



A-level HISTORY

Component 1H Tsarist and Communist Russia, 1855–1964

Friday 23 May 2025

Morning

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 16-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7042/1H.
- Answer **three** questions.
In **Section A** answer Question 01.
In **Section B** answer **two** questions.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Advice

- You are advised to spend about:
 - 1 hour on Question 01 from **Section A**
 - 45 minutes on each of the **two** questions answered from **Section B**.

Section A

Answer Question 01.

Extract A

Russia faced many domestic difficulties in 1855. The new Tsar, Alexander II, received various ministerial reports concerning, for example, the poor condition of state-owned peasants and the dangers of the enormously high level of peasant taxation. Even Valuev, a right-wing provincial governor, voiced his concern for the future of the empire. Calls for action came from all sides: bureaucrats, intellectuals of various persuasions, city-dwellers and the peasantry all pressed for radical changes. Westernisers and Slavophiles were advocating, among other things, the end of serfdom, freedom of opinion and of the press, freedom of instruction in schools and universities and open judicial proceedings. None of these attacked the regime as fiercely as the left-wing socialist, Alexander Herzen, though. His publications, produced in London, beyond the reach of the imperial censors, were to play a significant part in promoting change. Russians read them and contributed to them, and Alexander II found himself called upon to remodel the state.

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Adapted from D Saunders, *Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform*, 1992

Extract B

Alexander II was well prepared for Tsardom. He knew that serfdom must be reformed, although when his brother, Konstantin, demanded immediate reform in 1855, Alexander proposed 'quiet for now'. Alexander was the most sensitive of the Romanovs. He toured the country, relaxing court rules and easing censorship, signalling a new openness – the smiling tsar, so different from his scowling father. He knew change was essential and carefully planned his moves. He was also backed by his forward-thinking Aunt Elena. She introduced Alexander to the young liberal, Nikolai Milyutin, whom she had asked to devise a plan to free the serfs on her own large estates. Emancipation was only the first of Alexander's many reforms and he had such unshakeable firmness in these great undertakings that he could ignore the murmurings of opponents of innovation. In this sense, the soft, humane Alexander II displayed greater decisiveness and a truer idea of his own power than his father who had been noted for his iron will.

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Adapted from SS Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, 2016

Extract C

The overriding impetus behind the steps towards reform was the disaster of the Crimean War. That foreign fiasco led to domestic reconstruction because it exposed the real backwardness and weakness of the traditional Russian State. The Crimean War was not only costly in lives, resources and prestige, but it also destroyed the belief that had stood in the way of reform. It was no longer the case that the existing social order meant stability and power. The shock of defeat caused the elite to recognise the need to end Russian serfdom and move towards a modern economy capable of meeting the challenge of Western power. Serf emancipation would be the most significant reform, but many other reforms would follow, based on a growing acceptance that not only serfs, but society more generally, had to be emancipated from the chains of state control. The reformist zeal, derived from the Crimean crisis, was driven by a belief that only such emancipation could liberate the vital forces of progress.

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Adapted from G Freeze, *Russia: A History*, 1997

0	1
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Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to the reasons why Alexander II carried out a programme of domestic reforms.

[30 marks]

Turn over for Section B

Section B

Answer **two** questions.

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'The collapse of the Tsarist state in 1917 was due to the personal inadequacies of Tsar Nicholas II in the years after 1894.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

0	3
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To what extent were the Leninist and Stalinist regimes, in the years 1917 to 1945, dependent on fear and terror?

[25 marks]

0	4
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'Life was much easier for the Soviet people under Khrushchev, in the years 1953 to 1964, than it had been under Stalin, in the years 1945 to 1953.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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