# The Social State of Russia

## Geography
- Massive country (8 million square miles)
- 2.5x size of USA
- St Petersburg & Moscow principal cities
- Limited farmland

## Church
- Russian Orthodox Church
- Loyal supporters of royal family
- Highly-conservative

## Society
- Massive population growth – quadrupled from 40 to 165m between 1815 and 1914
- Wide social & ethnic mix, e.g. Ukrainians, Poles, Germans, Finns etc.
- 4/5 population peasants
- Class divisions
  - 1897 census: .5% ruling classes; 12% nobility; 82% peasants
- Illiterate peasantry

## Ethnic Minorities
- Russification
- Attacks (pogroms) on Jews increased esp in Jewish Pale (Belarus) leading to max exodus to North America & Western Europe
- Persecuted Jews formed radical political organisation, ‘Bund’ which joined forces with Bolsheviks

## Government
- Launched campaign of repression of all those supporting political reform.
- Liberal ministers, e.g. Loris-Melikov & Ignatiev from Alex II’s govt dismissed
- Constantin Pobedonostov, Chief Procurator of Holy Synod of Russian Orthodox Church became chief minister and leader of State Church
- Issued Manifesto declaring power resided in Tsar
- Press freedom restricted, 14 major newspapers banned between 1882-1889
- Foreign books & newspapers rigorously censored
- University fees increased & from 1884 lost independence & came under state control
- 1889 universities temporarily closed due to student demonstrations
- Okhrana (secret police) estd.

## Civil Rights
- Nicolai Bunge introduced laws to reduce tax burdens on peasants
- Peasants Land Bank estd to provide loan facilities for peasants
- Vyshnegradski introduced financial incentives to migrate to Siberia
- However, famine struck in 1891 caused by demands on land
**The return of Lenin**

Lenin’s return increased pressure on the Provisional Government as it meant…

- Other revolutionaries returned, e.g. Stalin
- Lenin returned to stir up opposition to PG
- Increased support for Soviet – sole right to govern, ‘All Power to the Soviets’
- Criticisms echoed popular concerns ‘Peace, Land & Bread’
- Excellent orator – Finland Station Speech & April Theses, need for worldwide revolution

**Lenin’s ideology and the April Theses**

- Lenin was a committed follower of the ideas of the German political thinker Karl Marx
- His popular slogans ‘All power to the Soviets’ and ‘Peace, Land and Bread’ were intended to rally support for the revolution and undermine the authority of the Provisional Government
- Russia was insufficiently industrialised by the early twentieth century for there to be enough workers to stage a revolution, so Lenin and the Bolsheviks would have to do this on their behalf
- Lenin welcomed the outbreak of War in 1914, because he thought the strains it would create would lead to revolution
- When Lenin arrived in Petrograd he condemned the Provisional Government and demanded an immediate revolution
- Lenin wanted to see political power handed over to the Soviets
- He disagreed with other political leaders including those in his own party like Stalin, who supported the Provisional Government because they saw it as a necessary stage in a revolution
- He believed in a worldwide socialist revolution
- In 1902 he wrote a book entitled ‘What is to be Done’ in which he described the need for a disciplined party of professional revolutionaries to organise and lead the Russian revolution
- Lenin believed that capitalists had deliberately caused the War to gain more wealth
- He believed that revolution would break out in weak capitalist societies like Russia – ‘capitalism’s weakest link’
- Like Marx, Lenin thought that revolution would be achieved by different stages: first there would be a capitalist (bourgeois) society where workers were exploited by industrialists, then there would be a socialist revolution leading to a much fairer society

**The July Days**

**What were the causes?**

- Bolshevik planning
- All-Russia Congress of Soviets ready to take power from PG
- Failure of PG’s ‘June Offensive’ against Austro-Hungarian Army