



Ark Globe Academy
Year 11 to 12 Transition Work:
Russian History

AQA Tsarist and Communist Russia 1855-1964



To-do List

Task	Instructions	Complete
Task 1: Organisation	Buy a folder for the Russia side of the course (or collect one from Sixth Form) and a pack of 10 dividers. You will need to divide it into the following areas: 1. Course Info 2. Lessons/PPs 3. Alex II 4. Alex III 5. Nicholas II 6. Reading 7. Assessment	
Task 2: Background Reading	Complete the reading and 3 questions on what Russia was like in 1855	
Task 3: MindMap/Diagram	Create a MindMap or diagram showing the strengths and challenges the Tsarist regime faced in 1855.	
Task 4: Definitions	Learn the 20 key terms related to Russia ready for a test in the first lesson	
Task 5: Example Essay	Read through the Intro and 1st paragraph on 'Alexander II only introduced reforms because of Russia's defeat in the Crimea.' Assess the validity of this statement <i>Identify the argument being made and write this in your own words. Highlight the Point, Evidence and Explanation used in the 1st paragraph. Identify how this is different from a 16 mark GCSE question.</i>	

Task 2: Background reading

Complete the reading to answer these three questions in detail. Use the definitions from task 4 to help you.

1 Trying to preserve autocracy, 1855–1894

REVISION PROGRESS



1 The Russian autocracy in 1855



RECAP

In 1855, Russia was a vast empire covering around 21 million square kilometres. It contained many ethnic groups, each with its own culture, customs, language and, in some cases, religion. The Empire was predominantly held together by the power of the Tsar and the Russian **Orthodox Church** to demand obedience.



The calendar in Russia

The Russians used the Julian calendar until 31 January 1918, rather than the Gregorian calendar, in use elsewhere in Europe. Consequently, by 1918, Russia was 13 days behind Western Europe. This book uses the old-style Julian calendar for dates to 1 February 1918 and the new-style Gregorian calendar thereafter.

The political context

Russia was an **autocracy**. At its head was a tsar (emperor), who enjoyed unlimited powers. The Tsar's imperial edicts were law.

The Tsar was supported by:

- **The Church:** The Tsar was regarded as the embodiment of God on earth, controlling the Russian Orthodox Church. Russian lands were his property and the Russian people were his children. Russians were taught to show devotion to their tsar and accept their conditions on earth as God's will. Church and State were closely entwined.
- **Advisers and ministers:** These were chosen by the Tsar himself.

- **The nobility:** They kept order on their estates, and might serve as provincial governors, or in special committees appointed by the Tsar.
- **The bureaucracy:** These civil servants were paid noble officials, each holding a 'rank'. Through this bureaucracy, orders were passed down from the central government to the provinces and, in turn, to the districts and towns. It was riddled by corruption and incompetence.
- **The army:** This included around 1.5 million conscripted **serfs**, each forced into service for 25 years. The military absorbed around 45% of the government's annual expenditure. It could be used to fight in wars or to put down internal disturbances. The higher ranks were prestigious posts for nobles; for the lower ranks, army life was hard. In addition, elite regiments of mounted Cossacks, with special social privileges, acted both as a personal bodyguard to the Tsar and as police reinforcements.
- **The police:** Russia had developed into a **police state**. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press and travel abroad were prevented. Political meetings and strikes were forbidden. Censorship was enforced. The secret state security network was run by the 'Third Section' of the Emperor's Imperial Council. Its agents had unlimited powers to carry out raids, arrest and ensure the imprisonment or exile of anyone suspected of anti-tsarist behaviour.

Over 50% of the Russian population were peasant-serfs – men, women and children who were classified as the 'property' of their owners. Just over half were privately owned; the remainder were 'state serfs' who paid taxes and rent. Most serfs worked on the land in village communes (*mir*s). The serfs' working and living conditions were primitive. Most peasants were illiterate but deeply religious, superstitious and hostile to change.

Political developments

By the 19th century, liberal ideas were spreading from the West and many Russian intellectuals were arguing for a civil society based on the rule of law. However Tsar Nicholas I (reigned 1825–55) had followed a path of repression. He sought to maintain autocracy and to distance Russia from the West. His reign culminated in military defeat in the Crimea, which finally brought the need for change to the new Tsar's attention.

The economic and social context

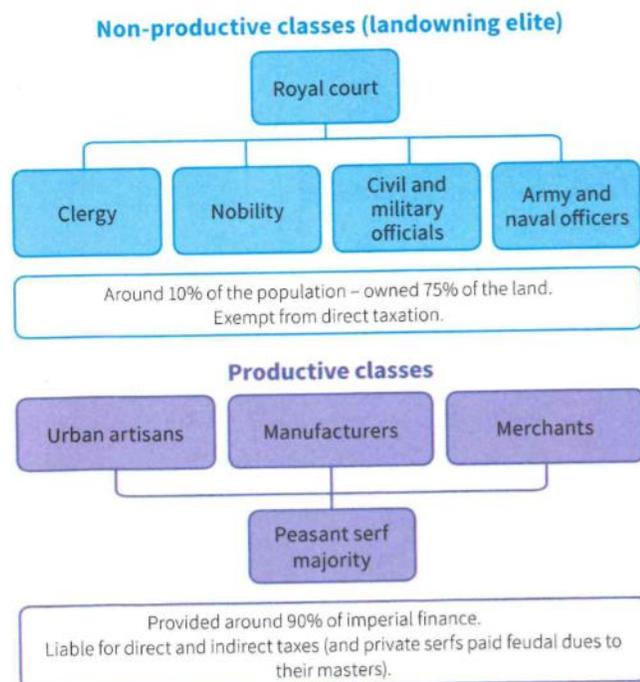
Economic situation

In 1855, Britain, Belgium, France and the German states were industrially advanced. Meanwhile, the Russian economy remained predominantly rural. This was partly because the inhospitable territory and climate in much of Russia limited economic progress. However the main reason for Russian backwardness was the serf-based economy. This limited the forces that drive change (wage-earners, markets and entrepreneurs):

- **Wage-earners:** The serfs were poor. Most only just managed to survive on the produce they grew, and starvation was common in winter. Land management systems meant that individual serf families worked scattered strips, following communal farming patterns. There was little opportunity for them to develop into 'wage-earners'.
- **Internal market demand:** Although markets existed, few goods were 'purchased'; instead, goods were exchanged. In some areas, market forces were beginning to develop as peasants sought wage-work in towns when farming was slack, but for most, money was irrelevant and there was no internal market demand.
- **Entrepreneurs:** At the other end of the scale, the small landowning elite could largely obtain what they needed by squeezing it from their serfs through service and feudal dues. Although many landowners were in debt, money was of little use to them. There was therefore little incentive to seek alternative ways of making money.

Social context

Socially, Russia was divided between the privileged land-owning elite and the serf majority – also known as the non-productive and the productive classes.



There was no coherent 'middle class', as elsewhere in Europe. There were a small number of professionals (e.g. doctors, teachers and lawyers), some of whom comprised an educated '**intelligentsia**', but the educated were predominantly the sons of nobles.

Society therefore remained essentially 'feudal' (based on birth, land and service).

The impact of the Crimean War 1853–56

The Ottoman (Turkish) Empire stretched from the Middle East across the Black Sea Straits and into the Balkans. Nicholas I's attempts to increase Russian influence there had caused the Turks to declare war in October 1853. The British and French, to protect their trading interests, entered the war in defence of Turkey. The Russians proved no match for the West and suffered defeats at Balaclava (October 1854) and Inkerman (November 1854).

Alexander II became Tsar in March 1855. By September, the fortress of Sebastopol, in the Russian Crimea, had fallen to its enemies. Russia was shocked. The concluding Treaty of Paris (1856) added the final humiliation by preventing Russian warships from using the Black Sea in peacetime.

The Crimean War had revealed Russia's military and administrative inadequacies, including:

- outdated technology
- poor transport
- inadequate leadership
- the problems of having a conscripted army.

Trade had been disrupted, peasant uprisings had escalated and much of the intelligentsia were appealing for action to close the gap between Russia and the West.

Russia's failure in the Crimean War proved a 'wake-up call'. 1855 marked the accession of a new tsar, Alexander II, and a new generation of liberal-minded nobles and officials who would strongly influence his reign.

SUMMARY

- In 1855 the vast Russian Empire was characterised by geographic, social, intellectual, economic and religious divisions.
- It was ruled by the Tsar, an autocrat with unlimited powers, in a regime backed by the Russian Orthodox Church and based on a feudal system of government.
- Politically, economically and socially, Russia remained undeveloped and 'backward' in comparison with the West.
- Failure in the Crimean War highlighted Russian inadequacies. This was to prove the catalyst for change under the new Tsar, Alexander II.

1. How was Russia ruled in 1855?

2. How did Russia's economy compare to other European countries?

3. What was the biggest challenge facing Russia in 1855?

Task 3: MindMap/Diagram

Use the reading to create a mind map of Russia's strengths and weaknesses in 1855.

Task 4: Russian History Key Terms Definitions

1) Anarchy	The absence of government or authority, usually leading to disorder.
2) Autocracy	A system of government where there are no constraints on the power of the ruler; absolute rule by one person.
3) Bourgeoisie	Owners of capital, industrialists, manufacturers, wealthy merchants and the wealthy middle classes.
4) Capitalism	An economic system based upon private enterprise and profit. The market determines the price of goods, supply of raw materials and the distribution of products.
5) Intelligentsia	Educated and more enlightened section of Russian society; normally upper middle class.
6) Mir	The peasant commune.
7) Bureaucracy	A system of government where most of the decisions are taken by state officials rather than by elected representatives.
8) Emancipation	Freedom from bondage/slavery
9) Landowning elite	Those who owned land and who were a privileged minority in Russian society.
10) Orthodox Church	Following a split in the Christian Church in the 11 th Century, the Eastern Orthodox Church developed its own beliefs and rituals. In Russia, the Orthodox Church taught followers that the Tsar's power was god-given.
11) Okhrana	Secret police established in 1881.
12) Third Section	Secret police set up by Nicolas I and abolished in 1880 by Alexander II.
13) Pogrom	Organised, violent attack on the homes and businesses of Jews.
14) Proletariat	Industrial workers
15) Real wages	Wages in terms of the amount of goods and services that can be bought.
16) Redemption Payments	Payments made by peasants to the government to redeem land they had been allocated in the emancipation.
17) Serfs	Peasants bound to the estates of nobles; essentially enslaved peasants.
18) Slavophiles	People who wanted to preserve Slav culture and the autocratic system of government, saw western values and institutions as unsuited to Russia.
19) Slavs	The main ethnic group in Russia
20) Police state	A state in which the activities of people are closely monitored and controlled for political reasons.

Task 5: Example Essay

Identify the argument being made and write this in your own words. Highlight the Point, Evidence and Explanation used in the 1st paragraph.

Read through the Intro and 1st paragraph on 'Alexander II only introduced reforms because of Russia's defeat in the Crimea.' Assess the validity of this statement

Identify how this is different from a 16 mark GCSE question.

Many of Alexander II's reforms were linked to Russia's defeat in the Crimea, not least military reforms. However, there was also pressure from intellectuals before the war to modernize and economic motives were key. The defeat in the Crimean War acted as a catalyst for change, convincing those outside the intelligentsia that Russia needed to reform in order to maintain its great power status. However, not all of Alexander's reforms were linked to economic modernization.

Russia's failures in the Crimean War deeply humiliated the country and highlighted the need for Russia to change. Alexander's military reforms introduced by the ex-Crimean army general, Dmitry Milyutin, were a direct result of defeat. Conscription was extended to all classes and the length of service reduced from 25 to 15 years. Military colonies were abolished and harsh punishments were banned. These reforms were accompanied by improvements in training, weaponry and communications. Although the upper classes were generally able to buy their way out of conscription, these reforms did make the army less expensive and more efficient in an attempt to avoid repeating the humiliations of the Crimean War.