

Name: _____
Global Studies

Date: _____

What was life like in Czarist Russia?

The following scene takes place in a small village near the Russian capital of Moscow.

Natasha Federov: My dear husband, how was farming today?

Evgeni Federov: Great!! I harvested another potato today!

Natasha Federov: Excellent. Now we have ten potatoes to get us through the next three months of winter.

Evgeni Federov: That is true. I just hope that we don't put on too much weight with all that extra food.

Natasha Federov: I know. The winter is supposed to be mild. It's only going to be 10 degrees below zero instead of the usual 30 degrees below zero. So we don't even need that extra layer of winter fat.

Evgeni Federov: Indeed. Now remember to hide some of those potatoes, otherwise Count Malkin will raise the rent he charges for this wonderful patch of land we're on.

Natasha Federov: I know. It stinks that we serfs, who work so hard for our food, must give half our crops to those rotten landlords, the nobles.

Evgeni Federov: It's the czar's fault. 90% of Russia's people are serfs. Meanwhile, the Czar lives in his fancy palace and actually eats meat for dinner everyday. We haven't eaten meat since Fluffy and Rover died last year. That Czar Nicholas II has everything and we have nothing.

Natasha Federov: No doubt. Perhaps it is time the nobles and the Czar receive a 'smackdown.'

Evgeni Federov: 'Smackdown?' I'm not so sure about that, but I do know the system needs to change. We cannot allow ourselves to go on living this miserable existence.

Natasha Federov: Very true. I'm going to speak to the other serfs in the village to see if we can do something about this. I heard that the French peasants were in a similar situation in 1789. I wonder how they straightened things out.

TWO DAYS LATER

(Knocks on the Door)

Kiril Kabanov: Is this the hut of Natasha and Evgeni Federov?

Evgeni Federov: Yes, it is.

Kiril Kabanov: I am with the KGB. Come with me, both of you.

Natasha Federov: What have we done?



Kiril Kabanov: Did you not tell your neighbors that the Czar should be done away with? Did you not tell your neighbors that the nobles should be done away with?

Evgeni Federov: Yes, but I...

Kiril Kabanov: Step outside, both of you, traitors.

(TWO QUICK SHOTS ARE HEARD)

THE END



DIRECTIONS: Use the reading to answer the following questions.

1. Who was the Russian wife? _____

2. Who was the Russian farmer? _____

3. What type of organization do you think the KGB is? _____

4. How would you explain what a serf is? _____

5. Describe one problem the serfs faced. _____

6. Why were the serfs angry with the nobles? _____

7. Why were the serfs angered by the Czar's lifestyle? _____

8. How did the KGB know what Natasha and Evgeni said? _____

9. How is the serfs 'trial' different from our legal system? _____

10. Is violence justified in overthrowing the Czar's rule? _____
