



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

**Tuesday 21 May 2019 – Afternoon**

**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 (OCR12 sent with general stationery)

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- Use black ink.
- Answer Question 1 in Section A and any **two** questions in Section B.
- Write your answers in the Answer Booklet. The question number(s) must be clearly shown.

**INFORMATION**

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

## SECTION A

Read the two passages and then 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 reasons why Alexander II emancipated the serfs. [30]

**Passage A**

Historians have long discarded the view that Alexander was a liberal whose goal to transform Russia into a modern democracy was ultimately defeated by harsh realities. They see him as a conservative, determined to preserve what was best from the old system, with a devotion to autocracy scarcely less than his father's. In particular, he was deeply convinced of his own sacred duty and of Russia's special identity. Like his father, at various times he expressed doubts about the loyalty of most sections of society, from the nobles to the peasants. Even his reforms reflected the wishes of his father, who had memorably admitted that serfdom was, "an evil, palpable and obvious to all". At the same time, he craved the approval of Western monarchs, amongst whose ranks he considered himself to belong. Modern statehood and serfdom were incompatible. All this was reflected in Alexander's role as 'Tsar-Liberator'. As he announced to the assembly of Moscow nobles in March 1856, it was better to abolish serfdom from above than to await the time when it began to abolish itself from below. The main aim was not to free up labour and promote "capitalism" – Alexander and his contemporaries did not think in such terms – but rather to improve the condition of the peasants and reduce the risk of rural revolt.

Adapted from: L. Hughes, *The Romanovs*, published in 2008.

**Passage B**

Alexander was an honest conservative, forced by the overwhelming logic of facts to put in the forefront of the program [of domestic reform] the liberation of the serfs. The government could best appreciate these evils when they affected the army, on which it depended entirely for its prestige not only abroad but at home. This was the lesson of the Crimean War. The military strength of Russia had been greatly exaggerated. Russia herself had thrown many more men into the war, but the wastage was enormous. The transport inflicted an enormous burden upon the population, only to achieve a small result; the medical service was as usual almost negligible, and epidemics were rampant.

The Russian infantry fought splendidly, but their commanders were incompetent. Above all, there was shown up at the front line, where there was every demand for intelligence and initiative, the standing contrast between the status of Russian serf and that of the free man of Western Europe; and it made serfdom look absurd as a basis of military power. For Russia, as soon as the Treaty of Paris was signed, the question of reform overtook all other issues. As the first step to any reform, serfdom had evidently got to be abolished. The Tsar was the only possible trustee of the peasants, and did not need to be a liberal in order to appreciate their first essential requirements and their economic importance to the country.

Adapted from: B. Pares, *A History of Russia*, published in 1953.

**SECTION B**

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2\*** 'Opposition to Russian rulers was more successful under the rule of the Tsars than the Communist governments.' How far do you agree with this view of the period 1855–1964? **[25]**
- 3\*** 'The Russo-Japanese war of 1904–1905 changed the lives of the peasantry more than any other war in the period 1855–1964.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4\*** 'In the period 1855–1964 the lives of the nationalities changed more under the rule of the Communist governments than the Tsars.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

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