

## **A Level Russian History: Summer Work**

The following tasks are designed to give an introduction to you an insight into Russian history - the depth study in your history A-Level. Since we do not cover this topic at Key Stage 3 or GCSE, it is likely you will be unfamiliar with Russian history. It is important that you therefore complete these tasks over the summer to have a better background understanding.

You should try to complete all of the tasks on this form, but they are listed in order of importance.

See you in September!

Mr Warrington

### *Task 1 - Read through the background information and make notes from the text.*

In 1855, Russia was an autocratic empire. At its' head was a Tsar, who took the title 'Emperor and Autocrat of all Russia'. The vast lands of the Russian Empire were his private property and the Russian people were his children. Russians were taught to show devotion to their Tsar and to accept their conditions on Earth as the will of God. Nobles had not been obliged to serve the State since 1785, however their sense of obligation remained strong and all landowners were expected to keep order on their estates. As well as his civilian officials, the Tsar also had at his disposal the world's largest army of around 1.5 million conscripted serfs, each forced into service for 25 years and made to live in a 'military colony'. The Tsar's decision to emancipate Russia's 51 million serfs in 1861 was to strengthen social and political stability, rather than as a product of 'liberal' thinking from an enlightened Tsar who is only concerned for the welfare of his subjects. Another key reform was the military where conscription was made compulsory for all classes from the age of 21, with punishments less severe and modern weaponry introduced. Alexander's reforms actually weakened faith in the Tsar as being capable of leading effective change, and ultimately created a desire for 'popular participation in government.'

Tsarist Russia was a multinational Empire inhabited by over 100 different ethnic groups. The policy of Russification was an attempt to preserve political loyalty. Although the Slavs in Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia comprise two thirds of the population, the remaining peoples were a mixture of many different nationalities, languages, religions and cultural traditions. This diverse Empire posed a continual challenge for the tsarist autocracy, particularly as the development of national ideology in the nineteenth century provoked ethnic groups to assert the distinctive identities. The effects of Russification were resentment among the more education and wealthy Finns, Poles and Baltic Germans in the west of the Empire.

Both hope and disappointment brought by Alexander II's reforms stimulated opposition to the tsarist regime. The creation of the Zemstva and dumas also provided a platform for the education intellectuals to challenge tsarist policies. The dumas were abolished because the Tsar and the Prime Minister ignored the view of ministers. The emergence of more organised opposition in the 1890s was a result of the 1891-1892 famines, which put pressure on the Zemstva. Alexander III's policy of Russification enabled him to promote Orthodoxy throughout the empire. The Orthodox Church had significant influence because 70% of the population were followers of the religion.

The years 1902 – 1907 were marked by widespread disturbance in both towns and countryside. The Tsar's minister, Pyotr Stolypin, dealt with the disturbances with a ferocity that aggravated the situation further. Stolypin's land reform aims were for a more sturdy and strong economy. It was thought that a swift and victorious war would distract the people from the unrest at home. This was a failure however as the Tsar lost the Russo-Japanese war by underestimating the enemy's resources. Despite this, the Tsar's decision to go to war in 1914 was initially a popular one, supported by a wave of anti-German sentiment. World War One was a failure for Tsar Nicholas II because it exposed the gross incompetence of the Russian army as a result of the Tsar's decision making.

By the winter of 1917, the streets of Petrograd were tense with the pent-up frustration of the unemployed, the starving and the desperate. In 1917, Bolshevik support increased due to the failure of the provisional government to provide basic supplies for the people. Lenin returned to Russia in April 1917. In the aftermath of the communist seizure of power, Lenin was idealised and treated as a hero. However the most important factor for Lenin in ruling Russia was the establishment of control for the Bolsheviks. After Lenin's death, Stalin arose as the leader because people feared the dominance of Trotsky who wanted to stir up a worldwide revolution. Once Stalin was in power, he created the five year plans to set targets for growth and increase production. Stalin rapidly set about changing Russia. The cheka's role was important because it controlled all aspects of terror under the Communist regime. Under the Stalinist regime, women's lives changed because they were able to get an education and were expected to contribute just as much to society as men. This change, while revolutionising the lives of women, also improved the economy, so that by the 1940s it was highly industrialised and productive. The promotion of the cult of personality of Stalin was a result of Stalin's increasing paranoia after suffering a mild stroke. Stalin's death in 1953 left a nation politically demoralised.

*Task 2 - Create a glossary from the words below - please don't just copy and paste from AI! Make sure you search up its context for this course.*

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| 1. Tsar                                | 14. Bolshevik           |
| 2. Liberalism                          | 15. Menshevik           |
| 3. Intelligentsia                      | 16. Cheka               |
| 4. Serf                                | 17. Soviets             |
| 5. Serfdom                             | 18. New Economic Policy |
| 6. Zemstva                             | 19. Politburo           |
| 7. Emancipation                        | 20. Proletariat         |
| 8. Taxation                            | 21. Bourgeoisie         |
| 9. Autocracy                           | 22. Bureaucracy         |
| 10. Slav                               | 23. Civil Service       |
| 11. Communism                          | 24. Gulag               |
| 12. Capitalism                         | 25. Totalitarian        |
| 13. Social Democrats (Russian context) |                         |

*Task 3 - Watch [this documentary on the history of the Romanov family](#). You can answer these questions as you watch.*

- 1) By 1881 how much of the world's land surface did the Russian state occupy?
- 2) During Alexander II's reign, what had started to happen in society particularly amongst senior officials?
- 3) What was the name of Russia's first terrorist group and whom did they assassinate?
- 4) When was Alexander III crowned as Tsar?
- 5) What did he set about doing as soon as his reign started? List at least 5 things.
- 6) How would his policies be described?
- 7) What happened to Jews in Russia in 1891 and how did it affect many young Jews?
- 8) What incredible feat of engineering was built during Alexander III's reign?

- 9) Within two years after the train crash what two posts had been given to Sergei Witte?
- 10) Over the next decade by what percentage each had the coal, oil, steel and cast iron industries grown?
- 11) What happened to both Russian agriculture and Industry during this time?
- 12) The new economic boom allowed the Russian Empire to increase amounts of what?
- 13) What happened to Russia's alliances during Alexander's reign?
- 14) Who was crowned new Tsar after the death of Alexander III in 1894?
- 15) Who did he marry in 1894?
- 16) Where was his wife from and why is this significant?
- 17) What happened during the coronation celebrations for Nicholas and his wife at Kodinka Field?
- 18) What impression did this give many people of the Tsar?
- 19) According to legend, what predictions were contained in the 100 year old letter?
- 20) What disease did the Tsar's son have? What does this disease do to the body?
- 21) Which area in East Asia was sought after by both Russia and Japan?
- 22) What was the result of The Russo – Japanese War 1904-1905?
- 23) In 1905 there was an attempted revolution in Russia. What various events throughout the year made up this revolution?
- 24) In order to suppress the revolution Nicholas was persuaded by Sergei Witte to implement 'The October Manifesto' of 1905. What reforms were set out in this document?
- 25) Who did Nicholas turn too to help restore order in Russia?
- 26) What different steps did he take in order to do this?
- 27) When did the Russian empire reach its economic peak?
- 28) By this year what was the empire's total national income?
- 29) What happened to Prime Minister Stolypin in 1911 at the Kiev Opera House? 30) What 4 empires were destroyed as a result of WWI?
- 31) Against which two countries did Russia declare war in the summer of 1914?
- 32) Who became The Commander – in – Chief of the Russian Army after Grand Duke Nicholas was dismissed in September 1915?
- 33) Back in Russia the Empress Alexandria was left in charge. Who did she confide in and why did this cause so many problems?
- 34) What did many of the letters from Alexandria to her husband the Tsar contain? 35) What began on February the 28<sup>th</sup> with a series of strikes in St. Petersburg? 36) Who all agreed that Nicholas II needed to abdicate?
- 37) When did the Tsar sign the abdication document?
- 38) What did Grand Duke Michael do the next day?
- 39) Who did power transfer to after this?
- 40) Who then took power in October 1917?
- 41) What was the Romanov house in Ekaterinburg described as?
- 42) What fate befell the entire Romanov Family in Ekaterinburg in the July of 1918?

Task 4: [Watch this documentary on the history of Russia](#). Aim to write down 30 facts from the video.