

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ P. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Source Work: Causes of the 1905 Russian Revolution**

#### **Source A: Letter from Count Serge Witte, finance minister to Nicolas II (1899)**

“My dearest czar .....Our great nation of Russia has been falling behind the industrialized nations of western Europe. We are viewed as a backwards nation whose people are tied to the land. Now that we have emancipated the serfs, it is time to build up our industry! Since many of these poor dirty peasants cannot afford to purchase land from the nobles they will be able to move into the cities and help build our industry! Fortunately our nation has vast natural resources which will enable us to industrialize. Work has already begun on building the Trans-Siberian Railroad, which will connect our iron and coal mines with factories and transport goods throughout Russia. The other members of your government and Russian business leaders are in favor of our decision to build up our industry, BUT the peasants and nobles are not. They fear change, and worry that these new ways of life will not benefit them. Regardless of their feelings, our nation must continue to build our Russian industry.”

#### **Source B: ‘The Life of the Cotton Workers’**

“The normal working day is eleven and a half hours of work...But...manufacturers [the factory owners] have received [government] permission to allow overtime so that the average day is 14 or 15 hours. I have often watched the crowds of poorly clad and emaciated [very thin] figures of men and girls returning from the mills...Their grey faces seem dead,...Badly clad [dressed] and underfed, waiting in the terrible frosty mornings of the St Petersburg winter, they present a sight that makes one shudder”.

#### **Source C: Report on workers’ living conditions from Moscow Local Council, 1902**

The apartment has a terrible appearance, the plaster is crumbling, there are holes in the walls, stopped up with rags. It is dirty. The stove has collapsed. There are masses of cockroaches and bugs...No double window frames and so it is piercingly cold. The lavatory is so dilapidated [old and damaged] that it is dangerous to enter and children are not allowed in. All apartments in the house are similar”.

#### **Source D: Union organizer Josef Stalin wrote in 1901**

“Wages are being reduced and bonuses are being taken away. Hours of work are being extended. Workers who make trouble are blacklisted [their names would be listed as unsuitable employees]. The system of fines and beating up is in full swing”.

### **Source E: Explanation of the Russo-Japanese War**

By the end of 1904 the situation in Russia was very tense. A series of bad harvests brought famine to the peasants and high prices and food shortages to the cities. A slow down in industrial growth caused high unemployment for workers. There were strikes and peasant riots across the country. In February 1904 war broke out with Japan. Russia and Japan were in a dispute over territory and trade in Korea. The Tsar believed that the Russian military could easily defeat an Asian nation. To his humiliation Japan inflicted one crushing military defeat after another. After defeat on land, Russia was further humiliated at sea. 20 Russian ships were sunk and another 5 were captured. The Japanese only lost three torpedo boats. Japanese casualties were approximately 600 compared to the approximately 6000 Russians killed. The government sank even further in the eyes of the people. The Tsar was eventually forced to accept the humiliating Treaty to bring the war to an end.

### **Source F: Explanation of Bloody Sunday (January 22, 1905)**

News of the military disasters in the Russo-Japanese war coupled with horrible economic and social conditions led to a massive protest against Nicholas II. Workers went on strike and protestors marched in the streets demanding better wages and short working hours. Liberals also protested, calling for a constitution and a new government. On January 22, 1905, a young Orthodox priest, Father George Gapon, led a large procession of workers (men, women, & children, all unarmed) to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. As they peacefully marched, they chanted prayers and brought a petition for justice and freedom to Nicolas (meanwhile, Czar Nicolas had fled the palace because he feared the peaceful protestors). When the procession of workers reached the Winter Palace it was attacked by the police. Over 100 workers were killed and some 300 wounded. The incident, known as Bloody Sunday, killed the people's faith and trust in the czar and signaled the start of the 1905 Revolution.

### **Source G: Witness to Bloody Sunday**

"At this moment a sharp word of command is heard and the victims fall en masse. There had been no disturbances to speak of. The whole crowd is unarmed and has not uttered a single threat. As I proceeded, there were everywhere troops and Cossacks. Successive discharges of musketry shoot down on all sides the terrorized mob. The soldiers aim at the people's heads and the victims are frightfully disfigured. A woman falls almost at my side. A little farther on I slip on a piece of human brain. Before me is a child of eight years whose face is no longer human. Its mother is kneeling in tears over its corpse. The wounded, as they drag themselves along, leave streams of blood on the snow."

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**Questions:**

Read **Source A:**

1. Why is Russia trying to build their industry?
2. How will Russia build their industry?
3. Why were certain people against industrializing?

Read **Source B, C, & D:**

4. Identify at least **four** problems that workers faced.
5. What changes might workers begin to demand?

Read **Source E:**

6. What affect did this war have on Russian Morale?
7. How might this war change the way Russian people feel about the Czar?

Read **Source F & G:**

8. What were workers protesting?
9. What effect did this event have?