EDEXCEL INTERNATIONAL GCSE (9–1)

HISTORY

RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET UNION, 1905–24

Student Book

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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1) History: Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905–24 provides comprehensive coverage of the specification and is designed to supply students with the best preparation possible for the examination:

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For Pearson Edexcel International GCSE History specification (4HI1) for first teaching 2017.
### ABOUT THIS BOOK

### TIMELINE

1. TSARIST RULE IN RUSSIA, 1905–14  
2. OPPOSITION TO TSARIST RULE, 1914–17  
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4. THE BOLSHEVIK CONSOLIDATION OF POWER AND THE CIVIL WAR  
5. WAR COMMUNISM AND THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY (NEP)

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is written for students following the Edexcel International GCSE (9–1) History specification and covers one unit of the course. This unit is Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905–24, one of the Historical Investigations.

The History course has been structured so that teaching and learning can take place in any order, both in the classroom and in any independent learning. The book contains five chapters which match the five areas of content in the specification:

- Tsarist rule in Russia, 1905–14
- Opposition to Tsarist rule 1914–17: the impact of war and the February Revolution
- Provisional Government and the Bolshevik Revolution
- The Bolshevik consolidation of power and the Civil War
- War Communism and the New Economic Policy (NEP)

Each chapter is split into multiple sections to break down content into manageable chunks and to ensure full coverage of the specification.

Each chapter features a mix of learning and activities. Sources are embedded throughout to develop your understanding and exam-style questions help you to put learning into practice. Recap pages at the end of each chapter summarise key information and let you check your understanding. Exam guidance pages help you prepare confidently for the exam.

Learning objectives
Each section starts with a list of what you will learn in it. They are carefully tailored to address key assessment objectives central to the course.

Timeline
Visual representation of events to clarify the order in which they happened.

Key term
Useful words and phrases are colour coded within the main text and picked out in the margin with concise and simple definitions. These help understanding of key subject terms and support students whose first language is not English.
TIMELINE – RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET UNION, 1905–24

1905
- Bloody Sunday
- Start of the Potemkin Mutiny
- General Strike begins
- St Petersburg Soviet formed

1906
- Publication of the October Manifesto

1909
- Plastic invented

1910
- Einstein proposes theory of relativity

1911
- Revolution in China

1912
- The Lena Goldfields strike

1914
- Russia defeated at Battle of Tannenburg

1915
- Nicholas II takes on leadership of the Russian armed forces

1916
- Assassination of Rasputin

1916
- Battle of the Somme
- Easter Rising in Dublin

1914
- Outbreak of First World War

1912
- Titanic sinks
1917
- International Women’s Day protests
- Army Mutiny
- Petrograd Soviet issues Order Number 1
- Nicholas II abdicates. Provisional Government formed
- Lenin returns to Russia
- Lenin sets out his April Theses
- The June Offensive
- The July Days
- Lenin flees to Finland
- Kornilov Revolt
- Trotsky elected president of the Petrograd Soviet
- Lenin returns in secret to Russia
- The Bolsheviks take over the Winter Palace
- Elections for the Constituent Assembly
- Early Bolshevik decrees

1918
- Constituent Assembly dissolved
- The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed
- Trotsky becomes War Commissar
- War Communism begins
- Tsar and his family executed

1919
- Versailles Peace Treaty

1920
- Bolshevik victory in the Civil War
- League of Nations founded

1921
- Kronstadt Naval Mutiny
- Lenin introduces the New Economic Policy

1923
- Munich Putsch
- Tomb of Tutankhamun discovered

1924
- Lenin dies
1. TSARIST RULE IN RUSSIA, 1905–14

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the key features of tsarist rule in Russia in 1905, and reasons for discontent with tsarist rule
- Understand the key features of the 1905 revolution and its consequences
- Understand how Nicholas treated the dumas and the reasons for the growth of opposition groups.

In 1905 a violent revolution ripped through Russian society, briefly uniting most of the country and its empire against the ruler of the empire, the tsar, and his government. Even though revolutionary groups were operating within Russia, this revolution took them completely by surprise: it wasn’t planned or led by revolutionaries, it was a sudden expression of people’s unhappiness with ‘the system’. The tsar managed to survive the revolution, although he was forced into allowing Russia’s first-ever elected parliament. But after the tsar’s army and police had brought Russia back under control, the tsar was anxious to side-line the new parliament and rule, as each tsar had always done, as the absolute, unlimited ruler of ‘all the Russias’ – his enormous empire.
1.1 TSARIST RULE IN 1905: REASONS FOR DISCONTENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- Understand the key features of tsarist rule in Russia in 1905
- Explain the reasons for discontent with tsarist rule
- Understand how the tsar tried to deal with opposition to his rule.

HOW WAS RUSSIA RULED?

By 1905 Russia had been ruled by one family, called the Romanovs, for nearly 300 years. Nicholas Romanov (Nicholas II) was tsar in 1905. He was 37 years old. Although he was the eldest son, Nicholas was never prepared for being tsar by his father, Alexander III. Nicholas could not cope with the demands of ruling Russia’s huge empire. He was devoted to his family, but was a weak person who found it hard to make decisions, who had no patience for detail and few strong ideas of his own. The one idea Nicholas did believe strongly in was that he must pass on his powers as tsar to his son, as he had been passed them by his father and ancestors. He said, ‘I will preserve the principle of Autocracy as firmly and unflinchingly as my late father.’

AUTOCRACY
Nicholas II ruled as an autocrat, which meant there were absolutely no controls on his power: no one could tell him what to do, or stop him doing what he wanted. The tsar was helped in his rule of the Russian empire by ministers, whom he could ask for advice. The tsar chose his ministers from the aristocracy and from senior Church leaders. The tsar was also in command of the armed services. All the army and navy swore personal loyalty to the tsar and the royal family.

Russia was a major European power in 1905, like Britain. Britain also had a king, but the real power was held by the British government. The government was formed from the political party that won the most votes in a general election. In Britain, people blamed the government for economic problems or an unpopular war, and could vote in a new government in the next general election. There was nothing like that in Russia. People did not usually criticise the tsar as they felt this was not loyal; they feared arrest if they developed a reputation for opposition to the tsar. If things were going badly, then it was assumed that the tsar’s ministers must be giving him bad advice. But there was nothing they could do to change their government or how the tsar chose to rule.

KEY TERM
autocrat a ruler who has absolute power over a country

REASONS FOR DISCONTENT
Different social groups in the Russian empire had different reasons to be discontented with the tsarist government.
SOURCE A

This photo of Nicholas II and his family was taken in 1905. His wife was called Alexandra. In the photo she is holding their son, the heir to the throne, who was called Alexei. Alexei was born in 1904. Nicholas had four daughters, who were called Anastasia, Olga, Tatiana and Maria.

EXTRACT A

From a biography of Nicholas II, published in 1990.

When, in 1894, he learned that he was to become tsar, Nicholas burst into tears. ‘Oh Sandro,’ he said to his cousin, ‘I am not ready to be Tsar,’ and he continued to sob bitterly.

His dream had been to be a sailor, to travel, to go on voyages round the world. Instead, he would have to attend Councils of Ministers, read reports, decide, govern, act.

ACTIVITY

What can you learn about Tsar Nicholas from Extract A?

Figure 1.1 Key reasons for discontent in 1905

- Peasants – hungry for land, overtaxed, desperate poverty
- Industrial workers – terrible working and living conditions, low pay, unemployment
- Radicals – wanted the peasants or workers to take power for themselves
- Nationalities – parts of the Empire wanted to be independent, free from Russian oppression
- Police state – no one could feel free because the police were always watching
- Middle classes – no say in how Russia was governed
Peasants

Around 85 per cent of the population of the Russian empire were peasants. Population growth meant peasants needed more land, but almost all were too poor to buy it. Famines in the 1890s and in 1901 killed thousands. Russians were very shocked at how badly the government dealt with the famines; in fact, the Russian word for famine was banned from newspapers by the government!

Industrial workers

Russia had only really started industrialising in the 1890s, so the number of industrial workers was small. However, heavy industry was growing fast, concentrated in huge factories in Russia’s major cities. Conditions in the factories were dangerous, working hours were long, pay was low, rules were strictly enforced and housing shortages meant workers were forced to live in overcrowded, dirty barracks where diseases spread rapidly.

Middle classes

Most of Russia’s middle-class people were liberals. They wanted to see changes in Russia, but were frightened of the radical revolutionary groups that wanted to share all property among the poor. Many thought the best way to prevent revolution was not with violence, but by replacing the tsarist regime with a constitution that guaranteed rights to everyone, under a fair legal system.

Non-Russians

A census in 1897 recorded 125 million people in the Russian empire, of which only 44 per cent were Russian by nationality. Some of the other nationalities wanted independence because the empire put Russia first in everything. The empire had a policy of ‘Russification’, which put pressure on other nationalities to speak Russian and adopt Russian culture. The policy had most of its support among the peasants.

A RADICAL THREAT

Tsarism had been under direct attack from revolutionaries. In 1881, Nicholas’ grandfather, Alexander II, was assassinated; through the early 1900s, terrorists also assassinated important government ministers. Most of these terrorists belonged to the Socialist Revolutionary Party (or the SRs for short). The terrorists believed that the tsarist government deserved to be destroyed through violence. Some of these revolutionaries followed socialist theory. Socialists believed that Russia would eventually have a revolution in which the workers would take control.

One organisation called the Russian Social Democratic Party (RSDP) had formed in 1898. It followed the ideas of Karl Marx, a German revolutionary socialist. Its membership was tiny. One part of the membership, called the Mensheviks, believed it would be a long time until Russia had industrialised enough to have a workers’ revolution. The other part, known as the Bolsheviks, believed in leading a workers’ revolution as soon as the time seemed right. The Bolsheviks were led by Vladimir Ulyanov. Political parties were illegal and radicals adopted new names to hide their identities from the police. Vladimir Ulyanov called himself Lenin.
THE POLICE STATE

In order to protect the tsar and the government from the threat of terrorism, the police were given a great deal of power. The courts and the police served the tsarist autocracy, not the people of the Russian empire. Censorship of books and newspapers prevented radical ideas from being published. People suspected of working against the regime were imprisoned or exiled to Siberia, the remote east of the Russian empire. Lenin may have called himself after the Lena River, a Siberian river crossed by many exiles.

A secret police division, called the Okhrana, kept watch on people suspected by the regime of being revolutionaries. Okhrana agents also pretended to be revolutionaries so they could find out what underground groups were planning. Terrorists who were caught were usually executed. One terrorist who was executed was Lenin’s brother, Alexander.

ACTIVITY

1 In groups of three, come up with three slogans to reflect what the peasants, the workers and the middle classes disliked about tsarism. Write them in graffiti-style lettering and post them up around the class.

2 Design a set of questions you could ask, as an undercover tsarist police agent, to see if your friends had come under the influence of revolutionary parties with extreme views.

3 Describe two key features of tsarism in 1905 that were reasons for discontent within the Russian empire.
The general discontent with tsarist rule can be seen as the long-term causes of the 1905 revolution. This discontent meant pressure was building up against the harsh conditions and lack of freedom in tsarist Russia. In 1905, two important events helped provide the immediate causes of the revolution.

THE RUSSO–JAPANESE WAR, 1904–05

Russia wanted control of a part of northern China called Manchuria. This region had valuable resources (including coal and silver) and, most important of all, a port where the sea did not freeze over in winter (unlike Russian ports). However, Japan also had plans for Manchuria and this led to a war between Russia and Japan in 1904. Russia was confident that, as a major European power, it could easily beat Japan. However, the Japanese defeated the old-fashioned military tactics of the Russians both on land and at sea. Russian people blamed the tsarist government for this embarrassing defeat.

BLOODY SUNDAY

Bloody Sunday was a massacre of unarmed protesters that took place in St Petersburg on Sunday 9 January 1905. A large crowd of protesters, led by a priest called Father Gapon, was bringing a petition to the tsar. The petition, signed by 150,000 people, called for an 8-hour working day, the right to organise trade unions and for a constitution to guarantee these rights and other freedoms in law.
Although the protest march was peaceful, the way to the tsar’s palace was blocked by soldiers. The demonstrators shouted abuse at the soldiers, including insults about military failures in Manchuria. The soldiers fired two rounds of warning shots. Mounted Cossacks, the regime’s elite troops, charged into the crowd, attacking with their whips and then with swords. The soldiers fired into the crowd. Over 100 protesters were killed and hundreds more wounded. Around the world, people were shocked by the massacre. In Russia, the events of Bloody Sunday united people in anger and disgust at the actions of the tsarist government.

SOURCE D
From a report about Bloody Sunday written by US diplomats in Russia the day after the massacre.

In all the years (eighteen) I have spent in Russia, I never knew the Russian public to be so united as in their views in connection with the action of the authorities in ordering the soldiers to shoot the workmen, their wives, children and harmless spectators last Sunday in St Petersburg. All classes condemn the authorities and more particularly the Emperor. The present ruler has lost absolutely the affection of the Russian people, and whatever the future may have in store for the dynasty, the present Czar will never again be safe in the midst of his people.

SOURCE E
A contemporary illustration of Bloody Sunday: the troops have just fired on the protesters.

ACTIVITY
What does Source C tell us about why the Bloody Sunday protesters were discontented? Were their complaints to the tsar political or economic, or a mixture?

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SOURCE E
A contemporary illustration of Bloody Sunday: the troops have just fired on the protesters.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION
Describe two features of the Bloody Sunday massacre of 1905. (6 marks)

HINT
Support your identification of a key feature with details from your knowledge.

THE EVENTS OF THE 1905 REVOLUTION

POTEMKIN MUTINY, JUNE 1905
Although most of Russia’s military forces remained loyal to the tsar in 1905, there were some mutinies. The most famous is the mutiny by sailors of the Russian navy battleship Potemkin.

Like the industrial workers, the sailors in the Russian navy faced very tough discipline and very poor conditions. As with the industrial workers, there were some sailors who had learned about socialism. They believed it was wrong for officers to have complete control over the lives of ordinary sailors, just because they were from the upper classes. The navy was also suffering from low confidence because of its embarrassing defeat by Japan in the Battle of Tsushima in May 1905.
The quartermaster of the battleship *Potemkin* was a socialist called Matyushenko. He and other crewmen planned to lead a mutiny of the Black Sea Fleet (the main part of Russia’s navy) that would link up with the peasants of the Russian empire to bring down the tsar.

On 14 June 1905, *Potemkin*’s cooks reported that the meat for the crew’s meal was full of maggots. The ship’s doctor inspected the meat and said it was of acceptable quality for the men. After more complaints, *Potemkin*’s executive officer threatened to shoot any sailors who refused to eat the meat. When the sailors continued to disobey orders, the officer shot one of the leading mutineers, who died soon after. This set off the *Potemkin* mutiny. Other sailors grabbed the officer who had fired the shot, threw him into the water and shot him. Then the sailors attacked the rest of the officers, killing some and locking up others, and took control of the ship. A socialist ‘people’s committee’ took control of the battleship, with Matyushenko as its chairperson.

The mutineers sailed *Potemkin* to the port of Odessa, where strikes and protests had been taking place for several weeks. There were demonstrations in support of the mutiny and large crowds attended the funerals of sailors killed by the ship’s officers. Riots spread through the city. Nicholas II ordered the army in Odessa to stop the riots, which they did by firing into the crowds. Over 1,000 citizens were killed. The city was brought under government control again.

Shortly afterwards, an attempt to spread the mutiny through the rest of the Black Sea Fleet failed, and *Potemkin* was forced to sail around the Black Sea, avoiding recapture and looking for supplies. On 8 July 1905, *Potemkin* entered the Romanian port of Constanta, where the mutineers were given asylum. They sank the ship rather than allow the Russian government to recapture it.
The crisis that followed Bloody Sunday featured great waves of protest in the countryside and in the industrial cities.

**PEASANT RIOTS**

Across the Russian countryside, peasants rioted against their landlords, often burning down their manor houses (3,000 were burnt down between 1905 and 1907) and sometimes killing landlords and their families. The peasants created **communes** by taking the land that their parents and grandparents had worked as **serfs**. The police and army had great difficulty trying to deal with the number of attacks which broke out.

**INDUSTRIAL WORKERS**

While peasants tried to take control of land through violence and threats, industrial workers used strikes to achieve their aims. Bloody Sunday led to a huge increase in the number of strikes: more than 400,000 workers went on strike in January 1905 alone.

A **general strike** was organised from 20 September to 2 October 1905. Workers from the most important industries, including the railway, joined the strike. Without railways to transport resources, information and people, Russia was not able to function. The general strike linked the workers with the liberal middle classes, who wanted political **reform**. The protests united Russians against oppression; the general strike became a national strike against the government.

**THE ST PETERSBURG SOVIET**

The word ‘soviet’ means council in Russian. The St Petersbourg Soviet was a council of workers set up in October 1905 to help organise the general strike in the city. Other soviets were set up in other cities also to organise major strikes. The St Petersbourg Soviet lasted only from September to early December, when the government shut it down, and it was not responsible for the general strike itself – it formed after the general strike had already begun. But it was a very important development: the idea of a workers’ soviet for organising **resistance** and revolution became important again in 1917, as did the chairperson of the St Petersbourg Soviet, Lev Trotsky.
The pressure of the general strike and increasingly worrying signs of mutiny in the army led to Nicholas’ ministers advising him to make concessions. Although they did not approve of giving in to violence and opposition, these ministers knew that something had to be done to restore order. The result was the October Manifesto.

The October Manifesto was published on 17 October 1905. In it, the tsar granted:

- new civil rights for the people of the Russian empire: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to form political parties and the right to form trade unions
- a parliament, known as duma, with representatives elected in a general election
- that any new laws would have to be approved by the State Duma and government actions would be supervised by elected representatives of the people.

IMMEDIATE REACTIONS TO THE OCTOBER MANIFESTO

The October Manifesto delighted the liberal middle classes. The general strike was called off. There were widespread celebrations.

However, the October Manifesto did not do anything to improve conditions for the workers or peasants, or those suffering tough discipline in the armed services. The Social Democrats were very critical of the October Manifesto and of the middle classes for abandoning the workers.
Peasant unrest and worker strikes continued through October 1905, together with mutinies in several hundred army barracks. However, the majority of the armed services remained loyal to the tsar. This meant the tsar’s government could use brutal force to repress strikes, unrest and mutinies.

In December 1905, the leaders of the St Petersburg Soviet were arrested after the soviet called for more strikes and argued that the workers should be armed to defend themselves. In Moscow, the Social Democrats attempted to organise an armed working-class revolution. The attempt failed badly, with more than 1,000 people killed by tsarist troops.

The government used extreme violence to get back control of the country. Under Pyotr Stolypin, the minister of the interior and then prime minister, the army was given complete control over law and order in almost every part of the country. Newspapers were shut down and trade unions were closed; suspected revolutionaries were rounded up and put into prison. Special army courts tried anyone suspected of causing trouble, with no lawyers allowed to defend the accused and no appeal against the sentence. Over a thousand people were executed by these courts between 1906 and 1907. Many thousands more were exiled to Siberia.

Repression was difficult in the countryside, with its thousands of isolated settlements. Stolypin ordered groups of army soldiers to ride out to villages where there was peasant unrest. The soldiers used extreme force to stop the unrest. Even so, it was difficult to stop unrest breaking out again in the countryside. Peasant unrest continued in different areas of the empire until 1907.

SOURCE H
This photo from 1905 shows a tsarist policeman carrying out an inspection in Riga, Latvia. Repression was intense in parts of the empire where people wanted independence from Russia.

EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

STOLYPIN’S NECKTIE
Many liberals criticised Stolypin’s special measures to restore order because they allowed the army to convict and execute people without their having any protection from the law. Stolypin was hated by both liberals and radicals. People called the hangman’s noose ‘Stolypin’s necktie’, and those carted off to exile in Siberia travelled in ‘Stolypin’s wagons’. The terrorist wing of the Socialist Revolutionary Party targeted Stolypin for assassination, finally achieving this one day in September 1911, when Stolypin was at the opera.
Lenin wrote that the 1905 revolution was a ‘dress rehearsal’ for a revolution: it had many of the features of a revolution but it did not achieve its aim, which was to overthrow the tsar. Why did Nicholas survive in 1905?

**THE OCTOBER MANIFESTO**
Although tsarism came close to completely losing control of Russia during the general strike in the autumn of 1905, it managed to survive by promising the reforms that liberal middle-class people demanded. For the middle classes, this was as much revolution as they wanted. The October Manifesto split those wanting reform from those wanting wider revolution, so it reduced the pressure on the tsar.

**THE MILITARY**
Tsar Nicholas II was generally able to rely on his armed services to defend him from the revolution. Mutinies were quite unusual. Once the Russo–Japanese War ended in 1905, tsarist troops could be used to deal with worker or peasant unrest. Nicholas also arranged for a large loan from France, which he used to pay his armed forces. This improved confidence and helped make sure the troops remained loyal.

**A DISUNITED OPPOSITION**
Opponents of tsarism were not united. Much of the unrest was spontaneous, meaning that it wasn’t planned. Most of it was about economic issues, too, rather than being about achieving specific political goals: people in the cities wanted cheaper bread; peasants wanted more land; workers wanted more pay and easier working conditions.

The Social Democrats thought this showed how workers and peasants were not educated enough to understand that only a political revolution could give them what they wanted. They felt it was therefore the responsibility of revolutionary parties, like the Bolsheviks, to lead the way.
KEY TERM

**anarchy** a situation in which there is no government control at all and everyone is free to do whatever they want

SOURCE I

This illustration from 1905 shows how some Russians saw the revolution: terrifying violence that threatened to bring **anarchy** to Russia.

EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE

**NICHOLAS II AND THE SURVIVAL OF TSARISM**

The tsar did very little for himself to save tsarism from the 1905 revolution. He was not really aware that a revolution was happening through most of 1905. His advisers regularly moved him around the country to keep him safe from assassination attempts. His favourite place was a summer holiday home outside St Petersburg, where he could enjoy walks and tea parties with his family. Nicholas could not understand requests to change the autocratic system, as he believed God wanted Russia to be ruled in this way.

EXAM-STYLE QUESTION

Describe two features of Stolypin’s policy of repression. (6 marks)

**HINT**

This question is about you demonstrating ‘knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied’. So you have to make sure you provide good detailed factual support for your answer.
Tsarism was in crisis in October 1905; Nicholas had been forced to promise to share his power with an elected parliament. However, by April 1906, when the government set out its political reforms in its Fundamental Laws, the tsar and his government were back in control.

These laws established Russia’s State Duma, the first parliament of around 500 elected delegates. The duma had a real role in making new laws for Russia. However, the powers of the duma were limited.

- The duma’s powers were matched by an upper house of parliament, the Imperial State Council. The State Council could block anything passed by the duma. Half the State Council’s members were chosen directly by the tsar and would always vote in the way the tsar wanted them to.

- The tsar kept hold of very important powers. He alone had authority over the armed services and foreign policy. He chose all his government ministers. He had the right to veto any duma legislation. He had the power to dissolve the duma at any time (though he had to say when elections for the new duma would then take place). When the duma was not in operation, the tsar had the right to pass any new laws he thought necessary, under Article 87 of the Fundamental Laws.

- Only the tsar was able to make changes to the Fundamental Laws of Russia.

The reasons for these limitations on the duma was that neither Nicholas nor his ministers trusted the idea of allowing the Russian people to have a say in how Russia and its empire should be governed. Nicholas hated the idea of limiting his sacred autocratic powers in any way, and believed deeply that the majority of the Russian people wanted him to remain as their absolute ruler. An elected duma could only be acceptable to the tsar if the duma could be counted on to support the tsar and his government.

At the same time, Nicholas and the government did treat the duma as important. The government encouraged people to celebrate the opening of the First Duma by decorating their homes and businesses with flags. After the opening ceremony, duma deputies went to the tsar’s Winter Palace, where the tsar made a speech to them.
From Nicholas II’s speech to duma deputies, 27 April 1906.

Almighty God entrusted to My care the welfare of the Fatherland [Russia] and impelled Me to summon representatives of the people to assist in legislative activity making laws...

It is my firm conviction that your unselfish service to the Fatherland will help determine the needs of the peasants so near My heart, and contribute to the enlightenment of the people and the advancement of their welfare.

May My earnest desire be fulfilled: may I see My people happy and pass on to My Son, as his inheritance, a strong, well-ordered, and enlightened state.

May God bless the work confronting Me and the State Council and the State Duma.

SOURCE J

Tsar Nicholas II giving his speech to the deputies of the State Duma at the Winter Palace, St Petersburg, on 27 April 1906.

SOURCE K

ACTIVITY

1 Which one of the following do you think best describes the tone used by the tsar towards the duma deputies?
   a Respectful: the tsar was appreciative and polite, and welcomed the duma deputies as men who would help with the urgent task of modernising Russia.
   b Dismissive: the tsar did not value their contribution, and warned the duma deputies they would have no real role in governing Russia so they should not get any big ideas.
   c Patronising: the arrogant tsar made it clear that the deputies were elected only by his permission and that their role was to help him understand his people better.

2 Select phrases from Source J to support the decision you made in Activity 1.
Before 1905, political parties had been illegal in Russia. After 1905, many different parties formed, from ultra-conservatives like the Union of the Russian People to the extreme left-wing Russian Social Democratic Party. The two middle-ground political parties were the Constitutional Democrats (known as the Kadets) and the Octobrists (named after the October Manifesto). The Kadets were more liberal, while the Octobrists were more conservative.

**THE FIRST DUMA, 27 APRIL–8 JULY 1906**

The left-wing revolutionary parties did not take part in the elections for the First Duma, but even without them the duma was strongly anti-government. It was dominated by deputies from the Kadets and the Trudoviks. The Socialist Revolutionary (SR) Party had refused to take part in the First Duma. The Trudoviks were SRs who disagreed about this and had split to form a new peasant party. Their main demand was land reform: taking more land from the landlords. The Kadets supported land reform, but also wanted the State Council to be abolished and for the government to answer directly to the duma.

**EXTRACT B**

From a history of Russia, published in 1981.

The first two Dumas proved to be bitter and unworkable experiments. Too many of the Duma deputies were completely opposed to the government, while Nicholas and his advisors regarded most of the Duma deputies as having evil intentions. Everyone assumed rigid, unyielding positions.

**SOURCE L**

Five peasant deputies from the First Duma, 1906.
These demands were far too radical for the tsarist government, but the duma deputies were not interested in any sort of compromise. So the tsar dissolved the First Duma after just 10 weeks. Liberals were extremely disappointed by this speedy return to autocracy. There was a strong increase in liberal opposition to the government.

**THE SECOND DUMA, FEBRUARY–JUNE 1907**

This time, the Socialist Revolutionary Party (the SRs) and the Social Democratic Party (RSDP) took part in the elections. Two hundred and twenty-two socialists, mostly SRs, were elected. The new prime minister, Pyotr Stolypin, soon realised that the Second Duma was even more of a threat to tsarism than the First Duma, and it was dissolved in June 1907. For the revolutionary parties, it became clear that they would not achieve their aims through elections.

**THE THIRD AND FOURTH DUMAS, NOVEMBER 1907–FEBRUARY 1917**

On 3 June 1907, Stolypin organised a change in the election rules so that more conservative deputies, rather than reformers, were elected to the Third Duma. Conservative deputies could usually be relied on to support the government. Stolypin’s change meant that the Octobrists and other conservative deputies controlled 287 of the 443 duma seats. The liberals were very shocked that the government would act in such a dishonest way in order to control a duma. They now realised that the tsar and his government would never willingly give up autocratic power. Although opposition parties continued to make speeches in the duma criticising government actions, the conservatives always made sure government policies got duma support.

The Third Duma lasted its full 5-year term; the government did not need to close it down because it could be relied on to support the tsar’s regime. The Fourth Duma, dominated also by conservatives, was similar to the Third Duma, except this time the right-wing, nationalist parties were even stronger. Again, opposition to the government was too weak to make an impact on laws or policies. The Fourth Duma lasted until February 1917.

**A COUNTER-REVOLUTION?**

By the time of the Third Duma, police repression was so severe that the revolutionary parties were almost unable to operate. It was difficult for the parties to connect with the workers, too; factory owners were allowed to sack striking workers, so those who had jobs were desperate to hold on to them and had to keep their distance from the revolutionaries. In the countryside, the peasants were also intimidated by Stolypin’s repression. Landlords had fortified their manor houses, employed armed guards and, in some cases, installed searchlights to guard against night-time attacks. By rigging the elections, the Third Duma was packed with conservatives, most of them landlords who would never agree to radical land reforms. The Kadets, who had hoped to prevent revolution through social and political reforms, felt betrayed by the government, and exhausted by the ‘whirlpool’ of politics since 1906.

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**EXTEND YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

**THE BLACK HUNDREDS**

Not all Russians opposed tsarism. Instead of blaming the tsar and the government for Russia’s troubles, some extreme nationalist groups held others accountable, especially the Jewish communities. Known as the Black Hundreds, these extreme nationalist groups launched pogroms on those they opposed. More than 3,000 people, mostly Jews, were killed by the Black Hundreds between 1905 and 1906. While some government ministers criticised the Black Hundred attacks, there were strong links between the police and the Black Hundreds, and the latter were certainly important in helping the government regain control and repress the revolution. Nicholas II himself was convinced that Jews were responsible for the 1905 revolution.

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The peasant unrest against the landlords continued long after the cities were brought back under control. The Third Duma was packed with conservative landlords who wanted the countryside to be made ‘safe’ again. Prime Minister Stolypin came up with a solution.

THE ‘WAGER ON THE STRONG’

Stolypin and the landlords did not want to give the peasants any more of their land. They argued that the inefficient, old-fashioned peasant communes would only waste it and peasants would stay as poor as before. This was because the commune controlled all the important decisions in the village: when to plough the land, which land should be used for which crops and how the land should be farmed. Even if a peasant wanted to do something new, the commune would not allow any change from the village traditions.

Stolypin’s plan was to let individual peasants leave the commune and set up farms for themselves. There were different ways this could happen, but what Stolypin was hoping for was that Russia would soon become a country of individual family farms. As each farmer would get all the profits from his crops, rather than everything being shared with the commune, Stolypin hoped that his new farmers would use modern farming methods so they had more crops to sell.

Stolypin called it the ‘wager on the strong’. Stolypin’s wager was that if peasants became successful farmers, they would stop wanting to burn down their landlords’ manor houses and start to support the government instead. Stolypin’s reform also encouraged peasant migration to Siberia, where there was plenty of land. Between 1905 and 1917, 3.5 million peasants moved to Siberia.

ACTIVITY

1 The Octobrists, Kadets and Social Democrats had different fortunes in the years of the first three dumas. Use a graph like the one below to show how you think members of each party felt between 1905 (First Duma) and 1907 (Third Duma).

2 Add annotations to your graph to explain the lines you have drawn.

STOLYPIN’S LAND REFORM

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SOURCE N

From a description by Stolypin of his land reform.

If we were to provide the diligent [hard-working] farmer... with a separate plot of land..., making sure there was adequate water and that it satisfied all the other requirements for proper cultivation, then... there would arise an independent, prosperous husbandman [farmer], a stable citizen of the land.

SOURCE O

From a discussion between Stolypin and a conservative general, Kireev, in 1906.

Kireev: I rebuke you for the destruction of communal agriculture.

Stolypin: It is impossible not to abolish it! I have seen it, I know – and I know, too, the difference between it and landholding by [individual farmers]. Russia will immediately become richer.

Kireev: You have forgotten that it is not only a question of finances, but of politics. You are creating a mass of agricultural proletarians. All the peasants’ land will be bought up by Jews.

Stolypin: So long as I am in post, that will not happen.

Kireev: Are you eternal, then?

KEY TERM

proletarian a member of the working class, those with nothing to survive on except their wages

ACTIVITY

1 In Source N, Stolypin talks about creating a ‘stable citizen of the land’. Explain why Stolypin thought breaking up the peasant communes would make revolution less likely.

2 In Source O, Kireev argues that breaking up the communes would create ‘a mass of agricultural proletarians’. Did this mean Kireev thought the reform would make revolution more or less likely? Explain your answer.

3 How far do you think Kireev agreed with Stolypin that the land reform would make Russia richer?
Stolypin’s reform happened at the same time as his repressions of peasant unrest (see page 12) and worker strikes. There was constant police repression of trade unions and revolutionary groups. Then, in 1912, a year after Stolypin’s assassination, there was a massacre of strikers at the Lena Goldfields in Siberia.

Working conditions for the gold miners along the Lena River had been terrible. One day, workers from one mining gang protested about the rotten horsemeat they were supposed to eat. This led to a strike (organised with help from the Bolsheviks) that spread through the goldfields. A number of strike leaders were arrested. The event turned into a mass protest of workers, who brought lists of their demands to the managers. As the huge crowd of protesters approached, troops fired into the crowd. Between 200 and 500 workers were killed, with hundreds more wounded.

The Lena Goldfields massacre kick-started a storm of protest throughout Russia. Repression meant the number of strikes had declined from thousands in 1905 to a few hundred in 1911. But after the massacre, there were nearly 2,000 strikes, and thousands of protest meetings. The duma organised an investigation into the massacre, led by Alexander Kerensky. He became famous for his reports about the terrible conditions endured by the miners. The reaction to the Lena Goldfields massacre showed that none of the reasons for discontent with tsarist rule had gone away. Instead of Russia moving towards better conditions and freedom, the tsar and his government continued to hold on to autocratic power, using the police and army to crush any opposition.
RECAP

RECALL QUESTIONS

1. What was the name of the family that had ruled Russia for nearly 300 years in 1905?
2. Who was the leader of the Bolshevik part of the Social Democratic Party in the period between 1905 and 1914?
3. Russia fought and lost a war against which country between 1904 and 1905?
4. In June 1905, a mutiny took place on an important battleship in Russia’s Black Sea Fleet. What was the name of the ship?
5. What was set up in St Petersburg in September 1905 to help organise a general strike?
6. What did Article 87 of the Fundamental Laws give the tsar the power to do?
7. How many dumas were there between April 1906 and February 1917?
8. What did the term ‘Kadet’ stand for (a political party)?
9. What was Stolypin’s ‘wager on the strong’?
10. What happened in 1912 that made many people in Russia feel nothing had really changed in the way Russia was ruled since Bloody Sunday in 1905?

CHECKPOINT

STRENGTHEN
S1 Identify two reasons why Russians in 1905 were discontented with the tsarist government.
S2 What was ‘Stolypin’s necktie’? How was it linked to Stolypin’s repression after the 1905 revolution?
S3 Explain three reasons why Nicholas II survived the 1905 revolution.

CHALLENGE
C1 Write a diary entry for Nicholas II, for 27 April 1906, describing his attitude towards the opening of the first State Duma.
C2 Suggest two reasons why it was difficult for the Bolsheviks to lead the opposition to the tsarist regime in the period between 1905 and 1914 (hint: their leader, Lenin, spent most of these years in exile in Switzerland).
C3 Make a list of the reasons you can find in this chapter to explain why Tsar Nicholas might have been unpopular.

SUMMARY

- The tsar ruled Russia as an autocrat.
- Russia was a major power but it had many weaknesses.
- Russia was defeated by Japan in war in 1905.
- In 1905, a revolution was brutally put down on Bloody Sunday.
- In 1905, sailors on the battleship Potemkin mutinied.
- The tsar issued the October Manifesto, granting concessions.
- Stolypin introduced land reform but also dealt severely with opposition to the tsar.
- The Fundamental Laws set up the dumas, which had limited powers.
- In 1911, Stolypin was assassinated.
- In 1912, the strike in the Lena Goldfields resulted in strikers being shot; discontent with the government increased.
Exam Guidance: Part (A) Questions

Question to be answered: Describe two features of either the First Duma (1906) or the July Days (1917). (6 marks)

(In this guidance we are going to talk only about how to answer the question on the Duma, because you haven’t studied the July Days yet!)

Analysis Question 1: What is the question type testing?
In this question, you have to demonstrate that you have knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied. In this particular case, it is knowledge and understanding of either the First Duma or the July Days.

Analysis Question 2: What do I have to do to answer the question well?
Obviously you have to choose one of the two options and write about it! But it isn’t just a case of writing everything you know. You have to write about two features. What are features? They are ‘aspects’ or ‘characteristics’. We might even say that, if you were allowed to put sub-headings in your answers, both features would be the sub-headings you would put.

Analysis Question 3: Are there any techniques I can use to make it very clear that I am doing what is needed to be successful?
This is a 6-mark question and you need to make sure you leave enough time to answer the other two questions fully (they are worth 24 marks in total). Therefore, you need to get straight into writing your answer. The question asks for two features, so it’s a good idea to write two paragraphs and to begin each paragraph with phrases like ‘One feature was...’ and ‘Another feature was...’.

You will get a mark for each feature you identify and up to 2 marks for giving detail to support it. This gives the maximum of 6 marks.

You have to demonstrate knowledge, so make sure you back up your paragraphs with as much detailed knowledge as you have. But remember, you are not writing an essay here. You are providing enough detail to pick up 2 extra marks on each feature you have identified.
**Answer A**

The first State Duma was the first ever elected parliament for the Russian empire. That meant that there were elections for it. The elections meant the First Duma was radical and got shut down.

**What are the strengths and weaknesses of Answer A?**

*It doesn’t have many strengths. It identifies a feature (the duma was the first elected legislature) but the second sentence (that this meant there were elections for the duma) is a bit obvious to count as detailed support. The election producing a ‘radical’ duma might be another feature or it might be a bit of support for the first feature. Whatever the examiners decide, this answer is not going to get more than 2 marks. It needs much more detail.*

**Answer B**

One feature of the first State Duma was that it was Russia’s first ever elected parliament, with duma deputies being elected from many different parts of Russian society. The First Duma was dominated by deputies from the Kadets, a liberal party that was critical of the tsarist government and wanted extensive political reforms, and the Trudoviks, a group of mainly peasant deputies who wanted land reform.

Another feature of the First Duma was that it was short-lived, beginning on 27 April 1906 and being dissolved by the tsar on 8 July 1906 (in the old Russian calendar). The reasons why it was dissolved was that the Kadet and peasant deputies combined to demand land reform (as well as refusing to support the government’s proposed policies), which would have damaged the *gentry* class of landowners and the aristocracy who were the main supporters of the tsar. So the tsar dissolved the Duma.

**What are the strengths and weaknesses of Answer B?**

*This is an excellent answer. It identifies two features (what the First Duma was and how the tsar dissolved it). It clearly shows there are two features and provides detailed support for them both. There is no need to look for ways to improve this answer, you should just learn from it.*

**Challenge a friend**

Use the Student Book to set a part (a) question for a friend. Then look at the answer. Does it do the following things?

- Identify two features
- Make it clear two features are being covered
- Provide 3–4 lines of detailed information to support the feature.

If it does, you can tell your friend that the answer is very good!