Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Thursday 23 May 2024 – 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.

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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 the reasons for Khrushchev's fall from power. **[30]**

Passage A

When the Central Committee ousted Khrushchev, they did not use the Stalin way of crudely stage-managed trials or [victims] mysteriously falling out of upstairs windows – Khrushchev was outmanoeuvred politically. Khrushchev was the acceptable human face of Communism. He was different to Stalin in so many ways: he was outgoing, one of the people, outspoken. He wanted to improve the standard of living of the ordinary people. While he continued to stockpile a frightening array of nuclear weapons, he advocated a policy of peaceful co-existence. However, his policies split the Communist world.

He had tried to solve the country's agricultural problems with a single minded drive to increase food production. It was successful initially, but it was quite unscientific. The result was a shortage of food; eventually food rationing had to be introduced. Likewise in industry, production fell during the Khrushchev years which led to shortages in the shops. This added to the general discontent.

Khrushchev faced mounting criticism. Some of his critics were old Stalinists who were opposed to his attempts to de-Stalinize the country. They felt that he was unjust in his attitude towards Stalin's wartime achievements. His behaviour also caused great embarrassment. His experimentation with agriculture was regarded as hare-brained. Ultimately, he lost the confidence of the powerful in the Soviet Union. He was called back from holiday in October 1964 to be told that neither the government nor the Central Committee had any confidence in him. He had to resign.

T. Downey and N. Smith, Russia and the USSR 1900–1995, published in 1996.

Passage B

Khrushchev's position was weakened by increasing pressure, both at home and abroad, to live up to his own tough rhetoric on foreign policy. Since the late 1950s, the Soviet-American relationship had begun to sour once again. Confident that the increasing Soviet nuclear capability would raise doubts about the reliability of the American deterrent, Khrushchev seized the opportunity to alter the delicate balance in Europe in the Soviet Union's favour. Ironically, the result of Khrushchev's actions was a propaganda defeat at home for Khrushchev personally.

His position as Premier was further worsened when the Cuban Missile Crisis resulted in an apparent Soviet defeat and American victory. One of its effects was to cause an escalation in the Soviet arms build-up. Kennedy's policy toward the Soviet Union during and after the Cuban Missile Crisis was that he was certainly not willing to concede defeat, or risk the appearance of defeat, to the USSR in any field. On the Soviet side, Nikita Khrushchev retained leadership for only a short time after the Cuban Crisis before he was removed from his duties by the Politburo. The new collective leadership blamed Khrushchev for, among other things, his reckless gamble in Cuba. However, more significant in Khrushchev's fall was the new leadership's desire to accelerate the Soviet nuclear build-up in order to reach parity with the United States. They were determined that the Kremlin would never again confront the United States from a standpoint of strategic inferiority.

A. Best, J. Hanhimaki, J. Maiolo and K. Schulze, International History of the Twentieth Century and Beyond, published in 2008.

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SECTION B

Answer any **two** questions.

2* ‘There was very little political change in Russia.’

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? **[25]**

3* ‘The Five Year Plans had a far greater impact on the lives of industrial workers than any other economic policies.’

How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1855 to 1964? **[25]**

4* Assess the view that Russia was consistently able to control its nationalities and satellite states in the period from 1855 to 1964. **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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