Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834–1904) was one of the most ardent educational reformers in late 19th-century Japan. Very soon after Japan began to have greater contact with the West, he concluded that Japan needed to change. He began to travel to the United States and Europe as early as 1860. He was not uncritical—he did not like the outspokenness of Western women or divisive debates in parliaments. But he firmly believed that, in key respects, Western education surpassed Japanese. As he put it in his autobiography, in 1899: “When I compare the two . . . as to wealth, armament, and the greatest happiness for the greatest number, I have to put the Orient below the Occident” (Figure 28.1).

The problem in Japanese education, according to Fukuzawa, was Confucianism. The Confucian tradition, he believed, undervalued science and mathematics. It also suffered from a "lack of the idea of independence." Although independence was hard to define, Fukuzawa argued that it was essential if "mankind [was] to thrive" and if Japan was to "assert herself among the great nations of the world:"

Japanese conservatives were deeply offended by this enthusiasm for Western education. Fukuzawa, a member of the elite and family friend of key conservatives, was sensitive to their criticism. In a letter to one observer, he seemed to back down. He talked of his commitment to "the teaching of filial piety and brotherly harmony." He said he worried that he was not being faithful to the memory of his own parents (who had been Confucianists). He admitted that he jumped into "Western studies" at a young age and did not know as much as he should about Confucianism. He even argued that (by the late 1870s) the traditions had reconciled: "Western and Confucian teachings have now grown into one, and no contradiction is seen."

Fukuzawa's dilemma was a common one for reformers: trying to prompt real change in a Western direction without unduly offending traditionalists and without wanting to become fully Western. Russian reformers, although different from the Japanese, faced similar problems, and handled them less successfully. Fukuzawa himself bent but did not break in his reformist zeal. In his autobiography he returned to defiance: "Again and again I had to rise up and denounce the all-important Chinese influence" even though "it was not altogether a safe road for my reckless spirit to follow:"

This chapter deals with two important nations that defied the common pattern of growing Western domination during the 19th century. By 1900 Russia and Japan had managed to launch significant programs of industrialization and to make other changes designed to strengthen their political and social systems. Russia and Japan differed from the pattern of halting reforms characteristic of China and the Middle East in the 19th century. Theirs were the only societies outside the West to begin a wholesale process of industrialization before the 1960s. In the process, Japan pulled away from other Asian societies, while Russia ultimately enhanced its power in world affairs.

Russia and Japan did have some common characteristics, which help explain why both could maintain economic and political independence during the West's century of power. They both had prior experience of imitation: Japan from China, Russia from Byzantium and then the West. They knew that learning from outsiders could be profitable and need not destroy their native cultures. Both had improved their political effectiveness during the 17th and 18th centuries, through the Tokugawa shogunate and the tsarist empire, respectively. Both nations could use the state to sponsor changes that, in the West, had rested in part with private businesses. At the same time, change took distinctive directions in each society. Russia's road to industrialization reflected its authoritarian traditions: It was marked by political repression and harsh conditions for workers that undercut social stability. Meanwhile, Japan's long experience with cultural adaptation in the face of change helped it manage the same transition from a feudal to an industrial society while retaining a great deal of political and social cohesion. Industrialization outside the West complicated economic power relationships, but it also illustrated the growing roles of global capitalism and the new forms of integrating capital and labor.
### RUSSIA’S REFORMS AND INDUSTRIAL ADVANCE

**28.1** How did Russian reforms help spur initial industrialization?

Russian rulers, beginning with Catherine the Great in her later years, sought ways to protect the country from the contagion of the French Revolution. The sense that Western policies might serve as models for Russia faded dramatically. Napoleon’s 1812 invasion of Russia also led to a new concern with defense. Conservative intellectuals supported the move toward renewed isolation. In the eyes of these aristocratic writers, Russia knew the true meaning of community and stability. The system of serfdom provided ignorant peasants with the guidance and protection of paternalistic masters—an inaccurate social analysis but a comforting one.

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**Before 1861, Russia stood out among European powers by the extent of its political conservatism. The nation’s reform period began in 1861 with the emancipation of the serfs. Russian leaders tried to combine change with continued tsarist autocracy.**

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<tr>
<th>1700 C.E.</th>
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<td>1720 End ban on Western books in Japan</td>
<td>1800–1850 Growth of “Dutch Studies” in Japan</td>
<td>1825 December Revolt, Russia</td>
<td>1853 Perry expedition to Edo Bay</td>
<td>1875–1877 Russian–Ottoman War; Russia wins new territory</td>
<td>1902 Loose alliance between Japan and Britain</td>
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<td>1762–1796 Reign of Catherine the Great</td>
<td>1812 Failure of Napoleon’s invasion of Russia</td>
<td>1825–1855 Heightening of repression by Tsar Nicholas I</td>
<td>1854 Follow-up American and British fleet visit</td>
<td>1877 Final samurai rising</td>
<td>1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War; Japan defeats Russia</td>
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<td>1773–1775 Pugachev Rebellion</td>
<td>1815 Russia reacquires Poland through Treaty of Vienna; Alexander I and the Holy Alliance</td>
<td>1829–1878 Serbia gains increasing autonomy in Ottoman empire, then independence</td>
<td>1854–1856 Crimean War</td>
<td>1878 Bulgaria gains independence</td>
<td>1905–1906 Russian Revolution results in peasant reforms and Duma (parliament)</td>
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<td>1772–1795 Partitioning of Poland</td>
<td>1830–1831 Polish nationalist revolt repressed</td>
<td>1856–1868 Civil strife in Russia</td>
<td>1881 Anarchist Revolution results in assassination of Alexander II</td>
<td>1881–1905 Growing repression and attacks on minorities in Russia</td>
<td>1910 Japan annexes Korea</td>
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<td>1861 Greek independence after revolt against Ottomans</td>
<td>1860s–1870s Alexander II reforms</td>
<td>1884–1887 New Russian gains in central Asia</td>
<td>1884–1914 Beginnings of Russian industrialization; near-completion of trans-Siberian railway (full linkage 1916)</td>
<td>1912 Growing party strife in Russian Duma</td>
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<td>1833, 1853 Russian–Ottoman wars</td>
<td>1861 Russian emancipation of serfs</td>
<td>1890 New constitution and legal code</td>
<td>1892–1903 Sergei Witte, Minister of Finance</td>
<td>1912–1918 Balkan Wars</td>
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<td>1841–1843 Brief shogun reform effort</td>
<td>1865–1879 Russian conquests in central Asia</td>
<td>1894–1895 Sino-Japanese War</td>
<td>1898 Formation of Marxist Social Democratic Party, Russia</td>
<td>1914 World War I begins</td>
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<td>1867 Mutuho, emperor of Japan</td>
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<td>1914–1918 Japan seizes former German holdings in Pacific and China</td>
<td>1916–1918 Russian Revolution leads to Bolshevik victory</td>
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<td>1867 Russia sells Alaska to United States</td>
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<td>1868–1912 Meiji period in Japan</td>
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<td>1870 Ministry of Industry established in Japan</td>
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<td>1870–1940 Population growth in Russia</td>
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<td>1872 Universal military service established in Russia</td>
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<td>1872 Education Act, Japan</td>
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664 PART V The Dawn of the Industrial Age, 1750–1900
Russia before Reform

Russia was hardly changeless. To resist Napoleon's pressure early in the 19th century, the government introduced some improvements in bureaucratic training. A new tsar, Alexander I, flirted with liberal rhetoric, but at the Congress of Vienna he sponsored the Holy Alliance idea. In this alliance, the conservative monarchies of Russia, Prussia, and Austria would combine in defense of religion and the established order. The idea of Russia as a bastion of sanity in a Europe gone mad was appealing, although in fact the alliance itself accomplished little.

Defending the status quo produced some important new tensions, however. Many intellectuals remained fascinated with Western progress. Some praised political freedom and educational and scientific advance. Others focused more purely on Western cultural styles. Early in the 19th century, Russia began to contribute creatively to Europe's cultural output. The poet Pushkin, for example, descended from an African slave, used romantic styles to celebrate the beauties of the Russian soul and the tragic dignity of the common people. Because of its compatibility with the use of folklore and a sense of nationalism, the romantic style took deep root in eastern Europe. Russian musical composers would soon make their contributions, again using folk themes and sonorous sentimentality within a Western stylistic context.

While Russia's ruling elite continued to welcome Western artistic styles and took great pride in Russia's growing cultural respectability, they increasingly censored intellectuals who tried to incorporate liberal or radical political values. A revolt of Western-oriented army officers in 1825—the Decembrist uprising—inspired the new tsar, Nicholas I, to still more adamant conservatism. The uprising, urging reform of tsarist autocracy, showed that liberal values had spread to elements of the Russian elite, but its failure was more significant. Repression of political opponents stiffened, and the secret police expanded. Newspapers and schools, already confined to a small minority, were tightly supervised. What political criticism there was flourished mainly in exile in places such as Paris and London; it had little impact on Russia.

Partly because of political repression, Russia largely avoided the wave of revolutions that spread through Europe in 1830 and in 1848. In its role as Europe's conservative anchor, Russia even intervened in 1849 to help Austria put down the nationalist revolution in Hungary—a blow in favor of monarchy but also a reminder of Russia's eagerness to flex its muscles in wider European affairs.

While turning more conservative than it had been in the 18th century, Russia maintained its tradition of territorial expansion. Russia had confirmed its hold over most of Poland at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 after Napoleon briefly sponsored a separate Polish duchy. Nationalist sentiment, inspired by the growth of romantic nationalism in Poland and backed by many Polish landowners with ties to western Europe, roused recurrent Polish opposition to Russian rule. An uprising occurred in 1830 and 1831, triggered by news of the revolutions in the West and led by liberal aristocrats and loyal Catholics who chafed under the rule of an Orthodox power. Tsar Nicholas I put down this revolt with great brutality, driving many leaders into exile.

At the same time, Russia continued its pressure on the Ottoman empire, whose weakness attracted their eager attention. A war in the 1830s led to some territorial gains. France and Britain repeatedly tried to prop up Ottoman authority in the interest of countering Russian aggression. Russia also supported many nationalist movements in the Balkans, including the Greek independence war in the 1820s; here, a desire to cut back the Turks outweighed Russia's commitment to conservatism. Overall, although no massive acquisitions marked the early 19th century, Russia continued to be a dynamic diplomatic and military force (Map 28.1).

Economic and Social Problems: The Peasant Question

Russia's economic position did not keep pace with its diplomatic aspirations. As the West industrialized and central European powers such as Prussia and Austria introduced at least the beginnings of industrialization, including some rail lines, Russia largely stood pat. This meant that it began to fall increasingly behind the West in technology and trade. Russian landlords eagerly took advantage of Western markets for grain, but they increased their exports not by improving their techniques but by tightening the labor obligations on their serfs. This was a common pattern in much of eastern Europe in the early 19th century, as Polish and Hungarian nobles also increased labor service to gain ground in the export market. In return for low-cost grain exports, Russia and other east European areas imported some Western machinery and other costly equipment as well as luxury goods for
the great aristocrats to display as badges of cultured respectability. A few isolated factories that used foreign equipment were opened up in imitation of western European industrialization, but there was no significant change in overall manufacturing or transportation mechanisms. Russia remained a profoundly agricultural society based mainly on serf labor, but it was now a visibly stagnant society as well.

The widening gap between Russia and the West was driven home dramatically by a minor war in the Crimea between 1854 and 1856. Nicholas I provoked conflict with the Ottoman empire in 1853, arguing among other things that Russia was responsible for protecting Christian interests in the Holy Land. This time, however, France and Britain were not content with diplomatic maneuverings to limit Russian gains but came directly to the sultan’s aid. Britain was increasingly worried about any great power advance in the region that might threaten its hold on India, whereas France sought diplomatic glory and also represented itself as the Western champion of Christian rights. The resultant Crimean War was fought directly in Russia’s backyard on the Black Sea, yet the Western forces won, driving the Russian armies from their entrenched positions. (Each side lost about 250,000 troops in a truly difficult struggle.) The loss was profoundly disturbing

**Crimean War** Fought between 1854 and 1856; began as Russian attempt to attack Ottoman empire; Russia opposed by France and Britain as well; resulted in Russian defeat in the face of western industrial technology; led to Russian reforms under Tsar Alexander II.

**MAP 28.1 Russian Expansion, 1815–1914** Russia continued to push to the west, south, and east. At first, its main conflicts were with the Ottoman empire. Later, however, conflicts in east Asia loomed larger.
to Russian leadership, for the Western powers won this little war not because of great tactics or inspired principles but because of their industrial advantage. They had the ships to send masses of military supplies long distances, and their artillery and other weapons were vastly superior to Russia's home-produced models. This severe blow to a regime that prided itself on military vigor was a frightening portent for the future.

The Crimean War helped convince Russian leaders, including the new tsar, Alexander II, that it was time for a change. Reform was essential, not to copy the West but to allow sufficient economic adjustments for Russia to keep pace in the military arena. First and foremost, reform meant some resolution of Russia's leading social issue, the issue that most distinguished Russian society from that of the West: serfdom. Only if the status of serfs changed could Russia develop a more vigorous and mobile labor force and so be able to industrialize. Russian concern about this issue paralleled the attacks on slavery in the Americas in the same period, reflecting a desire to meet Western humanitar­ian standards and a need for cheap, flexible labor.

So for two decades Russia returned to a policy of reform, based on Western standards and examples; serfdom had been abolished in western Europe after 1789 and in east central regions such as Prussia and Hungary in the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848. As before, however, the intention was not to duplicate Western measures fully but to protect distinctive Russian institutions, including the landed aristocracy and tightly knit peasant communities. The result was an important series of changes that, with tragic irony, created more grievances than they resolved while opening the way to further economic change.

### The Reform Era and Early Industrialization

The final decision to emancipate the serfs in 1861 came at roughly the same time that the United States and Brazil decided to free slaves. Neither slavery nor rigorous serfdom suited the economic needs of a society seeking an independent position in Western-dominated world trade. While Russian reformers had specific concerns, some of them also accepted new humanitarian ideals now spreading globally, that attacked systems of unfree labor.

In some ways, the emancipation of the serfs was more generous than the liberation of slaves in the Americas. Although aristocrats retained part of the land, including the most fertile holdings, the serfs got most of it, in contrast to slaves, who received their freedom but nothing else. However, Russian emancipation was careful to preserve essential aristocratic power; the tsar was not interested in destroying the nobility, who remained his most reliable political allies and the source of most bureaucrats. Even more, emancipation was designed to retain the tight grip of the tsarist state. The serfs obtained no new political rights at a national level. They were still tied to their villages until they could pay for the land they were given. The redemption money went to the aristocrats to help preserve this class. Redemption payments added greatly to peasants’ material hardship (Figure 28.2), and peasants thought that the land belonged to them with no need to pay for its return.

Emancipation did bring change; it helped create a larger urban labor force. But it did not spur a revolution in agricultural productivity because most peasants continued to use traditional methods on their small plots. And it did not bring contentment. Indeed, peasant uprisings became more common as hopes for a brighter future seemed dashed by the limits of change. Explosive rural unrest in Russia was furthered by substantial population growth as some of the factors that had earlier swelled the West's population now spread to Russia, including increased use of the potato. In sum, after 1861 Russia was a classic case of a society in the midst of rapid change where reform did not go far enough to satisfy key protest groups.

To be sure, the reform movement did not end with emancipation. Alexander II introduced a host of further measures in the 1860s and early 1870s. New law codes cut back the traditional punishments now that serfs were legally free in the eyes of the law (though subject to important transitional
RUSSIA PASSED SEVERAL LAWS PROTECTING WORKERS, but enforcement was minimal. The Ministry of Finance established a factory inspectorate in the 1880s, which dutifully reported on conditions; these reports usually were ignored. The following passages deal with a number of Moscow factories in the 1880s.

In the majority of factories there are no special quarters for the workers. This applies to workers in paper, wool, and silk finishing. Skilled hand craftsmen like brocade weavers can earn good wages, and yet most of them sleep on or under their looms, for lack of anything else. Only in a few weaving factories are there special sleeping quarters, and these are provided not for the weavers, but for other workers—the winders and dyers, etc. Likewise, the velveteen cutters almost always sleep on the tables where they work. This habit is particularly unhealthy, since the work areas are always musty and the air is saturated with dye fumes—sometimes poisonous ones. Carpenters also generally sleep on their workbenches. In bastmatting factories, workers of both sexes and all ages sleep together on pieces and mats of bast which are often damp. Only the sick workers in these bast factories are allowed to sleep on the single stove. . . . Work at the mill never stops, day or night. There are two twelve-hour shifts a day, which begin at 6:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. The men have a half-hour for breakfast (8:30–9:00) and one hour for dinner (1:00–2:00).

The worst violations of hygienic regulations were those I saw in most of the flax-spinning mills where linen is produced. . . . Although in western Europe all the dust-producing carding and combing machines have long been covered and well ventilated, I saw only one Russian linen mill where such a machine was securely covered. Elsewhere, the spools of these machines were completely open to the air, and the scutching apparatus is inadequately ventilated. . . .

In many industrial establishments the grounds for fines and the sizes of fines are not fixed in advance. The factory rules may restrictions). The tsar created local political councils, the *zemstvos*, which had a voice in regulating roads, schools, and other regional policies. Some form of local government was essential now that the nobles no longer directly ruled the peasantry. The zemstvos gave some Russians, particularly middle-class people such as doctors and lawyers, new political experience, and they undertook important inquiries into local problems. However, the councils had no influence on national policy; the tsar resolutely maintained his own authority and that of his extensive bureaucracy. Another important area of change was the army; the Crimean War had shown the need for reform. The officer corps was improved through promotion by merit and a new organization of essential services. Recruitment was extended, and many peasants learned new skills through their military service. Some strides also were made in providing state-sponsored basic education, although schools spread unevenly.

From the reform era onward, literacy increased rapidly in Russian society. A new market developed for popular reading matter that had some similarities to the mass reading culture developing in the West. Interestingly, Russian potboiler novels, displaying a pronounced taste for excitement and exotic adventure, also attested to distinctive values. For example, Russian "bad guys" never were glorified in the end but always were either returned to social loyalty or condemned—a clear sign of the limits to individualism. Women gained new positions in this climate of change. Some won access to higher education, and, as in the West, a minority of women mainly from the upper classes began to penetrate professions such as medicine. Even sexual habits began to change, as had occurred in the West a century earlier. Fathers' control over their children's behavior loosened a bit, particularly where nonagricultural jobs were available, and sexual activity before marriage increased.

The move toward industrialization was part of the wider process of change. State support was an industrial effort, because Russia lacked a preexisting middle class and capital. State enterprises had to make up part of the gap, in the tradition of economic activity that went back to Peter the Great.

Russia began to create an extensive railroad network in the 1870s. The establishment of the trans-Siberian railroad, which connected European Russia with the Pacific, was the crowning achievement of this drive when it was nearly completed by the end of the 1880s. The railroad boom directly stimulated expansion of Russia's iron and coal sectors. Railroad development also stimulated the export of grain to the West, which earned foreign currency needed to pay for advanced Western machinery. The railroads also opened Siberia up to new development, which in turn brought Russia into a more active and contested Asian role.
contain only one phrase like the following: “Those found violating company rules will be fined at the discretion of the manager.”

The degree of arbitrariness in the determination of fines, and thus also in the determination of the worker’s wages, was unbelievably extreme in some factories. In Podolsk, for instance, in factories No. 131 and No. 135, there is a ten-ruble forfeit for leaving the factory before the expiration of one’s contract. But as applied, this covers much more than voluntary breach of contract on the worker’s part. This fine is exacted from every worker who for any reason has to leave the factory. Cases are known of persons who have had to pay this fine three times. Moreover, fines are levied for so many causes that falling under a severe fine is a constant possibility for each worker. For instance, workers who for any reason came into the office in a group, instead of singly, would be fined one ruble. After a second offense, the transgressors would be dismissed—leaving behind, of course, the ten-ruble fine for breach of contract.

In factory No. 135 the workers are still treated as serfs. Wages are paid out only twice a year, even then not in full but only enough to pay the workers’ taxes (other necessities are supplied by the factory store). Furthermore this money is not given to the workers directly, but is sent by mail to their village elders and village clerks. Thus the workers are without money the year around. Besides they are also paying severe fines to the factory, and these sums will be subtracted from their wages at the final year-end accounting.

Extreme regulations and regimentation are very common in our factories—regulations entangle the workers at every step and burden them with more or less severe fines which are subtracted from their often already inadequate wages. Some factory administrators have become real virtuosos at thinking up new grounds for fines. A brief description of a few of the fines in factory No. 172 is an excellent example of this variety: on October 24, 1877, an announcement was posted of new fines to be set at the discretion of the office for fourteen different cases of failure to maintain silence and cleanliness. There were also dozens of minor fines prescribed for certain individual offenses: for example, on August 4, 1883, a huge fine of five rubles was set for singing in the factory courtyard after 9:30, or at any time in any unauthorized place. On June 3, 1881, a fine was to be levied from workers who took tea and sugar, bread, or any kind of foodstuffs into the weaving building, “in order to avoid breeding any insects or vermin.” On May 14, 1880, a fine was set for anyone who wrote with pencil, chalk, or anything else on the walls in the dyeing or weaving buildings.

**QUESTIONS**

- Were factory conditions worse than in western Europe during early industrialization, and if so in what ways and why?
- How did working conditions and management attitudes help create a revolutionary mood among Russian workers?
- Think also about the nature of this source. Why would a conservative government sponsor such a critical report?
- What do you think the results of such a report would be, in the Russian context, or indeed in any early industrial context?

By the 1880s, when Russia’s railroad network had almost quintupled since 1860, modern factories were beginning to spring up in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and several Polish cities, and an urban working class was growing rapidly. Printing factories and metalworking shops expanded the skilled artisanry in the cities, and metallurgy and textile plants recruited a still newer semiskilled industrial labor force from the troubled countryside.

Under Count Sergei Witte, minister of finance from 1892 to 1903 and an ardent economic modernizer, the government enacted high tariffs to protect new Russian industry, improved its banking system, and encouraged Western investors to build great factories with advanced technology. As Witte put it, “The inflow of foreign capital is . . . the only way by which our industry will be able to supply our country quickly with abundant and cheap products.” By 1900 approximately half of Russian industry was foreign owned and much of it was foreign operated, with British, German, and French industrialists taking the lead. Russia became a debtor nation as huge industrial development loans piled up. Russia had surged to rank fourth in the world in steel production and was second to the United States in the newer area of petroleum production and refining. Russian textile output was also impressive. Long-standing Russian economic lags were beginning to yield.

This industrial revolution was still in its early stages. Russia’s world rank was a function more of its great size and population, along with its rich natural resources, than of thorough mechanization. Many Russian factories were not up to Western technical standards, nor was the labor force highly trained. Agriculture also remained backward, as peasants, often illiterate, had neither capital nor motives to change their ways.

Other reforms also produced ambiguous results. Russia remained a traditional peasant society in many ways. Beneath the official military reorganization, discipline and military efficiency were lax. Even more obvious was the absence of a large, self-confident middle class of the sort that had arisen earlier in the West. Businesspeople and professionals grew in numbers, but often they were
Change and also the limits of change destabilized Russian society. Marxist leaders helped focus unrest.

**PROTEST AND REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA**

**28.2 Why did revolutionary potential grow in Russia?**

Alexander II's reforms, as well as economic change and the greater population mobility it involved, encouraged minority nationalities to make demands of the great empire. Intellectuals explored the cultural traditions of Ukrainians and other groups. Nationalist beliefs initially were imported from western Europe, but here and elsewhere in eastern Europe, they encouraged divisive minority agitation that multinational states, such as Russia and Austria-Hungary, found very hard to handle. Nationalist pressures were not the main problem in Russia, but given Russia's mainstream nationalist insistence on the distinctive superiorities of a Russian tradition, they did cause concern.

Social protest was more vigorous still, and it was heightened not only by the limitations of reform but by industrialization itself. Recurrent famines provoked peasant uprisings. Peasants deeply resented redemption payments and taxes and often seized and burned the records that indicated what they owed.

**The Road to Revolution**

Along with discontent among the masses, many educated Russians, including some aristocrats, also clamored for revolutionary change. Two strands developed. Many business and professional people, although not very aggressive, began to seek a fuller political voice and new rights such as greater freedom in the schools and press; they argued for liberal reforms. At the same time, a group of radical intelligentsia—a Russian term for articulate intellectuals as a class—became increasingly active. As Russian universities expanded, student groups grew as well, and many were impatient with Russia's slow development and with the visible restrictions on political activity. Women students played some role in the protest current, and some specifically feminist demands (for example, toward greater professional opportunity) emerged as well.

Some intellectuals later toned down their goals as they entered the bureaucracy or business life. But many remained inspired by radical doctrines, and more than a few devoted their lives to a revolutionary cause. This kind of intellectual alienation rested on some of the principles that had roused intellectuals in the West, but it went deeper in Russia. It was the first example of a kind of intellectual radicalism, capable of motivating terrorism, that would characterize other societies caught in tense transitions during the 20th century. The Russian intelligentsia wanted political freedom and deep social reform while maintaining a Russian culture different from that of the West, which they saw as hopelessly materialistic. Their radicalism may have stemmed from the demanding task they set themselves: attacking key Russian institutions while building a new society that would not reproduce the injustices and crippling limitations of the Western world.

Many Russian radicals were anarchists, who sought to abolish all formal government. Although anarchism was not unknown in the West, it took on particular force in Russia in opposition to tsarist autocracy. Many early anarchists in the 1860s hoped that they could triumph by winning peasant support, and a host of upper-class radicals fanned out to teach the peasantry the beauties of political activism. Failure here led many anarchists to violent methods and thus to the formation of the first large terrorist movement in the modern world. Given the lack of popular support and other political outlets, assassinations and bombings seemed the only way to attack the existing order. Anarchist leader Bakunin argued that general destruction was the only real goal. He hoped for a peasant revolution, but wanted no part of reformist efforts to improve conditions of life in advance of the replacement of current social and political structures. Simply tearing down the current framework was such a huge task that there was no way, at this point, to plan what would come next.
Not surprisingly, the recurrent waves of terrorism merely strengthened the tsarist regime’s resolve to avoid further political change in what became a vicious circle in 19th-century Russian politics.

By the late 1870s, Alexander II was pulling back from his reform interest, fearing that change was getting out of hand. Censorship of newspapers and political meetings tightened; many dissidents were arrested and sent to Siberia. Alexander II was assassinated by a terrorist bomb in 1881 after a series of botched attempts. His successors, while increasing the effort to industrialize, continued to oppose further political reform. New measures of repression also were directed against minority nationalities, partly to dampen their unrest and partly to gain the support of upper-class conservatives. The Poles and other groups were supervised carefully. Russian language instruction was forced on peoples such as Ukrainians. Persecution of the large Jewish minority was stepped up, resulting in many mass attacks—called pogroms—and seizures of property. As a consequence, many Russian Jews emigrated.

By the 1890s, the currents of protest gained new force. Marxist doctrines spread from the Western socialist movement to a segment of the Russian intelligentsia, who became committed to a tightly organized proletarian revolution. One of the most active Marxist leaders was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, known as Lenin. Lenin, a man from a bureaucratic family whose brother was hanged after a trial following his arrest by the political police, introduced important innovations in Marxist theory to make it more appropriate for Russia. He argued that because of the spread of international capitalism, a proletariat was developing worldwide in advance of industrialization. Therefore, Russia could have a proletarian revolution without going through a distinct middle-class phase. Lenin also insisted on the importance of disciplined revolutionary cells that could maintain doctrinal purity and effective action even under severe police repression. Lenin’s approach animated the group of Russian Marxists known as Bolsheviks, or majority party (although, ironically, they were actually a minority in the Russian Marxist movement as a whole). The approach proved ideal for Russian conditions.

Working-class unrest in the cities grew with the new currents among the intelligentsia. Russian workers became far more radical than their Western counterparts. They formed unions and conducted strikes—all illegal—but many of them also had firm political goals in mind. Their radicalism stemmed partly from the absence of legal political outlets. It arose also from rural unrest—for these new workers pulled in peasant grievances against the existing order—and from the severe conditions of early industrialization, with its large factories and frequent foreign ownership. Although many workers were not linked to any particular doctrine, some became interested in Bolshevism, and they were urged on by passionate organizers.

By 1900 the contradictory currents in Russian society may have made revolution inevitable. The forces demanding change were not united, but the importance of mass protest in both countryside and city, as well as among the radical intelligentsia, made it difficult to find a compromise. Furthermore, the regime remained resolutely opposed to compromise. Conservative ministers urged a vigorous policy of resistance and repression.

The Revolution of 1905

Military defeat in 1904 and 1905 finally lit this tinderbox. Russia had maintained its expansionist foreign policy through the late 19th century, in part because of tradition and in part because diplomatic success might draw the venom from internal unrest. It also wanted to match the imperialist strides of the Western great powers. A war with the Ottoman empire in the 1870s brought substantial gains, which were then pushed back at the insistence of France and Britain. Russia also successfully aided the creation in the Balkans of new Slavic nations, such as Serbia and Bulgaria, the "little Slavic brothers" that filled nationalist hearts with pride. Some conservative writers even talked in terms of a pan-Slavic movement that would unite the Slavic people—under Russian leadership, of course. Russia participated vigorously in other Middle Eastern and central Asian areas. Russia and Britain both increased their influence in Persia and Afghanistan, reaching some uneasy truces that divided spheres of activity early in the 20th century. Russia was also active in China. The development of the trans-Siberian railroad encouraged Russia to incorporate some northern portions of Manchuria, violating the 18th-century Amur River agreement. Russia also joined Western powers in obtaining long-term leases to Chinese territory during the 1890s.

Ulyanov, Vladimir Ilyich [VLAHD-ih-mihr IHL-lihch oo-l-YAH-nuhf]
Better known as Lenin; most active Russian Marxist leader; insisted on importance of disciplined revolutionary cells; leader of Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Bolsheviks Literally, the majority party; the most radical branch of the Russian Marxist movement; led by V. I. Lenin and dedicated to his concept of social revolution; actually a minority in the Russian Marxist political scheme until its triumph in the 1917 revolution.

Russo-Japanese War War between Japan and Russia (1904–1905) over territory in Manchuria; Japan defeated the Russians, largely because of its naval power; Japan annexed Korea in 1910 as a result of military dominance.
increase agricultural production and buy additional land. Yet the reform

**Duma** National parliament created in Russia in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1905; progressively stripped of power during the reign of Tsar Nicholas II; failed to forestall further revolution.

**Stolypin reforms** Reforms introduced by the Russian interior minister Piotr Stolypin intended to placate the peasantry in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1905; included reduction in redemption payments, attempt to create market-oriented peasantry.

**kulaks** (KOO-laks) Agricultural entrepreneurs who utilized the Stolypin and later NEP reforms to increase agricultural production and buy additional land.

These were important gains, but they did not satisfy growing Russian ambitions, and they also brought trouble. Russia risked an overextension because its diplomatic aspirations were not backed by real increases in military power. The problem first came to a head in 1904. Increasingly powerful Japan became worried about further Russian expansion in northern China and efforts to extend influence into Korea. The **Russo-Japanese War** broke out in 1904. Against all expectations save Japan's, the Japanese won. Russia could not move its fleet quickly to the Pacific, and its military organization proved too cumbersome to oppose the more effective Japanese maneuvers (Map 28.2). Japan gained the opportunity to move into Korea as the balance of power in the Far East began to shift.

Unexpected defeat in war unleashed massive protests on the home front in the Russian Revolution of 1905 (Figure 28.3). Urban workers mounted well-organized general strikes that were designed above all for political gains. Peasants led a series of insurrections, and liberal groups also agitated. After trying brutal police repression, which only infuriated the urban crowds, the tsarist regime had to change course. It wooed liberals by creating a national parliament, the **Duma**. The interior minister Piotr Stolypin (pee-UH-tuhr STOHL-yuh-pih) introduced an important series of reforms for the peasantry. Under the **Stolypin reforms**, peasants gained greater freedom from redemption payments and village controls. They could buy and sell land more freely. The goal was to create a stratified, market-oriented peasantry in which successful farmers would move away from the peasant masses, becoming rural capitalists. Indeed, peasant unrest did die down, and a minority of aggressive entrepreneurs, called **kulaks**, began to increase agricultural production and buy additional land. Yet the reform package quickly came unglued. Not only were a few new workers' rights withdrawn, triggering a new series of strikes and underground activities, but the Duma was progressively stripped of power. Nicholas II, a weak man who was badly advised, could not surrender the tradition of autocratic rule, and the Duma became a hollow institution, satisfying no one. Police repression also resumed, creating new opponents to the regime.

Pressed in the diplomatic arena by the Japanese advance yet eager to counter internal pressures with some foreign policy success, the Russian government turned once again to the Ottoman empire and the Balkans. Various strategies to acquire new rights of access to the Mediterranean and to back Slavic allies in the Balkans yielded no concrete results, but they did stir the pot in this vulnerable area and helped lead to World War I. And this war, in which Russia participated to maintain its diplomatic standing and live up to the billing of Slavic protector, led to one of the great revolutions of modern times.

**Russia and Eastern Europe**

A number of Russian patterns were paralleled in smaller eastern European states such as Hungary (joined to Austria but autonomous after 1866), Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. These were new nations—unlike Russia. And emerging after long Ottoman dominance, they had no access to the diplomatic influence of their giant neighbor. Most of the new nations established parliaments, in imitation of Western forms, but carefully restricted voting rights and parliamentary powers. Kings—some of them new, as the Balkan nations had set up monarchies after gaining independence from the Ottoman empire—ruled without many limits on their power. Most eastern European nations abolished serfdom either in 1848 or soon after Russia's move, but landlord power remained more extensive than in Russia, and peasant unrest followed. Most of the smaller eastern European nations industrialized much less extensively than Russia, and as agricultural exporters they remained far more dependent on Western markets.

Amid all the problems, eastern Europe enjoyed a period of glittering cultural productivity in the late 19th century, with Russia in the lead. Development of the romantic tradition and other Western styles continued. National dictionaries and histories, along with the collection of folktales and music,
helped the smaller Slavic nations gain a sense of their heritage. The Russian novel enjoyed a period of unprecedented brilliance. Westernizers such as Turgenev wrote realistic novels that promoted what they saw as modern values, whereas writers such as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky tried to portray a special Russian spirit. Russian music moved from the romanticism of Tchaikovsky to more innovative, atonal styles of the early 20th century. Polish and Hungarian composers such as Chopin and Liszt also made an important mark. Russian painters began participating in modern art currents, producing important abstract work. Finally, scientific research advanced at levels of fundamental importance. A Czech scientist, Gregor Mendel, furthered the understanding of genetics, and a Russian physiologist, Ivan Pavlov, experimenting on conditioned reflexes, explained unconscious responses in human beings. Eastern Europe thus participated more fully than ever before in a cultural world it shared with the West.

JAPAN: TRANSFORMATION WITHOUT REVOLUTION

How did Meiji Japan combine fundamental change with a continuing Japanese identity?

On the surface, Japan experienced little change during the first half of the 19th century, and certainly this was a quiet time compared with the earlier establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate (see Chapter 23) or the transformation introduced after the 1850s.

The Final Decades of the Shogunate

During the first half of the 19th century, the shogunate continued to combine a central bureaucracy with semifuedal alliances between the regional lords, the daimyo, and the military samurai. The government repeatedly ran into financial problems. Its taxes were based on agriculture, despite the growing commercialization of the Japanese economy; this was a severe constraint. At the same time, maintaining the feudal shell was costly. The government paid stipends to the samurai in return for their loyalty. A long budget reform spurt late in the 18th century built a successful momentum for a time, but a shorter effort between 1841 and 1843 was notably unsuccessful. This weakened the shogunate by the 1850s and hampered its response to the crisis induced by Western pressure.
Japanese intellectual life and culture also developed under the Tokugawa regime. Neo-Confucianism continued to gain among the ruling elite at the expense of Buddhism. Japan gradually became more secular, particularly among the upper classes. This was an important precondition for the nation's response to the Western challenge in that it precluded a strong religious-based resistance to change. Various Confucian schools actively debated into the mid-19th century, keeping Japanese intellectual life fairly creative. Schools and academies expanded, reaching well below the upper class through commoner schools, or terakoya, which taught reading, writing, and the rudiments of Confucianism to ordinary people. By 1859 more than 40 percent of all men and over 15 percent of all women were literate—a far higher percentage than anywhere else in the world outside the West, including Russia, and on a par with some of the fringe areas of the West (including the American South).

Although Confucianism remained the dominant ideology, there were important rivals. Tensions between traditionalists and reformist intellectuals were emerging, as in Russia in the same decades. A national studies group praised Japanese traditions, including the office of emperor and the Shinto religion. One national studies writer expressed a typical sentiment late in the 18th century: "The 'special dispensation of our Imperial Land' means that ours is the native land of the Heaven-Shining Goddess who casts her light over all countries in the four seas. Thus our country is the source and fountainhead of all other countries, and in all matters it excels all the others." The influence of the national studies school grew somewhat in the early 19th century, and it would help inspire ultranationalist sentiment at the end of the century and beyond.

A second minority group consisted of what the Japanese called Dutch Studies. Although major Western works had been banned when the policy of isolation was adopted, a group of Japanese translators kept alive the knowledge of Dutch to deal with the traders at Nagasaki. The ban on Western books was ended in 1720, and thereafter a group of Japanese scholars interested in "Dutch medicine" created a new interest in Western scientific advances, based on the realization that Western anatomy texts were superior to those of the Chinese. In 1850, there were schools of Dutch Studies in all major cities, and their students urged freer exchange with the West and a rejection of Chinese medicine and culture. "Our general opinion was that we should rid our country of the influences of the Chinese altogether. Whenever we met a young student of Chinese literature, we simply felt sorry for him."

Just as Japanese culture showed an important capacity for lively debate and fruitful internal tension, so the Japanese economy continued to develop into the 19th century. Commerce expanded as big merchant companies established monopoly privileges in many centers. Manufacturing gained ground in the countryside in such consumer goods industries as soy sauce and silks, and much of this was organized by city merchants. Some of these developments were comparable to slightly earlier changes in the West and have given rise to arguments that economically Japan had a running start on industrialization once the Western challenge revealed the necessity of further economic change.

By the 1850s, however, economic growth had slowed—a situation that has prompted some scholars to stress Japan's backwardness compared with the West. Technological limitations constrained agricultural expansion and population increase. At the same time, rural riots increased in many regions from the late 18th century onward. They were not overtly political but rather, like many rural protests, aimed at wealthy peasants, merchants, and landlord controls. Although the authorities put down this unrest with little difficulty, the protests contributed to a willingness to consider change when they were joined by challenge from the outside.

**The Challenge to Isolation**

Some Japanese had become increasingly worried about potential outside threats. In 1791 a book was issued advocating a strong navy. Fears about the West's growing power and particularly Russia's Asian expansion fed these concerns in later decades. Fear became reality in 1853 when American Commodore Matthew Perry arrived with a squadron in Edo Bay near Tokyo and used threats of bombardment to insist that Americans be allowed to trade. The United States, increasingly an active part of the West's core economy, thus launched for Japan the same kind of pressure the Opium War had created for China: pressure from the heightened military superiority of the West and its insistence on opening markets for its burgeoning economy. In 1854 Perry returned and won the right to station an American consul in Japan; in 1856, through a formal treaty, two ports were opened to commerce. Britain, Russia, and Holland quickly won similar rights. As in China, this meant that Westerners living in Japan would be governed by their own representatives, not by Japanese law.
**THINKING HISTORICALLY**

**The Separate Paths of Japan and China**

Japan’s ability to change in response to new Western pressure contrasted strikingly with the sluggishness of Chinese reactions into the 20th century. The contrast draws particular attention because China and Japan had been part of the same civilization orbit for so long, which means that some of the assets Japan possessed in dealing with change were present in China as well. Indeed, Japan turned out to benefit, by the mid-19th century, from having become more like China in key respects during the Tokugawa period. The link between Chinese and Japanese traditions should not be exaggerated, of course, and earlier differences help explain the divergence that opened so clearly in the late 19th century. The East Asian world now split apart, with Japan seizing eagerly on Chinese weakness to mount a series of attacks from the 1890s to 1945, which only made China’s troubles worse.

Japan and China had both chosen considerable isolation from larger world currents from about 1600 until the West forced new openings between 1830 and 1860. Japan’s isolation was the more complete. Both countries lagged behind the West because of their self-containment, which was why Western industrialization caught them unprepared. China’s power and wealth roused Western greed and interference first, which gave Japan some leeway.

However, China surpassed Japan in some areas that should have aided it in reacting to the Western challenge. Its leadership, devoted to Confucianism, was more thoroughly secular and bureaucratic in outlook. There was no need to brush aside otherworldly commitments or feudal distractions to deal with the West’s material and organizational power. Government centralization, still an issue in Japan, had a long history in China. With a rich tradition of technological innovation and scientific discovery in its past as well, China might have appeared to be a natural to lead the Asian world in responding to the West.

However, that role fell to Japan. Several aspects of Japanese tradition gave it a flexibility that China lacked. It already knew the benefits of imitation, which China, save for its period of attraction to Buddhism, had never acknowledged. Japan’s slower government growth had allowed a stronger, more autonomous merchant tradition even as both societies became more commercial in the 17th and early 18th centuries. Feudal traditions, although declining under the Tokugawa shogunate, also limited the heavy hand of government controls while stimulating a sense of military competitiveness, as in the West. In contrast, China’s government probably tried to control too much by the 18th century and quashed initiative in the process.

China was also hampered by rapid population growth from the 17th century onward. This population pressure consumed great energy, leaving scant capital for other economic initiatives. Japan’s population stability into the 19th century pressed resources less severely. Japan’s island status made the nation more sensitive to Western naval pressures.

Finally, China and Japan were on somewhat different paths when the Western challenge intruded in the mid-19th century. China was suffering one of its recurrent dynastic declines. Government became less efficient, intellectual life stagnated, and popular unrest surged. A cycle of renewal might have followed, with a new dynasty seizing more vigorous reins. But Western interference disrupted this process, complicating reform and creating various new discontents that ultimately overturned the imperial office.

In contrast, Japan maintained political and economic vigor into the 19th century. Whereas by the late 19th century China needed Western guidance simply to handle such bureaucratic affairs as tariff collection and repression of peasant rebellion, Japan suffered no such breakdown of authority, using foreign advisors far more selectively.

Once a different pattern of response was established, every decade increased the gap. Western exploitation of Chinese assets and dilution of government power made conditions more chaotic, while Japanese strength grew steadily after a very brief period of uncertainty. By the 20th century, the two nations were enemies—with Japan, for the first time, the stronger—and seemed to be in different orbits. Japan enjoyed increasing industrial success and had a conservative state that would yield after World War II to a more fully parliamentary form. China, after decades of revolution, finally won its 20th-century political solution: communism.

Yet today, at the onset of the 21st century, it is unclear whether East Asia was split as permanently as 19th- and early 20th-century developments had suggested. Japan’s industrial lead remains, but China’s economy is beginning to soar. Common cultural habits of group cooperation and decision making remind us that beneath different political systems, a fruitful shared heritage continues to operate. The heritage is quite different from that of the West but fully adaptable to the demands of economic change. And so Westerners begin to wonder whether a Pacific century is about to dawn.

**QUESTIONS**

- What civilization features had Japan and China shared before the 19th century?
- In what ways were Japanese political institutions more adaptable than Chinese institutions?
- Why was Russia also able to change earlier and more fundamentally than 19th-century China?
The bureaucrats of the shogunate saw no alternative but to open up Japan, given the superiority of Western navies. And of course, there were Japanese who had grown impatient with strict isolation; their numbers swelled as the Dutch schools began to expand. On the other hand, the daimyo, intensely conservative, were opposed to the new concessions, and their opposition forced the shogun to appeal to the emperor for support. Soon, samurai opponents of the bureaucracy were also appealing to the emperor, who began to emerge from his centuries-long confinement as a largely religious and ceremonial figure. Whereas most daimyo defended the status quo, the samurai were more divided. Some saw opportunity in change, including the possibility of unseating the shogunate. The fact was that the complex shogunate system had depended on the isolation policy; it could not survive the stresses of foreign influence and internal reactions. The result was not immediate collapse; indeed, into the late 1850s, Japanese life seemed to go on much as before.

In the 1860s, political crisis came into the open. The crisis was spiced by samurai attacks on foreigners, including one murder of a British official, matched by Western naval bombardments of feudal forts. Civil war broke out in 1866 as the samurai eagerly armed themselves with American Civil War surplus weapons, causing Japan's aristocracy to come to terms with the advantages of Western armaments. When the samurai defeated a shogunate force, many Japanese were finally shocked out of their traditional reliance on their own superiority. One author argued that the nation, compared with the West and its technology, science, and humane laws, was only half civilized.

This multifaceted crisis came to an end in 1868 when the victorious reform group proclaimed a new emperor named Mutsuhito whose reign was commonly called “Meiji,” or “Enlightened.” In his name, key samurai leaders managed to put down the troops of the shogunate. The crisis period had been shocking enough to allow further changes in Japan's basic political structure—changes that went much deeper at the political level than those introduced by Russia from 1861 onward.

Industrial and Political Change in the Meiji State

The new Meiji government promptly set about abolishing feudalism, replacing the daimyo in 1871 with a system of nationally appointed prefects (district administrators carefully chosen from different regions; the prefect system was copied from French practice). Political power was effectively centralized, and from this base the Meiji rulers—the emperor and his close advisors, drawn from loyal segments of the aristocracy—began to expand the power of the state to effect economic and social change.

Quickly, the Japanese government sent samurai officials abroad, to western Europe and the United States, to study economic and political institutions and technology. These samurai, deeply impressed by what they saw, pulled back from their earlier anti-foreign position and gained increasing voice over other officials in the government. Their basic goal was Japan's domestic development, accompanied by a careful diplomatic policy that would avoid antagonizing the West.

Fundamental improvements in government finance soon followed. Between 1873 and 1876, the Meiji ministers introduced a real social revolution. They abolished the samurai class and the stipends this group had received. The tax on agriculture was converted to a wider tax, payable in money. The samurai were compensated by government-backed bonds, but these decreased in value, and most samurai became poor. This development sparked renewed conflict, and a final samurai uprising occurred in 1877. However, the government had introduced an army based on national conscription, and by 1878 the nation was militarily secure. Individual samurai found new opportunities in political and business areas as they adapted to change. One former samurai, Iwasaki Yataro (1834–1885), who started his career buying weapons for a feudal lord, set up the Mitsubishi Company after 1868, winning government contracts for railroad and steamship lines designed to compete with British companies in the region. Despite his overbearing personality, Iwasaki built a loyal management group, including other former samurai, and by his death had a stake in shipbuilding, mining, and banking as well as transportation. The continued existence of the samurai, reflecting Japan's lack of outright revolution, would yield diverse results in later Japanese history.

The process of political reconstruction crested in the 1880s. Many former samurai organized political parties. Meiji leaders traveled abroad to discover modern political forms. In 1884 they created a new conservative nobility, stocked by former nobles and Meiji leaders, that would operate a British-style House of Peers. Next, the bureaucracy was reorganized, insulated from political
pressures, and opened to talent on the basis of civil service examinations. The bureaucracy began to expand rapidly; it grew from 29,000 officials in 1890 to 72,000 in 1908. Finally, the constitution, issued in 1889, ensured major prerogatives for the emperor along with limited powers for the lower house of the Diet, as the new parliament was called. Here, Germany provided the model, for the emperor commanded the military directly (served by a German-style general staff) and also directly named his ministers. Both the institution and its members’ clothing were Western, as the Visualizing the Past feature shows. The Diet could pass laws, upon agreement of both houses, and could approve budgets, but failure to pass a budget would simply reinstate the budget of the previous year. Parliament could thus advise government, but it could not control it. Finally, the conservative tone of this parliamentary experiment was confirmed by high property qualifications set for voting rights. Only about 5 percent of Japanese men had enough wealth to be allowed to vote for representatives to the lower house.

Japan’s political structure thus came to involve centralized imperial rule, wielded by a handful of Meiji advisors, combined with limited representative institutions copied from the West. This combination gave great power to a group of wealthy businesspeople and former nobles who influenced the emperor and also pulled strings within the parliament. Political parties arose, but a coherent system overrode their divisions into the 20th century. Japan thus followed its new policy of imitating the West, but it retained its own identity. The Japanese political solution compared interestingly to Russian institutions after Alexander II’s reforms. Both states were centralized and authoritarian, but Japan had incorporated business leaders into its governing structure, whereas Russia defended a more traditional social elite.

Japan’s Industrial Revolution

Political decisions were essential after the crisis of the 1860s, but they were soon matched by other initiatives. The new army, based on the universal conscription of young men, was further improved by formal officer training and by upgrading armaments according to Western standards. With the aid of Western advisors, a modern navy was established.

Attention also focused on creating the conditions necessary for industrialization. New government banks funded growing trade and provided capital for industry. State-built railroads spread across the country, and the islands were connected by rapid steamers. New methods raised agricultural output to feed the people of the growing cities.

The new economic structure depended on the destruction of many older restrictions. Guilds and internal road tariffs were abolished to create a national market. Land reform created clear individual ownership for many farmers, which helped motivate expansion of production and the introduction of new fertilizers and equipment.

Government initiative dominated manufacturing not only in the creation of transportation networks but also in state operation of mines, shipyards, and metallurgical plants. Scarce capital and the unfamiliarity of new technology seemed to compel state direction, as occurred in Russia at the same time. Government control also helped check the many foreign advisors needed by early Japanese industry; here, Japan maintained closer supervision than its Russian neighbor. Japan established the Ministry of Industry in 1870, and it quickly became one of the key government agencies, setting overall economic policy as well as operating specific sectors. By the 1880s, model shipyards, arsenals, and factories provided experience in new technology and disciplined work systems for many Japanese. Finally, by expanding technical training and education, setting up banks and post offices, and regularizing commercial laws, the government provided a structure within which Japan could develop on many fronts. Measures in this area largely copied established practices in the West, but with adaptation suitable for Japanese conditions; thus, well before any European university, Tokyo Imperial University had a faculty of agriculture.

Private enterprise quickly played a role in Japan’s growing economy, particularly in the vital textile sector. Some businesspeople came from older merchant families, although some of the great houses had been ruined with the financial destruction of the samurai class. There were also newcomers, some rising from peasant ranks. Shuibuzaawi Eichi (SHOO-ih-buh-zah-wah EYE-ee-chee), for example, born a peasant, became a merchant and then an official of the Finance Ministry. He turned to banking in 1873, using other people’s money to set up cotton-spinning mills and other textile operations.
VISUALIZING THE PAST

Two Faces of Western Influence

These pictures show an 1850s cartoon portraying American Commodore Matthew Perry as a greedy warlord and the first meeting of the Japanese parliament in 1890.

**Questions**

- What kinds of attitudes toward the West does the cartoon represent?
- What does the picture of parliament convey about attitudes toward the West?
- What was the model for the design of the meeting room?
- What do the two pictures suggest about uses of costume in a time of rapid change?

**zaibatsu** [ZYE-baht-soo] Huge industrial combines created in Japan in the 1890s as part of the process of industrialization.

By the 1890s huge new industrial combines, later known as zaibatsu, were being formed as a result of accumulations of capital and far-flung merchant and industrial operations.

By 1900 the Japanese economy was fully launched in an industrial revolution. It rested on a political and social structure different from that of Russia—one that had in most respects changed more profoundly. Japan's success in organizing industrialization, including its careful management of foreign advice and models, proved to be one of the great developments of later 19th-century history.

It is important to keep these early phases of Japanese industrialization in perspective. Pre-World War I Japan was far from the West's equal. It depended on imports of Western equipment and raw materials such as coal; for industrial purposes, Japan was a resource-poor nation. Although economic growth and careful government policy allowed Japan to avoid Western domination, Japan was newly dependent on world economic conditions and was often at a disadvantage. It needed exports to pay for machine and resource imports, and these in turn took hordes of low-paid workers. Silk production grew rapidly, the bulk of it destined for Western markets. Much of this production was based on the labor of poorly paid women who worked at home or in sweatshops, not in mechanized factories. Some of these women were sold into service by farm families. Efforts at labor organization or other means of protest were met by vigorous repression.

**Social and Diplomatic Effects of Industrialization**

The industrial revolution and the wider extensions of manufacturing and commercial agriculture, along with political change, had significant ramifications within Japanese culture and society. These changes also helped generate a more aggressive foreign policy. Japanese society was disrupted by
massive population growth. Better nutrition and new medical provisions reduced death rates, and the upheaval of the rural masses cut into traditional restraints on births. The result was steady population growth that strained Japanese resources and stability, although it also ensured a constant supply of low-cost labor. This was one of the causes of Japan’s class tensions.

The Japanese government introduced a universal education system, providing primary schools for all. This education stressed science and the importance of technical subjects along with political loyalty to the nation and emperor. Elite students at the university level also took courses that emphasized science, and many Japanese students went abroad to study technical subjects in other countries.

Education also revealed Japanese insistence on distinctive values. After a heady reform period in the 1870s, when hundreds of Western teachers were imported and a Rutgers University professor was brought in for high-level advice about the whole system, the emperor and conservative advisors stepped back after 1879. This was when reformers like Fukuzawa Yukichi began to tone down their rhetoric. Innovation and individualism had gone too far. A traditional moral education was essential, along with new skills, which would stress “loyalty to the Imperial House, love of country, filial piety toward parents, respect for superiors, faith in friends, charity toward inferiors and respect for oneself.” The use of foreign books on morality was prohibited, and intense government inspection of textbooks was intended to promote social order.

Many Japanese copied Western fashions as part of the effort to become modern. Western-style haircuts replaced the samurai shaved head with a topknot—another example of the Westernization of hair in world history. Western standards of hygiene spread, and the Japanese became enthusiastic toothbrushers and consumers of patent medicines. Japan also adopted the Western calendar and the metric system. Few Japanese converted to Christianity, however, and despite Western popular cultural fads, the Japanese managed to preserve an emphasis on their own values. What the Japanese wanted and got from the West involved practical techniques; they planned to infuse them with a distinctively Japanese spirit. As an early Japanese visitor to the American White House wrote in a self-satisfied poem that captured the national mood,

We suffered the barbarians to look upon
The glory of our Eastern Empire of Japan.

Western-oriented enthusiasms were not meant to destroy a distinctive Japanese spirit.

Japanese family life retained many traditional emphases. The birth rate dropped as rapid population growth forced increasing numbers of people off the land. Meanwhile, the rise of factory industry, separating work from home, made children’s labor less useful. This trend, developed earlier in the West, seems inseparable from successful industrialization. There were new signs of family instability as well; the divorce rate exploded until legal changes made procedures more difficult. On the more traditional side, the Japanese were eager to maintain the inferiority of women in the home. The position of Western women offended them. Japanese government visitors to the United States were appalled by what they saw as the bossy ways of women: “The way women are treated here is like the way parents are respected in our country.” Standards of Japanese courtesy also contrasted with the more open and boisterous behavior of Westerners, particularly Americans. “Obscenity is inherent in the customs of this country,” noted another samurai visitor to the United States. Certain Japanese religious values were also preserved. Buddhism lost some ground, although it remained important, but Shintoism, which appealed to the new nationalist concern with Japan’s distinctive mission and the religious functions of the emperor, won new interest.

Traditionalism was not the only theme in the situation of Japanese women amid industrialization. As in Russia, women were widely used in the early factory labor force—and in Japan’s case, also in sweatshop silk production—because their low wages were an indispensable advantage in competitive global markets. At the same time, the government carefully provided schooling for girls as part of its new commitment to mass education. And many upper-class women, as in Russia, had opportunities even for high education in secondary schools or separate universities. The tension they encountered, between assumptions that women should play subservient and domestic roles and the excitement of new educational opportunities, was particularly sharp, but not entirely different from contemporary conditions in Russia or the West. Outright feminism, however, was far less common than in either western or eastern Europe. Industrialization and urbanization made literal traditionalism impossible amid rapid economic change.

Economic change, and the tensions as well as the power it generated, also produced a shift in Japanese foreign policy. This shift was partly an imitation of Western models. New imperialism also
relieved some strains within Japanese society, giving displaced samurai the chance to exercise their military talents elsewhere. Even more than Western countries, which used similar arguments for imperialism, the Japanese economy also needed access to markets and raw materials. Because Japan was poor in many basic materials, including coal and oil for energy, the pressure for expansion was particularly great.

Japan's quick victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) was a first step toward expansion (Map 28.2). Japan convincingly demonstrated its new superiority over all other Asian powers. Humiliated by Western insistence that it abandon the Liaodong peninsula it had just taken from China, the Japanese planned a war with Russia as a means of striking out against the nearest European state. A 1902 alliance with Britain was an important sign of Japan's arrival as an equal nation in the Western-dominated world diplomatic system. The Japanese were also eager to dent Russia's growing strength in east Asia after the development of the trans-Siberian railroad. Disputes over Russian influence in Manchuria and Japanese influence in Korea led to the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 (Map 28.3), which Japan won handily because of its superior navy. Japan annexed Korea in 1910, entering the ranks of imperialist powers.

The Strain of Modernization

Japanese achievement had its costs, including poor living standards in the crowded cities. Many Japanese conservatives resented the passion other Japanese displayed for Western fashions. Disputes between generations, with the old clinging to traditional standards and the young more interested in Western styles, were very troubling in a society that stressed the importance of parental authority.

Some tension entered political life. Political parties in Japan's parliament clashed with the emperor's ministers over rights to determine policy. The government often had to dissolve the Diet and call for new elections, seeking a more workable parliamentary majority. Political assassinations and attempted assassinations reflected grievances, including direct action impulses in the samurai tradition.

Another kind of friction emerged in intellectual life. Many Japanese scholars copied Western philosophies and literary styles, and there was enough adaptation to prevent the emergence of a full Russian-style intelligentsia. Other intellectuals expressed a deep pessimism about the loss of identity in a changing world. The underlying theme was confusion about a Japan that was no longer traditional, but not Western either. What was it? Thus, some writers spoke of Japan's heading for a "nervous collapse from which we will not be able to recover." Others dealt with more personal conflicts such as those in the following poem:

Do not be loved by others; do not accept their charity, do not promise anything. . . Always wear a mask. Always be ready for a fight—be able to hit the next man on the head at any time. Don't forget that when you make friends with someone you are sooner or later certain to break with him.
As an antidote to social and cultural insecurity, Japanese leaders urged national loyalty and devotion to the emperor, and with some success. The official message promoted Japanese virtues of obedience and harmony that the West lacked. School texts thus stressed,

Our country takes as its base the family system: the nation is but a single family, the imperial family is our main house. We the people worship the unbroken imperial line with the same feeling of respect and love that a child feels toward his parents. . . . The union of loyalty and filial piety is truly the special character of our national polity.

Japanese nationalism built on traditions of superiority, cohesion, and deference to rulers, as well as on the new tensions generated by rapid change. It became a deep force, probably in Japan more than elsewhere, that played a unique role in justifying sacrifice and struggle in a national mission to preserve independence and dignity in a hostile world. Nationalism, along with firm police repression of dissent and the sweeping changes of the early Meiji years, certainly helps explain why Japan avoided the revolutionary pressure that hit Russia, China, and other countries after 1900.

Yet Japan's very success reminds us of how unusual it was. No other society outside the Western world was yet able to match its achievements. Russia, responding to Western example in its own way, continued its growth as a world power, but amid such social disarray that further upheaval was inevitable. Most of the rest of the world faced the more immediate concern of adjusting to or resisting Western dominance; industrialization was a remote prospect. Even today, when many societies are striving for greater industrialization, the ability to emulate the Japanese pattern of rapid change seems very limited—with other parts of east Asia, interestingly enough, leading the pack.

Global Connections and Critical Themes

RUSSIA AND JAPAN IN THE WORLD

Russia's world role, founded on its huge size and territorial expansion, had already been established in the Early Modern period. There were, however, new twists during the 19th century. Russian troops and diplomats periodically gained direct roles in western Europe. Russian forces entered France as part of the coalition that defeated Napoleon. A side result was the development of new restaurants in France, called bistros, based on the Russian word for quick. Russian armies helped put down the Hungarian revolution in 1849. Russian involvement in Middle Eastern diplomacy resulted from its steady pressure on the Ottoman empire. By the later 19th century, Russia extended its influence in eastern Asia, seizing new territories in northern China and claiming a role elsewhere, in China and Korea alike. This set the collision course with Japan. Russia also participated somewhat more broadly in the globalization of the later 19th century, participating in international conferences and contributing to "international" styles in art.

Japan's world role was much newer, and just emerging by 1900. Long isolated, Japan had experienced only one previous attempt at assertion beyond its borders, the late-16th century invasion of Korea. Now, however, ambitions increased, fueled by economic needs, growing industrial and military strength, and population pressure. It was during the Meiji era that Japanese leaders decided to open the wave of globalization, although without losing a distinctive identity, rather than trying to resist it. More specifically, Japan sought to be regarded as a great nation along Western imperialist lines. This brought the conflicts with China and Russia around 1900, and wider experiments thereafter. In the long run, it was Japan's striking economic success that would most clearly define its new place in the world. Initially, the unfolding of strength in the eastern Pacific region, along with the complex relationships to the West, marked Japan's dramatic entry as a force to be reckoned with.

The beginnings of serious industrialization in Russia and Japan, and the entry of Japan into world affairs, contributed important new ingredients to the global diplomatic picture by the end of the long 19th century. These developments, along with the rise of the United States, added to the growing sense of competition between the established Western powers. Japan's surge promoted a fear in the West of a new yellow peril that should be opposed through greater imperialist efforts. Outright colonial acquisitions by the new powers added directly to the competitive atmosphere, particularly in the Far East.
Further Readings


On MyHistorylab

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Compare the industrialization process in Japan and Russia with early industrialization in western Europe.

2. What were the main causes of revolutionary potential in Russia by 1900? Was a major revolution inevitable by that point?

3. Through comparisons with Russia, explain why Japan managed to introduce fundamental change without provoking a revolution.

4. To what extent was Confucianism a constructive cultural framework for industrialization? What aspects of Confucianism had to change to facilitate industrial development?

5. Why did Japan do better than China in initially responding to the industrial West?