

CHAPTER 27

Russia and Japan: Industrialization Outside the West

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Russia and Japan defied the pattern of 19th-century European domination. By 1914, they launched significant industrialization and accomplished other changes that preserved their independence. Both achieved economic autonomy and were able to join in the imperialist scramble. There were differences between the two. Japan displayed more political flexibility than did Russia. Change in Russia increased internal strains and led to revolution. Japan, through its reforms, pulled away from the rest of east Asia; Russia continued expanding its influence in eastern Europe and central Asia. Among the characteristics common to the two nations in their maintenance of independence was their prior experience of cultural imitation: Japan from China, and Russia from Byzantium and the West. They were able to learn without destroying their own cultures. Both also had improved their political effectiveness during the 17th and 18th centuries, a situation allowing the state to sponsor change.

Russia's Reforms and Industrial Advance. Russia moved into an active period of social and political reform in 1861 that established the base for industrialization by the 1890s. Immense social strain resulted as the government attempted to remain autocratic.

Russia before Reform. The French Revolution and Napoleon's invasion of 1812 produced a backlash in Russia against Westernization. Conservative intellectuals embraced the turn to isolation as a way of vaunting Russian values and institutions, including serfdom. Some intellectuals remained fascinated with Western developments in politics, science, and culture. When Western-oriented army officers fomented the Decembrist revolt of 1825, Tsar Nicholas I repressed opposition. As a consequence, Russia escaped the European revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Russia continued its territorial expansion. The Congress of Vienna confirmed its hold over Poland; Polish nationalist revolts during the 1830s were brutally suppressed. Pressure on the Ottoman Empire continued, and Russia supported dissidents in Greece and Serbia.

Economic and Social Problems: The Peasant Question. In economic terms, Russia fell behind the West because it failed to industrialize. Landlords increased exports of grain by tightening labor obligations on serfs. Russia remained a profoundly agricultural society dependent on unfree labor. The significance of the failure to industrialize was demonstrated by the Crimean War (1854-1856). Britain and France came to the support of the Ottomans and defeated the Russians because of their industrial economies. Tsar Alexander II was convinced that reforms were necessary, and that meant resolving the issue of serfdom. Many individuals believed that a free labor force would produce higher agricultural profits; others wished to end abuses or to end periodic peasant risings. Reform was seen as a way to protect distinctive Russian institutions, not to copy the West.

The Reform Era and Early Industrialization. The serfs were emancipated in 1861; they received land but did not gain any political freedoms. They were tied to their villages until they paid for the lands they had received. The payments, and increasing taxation, kept most peasants very poor. The emancipation created a larger urban labor force, but it did not spur agricultural productivity. Peasants continued to use old methods on their small holdings. Peasant risings persisted because of the enduring harsh conditions that were exacerbated by population growth.

Reform had not gone far enough. Other efforts followed. In the 1860s and 1870s, Alexander II improved law codes and created local political councils (zemstvoes) with authority over regional matters. The councils gave political experience to middle-class people, but they had no influence on national policy. Military reform included officer promotion through merit and increased recruitment. There was limited extension of the education system. During this era, literacy increased rapidly and a market for popular reading matter developed. Some women gained access to higher education and to the professions. In family organization, Russia followed earlier European trends. A move to industrialization was part of the process of change. State support was vital, since Russia lacked a middle class and capital. A railway system was created in the 1870s; it reached the Pacific in the 1880s. The railways stimulated the iron and coal sectors, as well as the export of grain to the West. They also opened Siberia to development and increased Russian involvement in Asia. Factories appeared in Russian and Polish cities by the 1880s, and the government quickly acted to protect them from foreign competition. Under Count Witte, from 1892 to 1903, the government passed high tariffs, improved the banking system, and encouraged Western investment. By 1900, about half of industry was foreign-owned. Russia became a debtor nation, but the industries did not produce economic autonomy. Even though by 1900 some Russian industries were challenging world leaders, the Russian industrial revolution was in its early stages. Its world rank was due to its great size and rich resources, not its technology or trained workforce. Despite all the reform, Russia remained a traditional peasant society that had not experienced the attitudinal change occurring with Western industrialization.

Protest and Revolution in Russia. Unrest accompanied transformation by the 1880s and Russia became a very unstable society.

The Road to Revolution. Alexander II's reforms and economic change encouraged minority nationality demands in the empire. Cultural nationalism led to political demands and worried the state. Social protest was heightened by the limitations of reform and by industrialization. Peasants suffered from famine, redemption payments, taxes, and population pressure. Educated Russians also were dissatisfied. Business people and professionals sought more personal freedom and fuller political rights; the intelligentsia wanted radical political change and deep social reform while preserving a distinct Russian culture. Some of the intellectuals became anarchists who hoped to triumph by winning peasant support. When peasants were not interested, some turned to terrorism. The government reaction was to pull back from reform, introduce censorship, and exile dissidents to Siberia. Alexander II was assassinated in 1881; his successors opposed reform and continued political, religious, and ethnic repression. By the 1890s, new protest currents appeared. Marxist socialism spread among the intelligentsia. Lenin attempted to make Marxism fit Russian conditions and organized disciplined cells to work for the expected revolution. At the same time, working-class unrest in the cities showed through union formation and strikes—both illegal—to compensate for lack of political outlets.

The Revolution of 1905. Russia had continued imperialist expansion through the 19th and into the 20th century. Gains were made against the Ottomans in the 1870s. New Slavic nations, Serbia and Bulgaria, were created, and conservatives talked of Russian leadership of a pan-Slavic movement. In the Middle East and central Asia, Russia was active in Persia and Afghanistan. In China, the Russians moved into Manchuria and gained long-term leases to territory. Russia encountered the similarly expanding Japanese and was defeated in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. The loss unleashed protests in Russia. Urban workers and peasants joined liberal groups in the Revolution of 1905. The government bowed and created a national parliament, the Duma. Minister Stolypin introduced important peasant reforms: greater freedom

from redemption payments and liberal purchase and sale of land. He aimed to create a market-oriented peasantry divided from the rest of the peasant mass. Some entrepreneurs among the peasants—kulaks—did increase production. But the reform package quickly fell apart as the tsar withdrew rights, took authority away from the Duma, and resumed police repression.

Russia and Eastern Europe. After the loss to Japan, Russian foreign activities returned to the Ottoman Empire and eastern Europe. Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, some nations recently gaining independence from the Ottomans, established parliaments elected by carefully restricted voters. Kings ruled without much check. Most nations abolished serfdom, but landlord power remained extensive and peasant unrest continued. In economic organization, industrialization was minimal; these nations remained agricultural exporters dependent on Western markets. In the midst of their many problems, eastern Europeans enjoyed, during the late 19th century, a period of cultural productivity that helped to enhance their sense of national heritage. Russian novelists, such as Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy, gained world fame. In music, composers moved from the brilliant romanticism of Tchaikovsky to innovative atonal styles. Eastern European composers, such as Chopin and Liszt, produced important works. In science, the Czech Mendel advanced the study of genetics and the Russian Pavlov contributed in physiology.

Japan: Transformation without Revolution. Japan's response to outside pressure was more direct and successful than that of Russia. The Japanese adapted to the challenge of industrial change and internal market reform. Many institutions had to be altered and much societal change resulted.

The Final Decades of the Shogunate. During the first half of the 19th century, the shogunate continued to combine a central bureaucracy with semi-feudal alliances between regional daimyos and samurai. The government encountered financial problems because taxation was based on agriculture, while the economy was becoming more commercialized. Reform spurts met revenue gaps until the 1840s, when an unsuccessful effort weakened the government and hampered responses to Western pressure. Japanese intellectual and cultural life continued to expand under the Tokugawa. Neo-Confucianism kept its hold among the elite at the expense of Buddhism. The upper classes became more secular, with variety among Confucian schools preventing the intellectual sterility common in China. Education expanded beyond the upper classes and led to the highest literacy rate outside of the West. Even though Confucianism was dominant, there were many intellectual rivals. A national studies group venerated Japanese traditions, including the position of the emperor and Shinto religion. Another group pursued Dutch studies or an interest in Western scientific progress. The Japanese economy continued to develop as internal commerce expanded and manufacturing spread into the countryside. By the 1850s, economic growth was slowing as technological limitations hindered agricultural growth and population increase. Rural riots reflected peasant distress and helped to weaken the shogunate.

The Challenge to Isolation. In 1853, an American naval squadron commanded by Matthew Perry forced the opening of Japan to the West. Later negotiations won the right to station a consul and open ports for commerce. European nations quickly secured equal rights. The shogunate bureaucrats had yielded to Western naval superiority; other Japanese favored the ending of isolation. They were opposed by conservative daimyos. All sides appealed to the emperor. The shogunate had depended on the policy of isolation and proved unable to withstand the stresses caused by foreign intervention. Internal disorder resulted in the 1860s and ended in

1868 with the defeat of the shogunate and the proclamation of rule by Emperor Mutsuhito, called Meiji.

In Depth: The Separate Paths of Japan and China. Japan and China, despite both being part of the same civilization orbit, responded very differently to Western pressures. Both nations had chosen isolation from outside influences from about 1600 to the middle of the 19th century, and thus fell behind the West. China had the capability to react to the challenge, but did not act. Japan, with knowledge of the benefits of imitation, acted differently. Japan's limited population pressure, in contrast to Chinese population growth, also assisted its response. In political affairs, China, by the middle of the 19th century, was suffering a dynastic crisis; Japan maintained political and economic vigor. In the late 19th century, the east Asian world split apart. Japan became the stronger of the two nations.

Industrial and Political Change in the Meiji State. The Meiji government abolished feudalism; the daimyos were replaced by nationally appointed prefects in 1871. The new centralized administration expanded state power to carry out economic and social change. Samurai officials were sent to Europe and the United States to study their economies, technologies, and political systems. Between 1873 and 1876, the government abolished the samurai class and its state stipends. Most samurai became impoverished, and revolt resulted in 1877. The reformed army, based on national conscription, quickly triumphed. Samurai continued to exist; many sought opportunities in commerce and politics. By 1889, the political reconstruction was complete. Political parties had formed on regional levels. The Meiji created a new conservative nobility from former nobles and Meiji leaders; they sat in a British-style House of Peers. The bureaucracy was reorganized, expanded, and opened to those taking civil service examinations. The constitution of 1889 gave major authority to the emperor and lesser power to the lower house of the Diet. High property qualifications limited the right to vote to about 5 percent of the male population. The system gave power to an oligarchy of wealthy businessmen and former nobles that controlled political currents into the 20th century. Japan had imitated the West but retained its own identity.

Japan's Industrial Revolution. Japan's reorganization went beyond political life. A Western-style army and navy were created. New banks were established to fund trade and provide investment capital. Railways and steam vessels improved national communications. Many old restrictions on commerce, such as guilds and internal tariffs, were removed. Land reform cleared the way for individual ownership and stimulated production. Government initiative dominated manufacturing because of lack of capital and unfamiliar technology. A ministry of industry was created in 1870 to establish overall economic policy and operate certain industries. Model factories were created to provide industrial experience, and an expanded education system offered technical training. Private enterprise was involved in the growing economy, especially in textiles. Entrepreneurs came from all social ranks. By the 1890s, huge industrial combines (zaibatsu) had been formed. Thus, by 1900, Japan was fully engaged in an industrial revolution. Its success in managing foreign influences was a major accomplishment, but Japan before World War I was still behind the West. It depended on Western imports—of equipment and coal—and on world economic conditions. Successful exports required inexpensive labor and poorly paid women. Labor organization efforts were repressed.

Social and Diplomatic Effects of Industrialization. Industrialization and other changes went along with a massive population increase that supplied cheap labor but strained resources and stability. In the cultural sphere, the government introduced a universal education system

stressing science, technology, and loyalty to the nation. The scientific approach enhanced the earlier secular bent of elite culture. Western fashions in dress and personal care were adopted, along with the calendar and metric system. Christianity, however, gained few converts. In family life, the birth rate dropped as population growth forced movement from the land and factory labor made children less useful. Family instability showed in a high divorce rate. The traditional view of the inferiority of women in the household continued; formality of manners and diet were maintained. Shintoism found new believers. The changes in Japan's economic power influenced foreign policy. By the 1890s, they joined the imperialist nations. The change gave displaced samurai a role and provided nationalist stimulation for the populace. Japan's need for raw materials helped pressure expansion. China and Japan fought over Korea in 1894-1895; Japan's quick victory demonstrated the presence of a new Asian power. A 1902 alliance with Britain made it an equal partner in the great power diplomatic system. Rivalry with Russia brought war in 1904 and another Japanese victory. Korea was annexed in 1910.

The Strain of Modernization. Japanese success had its costs, among them poor living standards in crowded cities and arguments between generations over Westernization. The emergence of political parties caused disputes with the emperor and his ministers, leading to frequent elections and political assassinations. Many intellectuals worried about the loss of identity in a changing world; others were concerned at lack of economic opportunities for the enlarged educated class. To counter the malaise, officials urged loyalty to the emperor as a center of national identity. Japanese nationalism built on traditions of superiority and cohesion, deference to rulers, and the tensions from change. Its strength was a main factor in preventing the revolutions occurring in other industrializing nations. No other nation outside the West matched Japan's achievements.

Global Connections: Russia and Japan in the World. The rise of Japan and Russia changed the world diplomatic picture by the early 20th century. Japan was not yet a major world power, but Westerners thought about a "Yellow Peril" as they watched its new strength.

KEY TERMS

Holy Alliance: Alliance among Russia, Prussia, and Austria in defense of the established order; formed by the most conservative monarchies of Europe during the Congress of Vienna.

Decembrist uprising: Unsuccessful 1825 political revolt in Russia by mid-level army officers advocating reforms.

Crimean War (1854 -1856): Began with a Russian attack on the Ottoman Empire; France and Britain joined on the Ottoman side; resulted in a Russian defeat because of Western industrial might; led to Russian reforms under Alexander II.

Emancipation of the serfs: Alexander II in 1861 ended serfdom in Russia; serfs did not obtain political rights and had to pay the aristocracy for lands gained.

Zemstvoes: Local political councils created as part of Alexander II's reforms; gave the middle class professional experience in government but did not influence national policy.

Trans-Siberian railroad: Constructed during the 1870s and 1880s to connect European Russia with the Pacific; increased the Russian role in Asia.

Count Sergei Witte: Russian minister of finance (1892-1903); economic modernizer responsible for high tariffs, improved banking system; encouraged Western investment in industry.

Intelligentsia: Russian term for articulate intellectuals as a class; desired radical change in the Russian political and economic systems; wished to maintain a Russian culture distinct from that of the West.

Anarchists: Political groups that thought the abolition of formal government was a first step to creating a better society; became important in Russia and was the modern world's first large terrorist movement.

Lenin: Russian Marxist leader; insisted on the importance of disciplined revolutionary cells.

Bolsheviks: Literally "majority" party, but actually a political group backed by a minority of the population; the most radical branch of the Russian Marxist movement; led by Lenin.

Russian Revolution of 1905: Defeat by Japan resulted in strikes by urban workers and insurrections among the peasantry; resulted in temporary reforms.

Duma: Russian national assembly created as one of the reforms after the Revolution of 1905; progressively stripped of power during the reign of Nicholas II.

Stolypin reforms: Russian minister who introduced reforms intended to placate the peasantry after the Revolution of 1905; included reduction of land redemption payments and an attempt to create a market-oriented peasantry.

Kulaks: Agricultural entrepreneurs who used the Stolypin reforms to buy more land and increase production.

Terakoya: Commoner schools founded during the Tokugawa shogunate to teach reading, writing, and Confucian rudiments; by the middle of the 19th century resulted in the highest literacy rate outside of the West.

Dutch studies: Studies of Western science and technology beginning during the 18th century; based on texts available at the Dutch Nagasaki trading center.

Matthew Perry: American naval officer; in 1853 insisted under threat of bombardment on the opening of ports to American trade.

Meiji restoration: Power of the emperor restored with Emperor Mutsuhito in 1868; took name of Meiji, the Enlightened One; ended shogunate and began a reform period.

Diet: Japanese parliament established as part of the constitution of 1889; able to advise government but not control it.