Chapter 32

Russia and Japan: Industrialization Outside the West

OUTLINE

I. Introduction

Russia and Japan managed to avoid Western dominance and industrialize to achieve economic autonomy. Japan proved to be the most flexible politically, whereas the strain of industrialization produced a series of revolutions in Russia. As late industrializers, however, there were substantial similarities between Russia and Japan. Both nations had prior experience with cultural imitation: Japan from China, Russia from Byzantium and the West. Both had achieved more effective central governments during the 17th and 18th centuries. As both countries industrialized, they came into conflict over territorial ambitions in Asia.

II. Russia’s Reforms and Industrial Advance

A. Introduction

Russia moved into active reform after 1861 and provided the foundation for industrialization.

B. Russia Before Reform

Russian leaders in the 18th century sought to isolate Russia from the waves of western European revolution. The Napoleonic invasions of 1812 completed the shift toward conservatism. There was some liberal rhetoric, but tsars favored conservatism. Tsar Alexander I sponsored the Holy Alliance, which linked conservative monarchies together in defense of the status quo. Russian intellectuals remained connected to western European trends, a connection that worried the elite. After the Decembrist uprising, in which Western-oriented military officers attempted a coup, Tsar Nicholas I turned to more repressive conservatism. Conservatism, plus the lack of substantial middle or artisan classes, helped Russia avoid the wave of mid-19th century revolutions. The tsar suppressed Polish nationalism in 1831 and pressed southward against the Ottoman Empire. Russia supported nationalist movements in the Balkans as a means of weakening the Turks.

C. Economic and Social Problems: The Peasant Question

Russia’s economy remained primarily agrarian and fell behind the West in terms of production and trade. To maintain the profitability of grain exports, tighter labor obligations were imposed on the peasantry. The Crimean War, 1854-1856, demonstrated how far Russia had fallen behind the West. British and French forces drove the Russians from the Crimea. The loss convinced Tsar Alexander II that reform was badly needed. In order to establish a more vigorous economy, some attempt had to be made to resolve the peasant crisis. A freer labor force, it was believed, could increase profitability. Western criticism of Russian social
injustice also stung Russian sensibilities. A series of minor peasant rebellions in the 1850s also stimulated the movement for reform.

D. The Reform Era and Early Industrialization

Tsar Alexander II emancipated the serfs in 1861. The freed serfs got most of the land, but the aristocracy retained essential political and economic power. Serfs remained tied to their villages until they could pay for the land they received. High redemption payments and state taxation kept most peasants in an abject state of poverty. The emancipation produced a larger urban labor force but failed to stimulate agricultural production. The slow pace of change engendered social dissatisfaction and regional peasant uprisings. In addition to freeing the serfs, Alexander II carried out other reforms. The tsar issued new law codes; established regional councils, or zemstvos, for input on local decision-making; and began military reforms. Literacy spread more widely in Russian society with the development of a mass market in popular literary forms. Women gained power slightly through greater access to education and somewhat loosened patriarchal authority. Industrialization was part of the pattern of change in reformed Russia. Lacking a substantial middle class, the state played a critical role in capital formation and investment. Russia created a substantial railroad network in the 1870s. Better transportation permitted more efficient use of Russia’s abundant natural resources. The railroad also facilitated shipment of grain to the West, which in turn helped finance industrialization. By the 1880s, modern factories had begun to develop in major Russian cities. Count Sergei Witte, the Russian minister of finance from 1892 to 1903, enacted high tariffs to protect the new industries. Witte also encouraged Western investment in Russian industrialization. As a result, nearly one half of Russia’s industrial businesses were foreign-owned. By 1900, Russia ranked fourth in steel production and second in petroleum production. Russian factories were typically enormous but technologically inferior. Agriculture also lagged behind Western standards of productivity. The masses of Russian citizens were only slightly affected by industrialization. Military reforms did not substantially alter the concept of peasant conscripts serving aristocratic landlords. Nor did Russian industrialization produce a substantial middle class.

III. Protest and Revolution in Russia

A. Introduction

During and after the 1880s, Russia became politically and socially unstable.

B. The Road to Revolution

Ethnic minorities in Russia began to agitate for national recognition after the 1860s. Recurrent famines produced peasant unrest. At the same time two strands of intellectual protest began. Business and professional people sought further liberal reforms, while a more radical intelligentsia demanded revolution. Intellectual radicalism shaded off into terrorism and anarchism as a means of fundamentally restructuring Russian society. Initially, Russian radicals sought to spread their message among the peasants but they found the masses unreceptive. Given the lack of popular support, anarchists fell back on political assassination as a tool to unseat the government. Terrorism convinced the tsarist government to pull back from reform. When Alexander II was assassinated in 1881, his successors imposed repressive policies to dampen unrest. In the 1890s, intellectuals picked up Marxism from the West as a means of organizing the revolution. Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, known as Lenin, introduced innovations in Marxist theory to accommodate the social theory to the Russian situation.
Lenin’s organization called for small disciplined cells of Marxists to organize the revolution. Lenin’s approach was accepted by the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Marxists. Radicalism spread rapidly among urban workers, who formed unions and engaged in strikes. Marxism was one of several doctrines that spread among the labor force. An intransigent government faced with mass protests in the cities and the countryside produced a situation that could not be adjusted by reform.

C. The Revolution of 1905

Russian military expansion came to an end in the first decade of the 20th century. Japan and Russia came into conflict over both nations’ plans for expansion in northern China. To the surprise of almost all observers, the Japanese quickly defeated Russian forces in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. Military defeat unleashed all of the dissenting forces in Russia. In the Russian Revolution of 1905, urban workers produced widespread strikes, while peasants erupted across Russia. After repression failed, the tsar’s government offered reforms. The duma, or national parliament, was created. The Stolypin reforms offered lighter redemption burdens to the peasantry and a place in village councils. In response, peasant rebellions did die out, and some peasants began to accumulate substantial parcels of land. The reforms were rapidly undone. Tsar Nicholas II withdrew concessions to workers, setting off new rounds of strikes. The duma rapidly became a political nonentity. Forced to seek new arenas for military expansion after the door to Asia was closed, Russia fomented rebellion among the Slavic kingdoms of the Balkans.

D. Russia and Eastern Europe

Many of the new nations emerging in the Balkans replicated Russian patterns of political autocracy, although many did establish parliaments. Most eastern European nations abolished serfdom in 1848 or shortly thereafter. Industrialization was less thorough in the nations of eastern Europe, and landlords continued to wield the majority of economic and political power. The Slavic nations enjoyed an era of great cultural productivity during the 19th century.

IV. Japan: Transformation Without Revolution

A. Introduction

Faced with European and American demands for more open trade, Japan underwent industrialization. Transformation in Japan was in some ways less difficult, but industrialization produced strains.

B. The Final Decades of the Shogunate

In the first half of the 19th century, the Tokugawa shogunate continued to combine a central bureaucracy with alliances with feudal magnates in the countryside. The government was chronically short of funds due to limited income from taxes on the agrarian economy and payments made to feudal lords for their loyalty. Shortages of income led to reform movements, which weakened the shogunate and made it vulnerable to external threats. Despite the ongoing deterioration of strength, the political alliance between the bureaucracy and the samurai worked well. The growth of neo-Confucianism made Japanese life more secular and precluded a religious opposition to change. Literacy rates in Japan were much higher than in the West. Several strains of intellectual pursuit developed. The national school
emphasized essentially Japanese culture, while the Dutch Studies school represented Japanese attempts to keep abreast of Western science and technology. The Japanese economy expanded on the basis of commercial growth. Manufacturing began to extend into the countryside, just as proto-industrialization had occurred in the West. Economic growth slowed by the middle of the 19th century, producing some rural protests and further weakening the shogunate.

C. The Challenge to Isolation

In 1853, the American commodore Matthew Perry arrived and demanded that Japan be opened to trade. By 1856, Japan was forced to receive Western consuls and to open ports to foreign trade. Bowing to military pressure, the shogunate faced immediate opposition from the daimyos, who insisted on maintaining isolation. The shogun and the daimyos both made appeals to the emperor, who began to emerge as a more powerful figure. Some among the samurai saw an opportunity to unseat the shogunate. Little changed until the 1860s, when samurai armed themselves with Western weapons and defeated the shogun’s army. In 1868, certain samurai managed to restore imperial rule under Meiji.

D. Industrial and Political Change in the Meiji State

The Meiji government abolished feudalism and replaced the daimyo states with regional prefectures. The government sent samurai abroad to study political institutions and economic organization. Foreign observations were used to restructure the state. In order to improve their fiscal situation, the new government abolished payments to the samurai in return for grants of government bonds. Conscription provided a new army. Some samurai fell into poverty; others found avenues of employment in the government and business. In 1884, the government created a new nobility to staff a House of Peers. Civil-service examinations were utilized to open the bureaucracy to men of talent. The new constitution, issued in 1889, recognized the supremacy of the emperor but gave limited powers to an elected lower house of representatives within the Diet. The new constitution was based on German models. Voting rights were determined by property qualifications, which allowed only five percent of the population to cast ballots. The form of government gave great authority to wealthy businessmen and nobles who could influence the emperor and the Diet. Political parties developed, but a small oligarchy continued to dominate the government into the 20th century. The inclusion of businessmen among the political elite was a major difference from the Russian model of reform.

E. Japan’s Industrial Revolution

The new government imposed military reforms to modernize Japan’s army and established the foundation for industrialization. An internal infrastructure was created, guilds and internal tariffs were abolished and a clear title to land was granted to individuals. Lack of capital dictated direct government involvement in the stages of industrialization. Japan established the Ministry of Industry in 1870 to oversee economic development. The government built model factories to provide experience with new technology. Education was extended as a means of developing a work force. Private enterprise soon joined government initiatives, particularly in textiles. By the 1890s, industrial combines, or zaibatsus, served to accumulate capital for major investment. Japan’s careful management of industrialization limited foreign involvement. Japan continued to depend on the importation of equipment and raw materials from the West. Rapid growth depended on the existence of a cheap supply of labor, often drawn from poorly paid women. More than Russia, Japan’s industrialization depended on
selling manufactured goods abroad.

F. Social and Cultural Effects of Industrialization

Social change led to rapid population growth, which strained Japanese resources but sustained a ready supply of cheap labor. The education system stressed science and loyalty to the emperor. Western culture arrived in Japan along with models of constitutional structure and industrialization. As industrialization progressed, population growth dropped off. Patriarchal households remained the norm, but divorce rates indicated increasing instability within family life. Shintoism, as an expression of indigenous culture, gained new popularity. In foreign policy, the Japanese entered the race for colonial domination. The need to employ the new army, the search for raw materials, and efforts to prevent Western encroachment all contributed to Japanese imperialism after 1890. Japan won easy victories over China in 1895 and over Russia in 1904. The victories yielded Japan some territories in northern China. In 1910, Japan annexed Korea.

G. The Strain of Modernization

Industrialization and successful imperialism had costs for the Japanese. Conservatives were appalled at the trend to imitate the West. The carefully contrived political balance began to become unwieldy. Ministries were forced to call more frequent elections to achieve working majorities in the Diet. Some intellectuals bemoaned the loss of an authentic Japanese identity and the creation of a Japan that was neither traditional nor Western. To combat the malaise, leaders urged loyalty to the emperor and the nation. Nationalism became a strong force in Japanese politics.

V. Global Connections: Russia and Japan in the World

Russia’s already established role in the world expanded in the 19th century, as its cultural, diplomatic, and military power came to be felt in Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and Asia. Japan’s role was newer, as it emerged from isolation to develop an increasingly powerful economy and to expand its influence in the western Pacific. The addition of Russia, Japan, and the United States to the world diplomatic picture increased competition. Some nations in the West feared the yellow peril represented by Japan’s emergence as an international power. Colonial acquisitions by the new powers heightened the competitive atmosphere, particularly in the Far East.
TIMELINE

*Insert the following events into the timeline. This should help you to compare important historical events chronologically.*

Meiji Restoration
Russian emancipation of serfs
end of Crimean War
beginning of Russo-Japanese War
Russian revolution, foundation of Duma
new Japanese constitution established

1856
1861
1868
1889
1904
1905

TERMS, PEOPLE, EVENTS

*The following terms, people, and events are important to your understanding of the chapter. Define each one.*

Congress of Vienna
Alexander I
Crimean War
trans-Siberian railroad
anarchists
Russian revolution of 1905
kulaks
Matthew Perry
zaibatsu
Russo-Japanese War
Holy Alliance
Nicholas I
emancipation of the serfs
Count Sergei Witte
Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov
Duma
terakoya
Meiji Restoration
Sino-Japanese War
Decembrist rising
Alexander II
zemstvoes
intelligentsia
Bolsheviks
Stolypin reforms
Dutch Studies
Diet
yellow peril
MAP EXERCISE

The following exercise is intended to clarify the geophysical environment and the spatial relationships among the important objects and places mentioned in the chapter. Locate the following places on the map.

Japan
Russian boundary with China

Manchuria
Korea

Where did Russian and Japanese imperial ambitions conflict? To what extent were both countries following older traditions of expansion?
MAKING CONNECTIONS

The following questions are intended to emphasize important ideas within the chapter.

1. Compare and contrast Japan and Russia during the period of industrialization.
2. Describe Russian reform and industrialization from 1861 to 1900.
3. What were the forces leading to the revolution in Russia by 1905?
4. Describe Japanese reform and industrialization from 1853 to 1900.
5. What social and economic changes took place in Japan as a result of industrialization?
6. How do the authors define the nature of the world economic and political system by 1914?

PUTTING LARGER CONCEPTS TOGETHER

The following questions test your ability to summarize the major conclusions of the chapter.

1. In what ways did the process of industrialization manifest itself in both Japan and Russia in terms of territorial expansion or colonialism? How was the manifestation different in each country?
2. How did Russia and Japan respond to the pattern of growing Western domination by attempting to reform their own societies? How successful were attempts at reform in each country?
SELF-TEST OF FACTUAL INFORMATION

1. Of the following regions, which defied the common pattern of Western domination in the 19th century?
   a. Russia and Japan
   b. the Ottoman Empire
   c. Latin America
   d. West Africa

2. Which of the following statements concerning Russia’s territorial expansion is NOT accurate?
   a. Russia continued to press for territorial acquisitions in the Ottoman Empire.
   b. No massive acquisitions marked the early 19th century.
   c. Russia supported nationalist movements in the Balkans.
   d. Russia supported nationalist movements in Poland to create a buffer zone between Russia and the West.

3. Which of the following was NOT a consideration in the reform of serfdom?
   a. It was the purpose of the tsar to sweep away the peasant communities on which serfdom depended.
   b. Some aristocrats were convinced that a freer labor system would produce higher profits.
   c. Leaders were stung by Western criticism of the injustices of Russian society.
   d. Peasant uprisings focused on lack of freedom, undue obligations, and lack of land.

4. One of the important results of the establishment of railway systems in Russia was the opening of
   a. the Ukraine.
   b. Poland.
   c. Siberia.
   d. the Crimea.

5. Which of the following was present during the Russian program of industrialization?
   a. attitudinal changes similar to those in the West among workers
   b. a large middle class
   c. rich natural resources
   d. small, but efficient, factories

6. Terrorism was the chief political method used by which of the following groups?
   a. the old believers
   b. anarchists
   c. liberals
   d. Turgenevs
7. Which of the following statements concerning the Tokugawa shogunate in the 19th century is most accurate?

a. The shogunate bureaucracy had been opened to talented commoners.

b. By the 19th century, the Tokugawa were able to dispense with the feudal organization of earlier Japan.

c. Increasingly, the shogunate depended on its long-standing alliances with Western powers to maintain its dominance.

d. The shogunate continued to combine a central bureaucracy with semifeudal alliances of regional daimyos and the samurai.

8. The return of imperial power to Japan in 1868 was accomplished with the proclamation of a new emperor named Mutsuhito but called Meiji or

a. samurai king.

b. Enlightened One.

c. Tokugawa shogunate.

d. daimyo leader.

9. One of the major similarities between Japanese and Russian industrialization was the fact that

a. both lacked natural resources.

b. scarce capital and technological inferiority compelled state direction.

c. neither was able to complete construction of a railway system.

d. neither had any experience of cultural exchange with the West.

10. Which of the following was not an effect of industrialization in Japan?

a. massive population growth

b. universal education

c. the rejection of traditional values

d. a shift in Japanese foreign policy