1906 Russian Duma
SILTMUN IV

Chair: Paul Witry
Political Officer: Danny Benson
Vice Chair: Dennis Sopic

December 7th, 2013
Lyons Township High School
La Grange, Illinois
Hello Delegates!

I have the wonderful job of being the chair for the 1906 Russian Duma at SILTMUN IV this year! My name is Paul Witry and I am a junior at St. Ignatius College Prep. I have been a member of our Model UN team since freshman year and have attended many conferences. I have been USG of Simulations at SILTMUN III, Head of Communications at SIMUN XII as well as on the dais of the JCC Cold War Cabinet. I am looking forward to a fun, productive and fast paced day when we meet for committee.

This will be the second cabinet I have chaired, and I aim to give everyone the best experience possible. We are focused on fostering student’s love for MUN and want to help then learn the ins and outs of committee. My vice chair Danny Benson is equally proficient in Model UN, and I am confident we will give you a very interesting and rigorous committee experience.

The 1906 Russian Duma was the political body from 1906 to 1917 in the Russian Empire. This body took on some the major issues of the day. Our committee is set in 1906, so anything after that time has not happened and does not affect the committee. You will set history. Our first topic will be economic reform and land division and our second will be electoral and political reform. These topics will determine the direction that Russia goes in its future and how its people survive. During the simulation, I will be acting as Sergey Muromtsev, who was the head of the First Russian Duma.

Some of you may have previously been in large GA sized bodies and have found it hard to speak and very slow. This will not be like that in any way. When you walk into this committee, there will be 24 other well-prepared people ready to dive into their work. You must know your position completely and use it to your advantage. Do as much research as possible. Become the person you are representing. This will make you a very successful delegate in not only this conference but in the future.

Yours in diplomacy,

Paul Witry, Chair
Danny Benson, Political Officer
Dennis Sopic, Vice Chair

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to email me at Paul.Witry@students.ignatius.org, with your position and “Russian Duma” as the subject. I will usually respond within 24 hours of your email. If I don’t return your email or answer your question, don’t hesitate to email me again. I want to make your Model UN experience as terrific as possible. See you on December 7th!
History of the Russian Duma

The period prior to the first Duma was a time of great turmoil in Russia. Political parties were being formed in the wake of the Russo-Japanese war. Throughout the country people were calling for political reform. Unions were on strike and the Soviets were calling for the withholding of taxes. In addition, there were strong anti-Semitic feelings throughout the country. It was a delicate situation to say the least. In October 1905, Nicholas II released a manifesto that helped to quell some of the issues, while sparking other fires across his great nation. ¹

“If the Duma did nothing else, it brought together for the first time representatives of every class and of every interest in Russia.” ² The Duma gave the political parties across the nation a vice in the politics that affected them. In addition, the Duma was intended to create an independent market and revitalize the Russian economy. Each political party has a different idea about the process, which makes the process difficult. The Duma aimed to successfully reform the land system within Russia, providing poor farmers with the means to start their own business and rebuild the market.

While most of the major parties were represented, some had a larger presence than others as well as more power. The liberal constitutional Democrats (Kadets) were the primary party within the body.³

³ Ibid
### The Makeup of the 1906 Russian Duma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties and coalitions</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constitutional Democratic party (Kadets)</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trudoviks (moderate labor)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Social Democratic Labour Party</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octobrist Party (conservative-liberal)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National minorities</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>105 (including 34 SRs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>478</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Topic 1: Civil Unrest

1. History

The Russian Revolution of 1905 started on January 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 1905, and ended on June 16, 1907. Throughout the two years of the revolution, major changes were brought out to better the Russian Empire, including adding the establishment of limited constitutional monarchy and the State Duma of the Russian Empire. There were four main reasons that the Revolution was started: agrarian problem, the nationality problem, the labor problem, and the educated class as a problem.

The agrarian problem consisted of the peasants, who were unable to pay for their land, and therefore starved to death. The basic problem started when the nobles, unable to pay for their land anymore, sold it to the peasants at low prices. The land, known as “allotment land”, wouldn’t be owned by individual peasants, but would be owned by the community of peasants; individual peasants would have rights to strips of land that were assigned to them under the open field system. Unfortunately a peasant was unable to sell or mortgage his piece of land so in practice he couldn’t renounce his rights to his land and thus he would be required to pay his share of redemption dues to the village commune. The government had created this plan to ensure the proletarization of the peasants would never happen, but the peasants were not given enough land to provide for their needs. By the tenth year of Nicholas II’s reign, their total arrears in payments of taxes and dues were 118 million rubles. These peasants were forced to roam the streets and look for work, but the work was not available to them. Desperate and hungry, they turned against the government and started violence that seemed could not be stopped.

The Nationality problem consisted of the lack of intercommunication between the national and religious groups. From long ago, the Russians have seen the Jewish religion has been seen as inferior, and a problem to the Russian society. Even though there were five million Jewish people, the Russians did not regard them as useful subjects of the empire, because of the Russians' general hatred towards them. The Jewish people constituted only about 6 percent of the population, but were concentrated in the western borderlands. Like other minorities in Russia, the Jews lived in miserable and circumscribed lives, forbidden to settle or acquire land outside the cities and towns, legally limited in attendance at secondary school and higher schools, virtually barred
from legal professions, denied the right to vote for municipal councilors, and excluded from services in the Navy or the Guards. Russia was a multiethnic empire.

Nineteenth century Russians saw cultures and religions in a clear hierarchy. Non-Russian cultures were tolerated in the empire but weren’t necessarily respected. Another social group that the Russians did not approve of was the Polish, because of many reasons. One reason was the Polish Rebellion of 1863. Unlike other minority nationalities, the Poles, in the eyes of the Tsar, were a direct threat to the empire’s stability. After the rebellion was crushed, the government implemented policies to reduce Polish cultural influences. The Russians also did not trust the Germans, for the Russian government felt that the unification of Germany would upset the power balance among the great powers of Europe and that Germany would use its strength against Russia. The government thought that the borders would be defended better if the borderland were more Russian in character.

Russia experimented with laissez-faire capitalist policies, which depleted their resources. That then lead to international price drops for grain, and Russia’s foreign indebtedness and needs for imports grew. War and military preparations continued to consume government revenues. At the same time, the peasant taxpayers’ ability to pay was strained to the utmost, leading to widespread famine in 1891. In the 1890s, under the minister of finance Sergei Witte, a crash governmental program was proposed to promote industrialization. His policies included heavy government expenditures for railroad building and operations, subsidies and supporting services for private industrialists, high protective tariffs for Russian industries especially heavy industry, increased exports, stable currency, and encouragement of foreign investments. His plans were successful, with industrial growth averaging 8 percent per year, and Railroad mileage grew by 40 percent. Industrial workers began to feel dissatisfaction with the Tsarist government despite the protective laws that the government had decreed. Some of those laws included the prohibition of children under 12 from working with the exception of night work in glass factories, limited employment of those who were between the ages of 12 and 15 and wouldn’t allow them to work on Sundays and holidays, prohibited charging workers for the cost of lighting of the shops and plants, required workers be paid in cash at least once a month, and limited the size and bases of fines for workers who were tardy.

The minister of the interior set up schools to try and cover the antigovernment feelings, but failed to follow up on those problems, thus leading to the educated class problems. They were taking up problems that were unrelated to their "proper
employment", and were taking part in open disorderly displays of defiance and radicalism. To express their feelings, students boycotted examinations, rioted, arranged marches in sympathy with the strikers or political prisoners, circulated petitions, or wrote antigovernment propaganda. These educated citizens understood what the government was doing, and inspired the peasants with their knowledge. This was originally perceived by the government as lack of proper training in patriotism and religion, and started to expel the students who misbehaved. The government looked at these communities with alarm, and in 1861 it created stricter restrictions on admission and prohibited student organizations that resulted in the first ever student demonstration held in St. Petersburg, which led to a two year closure of the university. During the next two decades universities produced a significant share of Russia's revolutionaries. Prosecution records from the 1860s and 1870s show that more than one-half of all political offenses were committed by students despite their minute number in the population as a whole.

2. Current Situation

The day is April 27, 1906, and this is the first hearing of the First State Duma. The revolution is ongoing, and it seems like there will be no end. The Duma is requested by newly formed Constitutional Monarchy to solve the crisis of civil unrest. In 1906 there have been estimated more than 14,000 people had been executed and 75,000 imprisoned. The historian Brian Taylor states the number of deaths in the 1905 Revolution was in the "thousands", and notes the existence of one source that puts the figure at over 13,000 deaths. Just in December the labor unions started a riot in the streets, and artillery was used to solve the uprising. There have been countless riots by all of the classes, headed by the laborers and the peasants. People hope that the newly formed government will help bring a solution, but new ideas are welcomed as this is a time of restructure, with the people heading the discussion.
Questions to Consider:

- How does your position plan to ease the people of Russia?
- How are you going to work with your bloc to solve the problem?
- Does your position support the constitutional monarchy?
- What can be done to prevent future revolutions?
- How does your position accurately represent the views of your whole bloc position?
- What solution will appease all of the blocs, and prevent further outbreaks?
**Topic 2: Economic Reconstruction**

Another of the primary issues you as delegates will be dealing with is Economic and Agricultural Land reform. During 1906, Russia’s economy is failing and the dying agricultural industry is pulling the country down into a state of recession. You as the Russian Duma are tasked with creating a new system that will help revitalize the economy and the agricultural industry.

The current system stands as one of communes. Peasant farmers live together and share homes, land, and crops within small communities that have independent governments. The Duma aims to stop these communes and convince farmers to start independent operations and work for themselves. As a delegate in this body, it will be your job to negotiate across the aisle and create an agreement that satisfies both sides. Immediate action must be taken, as well as long-term solutions that create a stable plan for the economy in the coming years.

A solution to this issue should not just address the obvious problem of economic insecurity, but must also take into account the problem of the recent civil war. Hundreds of people have been displaced and thousands killed. The Russian economy is failing and your people are going right along with it. A resolution to this problem must take into consideration all the sides of the argument, and address the concerns of everybody involved.

Questions to Consider:

- What was your representative’s position on economic reform?
- What party is your person from?
- How would they have reacted to the current unrest?
- What are your long and short-term goals and solutions?
- Who were the primary members of your bloc?
- What system of economy do you propose implementing within the country?
- How will you address possible opposition to your plans, both from other members of the Duma and citizens?
Bloc Positions

- Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets): The Constitutional Democrats were left extremists who supported many revolutionary ideas such as universal suffrage and the creation of a Constitutional Assembly. The party held the majority of the seats in the First Duma.

- Trudoviks (Moderate Laborers): The Trudoviks were a moderate left faction who maintained the rights of farmers. They were one of the many small parties formed in the post-1905 Revolution era. They were not in favor of the Tsar as a ruler.

- Russian Social Democratic Labour Party: A party formed in 1898 in favor of socialism. Multiple other parties find their roots in this party. They were very left-sided activists.

- Octobrist (Union of October 17): This part was in support of the Tsar and looked to constitutionalism as a political ideology. Proposed a new division on power within the country.