

The Last Czars

Alexander I - (1801-1825)

- A. Grandson of *Catherine the Great*- favorite of his grandmother
 - Followed in steps of domestic reforms
 - Ended torture
 - Encouraged literacy, education, printing
 - Amnesty for many political prisoners
- B. Rise of Napoleon in France
 - Russia accepts Napoleon's gains in Europe
 - Agree to Continental System- exclude British goods
 - Czar continues to sell grain to Britain
- C. *Invasion of Russia - "Great Patriotic War"*
 - June 1812- Grand Army of 400,000 invades
 - Napoleon moves uncontested to Moscow
 - Russia has used "scorched-earth" strategy
- D. Alexander dies at age 47- December 1, 1825
 - "Crushed by the weight of a crown"
 - **No heir, so throne will pass to his brother**

Nicholas I - (1825- 1854) - the "Unwilling"

"Revolution stands on the threshold of Russia, but I swear it will never enter Russia while my breath lasts."

- A. Crushes hundreds of peasant uprisings during rule
 - ***Decembrist Revolts (1825)***
 - Sided with landlords to maintain stability

Alexander II - (1855-1881)

- A. Recognized the need for reform
 - Preferred from above - not forced from below
 - Saw abolition of serfdom as first step
 - Proof of Russia's falling behind the West
- B. ***March 3, 1861- Emancipation Manifesto*** - serfs freed
 - Nobles retain about half of the land- peasants 40%
 - Peasants did not own land as private property-
 - Property of a peasant community- ***mir***
 - Peasants still felt oppressed-
- C. ***Alexander II assassinated- March 13, 1881***
 - "Home to the palace to die."- Alexander II

Alexander III - (1881-1894)

- A. Succeeds his father to the throne - rejects reform
 - “Autocracy, orthodoxy, nationality”-
- B. Dealt with issue of economic reform
 - Huge increase in foreign investment-
 - Greatly increased exploitation of resources
 - Iron, coal, oil, timber
- C. Consequences of modernization
 - Concentration of population in cities- unrest
 - Resentment of foreign involvement

Nicholas II - (1894-1917)

“I shall maintain the principle of autocracy, just as firmly and unflinchingly as it was preserved by my unfortunate dead father.”

- A. Married to *Czarina Alexandra - German descent*
 - **Alexei-** born in 1904
 - Following births of four girls
 - Son is a *hemophiliac*- mother’s gene
- B. **Russo-Japanese War- (1904-1905)**
 - Japan fears Russian advances in Asia
 - Russia ignores warnings - Japan attacks- 1904
 - Underestimated Japanese opponents
- C. **“Bloody Sunday”- January 22, 1905 - St. Petersburg**
 - Father George Gapon leads 200,000 workers
 - Unarmed marchers approach Winter Palace
 - Dressed in best clothes, no threats and carrying icons and religious symbols
 - Bringing petition- seeking working conditions, personal freedoms, elected legislature
 - Soldiers fire on the crowd
 - Hundreds killed on “Bloody Sunday”
- D. **The Revolution of 1905**
 - Wave of strikes spread across country
 - *October Manifesto - October 30, 1905 - three promises*
 - Freedom of speech, press, assembly to be granted
 - Duma of elected representatives to be set up
 - Duma would approve laws but Czar retains veto power