

## Primary Source Worksheet - Bloody Sunday

As you read each document look for key details. Compare how each document describes the events of Bloody Sunday. Then answer the questions at the end.

### *Accounts of Bloody Sunday, January 22, 1905*

#### **A. Anonymous Correspondent for the London *Times*:**

A more perfect and lovely day never dawned. The air was crisp and the sky almost cloudless. They [the people] were all walking in the direction of the Winter Palace [Czar's main palace in St. Petersburg]. Joining in the stream of workmen, I proceeded in the direction of the Winter Palace. No observer could help being struck by the look of sullen determination on every face. Already a crowd of many thousands had collected, but was prevented from entering the square by mounted troops . . .

Presently the masses began to press forward threateningly. The cavalry advanced at a walking pace, scattering the people right and left. . . . The first trouble began at 11 o'clock, when the military tried to turn back some thousands of strikers at one of the bridges. The same thing happened almost simultaneously at other bridges, where the constant flow of workmen pressing forward refused to be denied access to the common rendezvous in the Palace Square. The Cossacks at first used their knouts (wooden clubs), then the flat of their sabers, and finally they fired. . . .

The passions of the mob broke loose like a bursting dam. The people, seeing the dead and dying carried away in all directions, the snow on the streets and pavements soaked with blood, cried aloud for vengeance. Meanwhile the situation at the Palace was becoming momentarily worse. The troops were reported to be unable to control the vast masses which were constantly surging forward. Re-enforcements were sent, and at 2 o'clock the order was given to fire. Men, women, and children fell at each volley, and were carried away in ambulances, sledges, and carts. The indignation and fury of every class were aroused. Students, merchants, all classes of the population alike were inflamed. At the moment of writing, firing is going on in every quarter of the city.

Father Gapon, marching at the head of a large body of workmen, carrying a cross and other religious emblems, was wounded in the arm and shoulder. . . . The troops are apparently reckless, firing right and left, with or without reason. The rioters continue to appeal to them, saying, "You are Russians! Why play the part of bloodthirsty butchers?" . . . [http://www.shsu.edu/~his\\_ncp/1905BS.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~his_ncp/1905BS.html)

Edited further by Ms. Donat [excerpted from *Readings in Modern European History*, James Harvey Robinson and Charles Beard, eds., vol. 2 (Boston:Ginn and Company, 1908), pp. 373-375]

**B. Bernard Pares, a British academic, was a regular visitor to Russia during the reign of Nicholas II.**

Father Gapon's organization was based on a representation of one person for every thousand workers. He planned a peaceful demonstration in the form of a march to the Winter Palace, carrying church banners and singing religious and national songs. Owing to the idiocy of the military authorities, the crowd was met with rifle fire both at the outskirts of the city and the palace square. The actual victims, as certified by a public commission of lawyers of the Opposition, was approximately 150 killed and 200 wounded; and as all who had taken a leading part in the procession were then expelled from the capital, the news was circulated all over the Empire.

**C. Extract from the petition that Father George Gapon hoped to present to Nicholas II on 22nd January, 1905.**

We workers, our children, our wives and our old, helpless parents have come, Lord, to seek truth and protection from you. We are impoverished and oppressed, unbearable work is imposed on us, we are despised and not recognized as human beings. We are treated as slaves, who must bear their fate and be silent. We have suffered terrible things, but we are pressed ever deeper into the abyss of poverty, ignorance and lack of rights.

**The demands made by Father George Gapon and the Assembly of Factory Workers.**

- (1) An 8-hour day and freedom to organize trade unions.
- (2) Improved working conditions, free medical aid, higher wages for women workers.
- (3) Elections to be held for a constituent assembly by universal, equal and secret suffrage.
- (4) Freedom of speech, press, association and religion.
- (5) An end to the war with Japan.

**D. Victor Serge, *Year One of the Russian Revolution* (1930)**

Father Gapon is a remarkable character. He seems to have believed sincerely in the possibility of reconciling the true interests of the workers with the authorities' good intentions. At any rate it was he who organized the movement to petition the Tsar which ended with the massacre of 22 January, 1905.

The petition of the workers of St. Petersburg on Nicholas II, drafted by Gapon and endorsed by tens of thousands of proletarians, was both a tearful entreaty and a daring set of demands. It asked for an eight-hour day, recognition of workers' rights and a Constitution (including the responsibility of ministers to the people, separation of Church and State, and democratic liberties). From all quarters of the capital the petitioners, carrying icons and singing hymns, set off marching through the snow, late on a January morning, to see their "little father, the Tsar".

At every cross-road armed ambushes were waiting for them. The soldiers machine-gunned them down and the Cossacks charged them. "Treat them like rebels"

had been the Emperor's command. The outcome of the day was several hundred dead and as many wounded. This stupid and criminal repression detonated the first Russian revolution.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/RUSgapon.htm>

further edited by Ms. Donat

#### E. Vladimir **Lenin: Revolutionary Days The Number of Killed or Wounded**

Reports as to the number of killed or wounded differ. Naturally, there can be no question of an exact count, and a visual estimate is very difficult. The government's report giving 96 killed and 330 wounded is obviously false, and no one believes it. According to the latest press reports, journalists handed the Minister of the Interior a list of *4,600 killed or wounded*, as compiled by reporters. Of course, even this figure *cannot be* complete, since it would be impossible even in the day-time (let alone at night) to count all the killed and wounded in the various clashes.

The victory of the autocracy over the unarmed people took a toll no smaller than did the big battles in Manchuria. No wonder the St. Petersburg workers, according to the reports of foreign correspondents, cried out to the officers that they were more successful at fighting the Russian people than they were the Japanese.

<http://www2.cddc.vt.edu/marxists/archive/lenin/works/1905/rd/8.htm#v08fl62-121>

#### F. Czar Nicholas II **Manifesto of 17 October 1905: On the improvement of order in the state**

The disturbances and unrest in St Petersburg, Moscow and in many other parts of our Empire have filled Our heart with great and profound sorrow. . . . The present disturbances could give rise to national instability and present a threat to the unity of Our State. [The Czar will] . . . use all Our strength, intelligence and power to put a speedy end to this unrest which is so dangerous for the State. . . .

However, in view of the need to speedily implement earlier measures to pacify the country, . . . We have therefore ordered the government to take the following measures in fulfillment of our unbending will:

Fundamental civil freedoms will be granted to the population, including real personal inviolability, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association.

Participation in the Duma [national Congress] will be granted to those classes of the population which are at present deprived of voting powers. . . this will lead to the development of a universal franchise [all men will be able to vote].

It is established as an unshakeable rule that no law can come into force without its approval by the State Duma . . . .

We call on all true sons of Russia to remember the homeland, to help put a stop to this unprecedented unrest and, together with this, to devote all their strength to the restoration of peace to their native land.

Source: *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 3rd series, vol. XXV/I, no. 26803. Further edited by Ms. Donat.  
<http://www.dur.ac.uk/a.k.harrington/octmanif.html>