

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Modern European History  
Unit 6 – Nation-Building and War  
Pre-Revolution Russia

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Read the following handout thoroughly and annotate the information that will answer the following questions:**

What did Uvarov mean by “orthodoxy?”

What constituted the chief condition of the Russian political experience?

Why did Nicholas I feel the need to adopt the policy of “orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality?”

**CZAR NICHOLAS I'S APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT:  
ORTHODOXY, AUTOCRACY, NATIONALITY**

*Worried by the unrest stirred up among the Russian people by nationalist and liberal ideas from western Europe, Czar Nicholas I attempted to shut the door to Western influence. In a memorandum to Nicholas in 1834, the Russian Minister of Public Education, S.s. Uvarov, outlined this new policy. In the excerpt below from Russia and the West from Peter to Khrushchev, edited by L. Fay Olivia, Uvarov describes the three main themes of the policy - orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality. As you read the excerpt, ask yourself why Nicholas feared the influence of western ideas.*

Amid the rapid decay of religious and civilian institutions in Europe and the universal spread of destructive notions, in view of the sad occurrences that surrounded us on all sides, it was necessary to fortify our Fatherland on the firm foundations which are the basis for the prosperity, the strength, and the life of the people; to find the principals that constitute the distinguishing character of Russia and belong to her exclusively; to gather into one whole the sacred remains of her native essence and cast on these the anchor of our salvation. Fortunately, Russia has kept a warm faith in the saving principles without which she cannot prosper, gain strength, or live.

Sincerely and deeply attached to the Church of his fathers, the Russian has, from the earliest times, looked upon it as the pledge of social and family happiness.

Without love for the faith of its ancestors, a people, just as an individual, is bound to perish. A Russian devoted to his country will no more consent to the loss of one of the tenets of our Orthodoxy than to the theft of one pearl from the crown.

Autocracy constitutes the chief condition of the political experience of Russia. The Russian colossus stands on it as on the cornerstone of its greatness. This truth is felt by the overwhelming majority of Your Majesty's subjects: they feel it fully, though they are placed in various walks of life and differ in their education and in their relations to the government. The saving conviction that Russia lives and is preserved by the spirit of a strong, humane, enlightened autocracy must permeate public education and develop with it.

Beside these two national principles, there is a third, no less important, no less powerful: nationality. The question of nationality does not have the unity of the preceding one; but both take their origin from the same source and are linked on every page of the history of the Russian Empire. All the difficulty concerning nationality consists in harmonizing old and new conceptions; but nationality does not compel us to go back or stand still; it does not require immobility in ideas. The government system, as the human body, must change its aspect with time; features alter with years, but their character must not alter.