

# Europe and the Crimean War

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# CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	3
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	3
<b>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b>	3
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	3
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	
The Instabilities of the European Power Structure	4
Ideological Confrontation	
Religious Confrontation	
Geopolitical Confrontation	
Importance of the Danubian Delta, the Caucasus, and the Crimean Peninsula	5
Reforms by Tsar Alexander II	6
The Emancipation Edict	
Impact of the Emancipation Edict	
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	
How Significant was Religion as a Contributing Factor?	7
Religion as a Legitimate and Proximate Factor	
National Identity: Strengthened by the Crimean War	8
Evolution of Soft Power	8
Relative Importance of Religion, Ideology and Geopolitics: Alliance Graphs	9
To What Extent was the Emancipation of the Serfs Successful?	10
Miscommunication: A Chronic Problem	
Unavoidable Instabilities	
Minimizing Social Unrest: the Commune	11
Lasting Impacts of the Reforms: Was the Crimean War a “Turning Point” in History?	11
<b>CONCLUSION &amp; ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	12
<b>REFERENCES</b>	13
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
Appendix A: Interview Transcript	14
Appendix B: The Greek War of Independence (1821-1829)	24
Appendix C: Zemstvos	24

# ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the main causal factors and impacts of the Crimean War (1853-1856) on the countries involved. Opinions differ on the importance of religion as a contribution factor to the Crimean War. Chapman (2001) and Seaman (2001) described religion as a superficial reason, while Figes (2012) said that in general, “religion plays a vital role in fuelling wars”, and that the Crimean War as “a turning point in Russian history”. Through extensive literature review, this paper analyses the importance of religion as a contributing factor, as well as the validity of the claim by Figes (2012), and finds that religion is indeed a legitimate and important factor, and that Figes’ claim is valid to a large extent when considering the reforms’ long-term impacts. An interview was conducted to provide further insights into the topics of discussion.

# INTRODUCTION

The Crimean War began between the Russian and the Ottoman Empire, in October 1853. The British and the French Empire joined the war in support of the Ottoman Empire in 1854, and the theatre of war shifted from the Balkans to the Crimean Peninsula. *Prima facie*, the cause of the Crimean war is the dispute regarding rights of Christian minorities in the Holy Land, with France supporting those of the Roman Catholics and Russia the Orthodox. Chapman (2001) and Seaman (2001) remarks that religious confrontation is only superficial cause, and points to the Eastern Question as the principal underlying cause of conflict. In contrast, Orlando Figes (2012) believes that this is still mainly a religious war, that religion has strongly influenced the war from the part of the public, the soldiers, and the Tsar. We hypothesise that religion, tied to the concept of “founding myth”, is indeed a legitimate and important factor in comparison to other motivations.

Figes (2012) also claims that the Crimean War was “a turning point in Russian history” due to the multitude of reforms implemented in its aftermath. However, the claim requires further examination as some of the reforms, such as those for freedom of association and freedom of speech, were rescinded by Tsar Alexander III. Furthermore, Nafziger (2009) states that Emancipation did not positively impact the economic situation of the peasants. We hypothesise that in those reforms which lasted, in combination with the fact that liberal ideas were allowed to flourish leading to a build-up of revolutionary momentum, made the Crimean War a turning point in the sense that it laid the foundation for the subsequent revolutions to erupt.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research will address the following two research questions:

1. How significant was religion as a contributing factor of the Crimean War?
2. To what extent was the Emancipation of the Serfs a successful outcome of the Crimean War?

# METHODOLOGY

An extensive literature review was carried out from both print and non-print sources, such as books, research journals and online websites, on the European geopolitical situation before the war, on how the war was escalated, and on the reforms carried out by Tsar Alexander II in the aftermath of the war. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the Emancipation reforms was studied, in their execution, backlash, as well as economic and social impacts. An interview was conducted with Dr Lin Yuexin, postdoctoral fellow at the Centre on Asia and Globalisation (CAG), Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP), to provide further insights into the conclusions drawn. The interview involved discussions about proximate causes, evolution of soft power and diplomacy, impact of the Emancipation Edict, and the effects of “founding myths” on the actions of countries today. The interview transcript can be found in Appendix A.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## The Instabilities of the European Power Structure

Ideological, Religious and Geopolitical Confrontation

### Ideological Confrontation

The Age of Enlightenment (circa 1685-1815) brought forth and made popular the ideas and principles of liberalism and democracy (Osiander, 2003, p. 5). This was to a high degree incompatible with the monarchical and autocratic forms of government still prevalent in Europe. For the late 18th and the 19th Century, revolutions were a notable way in which the ideological clashes were resolved. Revolutions within the major powers of Europe have either succeeded or failed; when they have succeeded, the republican government was short-lived, in the case of the First (1872-1904) and Second (1848-1851) French Republic; when they have failed, they were suppressed by either its ruling government, in the case of the 1848 uprising in Vienna and Lombardy, or by another country; the 1848 Hungarian uprising was quelled by Russian forces. As such, in the Crimean War, Tsar Nicholas believed that Austria would support Russia, as a *quid pro quo* for Russia's intervention in Hungary (Chapman, 2001, p. 72). This was not the case: Austria mobilized 100,000 troops to its border with Russia and pressured Russia to withdraw from the principalities.

Indeed, in 1848 a wave of republican revolutions was sparked, beginning in Sicily, then spreading to mainland Europe; civil unrest was felt as far as Ireland (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.). The principal countries representing reactionary ideals, that legitimate governments should be upheld and revolutions crushed, were the Austrian, Prussian and Russian Empire, who in 1815 formed the Holy Alliance, the brainchild of Tsar Alexander. By means of joint military intervention, the Holy Alliance has been involved in suppressing these revolutions as they arose. However, the Holy Alliance was gravely weakened by the death of Tsar Alexander in 1825. Furthermore, when revolutions took on a religious aspect, as it did in the Greek War of Independence (described in Appendix B), the solidarity of the Holy Alliance began to waver.

### Religious Confrontation

Europe at the time contained four major religious factions: Britain and Prussia were predominantly Protestant; Austria and France were predominantly Roman Catholic; Russia and some regions of the Balkans were predominantly Orthodox; and the Ottoman Empire was predominantly Muslim (Seaman, 1963, p. 102). One of Tsar Nicholas's intentions when Russian forces occupied Moldavia and Wallachia during the early stages of the Crimean War was to incite Christian uprisings all across the Balkans. He had been persuaded by Mikhail Pogodin, who appealed to the Tsar's belief in his divine mission to defend the Orthodox and to his growing distrust of the West. Even after the fall of Sevastopol, Tsar Alexander II thought of ways to carry on the war. In late September 1855, he wrote a detailed plan for a new Balkan offensive in 1856, again involving instigating partisan and nationalist revolts among the Slavs and Orthodox. (Figes, 2012, p. 397)

### Geopolitical Confrontation

The Russian Empire has pursued a strongly aggressive, if not expansionist, foreign policy since the breakup of the Golden Horde, around the 1500s (Black Sea-Crimea, n.d.). By the 1800s, Russia was already the largest, continuous empire in the world, actively expanding into North Asia and playing the "Great Game". By the time of the Crimean War, nine Russo-Turkish wars have already been fought in the regions of the Balkans and the Caucasus, most recently the Greek War of Independence (Chapman 2001 p. 66).

## Importance of the Danubian Delta, the Caucasus, and the Crimean Peninsula

These three regions, shown and labelled in Fig. 1, lie where the spheres of influence of the Islam and Christianity intersect. As such, there is a strong degree of religious and ethnic diversity and tension in these regions. (Figes, 2012, p. 430).

The Danube Delta, encompassing the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia was an important buffer zone in the Balkans protecting Constantinople from a Russian advance over land. Danubian food supplies were essential for the Turkish fortresses, as they were for any Russian army attacking Constantinople; hence the allegiance of the peasant population was a vital factor in a war involving this region. Russia appealed to the Orthodox religion of the peasantry in an attempt to get their support for a war of liberation against Muslim rule, while the Ottomans adopted scorched-earth policies to prevent the Russians from obtaining supplies. During the Crimean War, the pestilent conditions of the Danube Delta led to severe outbreaks of diseases (Chapman, 2001, p. 74) and heavy losses in the Russian army.



The Caucasus was another theatre of battle involving Muslim tribes supported by the Ottoman Empire and secretly equipped by the British (Figes, 2012, p. 51). While Britain was unwilling to officially announce support for these tribes, it saw the Caucasus as a key front to contain Russian influence. The Tsar pushed to take Kars, a key stronghold in the Caucasus, as a counterbalance to the loss of Sevastopol. The importance of the Caucasus can be seen in the fact that the British government discussed sending half the force in the Crimea to Trebizond to cut off the Russian advance in December, and plans for the operation had been prepared for consideration by the allied war council.

Crimea houses the largest warm-water ports on the northern coast of the Black Sea, and is key to securing the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. As Russia's only trade location which operates all year round, it is essential for Russia to protect its trade routes through the Black Sea with its Black Sea Fleet. Sevastopol is the most fortified city on the peninsula, although at the time of the Battle of Alma (20 September 1854), Sevastopol was only defended by 5,000 troops and 10,000 sailors, who were untrained for a full-scale war (Figes, 2012, p. 234). Prince Menshikov, the commander-in-chief of the Russian armed forces, initially decided it was not "worth" committing any more demoralized troops to the defence of Sevastopol. Furthermore, upon recognition that the Russian Black Sea Fleet could not adequately contest the Royal Navy, the ships were detonated to block the harbour of Sevastopol, which rendered the allied navy ineffective for the remainder of the war.

In 1223, Crimea became part of the Tatar Empire, stretching from China to beyond Moscow. During this time, most Crimean Tatars have converted to Islam. In 1475, Crimea came under the control of the Ottoman Empire, and thereafter the Crimean Khans were appointed by Constantinople. Over the next three hundred years, the Tatars remained the dominant force in Crimea. In 1783, it was occupied by Catherine the Great, sparking the 7th Russo-Turkish war, where only after a series of naval defeats at the hands of the Russian Black Sea fleet, the Ottoman Empire conceded to the reality of Crimea's new sovereignty. Not only Russians, but also substantial numbers of Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Armenians, and Germans were encouraged by Catherine to settle in Crimea, a process which continued into the 19th century.

During the Crimean War, before the allied landings, the Tatars had been careful to declare their allegiance to the Tsar. From the start of the war, they were placed under increased surveillance, and Cossacks policed the countryside with "ferocious vigilance". Once the allies landed in Crimea, the Tatars rallied to their side; they saw the invasion as "liberation", and recognized the Turks as soldiers of their caliph. They provided the allied troops with cattle, horses and carts, as well as their service as spies (Black Sea-Crimea, n.d.).

## Reforms by Tsar Alexander II

### Emancipation of the Serfs

#### The Emancipation Edict

There had been growing pressure for liberation for the serfs as well, from notably Sergei Volkonsky, the famous Decembrist, who said emancipation was “the least the state could do to recognize the sacrifice the peasantry has made in the last two wars: it is time to recognize that the Russian peasant is a citizen as well” (Oliver, 2002, p. 145). Tsar Alexander believed that the emancipation of the serfs was necessary to prevent a revolution, “It is better to abolish serfdom from above than to wait for the time when it begins to abolish itself from below” (Figes, 2012, p. 447).

The economic argument in favour of emancipation was also becoming very convincing: the gentry had very little idea how to run their estates to make a profit; most of them knew next to nothing about agriculture or accounting. Yet they were still spending in the same old lavish manner. By 1859, one-third of the estates and two-thirds of the serfs owned by the landed nobles had been mortgaged to the state and noble banks. The serfs' redemption payments were intended as a means to cancel out the gentry's debts.

The Emancipation Edict was signed by the Tsar on 19 February 1861. Serfs were granted the full rights of free citizens, gaining the rights to marry without having to gain consent, to own properties and businesses. They were permitted to buy land that their landlords allocated to them, and they were advanced 100% mortgages, 80% by the state-owned Peasant Bank, and 20% by their landlords (Lynch, 2003). The Edict allowed the landowners considerable leeway in the amount of land for transfer to the peasantry, and in setting the corresponding redemption payments.

#### Impact of the Emancipation Edict

While many historians, such as Nafziger (2009), believe that the serfs' economic situation and the standard of living had worsened after the Edict, Crisp (1976) suggests that the purchasing power of the peasants did not decrease, as redemption payments were often lower than the dues formerly owed to the landlords. Furthermore, income increased due to the fact that grain prices rose, and that newly-built railways facilitated sales, reduced turnover time and hence wastage. Dr Lin emphasized that it was indeed possible for peasants to take advantage of the new social freedoms, and although these were a minority compared to the overall population, thousands of peasants emigrated “internally or externally”, with Siberia being a popular destination. Sociological studies about the peasants who immigrated to Siberia revealed their “enterprising” and “dynamic” nature (Graham & Treadgold, 1958).

# DISCUSSION

## How Significant was Religion as a Contributing Factor of the Crimean War?

From literature review, there are differing opinions on the importance of religion as a contribution factor to the Crimean War. Chapman (2001) and Seaman (2001) described religion as a superficial reason, while Figes (2012) said that “religion plays a vital role in fuelling wars”. We will assess the importance of religion by assessing its legitimacy, relative importance to other factors, link with national identity, and its contribution to “Soft Power” (McClory, 2016). The discussion will be limited to Russia.

## Religion as a Legitimate and Proximate Factor

A prominent effect of the Age of Enlightenment was secularization, leading to societies and countries placing a heavier emphasis on ideology, on geopolitics compared to religion. According to Dr Lin, there was a “de-legitimization of religion as a justification”. Therefore, those who fervently believed in religion, as was the case of Tsar Nicholas I, were seen as “mad” by contemporaries and historians. However, the religious justification can be important and rational, on two levels: state and personal.

On a state level, religious and geopolitical interests often align, as in the case of Russian interventions into the Balkans. As Russia prides itself as the leader of the “Orthodox Crusade” (Figes, 2012, p. 9) as well as of the Eastern Slavs, it must act in accordance, with hundreds of thousands of Balkans Orthodox Slavs looking towards Russia for leadership. For the Orthodox communities of the Ottoman Empire, Russia was their protector against the Turks; Russia had helped the Serbs to gain autonomy, brought the Principalities under Russian protection, and supported the Greeks in their War of Independence. The ability to appeal to religion is an advantage unique to Russia in the Balkan region, and it is one that Russia is prepared to make full use of.

It is often a necessity that the Tsar appeal to religion on a personal level. As Orthodox Church was an integral part of the society and the government, being one of Nicholas’s six sectors, the Tsar “derives power from the Church”, according to Dr Lin. Therefore, it may well be necessary that in order to affirm his personal reputation and political standing that he cites religion to justify the state’s actions. Furthermore, the Tsar’s devotion to the religious cause lends credibility and strength to the state’s actions, as well as maintaining the morale of the Russian people and the army, who were overwhelmingly firm believers in the Church.

It is important to note that the nature of religion as a contribution factor is different from that of security or ideology, which are often the underlying causes, while religion is a “proximate” cause, according to Dr Lin. In that sense, while security issues may build up regional tensions, religion is the circumstantial spark that causes the situation to escalate. These factors are not mutually exclusive: Russia’s ideology contains not only reactionary but also religious beliefs; appealing to religion also advances Russia’s geopolitical interests in the Balkans. Specific to the Crimean War, Dr Lin believes that the issue of security arises as the greatest consideration. Geopolitical dominance is substantiated not only by territory but also a country’s Great Power status and the corresponding prestige. Being part of Europe-wide initiatives, such as the Congress of Vienna and the Concert of Europe, being on equal terms as other powers in diplomatic negotiations affirms Russia’s status as a great power not only in the eyes of Russia but Britain and Austria as well.

This status and prestige are the foundation of Soft Power, which is defined as the ability to influence the actions of others through attraction rather than coercion (Nye, 1990). The numerous Congresses in Europe and attempts at multinational cooperation demonstrate that countries began see Soft Power as a valuable leverage, and that they are actively trying to exercise this power in addition to or in place of military power. The nature of Soft Power was evidently changed by the Age of Enlightenment, as discussed below.



## National Identity: Strengthened by the Crimean War

The political boundaries of Medieval Europe were between Royal Houses (e.g. the House of Romanov, the House of Bourbon) rather than between countries as they are today. The Age of Enlightenment and the French Revolutions led to the adoption of liberal ideas, among which are the concepts of national self-determinism. Thus, nationalism replaced the monarchy as the source of common identity for the common people. Furthermore, political leaders saw themselves as representatives of nations, rather than Royal Houses, changing to nature of diplomacy; the image of a country is no longer dependent on its leader's noble lineage but by its own power and prestige.

A country's national identity is supported by its "founding myth": for Russia, it was conceived as an "Orthodox Crusade" and as the "Third Rome" (Figes, 2012, p.9), and the victory of 1812 against Napoleon gave Russia the status of a great power. The national identity is also strengthened by the fact that each country maintains a standing army of its own citizens, unlike in the Medieval period where battles were often fought with foreign mercenaries. The Crimean War in particular was the confrontation of each country's own forces on an industrial scale, and resulted in the death of over half a million people. The extent of killings gave rise to nationalistic sentiments on both sides, honouring the sacrifice of the soldiers, captured through literature and art.

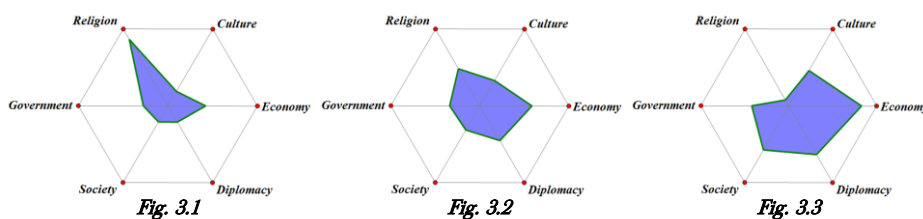
Another lasting impact of the Crimean War, besides culture, was the idea of the entire nation uniting to contribute to the war effort, that all social classes were involved, including women, rather than just the military men. Stories of Queen Victoria knitting Balacclavas and of Florence Nightingale, "The Lady with the Lamp" (Fig. 2) are epitomes of this concept. War is no longer between the nobilities, but between countries and all of their citizens.



Fig. 2

## Evolution of Soft Power

Soft Power takes many different forms, and has always been important, even before Enlightenment. As mentioned above, the Age of Enlightenment reduced the emphasis on religion, and increased the emphasis on diplomacy. From the IfG-Monocle Soft Power Index (McClory, 2016), I have selected six main components of Soft Power which would be applicable in this discussion for the countries relevant to this paper: Religion, Culture (the Arts and Sciences), Economy, Diplomacy, Society (standard of living and upwards mobility), and Government (efficiency and corruption). These components were deemed relevant as they appear frequently as topics of discussion in literature. For example, Grosul (2012) discussed the Russian society, Nafziger (2009) discussed the Russian economy and Seaman (1963) discussed diplomacy in Europe.



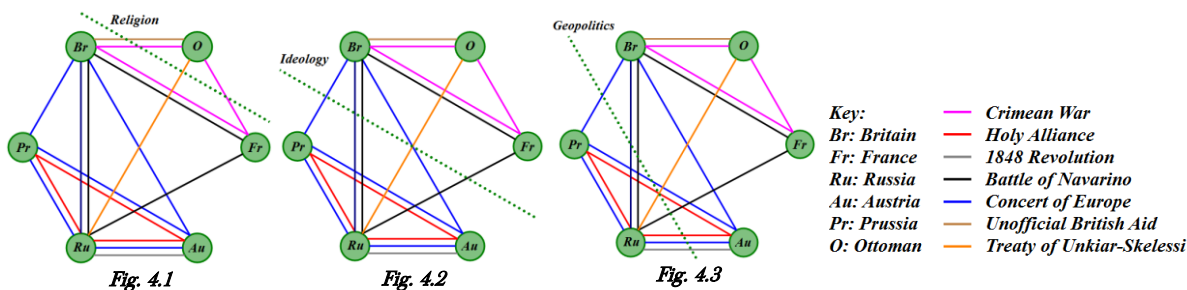
Figs 3.1 to 3.3 are a **qualitative** description of the **relative** importance of each component, and are by no means numerically precise. Fig. 3.1 shows that religion is the most significant factor in Soft Power before the Age of Enlightenment; Fig 3.2 shows that diplomacy has become as important as religion in the 19th Century; Fig 3.3 shows that today, with the prevalence of secular government, religion has fallen in significance. In comparison, the economy has gained importance through the Industrial Revolution and the Technological Revolution. The shift in emphasis across the centuries can be clearly seen. The increasing area enveloped also shows that Soft Power has been gaining prominence, and that countries have been paying more attention to the components which contribute to their Soft Power.



## Relative Importance of Religion, Ideology and Geopolitics: Alliance Graphs

I have simplified the complex power struggle in Europe down to three components: the religious confrontation between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe; the ideological confrontation between the Holy Alliance and Britain and France (as well as the Ottoman Empire due to the necessity of this representation); and the geopolitical struggle between Russia (as well as Prussia, due to the same reason above) and the rest of the powers. By representing major alliances in the form of an interconnected *Alliance Graph*, I have created a visual representation of the political landscape. For example, the Holy Alliance of Russia, Austria and Prussia is shown with red lines connecting these countries to each other. This is in part inspired by Haldi's (2015, p. 169-184) attempt to describe the political landscape in tables and lists of alliances and involvement. A visual representation was sought as it proved tedious to draw conclusions from a long list of text. This method can be extended to include any number of events; however, I have focused on seven for the discussion of this topic.

The following diagrams (Fig 4.1 to 4.3) show the fault line (shown with dotted line) of religion, ideology and geopolitics superimposed upon the *Alliance Graph*. The importance of each of the three components can be assessed by counting the number of transgressions across the respective dotted lines. A high number of transgressions would indicate that this component is often overridden by other considerations in policy-making.



For Russia, the number of transgressions over religion, ideology and geopolitics respectively are: one, three, and three. This shows that religion remains the most influential factor in government circles. One notable event which crossed all three fault lines is the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi (Figs, 2012, p. 44) signed in July 1833. The treaty reaffirmed Russian territorial gains in 1829, and contained a secret article guaranteeing Russia's military protection of Turkey in exchange for a Turkish promise to close the Bosphorus Straits to foreign warships when demanded by Russia. As seen in the aftermath of the Greek War of Independence, Russia believed it could turn the Ottoman Empire into effectively a vassal state, which evidently disregarded traditional religious, ideological and geopolitical concerns.

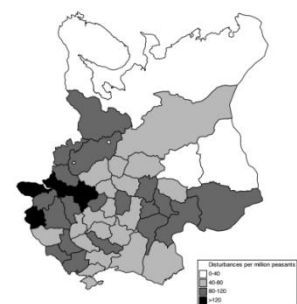
## To what extent was the Emancipation of the Serfs a successful outcome of the Crimean War?

Figes (2012) and Finkel et al. (2013) concluded that the Emancipation Edict of 1861 was an attempt at reform from above to avoid revolution from below. Although the Bolshevik Revolution only came half a century later in 1917, the immediate impact of emancipation was precisely counter to its intent. We aim to assess the errors in the execution of the reform that had led to significant social grievances, and whether there were any redeeming features that limited the extent of social unrest.

### Miscommunication: A Chronic Problem

The grievances of the peasants, which eventually contributed to the downfall of the Tsarist system in the 1917 Revolution, were to a large extent caused by the miscommunication between the state and the peasants. The act was named “Отмена крепостного права в России”, whose literal translation means “cancelling of serfdom in Russia”. The peasants believed that they would be free without any obligations, similar to the case of emancipation in the U.S., and they were angered when they were told they had to make redemption payments. The Emancipation Edict effectively put a price on the freedom of the serf, who gained personal freedom, but retained his previous economic responsibilities until he has paid off all his debts. The redemption payments set by the landlords were often unfair, and many peasants were aware that they were paying for more than the land is worth. Especially in regions with fertile soil, landowners frequently took advantage of the reform process to cut off existing peasant allotments and reallocate good land in their favour.

Peasant rebellions broke out across the Russian Empire. Fig. 5 shows the number of disturbances per million peasants in Western Russia from 1851-1871 (Finkel et al. 2013). They believed that the published law “was not the one the Tsar had meant to sign, but a forgery by nobles who wanted to prevent real emancipation” (Figes, 2012, p. 448). It has also been documented that on multiple occasions, the peasants were misled that they would be granted freedom if they joined to fight in the Crimean War. Furthermore, according to Dr Lin, miscommunication was a “common occurrence” in the enactment of Russian policies. This was due to the stark disparity between the well-educated ruling elite, who were often absentee-landlords, and the largely uneducated peasants: the two worlds rarely come into contact. A government which was so out of touch with its people would be prone to miscommunication as the policy-makers possess a vastly different mind-set from those whose lives they dictate.



*Fig. 5: Disturbances*

### Unavoidable Instabilities

Goldstone (2001, p. 147) writes that instability is more likely when elites are divided and state actors lack the “financial and cultural resources” necessary to carry out critical tasks demanded by society. That was exactly the case in this reform: the Emancipation Edict was only enacted after 3 years of political wrangling under Tsar Alexander II’s special commission (appointed in 1858). The unavoidable compromise needed with the existing stakeholders—the landed gentry—prevented the ambitious reform expected by Russia’s serfs, and the fact that the implementation process was carried out by the nobility resulted in further disparity between expectation and reality. As Serfdom was one of the key pillars of the Russian society, from which the autocracy derives its status and power, it was inevitable that instability arose from Emancipation. However, it is important to note that social unrest was not caused by peasants who had believed that they would correspondingly rise in social status and gain personal liberties. According to Dr Lin, that was never a prevalent belief. The mismatch between expectation and reality then, is only in the economic sense.

## Minimizing Social Unrest: the Commune

Communes (община), are the primary way in which peasants were organized, predating serfdom itself, and would go on to survive major upheavals, including the Emancipation and the 1917 revolution. A Commune is led by an elected Elder (Староста), and has control over the allotment of communal land, the movement and work schedule of peasants. Therefore, if a peasant wanted to emigrate, purchase or sell his share of the communal land, he needed the permission and the approval of the commune. Prior to the Edict, the Commune was responsible for the communal land, and the landlords were responsible for the livelihoods of the serfs. After the introduction of the Edict, the Commune took over that responsibility, while the peasants now owned private land, their social lives came under the control of the Commune. Effectively, the peasant is still strongly constrained by a rigid social structure, with upward mobility only afforded to those who were well-off or well educated. In the reform, the appearance of this ancient institution was preserved. The peasants did not expect to rise in social standing nor gain civil rights other than those granted by the Emancipation Edict, because they were still controlled by their Communes, which had existed before serfdom itself. As such, the commune served to limit the damage dealt to the autocratic system by the reforms. Thus, the mismatch between expectation and reality was introduced by miscommunication, but minimized by the Communes.

## Lasting Impacts of the Reforms: Was the Crimean War a “Turning Point” in History?

To assess whether the reforms prompted by the Crimean War was lasting, we see whether and how they were reversed under the rule of Tsar Alexander III. His father, Tsar Alexander II was assassinated because of his liberal thinking and policies. As such, Tsar Alexander III was understandably conservative.

The Zemstvo, revised judiciary system and military reforms definitely represented turning points in history as they persisted into the revolutionary period, and the Crimean War has impacted these sectors for the long term. On the other hand, the liberal policies of freedom of speech in universities and in publication were rescinded under Tsar Alexander III. For Emancipation, as explained previously, the majority of the peasants did not rise in social standing in addition to retaining their previous economic burdens. Therefore, these cannot be considered turning points in the long-term perspective as they did not leave a lasting impact in the period that we have considered.

However, as pointed out by Dr Lin, we must also take into account the change in mind-sets. Emancipation was still “a crucial watershed”, as freedom, no matter how limited, has finally been given to the mass of the people. Having exposed the Russian peasants to a more liberal thinking, it planted the seed for the liberal movement to continue pushing their ideals through the likes of Witte and Stolypin. The reform created a momentum to strive for further reforms, such as the abolition of the redemption payment, abolition of the communes, eventually achieved through Stolypin’s Agrarian reforms in 1906-1917 and collectivization in 1928-1940 as the nail in the coffin. Therefore, the claim that this is a turning point in history is to a large extent justified, as the reforms prompted as a direct result of the war were either long-lasting, or they created a revolutionary momentum that allowed the liberal ideals to flourish in the future.

One could also argue that the first French Revolution in 1789 similarly created this momentum of liberal ideals and reforms, which has manifested itself many times in France through multiple major revolutions. Going further back, the age of enlightenment planted the seed for these liberal ideals and exposed them to the intellectuals and scholars who later pushed for reforms. Dr Lin agrees that Tsar Alexander’s reforms could be compared to the reforms under Catherine the Great, who similarly brought forth a wave of modernization and secularization, creating the momentum for the rise of secular society and the fading of religion.

# CONCLUSION

Through extensive analysis of the causes and impacts of the Crimean War, we have concluded that religion played a significant role as a contributing factor to the Crimean War, as a proximate and legitimate cause and as the founding myth of the Russian Empire. Furthermore, the Crimean War represented a major “turning point” in Russian history as it prompted some lasting reforms as well as created a revolutionary momentum that allowed liberal ideas to flourish in the future. Insights discussed are very much relevant to today; while most nations’ founding myths are no longer based on religion, they will continue to be the basis of national unity and will be cited to rally a nation’s spirit in times of difficulty. In Fig. 6.1, the message on the flag means “thank you grandfather for the victory”. Today, Russia’s “founding myth” is its victory against the Third Reich in 1945, celebrated by the annual Victory Day parade (Fig. 6.2: The parade in Yakutsk, Russia) on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May.



**Fig. 6.1: Flag & Badge**



**Fig. 6.2: The Parade**

The impact of a newfound national identity can be seen in European diplomacy, which rose in prominence. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Concert of Europe was the most prominent multi-national body, and would go on to be succeeded by the League of Nations, the United Nations and the European Union. Diplomacy had become one of the most important components of soft power, which rose in importance as the turmoil of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, beginning with the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, led society to desire peace. As long as peace remains a principal objective in today’s world, Soft Power will continue to be extremely important.

Today, nations again are beginning to see themselves as distinct, separate nations. In the post-Cold War era, internationalism and multiculturalism flowered. However, games similar to those played in or before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century are being played again: notable examples include China’s “One Belt One Road” initiative, its increasingly aggressive movements and claims in the South China Sea, and the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. The underlying issues of nationalism and national identity are surfacing, as well as ethnic and religious fault lines in regions of strong diversity and historical instability.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Interview Transcript

Personal pronouns are italicized whenever they refer to neither the interviewer nor the interviewee, such as in reference to a stakeholder. (i.e. *I* am Russia; *You* are France;)

Teddy: Good afternoon Dr Lin.

Dr Lin: Good afternoon.

Teddy: So in my project, I generally concluded that there are three fault lines in Europe: religion, ideology and geopolitics. So, how do you balance these causes? Which is the stronger cause in that period of time?

Dr Lin: Um, so, as mentioned this touches on a really interesting issue, which is the idea of causes, and which causes are more important and how we weigh them. Um, There is a concept in history that a lot of events are overdetermined, that a lot of causes points towards the occurrence of a particular event, to the extent that even if you removed one or another, it made the event very likely to happen anyway, so it's kind of overdetermined. This means that you have a whole range of different factors that are underlying a subsequent event. How historians then tease this apart, which is more important, which is going to the source material and seeing how actors then, for example the Tsar, or the British high command then conceptualized their actions or justified their actions, before and after the event. So specific to the Crimean War, what comes across very strongly is a kind of security issue, a geopolitical angle, um, which is a very long standing trend in Europe during this time, and it carries on both before and after the Crimean War. Yeah. one could say that very strongly linked to this idea of geopolitical security issues is also this issue of ideology, because part of geopolitical dominance over the continent is the idea of who is a great power, what makes a great power, what makes prestige, on a European-wide and a global scale. So, being a member of this kind of European great power concert becomes critical not just in the tangible sense, it means *I* am powerful or *I* am secure or *I* am powerful and *I* can project my power, but it also means *I* am power and other people recognise me as powerful, and *I* gain status and prestige and identity as France, Russia, Britain, that kind of top rank of European or global powers. So ideology is also closely linked to this kind of idea as well.

Uh religion is too, I mean opinions differ, to my mind during this period it's a proximate cause, an immediate trigger over who represents certain groups of Christians, who represents the bulwark of Christianity against Muslims, or the Muslim Ottoman Empire for example. What you see is that this is kind of the immediate, kind of niggling thing that they pick up on, but the sediment below is the the idea that well, *I* should represent Christians, because *I* as Russia for example, as the representative of orthodoxy, need this to shore up *my* own prestige, whereas if France, *you* come in and *you* represent Christians and *your* brand of Catholicism, leadership then passes to *you*, then what am *I* doing. *I* also lose face in front of a lot of Orthodox Christians in the Balkans who have traditionally looked to *me* for leadership. It's all kind of linked. In this, we're talking also about a post-enlightenment age, in which the kind of ideological hold of religion is possibly not as strong as it used to be. And I kind of went into that in the response about how a strong religious motivation is seen almost as mad, or like irrational. And that begins to point to a kind of de-legitimization of religion as a factor, it becomes like a manifestation of other things, not just religion itself. So, um, so yeah, that I would say that geopolitics, security issues of status prestige, ideology are very high up, religion perhaps is the immediate kind of trigger that ties in all this things, but it's not exactly the main issue.

Teddy: Is this like the “force of history” argument, WWI would have more or less happened around then, even if the Archduke wasn’t assassinated, because there was a lot of tension and you know building up of aggression and things like that.

Dr Lin: I mean yeah, one can say that the assassination of the archduke made it happen at that time, that it happened in 1914 because the assassination happened then, one can say exactly as you pointed out, because of these really long term trends, towards you know, breakneck industrialization, continental competition, security concerns over who’s going to invade who first and attack who first, it was, you were probably going to have a war, but for it to happen exactly at 1914, the trigger was the assassination.

Teddy: Okay. so there is hard power, which is the military power, and there is soft power, cultural, diplomacy, influence, and i think it’s safe to say that in the pre-enlightenment age, the 15th 16th century, hard power was the most dominant assessment of a ranking of a country, basically, and nowadays there is also soft power which is quite important, what do you think of the, there is some attempt at diplomacy, like the Metternich era, but in the end it didn’t last very long. What do you think of the sort of trend towards peace, diplomacy. The trend I’m seeing is that even though all the country claim to support a religion, the other country, the way they are acting is really secure, the way they justify a war, we want to protect our interests, not we want to cause Orthodox uprising, there is as sort of evolution between the 15th century to today.

Dr Lin: So, I mean, two points. I think that soft power has been very important all along, I mean pre-enlightenment, post-enlightenment, and religion especially pre-enlightenment, was a huge factor in soft power. I mean if we go back to for example king john in England, the fact that he was put under papal interdict which meant that the whole kingdom of England was essentially outside of the pail of Catholicism, in that they were condemned by the pope, eroded a lot of his moral authority, one could say that moving later on, henry the 8th, that’s less of an issue, clearly this act of soft power of putting you under a sort of papal status had an influence on how England behaved with respect to the rest of the continent. I think soft power takes many different forms, based on what matters most to people at the time. If religion matters a lot, they your status as say, uh you know, ah the Pope is *my* status as leader of Christendom, *my* status as leader of the crusade, or *my* status as somehow blessed by God, it’s very important because this is what matters to people. What I think then you have going forward through the centuries to now, the issue of diplomacy, is the question one of attempts to maintain peace, to say peace is a desirable things and we need to maintain it, or is it a change you see happening?

Teddy: The age of enlightenment, the modernization and things like that sort of pushed down the importance of religion, and all the revolutions made peace more desirable. I think, I got the impression from Alexander I that it was very proud thing to him to be able to resolve crisis in the Concert, rather than in battle, well still in battle but through the Concert first.

Dr Lin: So, what I think is the watershed in terms of how diplomacy is conducted is the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. Because under Napoleonic wars, it think for one of the first time in history you have nations fighting nations. It used be that *I*m the King, I’m controlling some of *my* mercenary troops who could be from anywhere, they could be from Vikings, they could be from Switzerland, people that *I*’ve managed to pay off and things like that to fight another King with his force that he managed to pay off. Often this took place prior to the French revolution. What Napoleon kind of innovated and which Alexander the II tried to after the Crimean War tried to then institute in Russia with the reforms is that the idea of a national army, that the whole nation is under arms, and they’re going to fight nations, so it’s nations fighting nations, rather than kingly force or royal force fighting royal force.



For the first time you have this confrontation of forces as nations in Europe and also through the Napoleonic wars you also have the myths of, for example the Germans they fought the French, so that you have the rise of this German nation, Borodino and Russia you have this idea of Russians fighting off the French, we then went into an era of wars of nations and diplomacies of nations, so that we sit down at the table, that now I as France talk to you as Russia, *we're* not talking as like, *we're* of different noble houses, *we* might be cousins, that *I'm* just talking to *you*, as a different noble family. *We're* talking as representatives as nations now. So I think this changes the nature of diplomacy a bit. This then has implications for status, so *I'm* coming to the negotiating table now, not as just a kind of noble lineage, but as leader of a nation, or what will soon grow to be a nation, and as a representative of this nation, where *I am* in these congresses and these concerts of Europe reflects the status of my nation. So the fact that for example Alexander I could sit down at the same table with the French and the British was a huge boost, because *I'm* on your level now, *I've* joined the club. It's kind of an interesting, this is an interesting period.

We always take the idea of countries and nations as granted, because this is how we see ourselves this is how we organize the world today, right, but it's not how it always has been. And this is an interesting period, because when you see concepts of nationhood and concepts of countries being cohesive entities starting to form, um, and then this influences how countries then relate to each other. So *I* don't relate to *you* as a fellow nobleman, what happened previously and often did happen is that *we* are fellow nobles, and *we* can marry each other to maintain our dynastic alliances, and *I* have more in common with *you* as a noble than with *my* own peasants who are illiterate and everything. Slowly you start to have these geographical boundaries and mental boundaries being redrawn, where *I* as a Russian noble have more in common mentally, emotionally, and more obligations to a Russian peasant than *I* have to a German nobleman. It's a process of how the world is starting to change during this period and it manifests in the kind of theatre of diplomacy that takes place in the Concert of Europe.

So nowadays you again have a situation of nations starting to see themselves as nations, we had a period of the cold war, for example, a kind of ideological divide, and post-Cold War, we have the kind of flowering of international organizations, now the UN can function, we have NGOs, we have diverse multiculturalism, but there's this pullback where nations are saying, no, *I'm* America, make America great again, or make Russia great again. And we see this taking certain forms, in which people start, so the geopolitical games that were being played then are being played now, because we see the same underlying issues of nationalism and national identity, national consciousness, starting to become really important. We see the same issues of ethnic, places of ethnic diversity and places of I guess traditionally imperial collapse, now becoming very vulnerable, I mean Ukraine is a huge case in point, that it's post 1991, it's been in a horrible state, very corrupt, completely politically cannot get its act together, and it's a very diverse area, Crimea, don't even need to talk about it, now you have these same games being played in Crimea and Ukraine.

So, you have interesting situations where you have perceived defeats then leading to states having to do certain things, say reforms, or playing up national myths, so 1812, 1812, now you see Russia going 1945, 1945, 1945 constantly, and then you see this kind of increasing tension where it becomes *I* have to now assert *myself*, and how do *I* assert *myself*? *I'm* going to play around in central Asia or *I'm* going to play around in Ukraine, or *I'm* gonna start making some comments about America or whatever it likes to do. It's an issue of nations becoming nations, the security and geopolitical repercussions that happen when nations become nations, and the games that they then start playing, the myths that they then start spinning out, and the very real consequences for vulnerable areas of the world, where they become targets that this is where *we* start playing our little proxy wars in Crimea, *we* start playing out little proxy wars in Ukraine.

I mean this is not just applicable to Russia, but to China as well, because now you have China now identifying herself as no longer the kind of Maoist thought, is no longer the key to legitimacy, it's not nationalism, and then what does this mean, China is now playing the old games it played when it was a

dynastic nation, well where is our, where do *we* like to kind of pull strings, South China Sea is one place. And then they will make appeals to kind of this used to be our land, Vietnam used to be part of *us*, that used to be part of *us* thing. And then it's now this whole one belt one road thing this is Silk Road used to be China, used to be a sphere of influence. When nations start to conceiving of themselves in certain ways, they tend to fall into certain forms of behaviour and tend to justify their actions in certain ways, by appealing to myths of the nation. And often the myths can be religious, can be ethnic, the myths can be part of this imagined geographical space that it used to be, and that this will bring them into conflict with other nations saying well this is my space, this is not your space, especially in regions there is a legitimate claim, I mean Balkans is so diverse anyone can play any card, religious, historical whatever.

Teddy: So, Orlando Figes said that in the founding ideology of Russia, it was conceived a crusade, as the “Third Rome”, after Rome and Byzantium, so I would suggest that religion at least before enlightenment, before Catherine’s era, was an integral part of the social fabric and the top of the social structure, and Tsar was seen as the son of God to carry out his wishes. And all the peasants believe in Orthodoxy and things like that. Do you think that afterwards, during the Crimean war period, was this still the case? Was religion still a central part of the social fabric?

Dr Lin: Firstly I would hesitate in putting a hierarchy, because, um, while yes, the Tsar is seen as somehow a holy representative, by this period the Orthodox church is very much integrated into the state, one thing that you see in Russian history that you don't see in the wars of religion in western Europe is that the Orthodoxy patriarch of Russia hardly ever comes up and tries to unseat the Tsar, he doesn't have that authority because often the Orthodox church is controlled by and deeply intertwined with the secular ruling house, whereas in western Europe, the pope himself has independent authority, he can declare certain kings, he can censure them, he can remonstrate with them. That's why I wouldn't say that the church was above the nobility, I think it's a bit more equal in this case.

In terms of religion as a culture landscape, yes it was very prevalent, but by during this time I think you're starting to get a lot of schisms, you have a lot of peasants break away and form what the mainstream orthodox church considers heretical sects, they're often prosecuted as the main orthodox church, you have the old believers, the milk drinkers, the holy fools going around the flagellating themselves, these are people who are rejecting the establishment church, by breaking away and forming their own movements. So it's still under the orthodox umbrella, but they're not under the establishment church as much. I mean these breakaway groups. Insofar as religion is a deep rooted part of the cultural landscape, I totally agree.

Teddy: So I gather that the peasants were deeply unsatisfied with the emancipation edict. Is this because of the difference between their expected social level and their economic situation, like they expected to have a higher status and the corresponding rights and improvements.

Dr Lin: Specific to the case of the reforms in Russia, one thing I want to emphasize it's not a revolution, it's very much a reform from above, it's like the Deng Xiaoping, saying god, we're in a really bad position, what are we going to do now. Essentially, you have a liberal group of Russian officials who now have to chance to say, look guys we just had a really awful defeat, this shows us that there is definitely something wrong. Give us a chance to reform to make ourselves stronger. The defeat gives these liberals to start acting things to get the things they want. When any regime starts to reform you have, it's at its weakest, you create this expectation exactly as you said, that something will happen, but you also have to keep people happy, people who will potentially be losers. In this case, I hesitate to say that the peasants thought they would rise up in social standing. When you look at the kind of historical grievances, there's a tradition, one of the sources historians look at when looking at the peasantry in

Russia is there is a lot of these peasant petitions that are sent in to the zemstvo, sometimes even to the central Government in St Petersburg to say we are unhappy about this. You get to see what the peasants are talking about and why they're unhappy. Often they don't say we're unhappy because we didn't become middle class, they don't say we're unhappy because we did not rise up as we thought we would. They were unhappy because they felt they were cheated out of being able to leave serfdom in a way that they wanted. So firstly there was a breakdown of communications, that when the emancipation act was conveyed to the peasants, they didn't understand it, they thought oh we're free, that's it.

Teddy: They thought the land would be given free to them.

Dr Lin: Yes exactly, so they thought oh wow, so, great. Then they go wait you actually have to pay all this stuff, the redemption payments, they're like, what? You know I thought you just said we were free, so there's a miscommunication going on there that they didn't understand, or how it was communicated to the peasants often didn't say you're not really free, you will be free once you've paid all this stuff, but you know, they thought wow I'm free. So you have a lot of these peasants who write in with all this grievance saying that we thought we were free, but now they're telling us we have to pay stuff, what's going on? And then they are also unhappy that the landlords were trying to rig these redemption payments to make them pay more than what the land is worth, or they make them pay for the land that is not the best land, so there's is grievances that hey we were the ones working this land, why do we still have to pay all this much for it, or we know that we're paying more than the land is worth. That's kind of what's comes across very strongly in their complaints. It's not so much that we think we should be landlords, we should be like the landlords, or we think the landlords should be below us. So it isn't so much the idea that people desired a whole social upheaval, but there were expectations that were created that through miscommunication through compromise necessary compromise with the existing stakeholders in the system couldn't satisfy everybody. I mean the liberal movement is now the example they thought okay well, we have a free press now, unis are free, you know we can start expressing ourselves to our heart's content, but then actually, no, because there's still this kind of idea of Orthodoxy, Nationality, Autocracy, that kind of stuff that's really important, but people said "but I thought we are able to do this now. So it's not so much I think an issue of total social remodelling of the whole society, it's that people wanted things, they thought they would get these things and they didn't get them in the extent they wanted it.

Teddy: Actually, what does the word emancipation mean? I would think this is actually more like allowing you to buy yourself out of serfdom, like before abolition of slavery in America. So this is not the same kind as the abolition of slavery in America?

Dr Lin: My understanding is that before the abolition of slavery in America, yes you could buy yourself out, but once the act was signed meant that you don't need to buy yourself out, you're just free. So what they thought with the emancipation act, I mean emancipation is an English translation of the Russian word, and the Russian word means "freeing", so they thought they would be free, just like that, um, and then when they say, not actually you need to pay, they then get really annoyed. So, I think it's not so much as the word emancipation here that's an issue, I mean cause emancipation is not the actual word in Russian, it's just that we have to accept that it is translated as the emancipation act, but it's the idea that it would be free, but they, this is anachronistic, but they probably thought along the same lines that it would be like the abolition of serfdom, that you would just be free, without having to pay anything.

Teddy: I saw in some of the sources, that around the time of the Crimean War, there was a recruitment drive that the peasants thought they will be free if they joined to fight the Crimean war, and then in the end they weren't free. So this miscommunication thing is not a one-time thing, it's quite prevalent?

Dr Lin: I mean, miscommunication in government is one of them that you have in the Russian case you have this huge gulf between the ruling elite who are literal in multiple European languages, who clearly are absentee landlords, they don't really go down to their estates and talk to their peasants and live amongst them, and then you have the 90 percent of the population who are uneducated peasants, and the two worlds very rarely meet, and have a proper communication with each other, they're very out of touch. So miscommunication happens rampantly, it takes place on multiple levels, and I think this also adds to the issue of you know creating expectations that cannot be fulfilled.

Teddy: So emancipation was introduced in 1861, the other things in 64, and the military one was 74, I think it was not wise to introduce all the reforms together, it created the expectation that the government is trying to change things for the better, and the society should be better now

Dr Lin: So I think that in terms of expectation, it's not necessarily a society wide thing, I think what the intention at least of the reformers was not to "we're going to do this and have a great and wonderful Russia where everybody is happy." I don't think that was the case, I think what they wanted to do was to strengthen the regime and to get rid of a lot of social institutions and phenomena which they saw as holding Russia back. And the fact the emancipation act came first reflects the fact that they saw that serfdom was the fundamental thing that was holding Russia back, it was like "that's what we need to tackle first, and once we tackled this, we can then start doing things like we have now a more fluid labour force, which can now be used to industrialized, we have people with more fluid potential pool for the military, we can then use the system from the military. So I think the pace of reforms as the sequence reflects the thinking of what was most damaging institution for Russia. So serfdom clearly in their minds underlying everything, so we need to cope with that first and then we can start building on it. I mean I think that recognized it would be impossible to enact these reforms in a way that would please everyone, I mean the Milutin brothers clearly knew they couldn't please everyone, and so there was a deep sense of the kind of trade-offs that were gonna take place. So I don't think that on that level, they thought that once we do this, we will make Russia great again. I don't think that there was that sense, that we need to undergo that kind of painful things in order to have it come round the long term returns. In other levels of society I also don't think there was this idea that you know society will somehow become better overnight just because this has happened. You have for example among the peasants, I mean you don't get the sense even with the misunderstanding, oh we're gonna be free like that, I don't think there was this sense that we're gonna be free and then the land will be flowing with milk and honey and we will be really well off and comfortable. Even again looking at 1905 and again 1917 you don't see peasants saying that oh the institution of the дума or land reform or later on the with the 1917 revolution us taking over the land completely you don't see them going well now we will live in plenty. There isn't the same kind of immediate optimism.

Teddy: So what does the military reform being the last one reflect? I thought that the conclusion is that our military is so bad. One thing I've been seeing is that the victory of 1812 is mentioned a lot in sources, speeches, etc. Does that reflect that there is a tendency to refuse to accept the fact that they were inferior?

Dr Lin: I think it's a more complex issue. To the take issue of the 1812 versus Napoleon, I think it's more complex issue, it's not an unwillingness to recognise how bad they are, because after Crimea they really do understand how bad they are, there is this sense of crisis. What is is a founding myth, and all

nations have founding myths. And I said in the response to the first question, this is a period when we are starting to see nations conceive of themselves as nations, so how do we identify as Russia now, we need to pull on all sorts of things to say this is what makes Russia Russian, and this is what makes Russia great, and this is why we should make Russia better, despite the fact that we have so many flaws and so many issues with the way we are running things, and one of these myths is 1812 that this is when we came together, we were a nation, and this is why we need to go forward and continue and preserve what we gained psychologically intangibly in 1812. So it's not so much an exercise in wishful thinking, i think it's part of the myth all nations tell themselves to keep themselves united and motivate themselves going forward, undertaking reforms, going through difficult periods, all that kind of thing, you see that today as well, nations will appeal to all sorts of things, to say well, this is why were great, this is why we should improve, this is why we should stay united.

Specifically the military reforms, as I said just now, that there was quite a reasonable understanding that the problems with Russia's military was not just military, it was a social issue, so that's why they had to start with serfdom, and I mean the issue with Crimea is because you have mass armies using industrial weapons with industrial logistics coming together and slaughtering each other, and Russia realized it's not just an issue of military organization, it's also a problem of the arms that we have, the logistics that we have, the problem of the type of army that we have. And we don't have the industrial capability, we don't have the railway networks to fight an industrial war, and we certainly don't have the kind of manpower that we can organize easily into a national army, so what do we do? We need them to work on not just military but also the fundamental things, remodelling the economy, as well as the social issues, where do we get the workers to remodel the economy, where do we get the conscripts or the soldiers who can perform as a national army, regression then takes them back and oh, it's serfdom that's the problem, so we need to do this first. Once we got that kind of going, we will follow up with the military issue.

Teddy: So the idea of honouring the soldiers, it comes up a lot in Britain and the western countries, but I didn't see this word in the Russian texts, there was this idea that the state should recognize the sacrifice of the peasantry and things like that, do you think the reforms reflect that they tried to make the sacrifice not in vain.

Dr Lin: I mean when you come across the phrase sacrifice of the peasants, was this in relation to the war or in relation to serfdom?

Teddy: To the war.

Dr Lin: I mean the thing is that if the question means that did Russia learn from the war and try to enact reform, I think the answer is yes, the reforms of 1860s and 1870s are fairly serious attempts at dealing with the problems, it not the kind of cosmetic procedure, they do attack some very fundamental, serfdom being the most fundamental pillar of tsarist authority, they kind of start hammering away at it, kind of deal with this. You have a period of relative freedom of speech and association which you're not gonna see for the next 40 years. So it's a genuine attempt, i don't think it's just cosmetic, and one could argue that um um um it's to the to the degree that they were willing to tolerate instability, that shows your that was not cosmetic. If it was just cosmetic, the it's like we want to keep the status quo and kind of tinkering around the edges. In this case they were conscious that they could create instability but they were willing to bite the bullet. So this seems to be a genuine attempt. But again in terms of motivations, yes while kind of honouring sacrifice and acknowledging the kind of bloodshed that took place in Crimea that's one reason but I think another very key reason is exactly to strengthen the state, you know, this shows that we are weak, now we need to be strong.

Teddy: Can we compare this to Catherine's reforms, like a second enlightenment?

Dr Lin: Insofar as you have a kind of liberal flowering, that this is an opportunity for liberal strand of Russian officialdom of Russian thought, to have its time in the sun to say that you know, previously all these liberals are like marginalized, suppressed, you have no freedoms to even administer small things like education in the province, but now you can, so it gives, I mean, in so far as Catherine was inspired as this kind of enlightenment ideal and their quote unquote liberal ideas were able to be heard and have authority in this case also the defeat allowed liberal ideas to come up and be legitimate. I mean the assassination later on clearly then prompts everyone to go oh my god you know we went a bit too far. So then it gets pulled back, in so far as this is a time when Russian liberalism gets a chance, so yeah.

Teddy: It appears to me that the rest of the Tsar's government was thinking, logically, secularly, and only the Tsar seems to be the one who supports this kind of crusade idea. But it's not recognized in the government circle that everybody thinks that religion, you know, is the motivation.

Dr Lin: Yeah, I mean I don't think that religion is the motivation, clearly religion plays a part in terms of its ideological, the kind of ideological background, but you don't see them saying, um, it doesn't matter, number, the number one goal that we have to achieve is preservation of the orthodox community, is pushing back the kind of heathen Muslims, you don't really see the kind of talk taking place. Specific to the tsar, yes, but then again issues of religion especially in Russia are very strongly linked to state power, so if, one could say that it's madness, but one could say that part of the tsar's personal authority comes from his rule as the representative of Orthodox Christianity, and if the Tsar feels his position is being threatened in some way, or he feels that oh, um, this will enhance my prestige as leader of the orthodox world, then maybe *I* need to start kind of banging this drum a bit more loudly, so I mean I don't think we can dismiss religion, I think as a motivating factor for Russia capital R as a whole, it's not maybe as strong would have been 300 years ago, but specifically in terms of individual people religion can be important and it does make sense, rationally even, if you consider, yeah, the tsar derives authority from the orthodox church so it makes sense even if he's a bit loony for him to champion this belief.

Teddy: So what exactly is the social status of the serfs? Who are they governed by?

Dr Lin: So after the emancipation the peasants are in the village commune, and this means that in a way *I* still don't have freedom of movement, because *I*, any decision that *I* have to leave the commune or whatever, has to be approved by the commune first, so *I* can't do simple things like, in the extreme form, *I* can't say *I* want to migrate to Siberia, *I* want to sell my land that is very difficult, because the commune can say no, even into kind of small things like who tills the land when, because they farmed in strips, so who gets what strips when that kind of thing is also allocated by the commune. So there's still a lot of structural rigidity in the system.

So they have an Elder, who is often elected by the men of that particular commune, but I mean how democratic really this is and everything, but in theory he is selected amongst the members of that commune. How this commune elder relates to the zemstvo is not direct at all. So it's not like I elect the village elder and the elder elects somebody to go to the zemstvo, the zemstvo is pretty much an almost self-contained, if you can kind of think about it as a municipal or provincial body, that often has minimal peasant participation or at least the participation of the peasants is limited to those who are quite upwardly mobile or well educated, often it's dominated by doctors, lawyers, doctors, teachers, the new kind of up and coming middle class professions, and they will be the ones who will be carrying out things like education reform, things like health care, things like judicial, kind of judicial functions

that used to be part of the landlord's estate but now detached from the landlord's estate and are now taking place in an independent court. So it's not a kind of democracy as we would see it now, you don't and there's definitely no parliament, so there's no way anyone can vote someone into the parliament or a cabinet minister, that's not even possible.

So they did preserve the outward structure, It's still very rigid, as a peasant, I'm technically free, but I'm still stuck in some kind of structure. It's now that I can if I want to, you know, get the permission of the commune to emigrate, and many of them did, I can get the permission of the commune to sell my land and many of them did, but it's still a very rigid system.

Teddy: Uhmhmhm, so about whether this is actually a turning point, is it right to say, it is a turning point for the liberals the government circle in that the reformists and liberals got their say, and that is was a turning point, well both yes and no for the serfs, in that they were actually poorer but they were I mean they retained their economic burden in almost the same way as they had before, and they nominally had social change in status, in the end it's not, actually it's the same thing.

Dr Lin: I mean, uh, several things. There was a study done in the, uhhh, it's by Olga Crisp, uhh ok so I don't have the date of the study but she wrote a book on the post-emancipation peasants and she did economic history and went into like things like uhh income of peasant households, yields of peasant plots, and she actually found that there was a steady increase in the economic status, so it's not that they actually became poor, maybe in the very short term they were burdened, but in the kind of forty years, so she she studied pre 1914, so in like the fifty years from 1864-1914, she found that there was actually a steady increase of quality of life in terms of economic indicators, so in a way challenging the stereotypic and widespread view that the Russian peasant was just this impoverished really really poor person, what she's trying to say is that there was in improvement, they were not turned into like a really bad state. I think that is one factor that needs to be taken into account, um, another, i think while the system was still very rigid, you did have cases of thousands of peasants who did leave the commune, they often in many cases emigrated internally or externally, um, lots of them went to Siberia where they had larger plot, there never was serfdom in Siberia, and in certain sectors in the farming economy for example dairy farming was very very successful in Siberia. In fact one big issue that emerged under Stalin in the 1930s the idea of the Siberian peasant like a gulag, like the Siberian peasant is better off, more middle class, more whatever than the peasants who stayed back home. And again other historians have done sociological studies about the kinds of peasants who left and went to Siberia for example and they find that these peasants are usually very enterprising, more dynamic, they say you know what I'm gonna leave the commune, everybody yeah yeah yeah yeah ok I'm going to go now. You have a situation where a certain minority, fair enough a minority of peasants taking advantage of these new freedoms and make a better life for themselves. So it's quite a complex picture taking place here.

In terms of turning point not turning point, i try to look at the kind of persistent changes, like are they rolled back, are they not rolled back, how far did it go, how little did it go. Um, in terms of the zemstvo, it was definitely a turning point, because they persist into the revolutionary period, um, in terms of the new courts the legal system, that's again persist for very long, military reform, I mean that doesn't change either, they don't kind of oh let's pull it all back, they don't say that, even after the assassination. So, those are turning points, the kind of freedom of speech, new liberal thinking, that was definitely turned back under Nicholas the first, the

Teddy: Nicholas the Second?



Dr Lin: Uh I'm getting my tsars mixed up, uh let me check, my bad my bad, not Nicholas the first. Okay so post assassination of alexander the second, yeah, all the liberal policies were pulled back, because it's like oh no we're creating this dangerous radical group, so I think that is not so much of a turning point because it is in a way it's pulled back, but then, it's kind of let the genie out of the bottle already, there's no way you can return Russia to the same way that it was, because all these ideas are spreading, people are talking about it. If you want to talk about it policy wise, it's turned back, maybe culture wise, maybe it's a turning point. I mean it's very hard to say whether it's a turning point in the absolute sense, so some things were more of a turning point than others, so industrialization, no it was not, because industrialization required a certain set of economic condition before it occurred, towards the end of the 19th century. Abolition of serfdom, again if you want to talk about were peasants able to now do whatever they want, not really, some of them could, some of them did, but perhaps maybe more of a turning point than industrialization but also not like it's not a massive change, things like zemstvos definitely yes, things like courts, definitely yes, things like army definitely yes, liberal, um the liberal movement a bit more difficult, like I said it's pulled back but culturally it created this atmosphere already. Uhm. um. Yeah, I think uh that's uh, but then again you could say that in terms of abolition of serfdom, yes it's not so much of a turning point in that it did not render the peasant exactly free to do whatever he wanted, but then it created this momentum that people like Witte and Stolypin later started pushing it further and further and further, uhm, and that unlike the liberal policies were not pulled back, in fact it was constantly became more and more and more radical in how the peasants were supposed to be freed, and the commune supposed to be abolished, and the redemption payment supposed to be abolished, so it did create a kind of momentum towards freeing the peasants, so one can say well it's also a turning point, so it's hard to say.

Teddy: Okay okay... I don't really have any more questions and I think our time is, oh it's 3.20pm already. Okay, um, thank you very much!

Dr Lin: Okay, don't hesitate to drop me an email if you have any more problems. I'll show you out.

## Appendix B: The Greek War of Independence (1821–1829)

The Eastern Question was a question of how each country would approach the foreseeable collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It was public knowledge that the Ottoman Empire had been in decline; it was often termed “the sick man of Europe” (Chapman, 2001, p. 71). Russia’s perspective on the Eastern Question was driven by its need to secure the Black Sea, and can be clearly seen by how it approached the Greek War of Independence. While Russia had made its commitment to prevent revolutions in the Holy Alliance, it was also obligated to support Orthodox Christians oppressed by a non-Christian government, most notably the Ottoman Empire. While Alexander was unwilling to officially support the Greek cause, two things happened in 1825: The Sultan called on their Egyptian vassal, Mehmet Ali, who put down the Greeks by committing new atrocities. Then, Alexander died.

His death marked the shift in Russia’s stance; Tsar Nicholas, with his motto “*Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality*”, moved to defend Orthodoxy in Greece. Russian forces advanced quickly in the April of 1828, but were stalled around Varna. In the spring of 1829, they had captured Silistria and Adrianople. They were a short march from Constantinople, complimented by the Black Sea Fleet which controlled the Black Sea and the Aegean. They could have easily seized the Ottoman capital, overthrown the Sultan and annex Turkey; instead, Nicholas was persuaded by his foreign minister Nesselrode that “a sick Turkey was more useful to Russia than a dead one” (Figs, 2012, p. 40). Constantinople was hence left intact.

Moscow was too far away to govern the whole of Turkey, and it would have to be partitioned among the British, French and Russians. As a result, the Black Sea would be contested, and British presence in the Mediterranean would be strengthened. This would leave Russia in direct contact with the British and the French, extending the length of its border which needed to be defended. On the other hand, a “sick” Turkey, dependent on Russia for its survival, would enable to promotion of Russian interests in the Balkans and the Black Sea, and would act as a buffer state against Russia’s enemies (Figs, 2012, p. 40).

## Appendix C: Zemstvos

Emancipation resulted in a huge number of new citizens (former serfs) populated in the countryside, who had to be organized and governed effectively. The Zemstvo (земство) was a quasi-established as system of elected local governments. This reform introduced an elected body in district and provinces, supposedly with representatives from all class groups: peasants, townspeople, and private landowners. It was responsible for maintaining the local infrastructure and industrial development. Through taxation, the Zemstvo built bridges, roads, hospitals, and prisons and provided essential services such as healthcare and poverty relief.

In regards to new localized government, the reforms put in place a system where the landowners were now able to have more of a say within their newly formed “provinces.” While this was not the direct intent of the reforms, it was evident that this significantly weakened the idea of the autocracy. Now, the “well-to-do” serfs, along with previously free peoples, were able to purchase land as private property. While early in the reforms the creation of local government had not changed many things about Russian society, the rise in capitalism drastically affected not only the social structure of Russia, but the behaviours and activities of the self-government institutions. With new, capitalistic ideals, local government was not responsible for the rules and regulations dictating how the new market would operate. If there was a positive of this movement towards localized government, from the autocracy’s point of view; it was (as Petr Valuev put it) that the *zemstvo* would “provide activity for the considerable portion of the press as well as those malcontents who currently stir up trouble because they have nothing to do”.