

ALEXANDER II



REFORM AND EMANCIPATION



To Look At Serdom and Early Reform Attempts

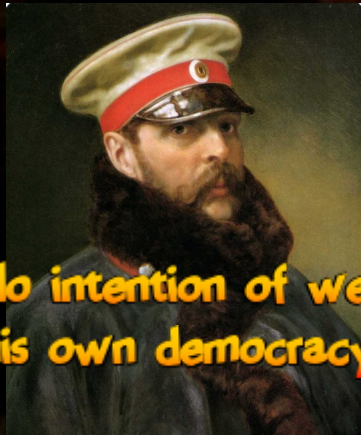
1855 - 61

RECAP -

1853 - 1856 - Crimean War and the Russian loss to Ottomans, France and Britain highlights the backwardness of Russia's social, economic and military structures.

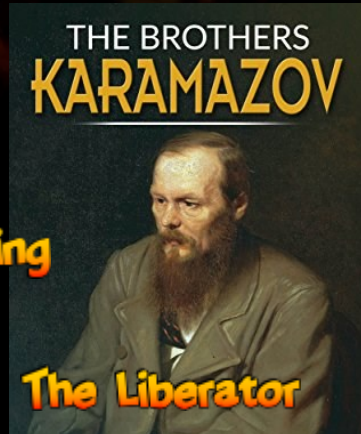
1855 - Alexander II - Tsar of Russia after the death of his father Nicholas I.

Tsar Alexander II



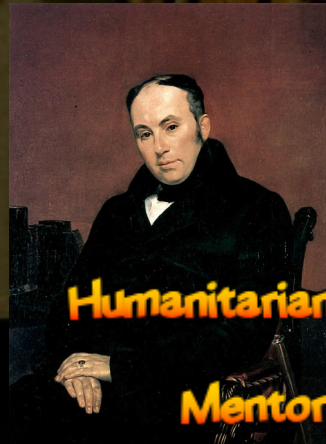
No intention of weakening his own democracy

Fyodor Dostoevsky



The Liberator

Vasily Zhukovsky



Humanitarian
Mentor

G Duchess Pavlovna



Liberal Minded
Aunt

Prince Alexei Orlov



Mediator
Conservative

Note - Mikhail Speransky - 'enlightened bureaucrat.' Most of 17 ministers retained?

BEGINNERS SERF



53 million serfs in the Russian Empire.	90% of population.	50% were pomeschlik serfs. Private owned.	Most others worked for the state.
+ 1.4 million household serfs.	The 'paternalistic' argument of landlords.	Better off than free peasants in Europe.	But - most at the mercy of exploitative landlords.
Could be sold like cattle - separted from family.	Landlords could issue corporal punishments.	Serfs had to ask permission to marry.	State serfs tied to the commune - e.g. tax. Couldn't move.
Sexual exploitation and abuse was widespread.	Living conditions often dire - mass starvation.	Some 'escaped' by getting drunk on home made vodka.	Tsar Nicholas I had set up 10 secret commissions!

'Short of executing them, the landlords could treat serfs as he wished.' S Waller.

Early Attempts At Reform



Even Nicholas I had described serfdom as a *“an evil palpable to all.”*

1842 - Minor decree allowed landlords to abandoned the master / serf relationship in favour of fixed contracts and creating 'obligated serfs'.

1847 - Minor decree allowed serfs to but their freedom to help landlord pay debts when estate needed to be sold at auction.

So why hadn't serfdom been abolished previously?

Bring 3 Things To The Table



3 Most Surprising Things



3 Points of Discussion



3 Most Important Things To Know



3 Most Interesting Things To Know

Long term cause of 1917 Revolutions – due to failure.

Catherine Great – unable to free them.

Serfdom just not very Russian = camaraderie!

View of serfs - romantic v villains.

EPISODE 7 - IMMERSION?



ARGUMENTS FOR EMANCIPATION

● The Economic Argument

Russian industry was 'backwards' compared to Western Europe. Tied serfs could not be used where needed most. Free labour was more efficient than forced. Serfdom meant low standard of living, thus no internal market for goods. Serf owning Nobles falling into debt due to outdated methods - unable to produce grain surplus - subsistence farming rather than industrial farming as population had doubled between 1800 - 1850. By 1859, 66% of serfs used as collateral on bank loans. Many serfs unable to pay taxes by 1859.

● The Military Argument

Historian Albert Rieber - **perspective** - serfdom had to go to match other militaries. Refer to Crimean War for issues! Maintaining conscripts for 25 years was too expensive. A more manageable system of a shorter period of service before sending highly trained serfs back to communes was seen as too dangerous while serfdom still existed. Finally, it was custom for serfs to earn their freedom after (hopefully) surviving military services - new systems would mean most serfs would be free in 2 or 3 generations anyway. Better to get ahead rather than see it happen 'from below!'

● The Moral + Intellectual Argument

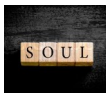
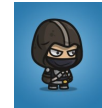
Bondage is bad - immoral in any civilised society and hurt Russia as a whole. Westernisers / Intelligentsia - **perspective** = Serfdom hurt, serfs, nobles and greater society. Landowners lazy, burdened and lacked character. + Serfs were soul of Russian + comrades. Ivan Turgenev - **perspective** - wrote a 'Sportsman's Sketches ... serfs as just 'normal' feeling people. Group called Nihilists - **perspective** - believed that massive change to society was the ONLY thing that could save / improve Russia.

● Practical Arguments

Growing unrest amongst serfs made it necessary - 300 separate uprisings between 1843 and 1853. Tsar Alexander II had NOT freed those who had fought in the Crimean War - holding back for more radical action - but, this led to further unrest.

ARGUMENTS FOR EMANCIPATION

c1855



300



EMANCIPATION PROCESS

- 1857, Alexander puts Prince Alexei Orlov in charge of a secret committee tasked with bringing about emancipation.
- The committee was made up primarily of conservatives.
- Alexander's motives for choosing Orlov and conservatives?
- For the first six months the committee simply '*gazed at the beast which it was shown?*'
- Frustrated with lack of progress Alexander brought in brother, Constantine a 'vocal pro abolitionist.' Waller.
- By 1858, Alexander began to **openly** invite provincial committees to draw up records of peasant holding. (stock take!)

SOURCE A



'Time is short. If the serfs are not free in six months we are in for a holocaust. Everything is ripe for it. Only one criminal hand is needed to fan the flames of rebellion and we shall all be consumed by the blaze.'

Leo Tolstoy - Russian novelist, 1856. (War and Peace)

He was an aristocrat and landowner, aged 28 in 1856.

+ Make note - the best line of "evidence" from the source?

+ Identify - values and limitations of the source. COPS

SOURCE B

'The matter of consideration of the liberation of the serfs which has been submitted to the State Council. I consider to be a vital question for Russia, upon which will depend the development of her strengthened power. I am sure that all of you, gentlemen, are just as convinced as I am of the benefits and necessity of this measure. I have another conviction, which is that this matter cannot be postponed, therefore I demand that the State Council finish with it in the first half of February so that it can be announced before the start of work in the fields. I repeat - and this is my absolute will - that this matter will be finished with right away.'

Declaration made by Tsar Alexander II in 1860.

- + What reasons are given for emancipation? Explicit v implicit?
- + Make note - the best line of "evidence" from the source?
- + Identify - values and limitations of the source.

THE EMANCIPATION EDICT, 1861

19th February, 1861

An anti-climax ... ?

The Edict was read out in churches all over Russia. It had been written by Bishop Flaret. The wording was so vague and legalistic that many serfs did not understand what it actually meant. It was also not due to come into force until the 5th of March. Only applied to privately owned serfs (state serfs would be in 1866). Emancipation would take place in a three stage process.

28th February, 1861

To the landowners ...

"I hope gentleman, that when you have examined the projects put before you, you will be convinced that everything that was possible to do to protect the interests of the landowners has been done."

Tsar Alexander II.

The Great Liberator?

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DIARY OF AN EDUCATED A SERF - 1861

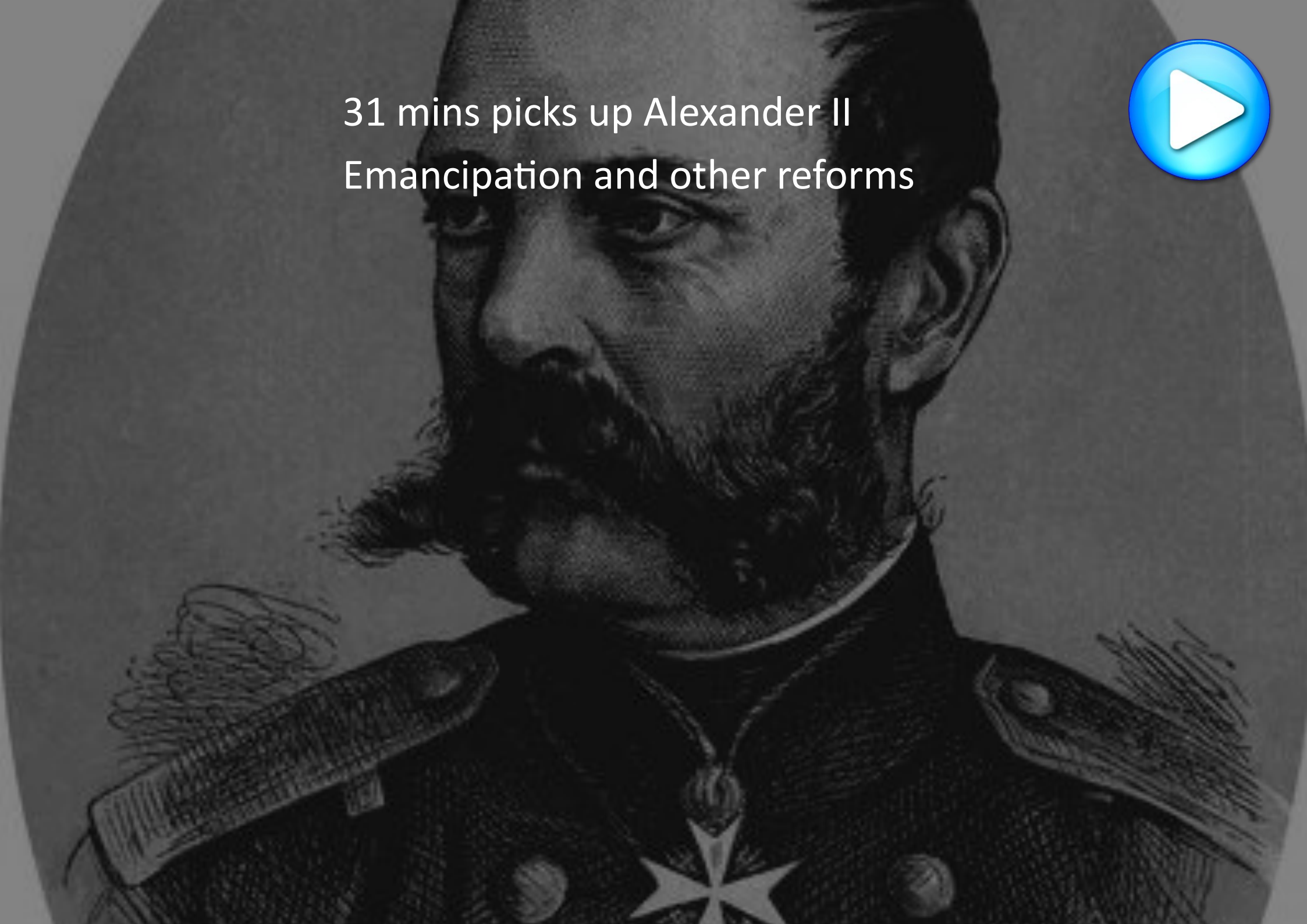
Sunday 5th March, 1861

"A great day: the manifesto on the freedom of the peasants. They brought it to me around noon. With an inexpressible feeling of joy. I read through this precious act, the likes of which has surely not been seen in a thousand year history of the Russian people. I read it aloud to my wife and children and one of my friends in the study before the portrait of Alexander II at whom we all gazed with deep reverence and gratitude. I tried to explain to my 10 year old son as simply as I could the meaning of the manifesto, and I instructed him to enshrine forever in his heart, the fifth of March, and the name Alexander II, the Liberator."


Alexander Nikitenko reports his reaction to the edict in his diary.

+ Identify - values and limitations of the source. COPS

31 mins picks up Alexander II
Emancipation and other reforms



Alexander II - Military Reforms and Modernisation

 **Understand** - how Alexander and Dimitri Milyutin modernised the military and to with what success.

THE BIG PICTURE

Crimean War 1853 - 1856. Some of the issues raised by Russia's defeat to Turkey, **Piedmont**, Britain and France.

Problem

Low morale - cruel punishment such as flogging and running the gauntlet. Military service used as a punishment by civil courts. Length of service was 25 years. Burden of military service fell upon the poorest.

1

Solve it

Problem

Calibre of Army - Officers only from the nobility. Notion of a bygone era, for example preferring to fight with bayonets rather than modern rifles as they believed long range combat was cowardly. Peasantry illiterate - alcoholism.

2

Solve it

Problem

Conscription - Only sons (main breadwinners) - exempted from conscription as to were the landowning / nobility.

3

Solve it

Problem

Economic cost of army = in 1848, 45% of total government spending on the military. Russian army was large but disorganised. Logistically hard to manage and mobilise during times of war.

4

Solve it

Problem

Weaponry = outdated and insufficient rifles - Prussian Army was the model at the time. Navy lagged behind western counterparts -

5

Solve it



General Dmitri Milyutin

Russian Minister for War


(1861 - 81)

Extension - find out more.

What is the CORE problem and what needs to change?

Alexander II - Military Reforms and Modernisation



 **Understand** - how Alexander and Dimitri Milyutin modernised the military and to with what success - pg 52 - 55

General Dmitri Milyutin - Reforms

Abolished cruel punishments and banned military services as a civil punishment.

Reforms made to military courts and new code for soldiers and officers conduct introduced.

1868 - length of conscription was reduced to 10 years + 5 years in the reserves.

Introduced the Office of Chief of Staff and reorganised the army into 15 military districts.

Created military cadet schools that specialised in - cavalry + infantry.

Military colleges accepted non - nobles.

The Conscription Act - 1874

Nobility no longer exempt from military services - all males now eligible at 20.

Full term of service was increased (from 1868) to 15 years but only 6 years in active service.

Only sons or sole breadwinners (still exempt) BUT all others drawn from a lottery in regions to fill a quota .

25% of men aged 20 to serve each year.

Those with more education - service was reduced E.g.- university graduates = 6 months service - Secondary = 3 years.

Results - achievements

A fairer system - and '*a new spirit of professionalism*' - Waller.

Considerably reduced spending + smaller more efficient army.

Core of well trained soldiers in every province = government reassurance and preparedness for internal and external threats.

Improved literacy in country - peasants sent kids to school in order to reduce their service. Generally better - more educated soldiers.

Results - limitations

Opposition from nobles - 'uppers' at being made to rub shoulders with the peasant classes - e.g. - Prince Baryatinsky.

Illiterate population / peasantry still widespread.

Wealthier found ways to avoid - buying a proxy - Hunger Games!

Officers still mainly from aristocracy - still pig headed views.

'Russia did not keep pace with the West' - equipment or navy.

Alexander II - Military Reforms and Modernisation



Understand - how Alexander and Dimitri Milyutin modernised the military and to with what success - pg 52 - 55

General Dmitri Milyutin - Reforms

The Conscription Act - 1874

Results - achievements

Results - limitations