

## Bloody Sunday. January 1905.

By the 20th century, the Romanov family had been ruling Russia with an iron fist for nearly 300 years. The Romanov Tsars lived a lavish lifestyle, purchasing the most sought after fashion items and jewelry, living in massive palaces, and eating the best foods. It is said that even the stockings worn by the Romanov family were embroidered with real gold. How could they afford to do this considering how backward and poor the Russian empire was? Well, that is an easy question to answer. They were able to live such a decadent lifestyle due to the fact that they had control over millions of tax paying serfs. The Romanovs built their wealth and lifestyle on the backs of the lower classes. And in 1905, after the defeat of the Russians by the Japanese, the people decided to take a stand, and marched on the Winter palace. On Sunday, January 22, 1905 protesters marched through the streets of St. Petersburg.



Those who gathered at the Winter palace to protest were led by a young Eastern-Orthodox priest, in an attempt to organize a peaceful protest. At the time, workers were going on strike to join the march alongside liberal Russians. Their demands were made quite clear. The workers aimed to obtain shorter work hours and better wages, while the liberals marching alongside them demanded that a constitution be created, and reforms needed to be made to overhaul the brutal and autocratic government. Protesters were chanting prayers and singing religious hymns, carrying holy icons and pictures of the Tsar. They also brought a petition for justice and freedom. The government was failing to meet the needs of the people.

Fearing the marchers, Tsar Nicholas II and his family had fled the Winter palace and called in soldiers. As the protesters reached the palace, they saw a line of soldiers. Soldiers then opened fire on the crowd. Hundreds fell dead or wounded in the snow. One woman stumbling away from the scene yelled “The Tsar has deserted us! They shot away the orthodox faith!” The slaughter marked a turning point for the Russians. Bloody Sunday killed the people's faith in the Tsar.

In the months that followed Bloody Sunday, discontent exploded throughout Russia. This would become known as **The Revolution of 1905**. Strikes multiplied. In some cities, workers took over local government. In the countryside, peasants revolted and demanded land. Minority nationalities called for autonomy from Russia. Terrorists targeted officials, and some assassins were cheered on as heroes by angered Russians. The Tsar was left with two choices... He could send soldiers to quell revolt and discontent through violence and bloodshed, or agree to sweeping reforms to satisfy the needs of the people.



## The Tsars Decision: The October Manifesto

### On the improvement of order in the state

The disturbances and unrest in St Petersburg, Moscow and in many other parts of our Empire have filled Our heart with great and profound sorrow. The welfare of the Russian Sovereign and His people is inseparable and national sorrow is His too. The present disturbances could give rise to national instability and present a threat to the unity of Our State. The oath which We took as Tsar compels Us to use all Our strength, intelligence and power to put a speedy end to this unrest which is so dangerous for the State. The relevant authorities have been ordered to take measures to deal with direct outbreaks of disorder and violence and to protect people who only want to go about their daily business in peace. However, in view of the need to speedily implement earlier measures to pacify the country, we have decided that the work of the government must be unified. We have therefore ordered the government to take the following measures in fulfilment of our unbending will:

1. Fundamental civil freedoms will be granted to the population, including real personal inviolability, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association.
2. Participation in the Duma will be granted to those classes of the population which are at present deprived of voting powers, insofar as is possible in the short period before the convocation of the Duma, and this will lead to the development of a universal franchise. There will be no delay to the Duma elect already been organized.
3. It is established as an unshakeable rule that no law can come into force without its approval by the State Duma and representatives of the people will be given the opportunity to take real part in the supervision of the legality of government bodies.

We call on all true sons of Russia to remember the homeland, to help put a stop to this unprecedented unrest and, together with this, to devote all their strength to the restoration of peace to their native land.

**Why was Bloody Sunday a turning point for the Russians?**

## The Results of the 1905 Revolution

### The Duma is Created

In the October Manifesto, Tsar Nicholas II promises free speech, conscience, assembly, and union. He agreed to summon a Duma, or elected legislature. No law, Tsar Nicholas declared, would go into effect without approval by the Duma.

The October Manifesto helped to win over the moderates, leaving the Socialists isolated. These divisions helped the Tsar who had no intention of letting strikers, revolutionaries, and rebellious peasants challenge him.

### New Prime Minister: Peter Stolypin

At the first Duma of 1906, officials criticized the government. In turn, the Tsar quickly dissolved it to avoid any further criticism of his rule. Tsar Nicholas then appoints Prime Minister Peter Stolypin. Under the new prime minister, increased arrests, programs, and executions were used as a means to restore order. Stolypin knew that repression was not the right way to restore order to Russia, and aimed to reform the government.

- Enacted land reform to increase peasant support of the government.
- Strengthened the Zemstvos local government, and aimed to improve education throughout the empire.

These reforms were not enough. The government still was **failing to meet the needs of the people.**

Stolypin was assassinated in 1911, and Russia remained an autocracy with discontent flowing throughout the nations many social groups.

Dumas would continue to be held, but were very ineffective. The Tsar would continue to pull back reform to ensure his power remained absolute.

What methods did Stolypin use to restore order after the Revolution of 1905?

How did Stolypin's tactics change over time? What did he believe Russia truly needed to restore stability and order?

How did the Tsar prevent the loss or weakening of his autocracy? What does this contradict?

