

Russia: Emancipation and Revolutionary Stirrings

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Reforms of Alexander II

- Russia was defeated in the Crimean War. Their defeat caused them to reconsider their political policies.
- Nicholas I died in 1855 and his son Alexander II took over and ruled in his place.
- Alexander II took advantage of the defect and started to reform Russia.



Alexander II

Reforms of Alexander II

Abolition of Serfdom

- Russia still had serfdom even though every other nation in Europe had gotten rid of it.
- Russia had not changed much since the eighteenth century but Alexander II wanted to change this.
- Alexander II thought the abolition of serfdom was necessary in order for Russia to stay a great power.
- The nobility opposed this idea but Alexander II ended serfdom anyway in 1861.



Serfs in Russia

Reforms of Alexander II

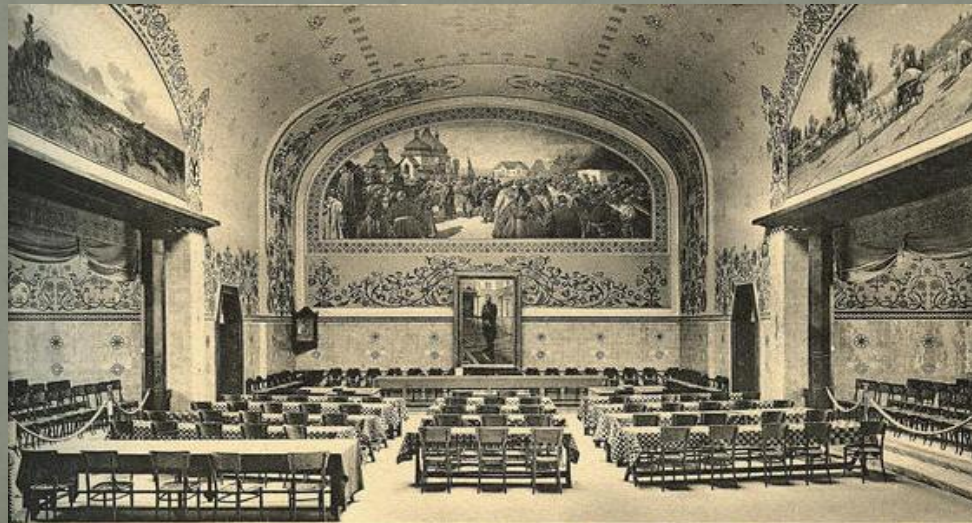
Abolition of Serfdom Continued

- Although serfdom had ended they still faced difficulties.
- The serfs received rights like the right to marry without their landlord's permission, the right to buy and sell property, to sue in court, and to pursue trades.
- They unfortunately did not receive title to their land and had to pay the landlords over a period of forty-nine years for the land but the amount was often too small to support them .
- They would not receive title until the land was paid off.
- In 1905 the government cancelled the remaining debts.

Reforms of Alexander II

Reform of Local Government and the Judicial System

- After serfdom was abolished there was a new government system taking its place.
- Instead of landlords there were now people ahead of the authority of village communes.
- Village elders collected taxes, imposed fines, and settled arguments within families.
- Councils were made up of the nobility and their job was to oversee local matters. These councils were known as zemstvos which were not funded causing them to be ineffective in their work.



№ 7 Полтава. Будинок Губерського Земства. Головна зала зі столами для земських гласних

A zemstvos house
where they met.

Reforms of Alexander II

Reform of Local Government and the Judicial System Continued

- In 1864 Alexander II made a new judiciary system.
- This system introduced Western European principles to Russia.
- Some of these legal principles included equality before the law, impartial hearings, uniform procedures, judicial independence, and trial by jury.
- Some cases were not tried before a jury. Example: offenses involving the press.



Printing Press

Reforms of Alexander II

Military Reforms



Crimean War

- Russia had the largest army on the continent, but unfortunately the army was unsuccessful during the Crimean War.
- The average person service time in the army was 25 years.
- Often times the villages sent serfs into war to fill the quota.
- In the 1860's the draft ages was lowered to 15 years of age, but fortunately treatment was a little better than it was before.
- In 1874 the enlistment period was lowered to 6 years of active duty and 9 years in reserves.
- All males had to be subjects of military service after the age of 20.

Reforms of Alexander II

Repression in Poland

- In 1830 Russians started to suppress the Polish rebellion.
- In 1864 Alexander II emancipated the Polish serfs.
- Russian law, language, and administration were all imposed on areas of Poland.
- Until the end of World War I Poland was treated as Russia's province.
- Unfortunately Alexander II's changes to Russian life was not successful in creating loyalty with his subjects.

Reforms of Alexander II

Repression in Poland Continued

- The serfs were unhappy with their emancipation and thought it was unfair.
- The nobility of Russia resented the tsar and refused to let them have a meaningful role in the government.
- Because the people of Russia were unhappy Alexander II was not very popular. He was often closed minded which affected his popularity.
- The repression often started radical groups to form and revolt.
- Russia then became a police state.



Alexander II

Revolutionaries

- One of the well-known tsars that lived in exile was Alexander Herzen.
- Herzen published a newspaper in Britain called *The Bell*. In this newspaper he sent reformist positions.
- Students began to form a revolutionary movement known as *populism* and they drew off the ideas of Herzen.
- The students' revolution was based on the communal way of life of Russian peasants.
- The society that was made was called *Land and Freedom*.

Revolutionaries Continued

- The youth involved in this revolution decided to live in the country side to gain the peasants trust and to teach them about their role in the upcoming revolution.
- Unfortunately the peasants did not trust them and turned the youth over to the police causing over two hundred students to be tried from 1877- 1878.
- After that revolutionaries had to attack tsarist regime directly, which then caused the adoption of terrorism.



Revolutionaries Continued



Vera Zasulich

- Vera Zasulich attempted to assassinate the military governor of Saint Petersburg in January of 1878.
- In 1879, *Land and Freedom* split into two groups.
- One of the groups tried to reach out to the peasants but their group did not last long and quickly dissolved.
- The other group, known as The People's Will, wanted to overthrow the autocracy.
- On March 1, 1881 a member of The People's Will threw a bomb and killed Alexander II.

Revolutionaries Continued

- After Alexander II's death Alexander III took over.
- Alexander III wanted to roll back his fathers reforms and start over.
- He was in favor of centralized bureaucracy unlike Alexander II who was in favor of the *zemtvos*.
- Alexander III also strengthened the secret police and increased censorship of the press.



Alexander III

Work Cited

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