Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Friday 23 May 2025 – Morning

A Level History A

Y321/01 The Middle East 1908–2011: Ottomans to Arab Spring

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.

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Section A

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

1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages.

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of British policy towards Palestine at the end of the First World War. **[30]**

Passage A

© Eugene Rogan, The Arabs: A History, p247, 261 and 265, Penguin, 2009. From first line "At the end of the First World War, Britain's mastery over the Middle East was unrivalled." to last line "a failure that would condemn the whole of the region to conflict and violence." Item removed due to third party copyrig

Passage B

Britain had recalculated its own strategic interests in the future status of Palestine. It was the site of important military operations, and government officials concluded that its value as a buffer to the Suez Canal had become too important to allow for an ill-defined international presence there after the war. These new interests developed in tandem with the efforts of the leading members of Britain's Jewish community who, in pursuit of the strategies of political Zionism, sought to persuade the government that Zionist interests complemented British interests. In addition, a complex combination of motives led to the final decision to issue the Balfour Declaration. Contemporary explanations tended to stress an interest in the restoration of the Jewish nation in Palestine based on their understanding of the Bible and also their sympathy for the plight of Jews in Eastern Europe. Officials came to see Zionism as an ally. British officials searched out Zionist support in pursuit of their own interests in Palestine. Their main aim was to keep the French out. Within a year of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which called for the international administration of Palestine, Britain came round to fearing any foreign presence so close to the Suez Canal. Prejudices belied British support for Zionism. British officials drew upon a reserve of mistaken, even anti-Semitic, ideas and of a common Jewish nation, all of which tended to greatly exaggerate the power and influence of world Jewry.

M. Bunton, The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, published in 2013.

Section B

Answer any **two** questions.

2* ‘Russia had the greatest influence of all the Great Powers in the Middle East during the period from 1908 to 2011.’

How far do you agree? **[25]**

3* To what extent did the nature of the Palestinian issue change during the period from 1908 to 2011? **[25]**

4* ‘Throughout the period from 1908 to 2011, Pan Arabism in the Middle East was weak.’

How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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