

# ALEXANDER II – REFORMS

## REFORM: LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### *Identify the specific reform:*

**1864** - Zemstva

**1870** – Duma (Town Councils)

### *Who took the initiative to the reform and why?*

**WHO:** Alexander II – Set up a commission to work out suggestions in 1861

### **WHY:**

- No elected local government existed (it was usually the nobility that ruled)
- The administration locally was inefficient

### *Describe the resistance to the reform – who resisted it and why?*

**WHO:** It does not say so in this article but the groups that lost power and privileges were critical against this reform (Nobility and Church)

**WHY:** As mentioned – they lost some previous privileges

### *Details of the reform:*

**Zemstva – 1864:** Local elected council who was responsible for public education, public health, local economic development, road building, provision of services such as water and fire prevention.

*District (uezd)* – seats divided into three different classes: Nobility (45%), Peasants (40%) and towns men and clergy (15%)

The districts elected members to the *Provincial (guberny)* Council

**NOTE:** The liberals wanted the local councils to dispose imperial taxes – Alexander II said NO!

**Duma (Town Council) – 1870:** By Municipal Statute Town Councils (Duma) was elected. Russian men that were property holders and above 25 years of age got to vote. The Town Councils (Duma) responsibility included public health, provision of services, roads, public education, local trade and industry.

**NOTE:** The Police force was not a local responsibility. Alexander II and the government controlled them.

### *Result of the reform:*

- Zemstva did improve local administration in the areas they were allowed to operate
- On the local level the representation in Russia was much broader than in many supposedly advanced western societies.
- Sir Mackenzie Wallace (lived in Russia 1870-75) was very positive...

...but one big hinder was the fact that Alexander II did not extend the representative principle to a higher level – to a central government. Another one was that the nobility had tax privileges which limited the zemstva economy

# ALEXANDER II – REFORMS

## REFORM: LEGAL REFORMS

### *Identify the specific reform:*

1864 – Judicial reforms

### *Who took the initiative to the reform and why?*

**WHO:** Alexander II – by decree

### **WHY:**

- Several different types of courts made the legal system confusing and unfair
- The court officials were poorly trained and some even illiterate
- Evidence was normally presented in written form (most common people in Russia were illiterate)
- Evidence from the nobility was usually given more weight (credence) than from any other group
- The accused individuals hardly ever saw the judges – most cases were handled by pen (written communication)
- Corruption was wide spread (“*No grease, no motion*”)

### *Describe the resistance to the reform – who resisted it and why?*

**WHO:** The old conservative élite

**WHY:** They lost their ability to run some of the legal system (like local courts) and some other privileges they had in the older judicial system

### *Details of the reform:*

The 1864 decree saw the following changes:

- High salaries were given to the higher officials in the judicial system – to avoid bribery
- Trials became public
- In the open courts, you now expected the evidence to be presented orally and the evidence would also be cross-examined
- Trial by jury was introduced
- Appeal courts were set up
- Justice of Peace were elected by the district zemstvo for a period of three years
- Judges were nominated by the Tsar (when appointed they were guaranteed independence and it was very difficult to remove them)

### *Result of the reform:*

- The courts became trusted and confidence + respect from all groups of the society
- Sir Mackenzie Wallace (lived in Russia 1870-75) was once again very positive...

...but some problems remained:

- Special courts for specific crime (like terrorism) would still exist
- Jury's and some judges often followed their moral conviction instead of the evidential proofs...

**NOTE:** Russia needed well trained legal assistants so the Tsar set up an independent bar (the bar here refers to the qualifying procedure by which a lawyer is licensed to practice law in a given jurisdiction). This education would be a good breeding ground for future reformers (and revolutionaries – for example Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin) was a lawyer...)

# ALEXANDER II – REFORMS

## REFORM: **MILITARY REFORMS**

### *Identify the specific reform:*

**1859** – Reduction of the length of the military service (from 25 to 16 years)

**1862** – Regional Commands set up in four areas

**1863** – Military code revised and the more brutal forms of corporal punishment banned

**1864** – Regional Commands set up in another six areas

**1864** – Set up special Junker schools – open to all

**1874** – Manifesto and Statute on Universal Military Service published

**1875** – Manifesto and Statute on Universal Military Service became law

### *Who took the initiative to the reform and why?*

**WHO:** Alexander II appointed Dmitrii Miliutin as Minister of War 1861 and he had the explicit task of reforming the military (he held this office for 20 years – until Alexander II died). The Tsar family supported Miliutin in his work for reforms (lots of resistance from the conservative nobility...)

### **WHY:**

- The Russian defeat in the Crimean War showed the necessity to reform the army
- The army cost a lot of money (1/3 of the total Russian income during the Crimean War)
- Military service was used as a punishment for criminals
- If you had a position and money it was possible to hire a substitute to serve
- The command structure of the army was inflexible and inefficient
- The administration within the army was also inflexible and inefficient
- The punishment within the army was often severe and barbaric
- The period for conscripts was very long (25 years)
- Those who could avoid military service did
- The performance on the parade ground seemed more important than the ability to fight...

### *Describe the resistance to the reform – who resisted it and why?*

**WHO:** Conservatives within the government and traditionalists within the army

**WHY:** The nobility had the rights of higher positions within the military system. The reforms undermined these old rights and they therefore resisted them. Note Count Shuvalov – Head of the Third Section...

### *Details of the reforms:*

- The reforms that suggested a reduction of the active military service was a way to reduce the enormous costs and at the same time make the army more efficient (and attractive). The 15 years (after 1874) was usually seven years in active service. The rest (eight years) was served as trained reserve. University graduates only had to serve six months in active service. Recruits with a primary education got their active service reduced to four years.
- The regional commands should decentralize administration and supply
- The regional commands should also improve efficiency
- The Junker schools were open to all. They prepared low-rank military for officer rank (in 1871 12 % of the Junker students were not from the nobility).
- According to the new law 1874/1875 all males upon reaching 21 years of age, from all classes in the Russian society, had to register. Around ¼ of all male in this age group came to serve.
- The Prussian Army was a role model for Miliutin – their success against the French Army 1870-71 helped him in his strive for reforms (especially for the acceptance of the Law 1875)

### *Result of the reform:*

It's mentioned as Alexander II's most democratic reform and it did change the military system. The military performance of Russia improved (victory in the Russo-Turkish War 1878). Still – the General Staff was very burdened by with a huge amount of regulations and diverse tasks; army doctors could be bribed to declare people unfit for service; the quality training and leadership still lagged behind more efficient nations (like Germany)

# ALEXANDER II – REFORMS

## REFORM: EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

### *Identify the specific reform:*

- 1861** – Develop primary education in the Russian villages (soon handed over to the Zemstva + later the Dumas when they were set up in the urban areas)
- 1862** – New schools were placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education
- 1863** – University Regulations
- 1871** – Gymnasia introduced
- 1872** – Realschule introduced
- 1872** – Women accepted to Moscow University
- 1876** – Imperial Statute about women's Higher Education

### *Who took the initiative to the reform and why?*

**WHO:** Alexander II appointed Golvonin as Minister of Education (aligned with the liberal reformers). Alexander II took a close personal interest in the drafting of the University Regulations 1863.

### **WHY:**

- The Russian educational system was very strict and repressive
- The Russian Orthodox Church (“*traditionally stifling influence*”) had monopoly on education

### *Describe the resistance to the reform – who resisted it and why?*

**WHO:** Conservative (nobility especially) and the Orthodox Church

### **WHY:**

- The reforms were very liberal and they opened education on all levels for all groups of the Russian society. Money and position was not an issue for talented students anymore.
- The Church lost its monopoly of education...

### *Details of the reforms:*

- The first reform 1861 started a process of building up a primary education system all over Russia (most Russians were illiterate at this time)
- With the new reform 1862 we see a separation of the older Church education and a more modern government controlled educational system
- Best textbooks received prizes which encouraged the production of new textbooks
- The University Regulations of 1863 is often described as Golvonin's most famous contribution.
  - The universities were given certain autonomy in administrative matters and in the choice of curriculums.
  - Rectors were appointed four years by a Council of Professors
  - Deans were elected by faculties for three years
  - The teaching of Law was upgraded and the teaching of constitutional law was reinstated.
  - Interested “outsiders” could attend lectures
  - Poor students could receive reductions on the tuition (some even got their education without having to pay)
  - Foreigners were let into Russian universities
  - The universities could import duty free any kind of scholarly texts from abroad – and they were not subject to the examination by the censorship...
  - Scholarships were set up to support the best students
  - Fact-finding expeditions abroad were encouraged

**NOTE** – 1866 assassination attempt against Alexander II. Led to changes – Dmitri Tolstoy (reactionary and close to the Orthodox Church) replaced Golvonin who was accused of attributing to the radical ideas allowed in the liberal education policies.

- Secondary education improved. A new Gymnasia with a classical curriculum (Greek, Latin, Math) and a modern technical Real Schule introduced. An increased number of secondary schools.
- Technical Institutes set up
- Women Education – Moscow University organized the first courses for women in 1872; women were admitted to the medical academy in St Petersburg; Five Universities set up degree courses for women in 1876

### *Result of the reform:*

- The number of Primary and Secondary schools increased fourfold between 1861-1881
- The University Regulations of 1863 allowed a freedom of expression which had not been seen for 50 years
- Tolstoy's reforms had some positive effects on the administrative efficiency and equality of opportunity
- Higher education for women started in 1872 – by 1881 there were some 2000 women studying at universities in Russia

# ALEXANDER II – REFORMS

**REFORM: CENSORSHIP** (*This part will include some background material*)

**Identify the specific reform:**

*(1804 – First Statute of Censorship)*

*(1826 – Second Statute of Censorship – “Iron Statute”)*

*(1828 – Third Statute of Censorship)*

**1865 – Press Law**

**Who took the initiative to the reform and why?**

**WHO:** *The first initiative towards a formal Statute of Censorship was taken by Tsar Alexander I. The Second and Third Statute of Censorship came during the reign of Tsar Nicholas I. Formally it was first under the Ministry of Education. Later several individuals of the government got involved in a Supreme Censorship Committee (Ministers of Education, Interior and Foreign Affairs. Also, the Third Section was actively involved)*

**WHY:** *The spread of modern ideas connected to the French Revolution (liberal ideas) and in an era of nationalism Russia decided to formalize the censorship.*

**WHO:** After discussions within the Russian bureaucracy Tsar Alexander decided 1863 to pass the responsibility of the censorship from the Minister of Education Golovnin to the Ministry of Interior, Valuev (conservative). Valuev took the initiative to the Press Law of 1865

**WHY:** The periodical press grew rapidly in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The new periodicals delivered some mild moderate critical comments against the governments' actions at first but with time they became more critical...

**Describe the resistance to the reform – who resisted it and why?**

Liberals resisted the Press Law (and censorship)

**Details of the reform:**

*The 1826 Statute of Censorship had been very detailed in its approach. It should control the three spheres of social, political and cultural life of society: rights and internal security, the direction of public opinion in accordance with the present circumstances and the types of government, science and education of youth. In 19 chapters and 230 sections it presented detailed rules to guide not only censors, but also cited the rights and responsibilities of booksellers, holders of libraries for reading, printing and lithographs, as well as recommendations for bulletins and periodicals, Jewish books, etc.*

*The 1828 Statute of Censorship was a bit less harsh and detailed. It was built on the principle that censorship should not give "any direction to literature and the general opinion; it was only to prohibit the publication or sale of those works of art and science, which were harmful with regard to faith, the throne, good manners and personal honor of citizens."*

These Statutes were used by the government of Alexander II. In **1865** the Minister of Interior Valuev released the **Press Law**. It stated which publications were freed from preliminary censorship (current periodical publications, original writings of not less than 160 printed pages, all government publications, all publications within academics, universities, and learned societies and institutions, all publications in Greek and Latin + the translations of these publications, sketches, diagrams and maps). It also stated what punishment a periodical could receive when it published unwanted material.

**Result of the “reform” - censorship:**

The result of censorship during the reign of Tsar Alexander II was dual. Sometimes it was fairly strict (like in 1866 when the radical journal The Contemporary was forced to close – but that was a decision taken just after the assassination attempt against Alexander II) and sometimes more lenient. In Russia, this period represents a considerable freedom of both ideas and expressions:

- 1855-1864 – the number of new books published per year doubled
- 1864-1881 – the number of new books published per year trebled

# ALEXANDER II – REFORMS

## REFORM: ECONOMIC REFORMS

### *Identify the specific reform:*

- 1859** – Richer Jewish Merchants + Foreign Jewish Merchants allowed to live and trade all throughout the Empire of Russia
- 1860** – Jews who had served in specific regiments were now also allowed to live and trade all throughout the Empire of Russia
- 1862** – Budget with reform suggestions
- 1863** – Duties replaced farming out licenses to sell certain goods (especially spirits)
- 1865** – The restrictions on settlement (Pale of Settlement) was abolished for Jewish artisans
- 1867** – All Jews who had served as soldiers were now also allowed to live and trade all throughout the Empire of Russia
- 1868** – Abolishment of some import duties on manufactured goods

### **Who took the initiative to the reform and why?**

**WHO:** The Minister of Interior (Valuev) took some initiative when it comes to ease the restrictions against the Russian Jewish population. This was of course done with the agreement of Tsar Alexander II.

**WHY:** The Russian Jews were important for the domestic economy.

**WHO:** Minister of Finance Mikhail Reutern 1862-1878. Economic reforms.

**WHY:** Russia needed to modernize her economy – from agriculture and industry to the main financial institutions

### *Describe the resistance to the reform – who resisted it and why?*

### *Details of the reform:*

Short background to the situation for the Jewish population and their settlement in Russia. Anti-Semitism was common in Russia. Settlement restrictions “*Pale of Settlement*”. Inside these areas of western Russia permanent residency by Jews was allowed.

Economy:

- Unified Treasury
- An efficient centralized administrative system
- Duties replaced farming out licenses to sell certain goods (esp. spirits - a key resource of revenue)
- Modified and streamlined the fiscal organization of the State
- Expanded the railroad network through private investments (many foreign investors). The investors were guaranteed an annual dividend of shares
- Increased grain export
- Development and expansion of Russian financial institutions
- Eased the restrictions against Jewish Merchants and Jewish artisans

### *Result of the reform:*

Railroad network increased a lot – from 700 miles to 14,000 miles and much of this was used for economic gains (like grain export – Russia’s main export item)

Opened up for foreign investments in the railroad construction which brought money for the Russian state

Eased import/export restrictions stimulated trade

From a different source: *Reutern has been identified as an important precursor of the Witte system for the state management of economic development, as under his Ministerial tutelage, the Russian railroad network increased its capacity from around 2,200 miles to 14,000 miles. Reutern’s tenure as Russian Minister of Finance was a very substantial one, lasting from 1862 to 1878, and hence his impact on post-emancipation Russia was significant. He has been described as “the most talented and dynamic minister of finance under Alexander II”. He was also an important figure in political terms, for example being one of the members of the small group within the Russian government involved in a meeting to decide on the issue of the sale of Alaska to the USA in 1866*