



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 24 May 2023 – Morning

A Level History A

Y318/01 Russia and its Rulers 1855–1964

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE

- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

SECTION A

Read the **two** passages and answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the domestic effects of the Crimean War. [30]

Passage A

The nature and causes of Russia's defeat in the Crimean War had serious consequences for the Tsarist regime. Russia's vast military system had proved to be just an illusion. Russia had not been able to muster more than a fraction of her soldiers to fight in the Crimea. Worse still, Russian industry had proved largely incapable of equipping these troops for a modern war. Since the autocracy justified its existence on the grounds that it guaranteed Russian stability and greatness, the defeat in the Crimea seemed to justify the critical comments made by opponents of the government. Under these pressures Alexander may appear less of a far-sighted reformer in the years following the Crimean War than a dutiful ruler with daunting challenges of great complexity. Alexander was responsible for the most spectacular social reform of the nineteenth century. Alexander famously stated that 'serfdom cannot remain unchanged'. It has become clear, however, that Alexander was reacting to a crisis that was already too real in Russian politics. The peasants, stirred by the knowledge that wars like the Crimean War needed soldiers, and that serf soldiers had traditionally been freed at the end of their military service, were in a state of unusual agitation. Since these reforms were a response to the military disasters of the Crimea, then it was only logical that the state of the Russian military establishment should also be re-examined.

Adapted from: T A. Morris, European History, 1848–1945, published in 1996.

Passage B

The Crimean War, especially the capture of Sebastopol, had revealed how deep-seated Russia's problems were. At home, discontent had grown among all classes, including the nobility. Russia was seen by many to be hopelessly backward. Clearly, there was an urgent need for some kind of restructuring. For those wanting change, Alexander's new reign got off to a promising start, with a range of reforms. Russian defeat had been the catalyst for fundamental change, and Alexander moved enthusiastically to pass reforms. Alexander had deep concern for his people, and he recognized that there had to be changes in the governmental system. The gentry had lost much of the legal basis for their control of the peasantry, but central government could not fill the void. The changes to local government provided new opportunities for many people who had not been involved in political life before. Before the reforms, the poor's chances of justice were remote, but the courts were now open to the public. Alexander also allowed a relaxation of central control in some regions.

The far-reaching reforms almost ground to a halt in the later 1860s. Perhaps Alexander's enthusiasm for reform was over, his mind changed by the first serious attempt on his life. One area that saw very little reform was the financial policies of the government. Despite the reforms, the political climate in Russia grew more threatening for the regime. The new openness encouraged by the reforms aroused expectations which the Tsar would never be able to satisfy.

Adapted from P. Oxley: Russia 1855–1991: From Tsars to Commissars, published in 2001.

3**SECTION B**

Answer any **two** questions.

- 2*** 'Stalin made greater changes to limitations on personal, political and religious freedoms than any other Russian ruler.' How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? **[25]**
- 3*** 'Wars and revolutions always weakened Russian governments in the years from 1855 to 1964.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4*** 'The First World War was the most important event affecting the development of the Russian Empire in the period from 1855 to 1964.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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