

Alexander III and the Policy of “Russification,” 1883-1886

This collection, as seen through the eyes of the British diplomatic corps in Russia, provides a unique analysis of Alexander’s “retro-reform” policy.

- Date Range: 1883-1886
- Content: 67,159 pages
- Source Library: The U.K. National Archives



The assassination of Alexander II – the reformer Czar – brought to the throne his son Alexander III. Alexander III condemned the influence of Western culture, ideas and liberalist reforms. He believed that Russia had lost its domineering role in Eastern Europe due to Western liberalism and the only way for Russia to regain its position was through a process he instituted called “Russification.”

A defiant stance

Alexander’s political ideal was a nation containing only one nationality, one language, one religion and one form of administration; and he did his utmost to prepare for the realization by imposing the Russian language and Russian schools on his German, Polish and other non-Russian subjects, by fostering Eastern Orthodoxy at the expense of other religions, by persecuting Jews and by destroying the remnants of German, Polish and Swedish institutions in the outlying provinces.

Alexander III and the Policy of “Russification,” 1883-1886 covers such issues as the increase of revolutionary agitation, the deepening of conservatism and changes from agrarian to industrial society, and the spread of pan-Slavism, both in the Russian Empire and Eastern Europe.

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This collection includes materials from the British Foreign Office Recordkeeping.

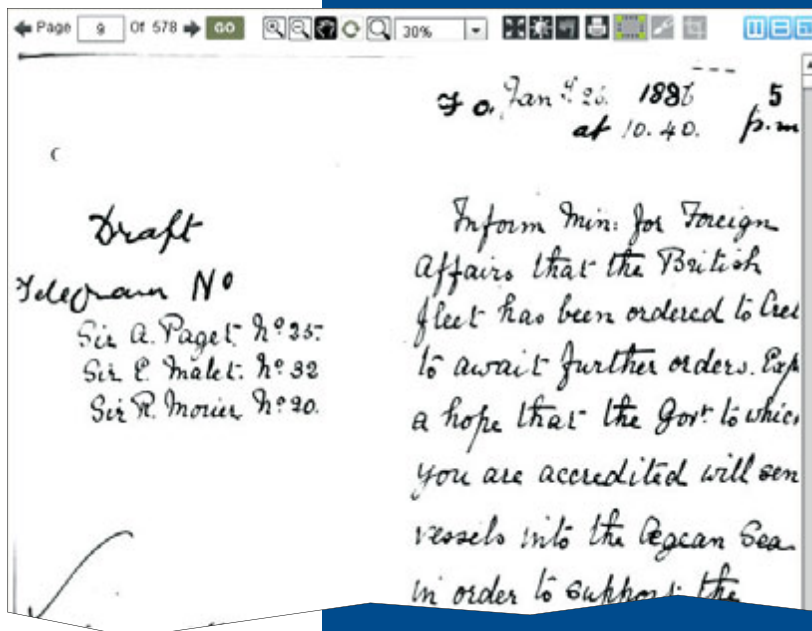
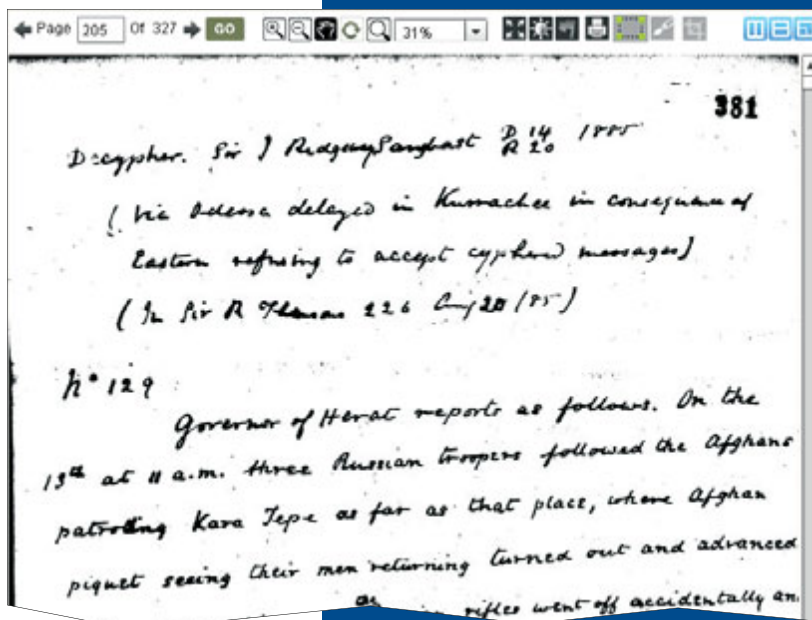
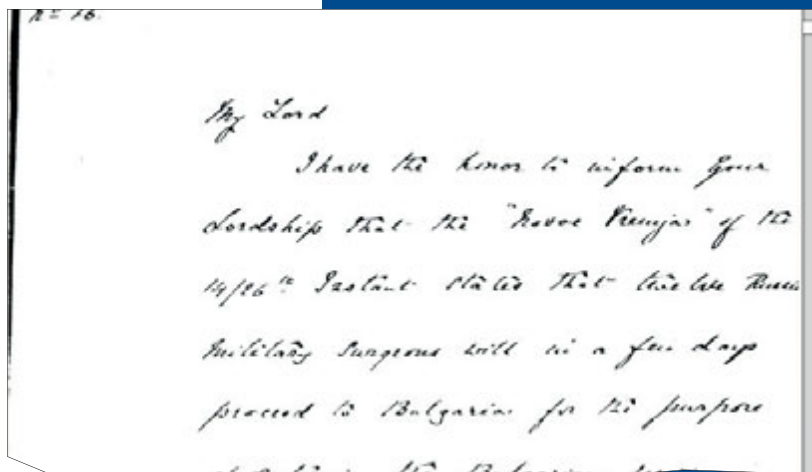
The British Foreign Office Records of General Correspondence for Russia, in record class F.O. 65, is the basic collection of documents for studying Anglo-Russian relations during this period of fundamental change in domestic and international affairs. This collection consists of the bound volumes of correspondence from 1883 to 1886.

- The correspondence arriving in the Foreign Office was divided between "foreign" correspondence (material originating abroad, generally from British embassies and consulates) and "domestic" correspondence, which was further divided into notes from foreign representatives in London and notes from other British government departments, institutions and individuals. Foreign correspondence was categorized by department (political, consular, commercial, etc.).
- Dispatches originating in British embassies and consulates followed a prescribed format. Each dispatch was to be on a single topic, enclosures were to be numbered, and any enclosure in a foreign language other than French was to be accompanied with a translation.

Each post indicated the sequence of dispatches by numbering them consecutively; this "local" or "dispatch" number enabled the Foreign Office to determine if dispatches had been lost in transit or unduly delayed. The heads of missions docketed their own dispatches with their name, date the dispatch was sent, place of origin, number of enclosures, means of conveyance, and a précis of the contents.

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