



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 6 October 2021 – 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 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 impact of Khrushchev's domestic policies on rural and urban living conditions. [30]

Passage A

The long-term neglect of agriculture under Stalin and the inherent weakness of the USSR's agricultural machinery and chemical industries posed serious economic obstacles to further progress under Khrushchev's rule. The fact was that both the urban population and disposable incomes (that is, the money in people's pockets) were growing faster than agriculture could meet their demand for food. This was partly because the poor quality of Soviet consumer goods meant that people, when they had money, chose to buy extra food instead. It was also in part because many of Khrushchev's social policies benefitted the poorer sections of society, and the poor spend a higher share of their income on food than do the better off. But it was also due partly to the failure of Khrushchev's policies, in particular the increased pressure he put on the peasants in general towards the end of his reign. All these factors meant that the demand for food went up faster than the country could grow it.

Khrushchev's solution was to make more bureaucratic adjustments, reorganising the ministries here, or reorganising the Communist Party there. But these measures failed to improve the living conditions of Soviet citizens because he could not solve the essential problems: improving peasant morale and incentives, and giving them better equipment and investment resources with which to work.

Adapted from: D. Filtzer, *The Khrushchev Era, De-Stalinisation and the Limits of Reform in the USSR, 1953–1964*, published in 1993.

Passage B

Back in August 1953, Khrushchev had told a meeting of agricultural activists that the Soviet Union was gradually moving from socialism toward communism. He then added a little anecdote. He had said the same to a group of peasants, and one had commented: 'well under socialism we have no pancakes, will there or won't there be pancakes under communism?' Khrushchev was determined that as the move towards communism accelerated under his watch, there would indeed be pancakes. The agricultural situation in 1958 was good. The Virgin Lands Campaign seemed to have paid off.

The Soviet people not only needed to be fed, they needed to be housed. Large-scale housing construction was a priority of Khrushchev's government. The policy was aimed at creating conditions which would benefit families and workers by improving urban areas with cost-effective construction. The new areas would give workers access to services that would improve living standards. New construction methods were developed to meet increasingly ambitious urban targets. The government promised to resolve the housing shortage within ten years. Khrushchev understood that quantity was more important than quality. As he later recalled, 'we limited ourselves to the task of creating minimally acceptable conditions in the lives of residents, we made this decision consciously.'

Adapted from: G. Swain, *Khrushchev*, published in 2016.

SECTION B

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

- 2*** 'Throughout the years from 1855 to 1964 the methods of repression and enforcement used by Russian governments remained consistent.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 3*** 'The economic policies of Russian governments consistently failed to benefit the rural population throughout the years from 1855 to 1964.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4*** 'War always led to major changes in the government of Russia in the period from 1855 to 1964.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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