

Russia

1855–81

8



INTRODUCTION

THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER II, 1855–81

The 1860s were a crucial decade for Russia. There were important reforms affecting the fabric of a still rural society. Tsar Alexander II ascended the throne during the Crimean War. His father Nicholas I had been well aware of the need for change, particularly to the institution of serfdom, but had been unwilling to face the unpredictable consequences. However, Russia's defeat in war highlighted the issues more starkly. Consequently Alexander took up the challenge. The most significant reform was the emancipation of the serfs, which brought him the epithet 'The Tsar Liberator'. However, Alexander discovered, like most reformers, that trying to implement change created stresses and opposition. These prompted a much more conservative approach, particularly after revolt in Poland and an attempt on the Tsar's life in the mid 1860s. Some historians have therefore drawn a clear distinction between the two periods in his reign, although this distinction can be exaggerated. Alexander implemented more reforms than any previous Tsar since Peter the Great; but his reign also saw opposition to the tsarist regime develop in new and ultimately more threatening directions, as the fundamentals of the tsarist system remained unchanged.

I ↪ POLITICAL HISTORY

A *The emancipation of the serfs*

Alexander was committed to reform from the start. His aunt, the Grand Duchess Helen, and his brother Grand Duke Constantine, both supported him, along with a group of reforming bureaucrats active in the administration since the 1840s. Reforming ministers included Nikolai Milyutin, Dmitrii Milyutin (Minister of War 1861–81) and Michael Reiter (Minister of Finance 1862–78). Alexander had practical motives for change:

- failure to change might lead to the eventual dissolution of the autocracy. Alexander recognised that serfdom was an insecure

TIMELINE

Events in Russia 1855–81
(foreign affairs in italics)

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- 1855** Accession of Alexander II
 - 1856** Treaty of Paris
 - 1858** *Amur acquired from China*
 - 1859** Length of army service reduced
 - 1861** Emancipation of the serfs began
 - 1863** Polish Revolt
 - 1863** Educational reforms begun
 - 1864** *Zemstvos* set up
Reform of local government
Legal reforms
 - 1865** Censorship relaxed
 - 1866** Attempted assassination of Tsar
 - 1870** Municipal reforms
 - 1871** Censorship tightened up
Straits Convention
 - 1873** *Dreikaiserbund*
 - 1874** Universal military conscription
 - 1876** Formation of 'Land and Liberty'
 - 1877** *Russo-Turkish War*
Treaty of San Stefano
 - 1878** *Congress of Berlin*
Trial of Vera Zasulich
 - 1880** Commission into unrest
 - 1881** Assassination of Alexander II
-

foundation for a Great Power anxious to regain its reputation and influence after military defeat

- although serfs were the backbone of the army and paid most of the taxes, their number was rapidly expanding without a rise in productivity; whilst the Tsar's traditional supporters, the nobility, were increasingly in debt. At the time of Alexander's accession, 60 per cent of private serfs and 50 per cent of land values were mortgaged to the state.

It was a system that could not safely continue unchanged. Yet as an autocrat, how could the Tsar make concessions without avoiding on the one hand the backlash of entrenched opposition, and on the other hand raising unrealistic expectation? He was determined not to open the floodgates to more radical reforms which might be equally threatening to the long-term stability or even survival of the autocracy.



PICTURE 14

*Cartoon from Punch showing
Tsar Alexander II succeeding to
his throne*

THE YOUNG CZAR COMING INTO HIS PROPERTY.

TSAR ALEXANDER II (1818–81)

Alexander came to the throne at the age of 37, well prepared for the task of governing. He had extensive experience already as a member of the Council of State and several committees. Like his father Nicholas I, he was conservative, patriotic and religious by nature, but unlike him he also enjoyed the worldly pleasures of the court. Alexander was more adaptable, partly because he had received a liberal education. However, he was prone to bouts of apathy, pessimism and indecision. He appointed both reforming ministers like Nicholai Milyutin, who pushed through emancipation, but also appointed reactionaries like Shuvalov.

Historians sometimes divide Alexander's reign into two periods: one of reform from 1855 to the early 1860s, then a period of reaction as dissatisfaction with his policies grew. For example, H. Seton Watson wrote that 'The reign of Alexander II which began with bright promise, and changed to dreary stagnation, ended in tragedy. The Tsar-liberator was a victim of the unsolved conflict between social reform and the dogma of political autocracy' (*The Decline of Imperial Russia*, 1964). However, a simplistic chronological division is not helpful, since throughout his reign Alexander never intended reform to touch his personal power, and there was not necessarily a contradiction in his own mind between autocracy and his ability to grant limited reform from above. Other critical assessments include J. Grenville: 'He was indecisive and throughout his reign alternated between reforming impulses and reaction ... the degree of discontent was raised more by the hope of reform than satisfied by their application' (*Europe Reshaped 1848–1878*, 1976). W. Mosse wrote: 'Alexander proved himself not only a disappointing 'liberal', if indeed that term can be applied to him, but ... an inefficient autocrat ... He merely succeeded in proving that a pseudo-liberal autocrat is an unhappy hybrid unlikely to achieve political success' (*Alexander II and the Modernisation of Russia*, 1992). Balanced assessments take account of the context in which Alexander came to the throne and the difficulties facing anybody trying to do more than uphold the *status quo*. M. Lynch concluded that 'He was convinced that he had to remain in charge of events if Russia was to avoid revolution. An autocrat's task is a difficult one. The task of a reforming autocrat is the most difficult of all' (*Russia 1815–81*, 1991). S Lee emphasised elements of continuity during Alexander's reign: the fact that there was evidence of reform and reaction throughout; there was continuity in some of the personnel; and the fact that military and fiscal concerns were always at the core of the Tsar's thinking – he 'realised that effective autocracy must depend ultimately on sound financial management and military strength. This was a traditional Romanov approach and had as much to do with Alexander's reforms as any enlightened theories' (*Aspects of European History 1789–1980*, 1982).

Alexander was considering further reform at the time of his assassination in 1881.

PROFILE

KEY ISSUE

What were the motives for the 1860s reforms?

Whatever Alexander's approach, the process of reform was bound to be complex in Russia. Like all Tsars, Alexander was effectively his own Prime Minister. Government ministers never discussed policy as a group, but were individuals who reported briefly and individually to the Tsar, and were often not aware of what their colleagues were doing. The State Council was an advisory body which had no independence, and its advice could be ignored. When decisions were taken, the lack of an efficient network of local government in far-flung provinces made co-ordinated implementation of policy difficult. In such a system, much depended upon the Tsar's determination and hard work. This made Alexander II's efforts to tackle major issues like serfdom the more commendable. Despite the fact that the Tsar was an autocrat with few theoretical limits on his power, the practical difficulties of governing nineteenth century Russia should always be borne in mind when assessing the practical impact of reforms.

Alexander wanted to satisfy both the peasantry and the nobility. He told the latter in 1856 that 'the existing system of serf owning cannot remain unchanged. It is better to begin abolishing serfdom from above than to wait for it to begin to abolish itself from below.' How could he satisfy both the serfs and their owners? The committee set up in 1856 to consider the issue first met in secret to avoid the spread of rumour. The Government felt it important that freed serfs stayed on the land, rather than drift to the towns where they might become a large discontented working class of the kind which frightened European Governments in 1848. Therefore Alexander insisted that the serfs, if freed, must be given property rights, even if the land belonged to the nobility.

In 1857 the Tsar and his ministers produced a plan of action to be considered in each province. Consultation began in earnest in 1858 when provincial assemblies of nobles were invited to make proposals for reform. It was immediately evident that opinion was divided: some liberal nobles were willing to give the serfs both full personal liberty and full property rights. This was far too radical for most nobles, who wanted to retain extensive powers over the peasantry. Those nobles who relied upon serfs to farm their land were afraid that they would lose this power if peasants were free to uproot themselves. Differences amongst the nobility allowed the Government to take the initiative and insist on the more radical proposal that freed serfs must be allowed land. Representatives from the provinces which were most supportive of change were invited to Moscow in 1859, and their opponents in 1860. The administration itself wanted to preserve the *mir* or village commune, since it managed taxes and acted as an adjunct to the bureaucracy. Nevertheless, as the debates dragged on and peasant discontent grew, the Government decided that the peasants must be granted land if serious unrest were to be averted.

The great Emancipation Decree was issued on 19 February 1861. It was a complex decree made up of 22 separate Acts. The first abolished the institution of serfdom, and there were to be three main stages, outlined in the analysis box.

KEY ISSUE

Why did proposals to emancipate the serfs create such debate?

The stages of the emancipation of the serfs

Stage 1. 1861–3. Landlords' serfs were declared free, allowing them to own land and marry. But other than the land on which their households were established, which was declared to belong to the peasants, the rest belonged to the nobility and had to be bought from it. In return for the right to farm, the peasants had to continue paying existing feudal dues. Therefore their true status was little altered.

Stage 2. This was to begin in 1863. Ties between the ex-serfs and landlords were further loosened, with landlords losing their judicial rights over the peasants. Feudal dues would continue but agreements had to be negotiated obliging the peasant to buy, and the landlord to sell, a certain amount of land. The transfer of land was not compulsory until 1881. The Government regulated prices and the amount that had to be bought and sold. Household serfs were also freed, but received no land.

Stage 3. This would begin *after the negotiations were completed*. The Government paid landlords most of the price of the land; peasants had 49 years in which to reimburse the Government in 'redemption payments'. The *mir* continued to allot shares of land to the peasants. So some 23 million peasants would still have obligations – but to the *mir* and the Government rather than to private landlords. This was a significant change in the status of peasants, although economically their position was little altered.

ANALYSIS

B *The results of emancipation*

The peasants saw little benefits from the reforms, and were confused about their implications:

- they now had to pay for land they regarded as theirs anyway
- they received relatively little land, at high prices. Land distribution was unequal: peasants in the more fertile regions received less land than in the less fertile areas, often less than the amount they had previously worked. In some areas, like the central and southern provinces, peasants lost up to one-quarter of their land. Over 1 500 000 serfs received no land at all, and by the end of Alexander's reign, over 60 per cent of peasants had less than the minimum land that the Government itself considered necessary for subsistence
- the redemption costs varied from area to area: they were very high for example in Poland. Many peasants tried to buy more land and fell into more debt. Those peasants without land often found alternative work hard to come by.

KEY ISSUE

What was the reaction of the peasants and nobility to emancipation?

The number of peasant disturbances increased in the two years after 1861. Although the unrest did die down, the peasants' situation steadily worsened as the considerable growth in population (from 74 million to 125 million between 1858 and 1897) put pressure on the land. The *mir*, traditionally the protector of the peasants' interests, still allocated land, but had no particular interest in improving farming methods. Consequently Russia fell further behind other European Powers in crop yields, and failure to revitalise the rural economy meant that much more drastic measures were necessary in the future in order to provide a basis for industrialisation.

Most nobles also resented the changes. Those that had been serf owners lost their control over the peasantry, and much of their influence generally. Many nobles were themselves in debt, and over half their land had been sold off by 1911. Many abandoned farming and took up other professions.

C *Other reforms*

Alexander II implemented other reforms which had important social implications. Destroying the old relationship between serf and noble affected more than land ownership, since the nobility had played a significant role in local government and administering justice. Who would now exercise these powers? In 1864 *zemstva* were created. These were elected local government assemblies with responsibility for education, public health, transport and the prison system. The Prussian three-class voting system was adopted which meant that although all classes could elect *zemstva* members, they were dominated by the nobility. However, more liberal members of these councils began to press for more powers, whilst other interest groups were set up representing professional or social groups. The central Government retained control of the police, whilst provincial governors could overturn *zemstva* decisions. The reform was therefore less radical in practice than it appeared on paper.

This was also true of the judicial reforms of 1864. For the first time all Russians were declared equal before the law. Justice was to be open, with independent judges and trial by jury in most cases. However, the Government retained the right to hold closed trials in 'political cases'; special courts continued to try cases involving ex-serfs; and it was still possible to exert pressure on judges.

There were other reforms in the 1860s:

- from 1862 Government finances were determined by a public budget
- the tax system was modernised
- in 1863 universities were given powers to run their own affairs
- censorship was partially relaxed in 1865
- military reform, very necessary following Russia's performance in the Crimean War, ended exemption from conscription for the privileged in 1874 and reduced the lengthy period of active service to six years, with nine years in the reserves. However, the modernisation of military technology and tactics was a slow process.

KEY ISSUE

How significant were the 1860s reforms?

Alexander II's reforms were linked with each other in at least one important respect. Recovering Russia's international standing depended upon economic progress and having a modern army, which depended on abolishing serfdom, incompatible with maintaining a well-trained reserve. The *zemstva* and other reforms were more designed to appease the nobility. The reforms certainly had a cumulative effect overall. They increased the power of the professional bureaucracy, but at the expense of the nobility, not the Government.

Superficially the reforms appeared to be in line with earlier developments in more liberal Western European states, but in reality the tsarist regime remained autocratic, subject to few real restraints. After the mid 1860s, Alexander, troubled by the Polish Revolt and attempted assassination, abandoned reform. He removed all the reforming ministers except for Dmitrii Milyutin and Reiter.

How significant were Alexander's reforms? They raised expectations of change without satisfying the aspirations of many Russians. The nobility could no longer rely upon the compulsory labour of serfs and had lost its judicial and police powers. Government officials now performed many of the old duties. Receiving payment from the Government for land they were forced to sell, and having the right to serve in the *zemstva*, did not seem adequate compensation to nobles for the loss of status and real power. However, for the first time in Russia elected representatives had a part in government, albeit at the local level through local councils. Some prominent Russians even advocated extending this principle to central government, possibly through a consultative assembly: they included Valuev, Minister of the Interior between 1861–8, the Tsar's brother and P. Shuvalov, head of the political police during the 1870s.

The Tsar was too much the autocrat to consider any proposals for sharing power at the top. He voiced approval of his father's policies and declared that his reign would see a continuation of them. Yet ironically, he did consider further change shortly before his assassination. In 1878 the young radical Vera Zasulich was acquitted despite shooting and wounding the unpopular Governor of St. Petersburg, General Trepov. Alexander established a commission to investigate the causes of unrest, and he agreed in February 1881 that local councils should elect members to serve on commissions, alongside appointed experts, to advise on legislation. However, his assassination in the following month effectively put an end to serious discussion of reform for more than a generation.

D *The growth of opposition*

Although the autocracy had achieved success in the short term, reinforcing its authority and appearing to implement some necessary reforms, trouble was also being stored up for the future. The regime could rely to a large extent on the traditional loyalty of the peasantry towards the Tsar, the 'Little Father', but not when economic pressures became too great. The nobility had once been the Tsar's natural allies,

but its powers had been increasingly handed over to bureaucrats. The nobility might be less willing to support the Tsar in all circumstances in the future. Educated and liberal Russians, both nobles and from other classes, were increasingly frustrated by what they regarded as the unwillingness of a regime to introduce more modern, western-style practices into what remained, in European terms, a semi-feudal state.

Disillusion with the impact of Alexander II's reforms also created movements for change of a type new to Russia. Before there had been serf uprisings and plots by disaffected nobles. But, for example, Russia had been relatively untouched by the European Revolutions of 1848. Now there were new forces of dissent. Some belonged to Liberals, who, in the tradition of the American and French Revolutions of the eighteenth century, believed in individual liberty and the rule of law. Many of the more radical thinkers became socialists: they went further than Liberals in their insistence that guarantees of individual rights and freedoms meant little if those who were landless in a society based on private property could be exploited by those who owned the land. In other words, true equality and freedom could only exist in a society based upon collective ownership of land and the means of production. The reforms of the 1860s also appeared to socialists to confirm that legal freedom for ex-serfs meant little if they were weighed down by debts and poverty.

KEY ISSUE

Why was there growing opposition to Alexander II and what forms did the opposition take?

Radical reformers were almost bound to become revolutionaries, since in an autocratic society like Russia, with police and censorship to buttress the system and no national parliament in which to debate change, there were few legitimate means to openly pursue an organised political programme. Revolutionaries came from a variety of backgrounds, but they were usually well-educated. Two influential figures who inspired the revolutionary movement were the journalist Nicholas Chernyshevskii (1828–9) and the nobleman Alexander Herzen (1812–70). Herzen's newspaper, *The Bell*, was published in London in the 1850s and 1860s. Herzen looked to the Russian peasant for salvation, and saw the *mir* as a socialist organisation which would lead Russia into a utopia in which inequalities of wealth and status would disappear. It was a vision which inspired other radicals, known as Populists because of their belief in the Russian people as the instrument of change. Most Populists were scarcely interested in Western Liberal ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. Rather they were 'Slavophiles' who put their faith in the particular virtues of the Russian peasant. Recognising the low level of industrial development, they believed that Russia could avoid the capitalist development of Western Europe and move directly to peasant socialism.

The Polish Revolt of 1863 fanned the flames of discontent. Polish peasants were treated relatively generously under emancipation. However, the Tsar followed a policy of *Russification*, enforcing the dominant status of the Russian language. In 1863 200 000 Poles took up arms against Russian control and a National Government was proclaimed. Russian armies commanded by the Tsar's brother suppressed the rising. Although the Revolt failed, nationalist feeling inside Poland continued to grow.

Following an assassination attempt in 1866 Alexander, already alarmed by the Polish Revolt, abandoned further attempts at reform. Student Populists had already fomented discontent in St. Petersburg and other cities from 1862. They now responded with more plots and underground newspapers. In the early 1870s students responding to the clarion call 'To the people!', descended on the Russian countryside in order to spread the message of revolution to the peasants. The students involved probably numbered only about 2000. Most peasants mistrusted these outsiders and were uncooperative, sometimes even turning Populists over to the authorities.

Disillusioned with the failure of the direct appeal to the people, some radicals began to argue for the formation of more secretive, organised groups which would work for revolution underground. Their methods were a foretaste of the Bolshevik organisation later in the century, without the Bolsheviks' discipline and ideology. Some groups employed terrorist tactics. One such, *Narodnaya Volya* or 'People's Will', with about 500 members, succeeded in blowing up Alexander II in March 1881. The brief era of reform had already ended several years before, but the Tsar's death nevertheless was to mark a new stage in the underground war between the autocracy, bolstered by the secret police and the censors, and the small groups of violent and determined revolutionaries.

2 ↪ ECONOMIC HISTORY

The basics of the Russian economy in the mid-nineteenth century are outlined in Chapter 12. During Alexander II's reign the textile and sugar industries were well developed, but the once prosperous iron industry was lagging behind competitors in Western Europe. As the Government implemented major reforms in the 1860s, so it also became much more interventionist in the economy than it had been during the reigns of Alexander's two predecessors, although not as extensively as later in the nineteenth century. Some measures were not beneficial. A liberal approach to reducing tariffs in the 1850s and 1860s reduced Government revenue and the import of cheap goods into Russia was a disincentive to indigenous enterprises. So tariffs had to be increased again in the late 1870s and 1880s. On the other hand, the railway network expanded by 400 per cent between 1868 and 1878, mostly as a result of private enterprise. There were over 14 000 miles of track by 1881. Urban expansion continued.

The abolition of serfdom in theory made industrial development more feasible. The population became less tied to the land and more mobile. The potential labour force was enlarged. Therefore M. Falkus asserted that 'the year 1861 can in many respects be taken as marking the beginning of Russia's modernisation' (M. Falkus, *The Industrialisation of Russia 1700-1914*). However, it was only the basis for further development: although both heavy industry and consumer-goods industries began to expand at an average rate of probably 5 per cent a year, industrial growth in most sectors only became really significant from the

KEY ISSUE

What economic progress did Russia make in the period 1855-81?

1880s. Production in mining, wool, sugar and paper actually declined in the 1860s, mainly due to the difficulties of adapting after emancipation. Although production picked up, there was a serious depression in the early 1870s before another upturn towards the end of the decade.

Russian economic development was assisted by the development of financial institutions. There were few banks in 1855, but over 300 in 1881, and 566 joint-stock companies. Restrictions on the settlement of Jews were relaxed, enabling them to better utilise their traditional financial and commercial skills.

3 FOREIGN POLICY

A Russia and Europe

See pages 26–8

KEY ISSUE

What principles underpinned Alexander II's foreign policy?

Russia's defeat in the Crimean War considerably weakened its international position, as confirmed in the Treaty of Paris. Russia lost control of the mouth of the Danube and its use for navigation. It could no longer intervene in the Danubian Principalities. Above all there was the neutralisation of the Black Sea. Britain, France and Austria were pledged to uphold the terms of the Treaty.

Russian foreign policy in Europe faced a dilemma. Traditionally, as a great conservative supporter of the status quo after 1815, Russia had wanted to preserve the balance of power and the existing state system – which seemed the best guarantee against revolutionary upheaval. Yet in 1855 a defeated Russia became a revisionist Power, keen to drive a wedge between its former enemies. Alexander II and Prince Alexander Gorchakov, Foreign Minister between 1856 and 1882, wanted to revise the Treaty of Paris, but it would not be easy.

During the 1860s Russia avoided significant involvement in Europe, concentrating instead on internal affairs. This detachment allowed Prussia to strengthen its position in central Europe. However, The Straits issue was raised by Gorchakov when the situation seemed favourable – notably during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, when Russia insisted that its participation in a European Congress depended on a revision of the Treaty. British refusal to support Russia's demands led Alexander II to unilaterally repudiate the clauses neutralising the Black Sea in October 1870. Gorchakov worked hard to placate other Powers: for example he emphasised to Britain Russia's desire to preserve the Turkish Empire, and also promised France to stand up for it in defeat. He declared that the Tsar 'has no intention of reopening the Eastern Question ... He desires only to preserve and strengthen peace'. Gorchakov succeeded: a Conference in London in March 1871 gave international agreement to Russia's action over the Black Sea.

Russian policy was important in making the unification of Germany possible. Russia's neutralisation of Austria helped to keep the Franco-Prussian War a localised affair, as recognised by Kaiser Wilhelm's expression of gratitude to the Tsar in March 1871, and despite French influence inside Russia. Russia tolerated a German state because it saw

the German Empire as a force for conservatism. However, it indirectly helped Germany become the strongest Power in Europe. Russia welcomed the Three Emperors' League (*Dreikaiserbund*) because it wanted to remain on good terms with Germany, particularly since Russia was concerned about British policy in Asia. The agreement to join the League, more a statement of intent than an alliance, signified Russia's return to the centre of European events on an equal basis. In 1873 Russia also signed a defensive alliance with Germany. However, Russia did not secure its principal aim – a free hand in the Balkans and Turkish Empire.

Towards the end of his reign, Alexander became more actively involved in the Balkans, encouraged by Pan-Slavs in Russia who saw themselves as protectors of Slavs in the region. Turkish policy, combined with Russian ambition and dreams of expansion towards Constantinople, led to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8 and Russian gains at the Treaty of San Stefano. Even after the Treaty was reversed at the Congress of Berlin, which outraged Pan-Slavs, Russia had regained the mouth of the Danube, although Russia's ambassador to Turkey, the Panslav Nikolai Ignatev, wanted a much more forward policy than his Government adopted.

B *Russia and Asia*

Despite his desire to improve Russia's international standing, Alexander II's policy in Europe was generally cautious. However, during his reign there was considerable Russian expansion particularly in Central Asia. The Khanates of Khiva, Khokand and Bukhara were absorbed. Although Alaska was sold to the United States, cessions were won from China, enabling the Russians to establish themselves on the Pacific Coast. The future Vladivostok was reached in 1859. Sakhalin was acquired from Japan. The Caucasus was brought more firmly under Russian control. During the 1850s and 1860s the Russians moved South, conquering Uzbek lands. Partly the motives for expansion were to do with prestige: Russia could demonstrate its Great Power status in Asian lands without the risks involved in expansion in Europe. Partly the Government absorbed territory after following up initiatives begun by traders and explorers, who were carving out their own trails across Asia. Interests of trade, security, and a missionary, civilising impulse were all combined. Gorchakov explained Russia's situation as

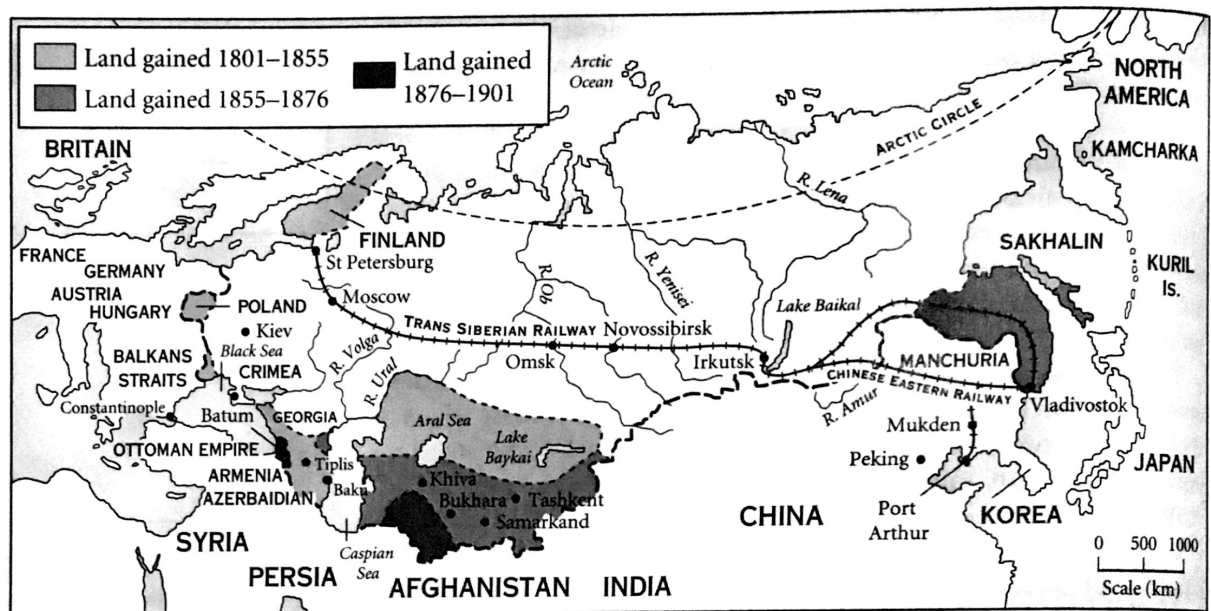
the same as the position of any civilised state which comes into contact with a semi-barbarous people ... In such cases the interests of frontier security and of trade relations always require that the more civilised state acquires a certain power over its neighbours.

Subject peoples did not appreciate Russian motives. Nationalist groups expanded in Finland, despite tolerant treatment by the Tsar which included allowing a Finnish parliament to meet. Nationalist

KEY ISSUE

How successful was Alexander II's foreign policy in Europe?

See pages 390–1



MAP 9 *Russian territorial expansion in the nineteenth century*

feeling also developed in the Baltic States and the Ukraine, in addition to exploding into revolt in Poland.

Assessments of Alexander II's success in foreign policy have varied:

- he did avoid a major conflict whilst giving Russia the opportunity to reform itself internally. Russia was a Great Power again, had emphasised its interests in the Balkans and enlarged the Russian Empire in Asia, bringing access to oil and mineral wealth. Shortly after Alexander's death the *Dreikaiserbund* was renewed, assuaging Russia's fear of having to fight several enemies if it were at war with a fourth Power
- however, Russia's longer-term ambitions had been thwarted at the Congress of Berlin: it was no nearer fulfilling the dream of controlling Constantinople and the Straits. Some Russians thought that Alexander had not promoted Russia's interests with sufficient energy, and Russia had allowed Germany to consolidate its position as the strongest Power in Europe, with serious implications in the long term.

KEY ISSUE

How significant was Russian expansion into Asia?

4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Useful books for this period of Russian history are *Russia 1815–81* by M. Lynch (Hodder and Stoughton, 1991), which is written for the 16–19 age group and includes essay and source material; *Tsarist Russia 1901–1917* by J. Hite (Causeway Press, 1989); *The Emergence of Modern Russia 1801–1917* by S. Pushkarev (Pica Press, 1986); and *Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform 1801–1881* by D. Saunders (Longman, 1992). Useful specialised studies of Alexander II's reign include *Alexander II and the Modernisation of Russia* by W. Mosse (I.B. Tauris, 1992) and *Alexander II, Emancipation and Reform in Russia, 1855–1881*