



# The Decline and Fall of the Romanov Dynasty in Russia

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# The Last 5 Tsars

1801-  
1825

- Alexander I

1825-  
1855

- Nicholas I

1855-  
1881

- Alexander II

1881-  
1894

- Alexander III

1894-  
1917

- Nicholas II

# Alexander I (ruled 1801-1825)

- Grandson of Catherine the Great
- Inherited throne after father (Paul I) murdered
- Ruled Russia during the Napoleonic wars
- Expanded Russian empire with Finland and part of Poland
- Initially introduced reforms but later took these back
- Died of typhus



# Nicholas I (ruled 1825-1855)

- Younger brother of Alexander I
- Decembrist Revolt (1825)
  - Attempted coup after Nicholas I's older brother, Constantine, declined the throne (after Alexander I died of typhus)
  - Nicholas I's reaction set the tone for his firm rule of Russia
- Highly reactionary
  - Principles of "Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and Nationality"
- Feared nobles' reaction to potential reforms, such as abolishing serfdom



# Alexander II (ruled 1855-1881)

- Crimean War (1853-1856)
  - Loss of war prompted military modernization
    - Universal military conscription
- Reforms
  - Allowed for early form of corporations (LLCs)
  - 1861—emancipated the serfs
  - Police force
  - Local self-government (zemstvo)
  - Had finished plans for a дума the day before his assassination
- Assassination
  - Attempts in 1866, 1879, 1880
  - 1881—bomb set by members of Narodnaya Volya (People's Will), a nihilist group





# Alexander III (ruled 1881-1894)

- Along with his son, the future Nicholas II, he witnessed Alexander II's assassination
  - Anti-Semitism—blamed Jews for his father's assassination
    - May Laws (1882)—harsh restrictions on all Jews
    - Pogroms—led to Jewish immigration to the U.S. and elsewhere
      - Film reference: “**Fiddler on the Roof**”
- Return to principles of “Nationality, Autocracy, and Orthodoxy”
  - Put local control in the hands of appointed officials
  - Secret police
  - Strict censorship
  - Political prisoners exiled to Siberia
- Died of kidney disease at age 49



# Nicholas II (ruled 1894-1917)

- Married Alexandra, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria of Great Britain
  - Their son, Alexei, was a hemophiliac
    - Treated by the “mad monk” Grigori Rasputin
- Completed the Great Siberian Railway
  - Port at Vladivostok in the east
  - Russians have historically sought warm-water ports
- Rejected calls for democratic reforms
- Last Russian tsar
  - Executed along with his wife and children in 1918



# Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)

- Imperial rivalry between Japan and Russia over Korea and Manchuria
- **Japanese surprise attack at Port Arthur, Manchuria**
  - First modern defeat in war of a European power by a non-European power
- **Treaty of Portsmouth (1905)**
  - Russians left Manchuria
  - Japan gained recognition of Korea as part of its sphere of influence (i.e., imperialism)
  - Japan gained the southern half of Sakhalin Island



# Russian Revolution of 1905

- Among long-standing complaints, the people were unhappy over Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War
- **Bloody Sunday (January, 1905)**
  - Peaceful protesters, led by a priest named Gapon, marched on the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg with a petition
  - Shot at by tsar's forces
  - 92 dead and hundreds wounded

# Russian Duma

- August, 1905—Duma organized as an advisory body
  - But this wasn't well received
- October Manifesto
  - Legislative powers for the Duma and civil liberties for the people
- Nicholas II repeatedly butted heads with the Duma
  - Socialists and revolutionaries kept winning seats

# World War I and 1917 Revolution

- Russians joined with Great Britain and France to fight the Germans and Austrians
  - Russian army suffered terrible losses due to outdated equipment and poor leadership
  - Tsar came to the front to lead troops, leaving Tsarina Alexandra to rule
  - Tsarina disliked
    - Foreign heritage
    - Influence of Rasputin
- 1917
  - These factors, along with food shortages and general discontent, led to full-scale revolution
  - Russia withdrew from World War I
  - Civil war in Russia over which group would rule Russia
  - Tsar and his family assassinated by Bolsheviks in 1918

