THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

In the beginning
RUSSIA IN 1900
The Russian Landscape
THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

• Occupies a vast area across two continents, Europe and Asia
• Measures 6400km from East to West and 3000km from North to South
• Encompasses tundra, desert, forest and grassland environments
• Communications across the empire poor
• Few roads were paved
• Rivers used for long journeys
• Railway also used; Trans-Siberian Railway critical in covering distance from Moscow to Vladivostok
THE PEOPLE

- Russia contains many varying nationalities within it due to early expansion of the empire.
- Russians formulate half the population, vast majority reside in European Russia, the remaining half consist of nationalities including: Ukrainian, Polish, Jewish, Tartar, Finnish, German.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirgiz</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tartar</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvian</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bashkir</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SOCIAL STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nobility</th>
<th>Middle Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Toward top of pyramid</td>
<td>• Middle of pyramid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Made up 1% of population, owned 25% of land</td>
<td>• Included: merchants, bankers, industrialists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mostly live in Moscow or St. Petersburg</td>
<td>• Middle classes participate in cultural life: ballet, operas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many have important jobs, mostly because of status, not ability</td>
<td>• Had large homes, ate well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Began to have a growing presence in local government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Urban Workers</th>
<th>Peasants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Most workers were young and male- typically ex-peasant class</td>
<td>• Bottom of social pyramid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wages very low, conditions poor</td>
<td>• Life very hard, worked for nobility usually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Living conditions terrible: shared rooms, no privacy, living spaces divided by curtains</td>
<td>• Poor, illiterate, uneducated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No heating, limited food, poor access to healthcare, education similarly unlikely</td>
<td>• Dependent upon good harvests-bad crops: starvation as a result of famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Disease widespread</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRINCIPLES OF TSARIST RULE

• 1. Autocracy:
  • Appointed by God
  • Ruled the country without constraint, according to his own will

• 2. Nationality:
  • Russians superior to those around them
  • Tsar had an obligation to preserve/ strengthen national identity
  • Russification official policy: all nationalities must speak Russian, dress accordingly, practice Russian customs publically etc.

• 3. Orthodoxy:
  • Supported divine right of Tsar
  • Important component of culture for Russians - offers council for poor, resource for information, education
Tsar
Church
Military
Nobility
Middle Classes
Urban Workers
Peasants
HOW RUSSIA WAS GOVERNED?

• Tsar was an autocrat, absolute ruler with supreme power
• Tsar had an imperial council who served as advisors, a cabinet of ministers who ran various government departments
• Both advisors and Ministers responsible to Tsar alone, they report directly to him and take instructions from him
• Important positions in government run by nobility: bribery common, corruption usual
• Opposition not tolerated, media censored, gatherings of more than 12 need police permission
• Secret police used to remove trouble- 1898: 300, 000 people sent to Siberia
HOW RUSSIA WAS GOVERNED?

• The army:
  • Crucial to Tsar’s survival
  • Largest in Europe
  • Conscripts serve for 7 years, come from peasantry
  • Poor pay, poor conditions

• Cossacks:
  • Come from Don area of Russia
  • Loyal to Tsar
  • Serve as cavalry units for Tsar
  • Help maintain loyalty from wider military
HOW RUSSIA WAS GOVERNED?

- Imperial Council
- Cabinet of Ministers
- Government departments
- Civil servants and officials
- Tsar
- Senate
• Comes to the throne 1894, though unwillingly
• Unprepared for the position of Tsar
• Admired his father, tried to rule as his father had done
• Little understanding of Russian people’s plight
• Russia experiencing major social/economic change- attempts to stifle discontent this through oppression and divine right