



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

A Level History A

Unit Y318

Russia and its Rulers 1855–1964

Sample Question Paper

Date – Morning/Afternoon

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



OCR supplied materials:

- 12 page Answer Booklet

Other materials required:

- None



First name										
Last name										
Centre number						Candidate number				

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Complete the boxes above with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer Question 1 in Section A and any 2 questions in Section B.
- Write your answer to each question on the Answer Booklet.
- Do **not** write in the bar codes.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended responses will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document consists of **8** pages.

Section A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in both of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing about the impact of the domestic policies of Alexander II.

[30]

Passage A

The 'Tsar Liberator' presided over an 'era of great reforms' which finally dragged Russia into the nineteenth century. Indeed, the scope of Alexander II's achievement has been compared by some historians with that of Peter the Great or Lenin. Autocracy would not be undermined, but it would be made to work more efficiently by modernising and rationalising the range of social and administrative institutions over which it presided. It was obvious that, by 1855, Russia was in desperate need of overhaul. Alexander had come to the throne at a time when Russia was in grave internal disarray. Nicholas I had admitted that 'I am handing you command of the country in a very poor state.' Defeat in the Crimean War showed the structural weakness of the army, the inefficiency of the financial administration and, above all, the dangerously archaic features of serfdom. Alexander was therefore impelled to take action, although what he had in mind was not a break with the past but controlled surgery to save the whole hierarchical body. The first and most important measure was the one which earned him the title 'Tsar Liberator', was the Emancipation of the Serfs, carried against a protesting nobility by the 1861 Edict. This can be seen as a monumental achievement. The grant of individual freedom and a minimum of civil rights to twenty million people previously in legal bondage was the greatest single liberating measure in the whole modern history of Europe. The 1861 Edict accomplished for Russia what had been done in France in 1789, in Prussia in 1807 and Austria in the 1780s. Its lateral impact was also considerable, for the end of seigneurial jurisdiction necessitated reforms in the entire system of justice, local government and military services. The emancipation of the serfs was therefore the force behind a series of reforms which followed between 1864 and 1881.

Adapted from: S. Lee, *Aspects of European History: 1789–1980*, published in 1982

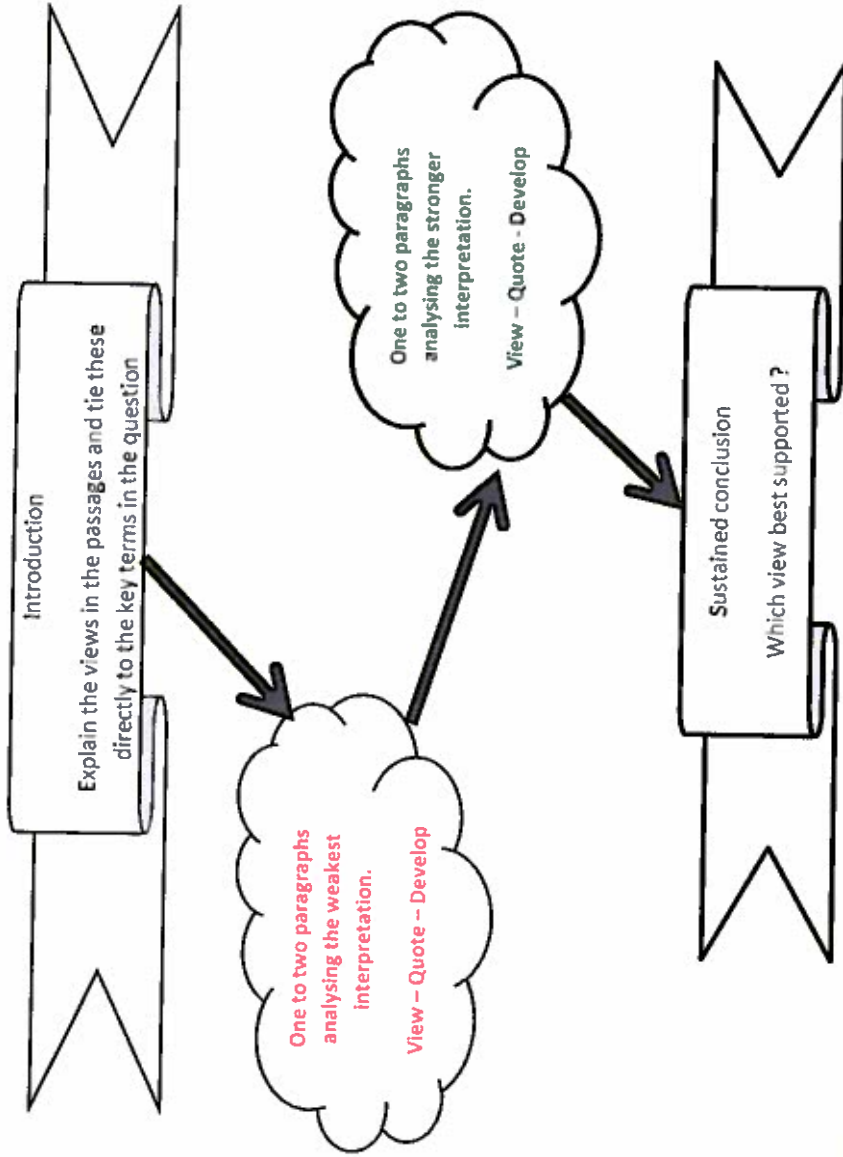
Passage B

When Alexander II became Tsar in 1855, the Russian state was in desperate need of fundamental reform. The programme of reforms introduced by him was radical in comparison with previous Russian experience, but it did not go far enough. The government's commitment to modernise Russia through a process of westernisation was moderated by its concern to perpetuate the interests of its ruling social class. This approach alienated the intelligentsia and, in doing so, undermined the stability of the regime, compelling it to rely on repression for its preservation. Significant though the reforms were, they failed to create popular support for the Tsarist regime.

The Edict of Emancipation freed serfs from their feudal obligations and allotted land for their needs. Landlords received compensation from the state in the form of Treasury bonds. The peasants were then indebted to the state and obliged to make redemption payments to the village mir. Peasants were incredulous that they had to pay for the land which they thought belonged to them because they had always worked it. Many, believing that the real terms of the Emancipation had been concealed by their landlords, noted in protest. The Emancipation was certainly onerous. The peasants lost on average 4.1% of their pre-1861 agricultural holdings. In the more fertile regions the situation was far worse. There was little investment in industry and agriculture following Emancipation, and the persistence of obsolete agricultural techniques made the central problem of low yields even worse. Serfdom was a medieval method of social control upon which the autocracy and nobility had become reliant. The government sought to perpetuate a similar level of control after 1861. The terms dictated that the village mir controlled the movement of the peasants. It is clear that the abolition of serfdom did not facilitate the optimum conditions for Russia's economic advancement.

Adapted from: C. P. Watts, *History Review*, published in 1988

Structure



Section A

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1	<p>Evaluate the interpretations in both of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing about the impact of the domestic policies of Alexander II.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In locating the interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might argue that Interpretation A argues the policies had a major impact in releasing 20 million people from legal bondage and were comparable to major European changes such as the French Revolution. The policies concerned not only serfs as this led to wider reforms. In evaluating Interpretation A, answers might argue that this view is flawed, given the continued social control of the peasants in the mir, the lack of real political reforms (making the comparison with 1789 in France strained) and the variable economic impact. In evaluating Interpretation A, answers might argue that Interpretation A is more justified in seeing reforms as a way to make autocracy work more efficiently, though given its later history, for example its performance in wars in 1904–1905 and 1914–1917 this may not have had the desired impact. 	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No set answer is expected. At Level 5 and above answers will evaluate both interpretations, locating them within the wider historical debate about the issue and using their own knowledge, and reach a balanced judgement as to which they consider the most convincing about the issue in the question. To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material. Knowledge must not be credited in isolation, it should only be credited where it is used to analyse and evaluate the interpretations, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.

Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In locating the interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might argue that Interpretation B argues that the policies, though significant, led to disappointment and unrest among peasants and did not modernise agriculture or create the conditions for economic advance, and note that it mentions little investment and the maintenance of the power of the mir. In evaluating Interpretation B, answers might argue its view is valid because it is supported by the scale of peasant unrest after 1861 and by the need for subsequent reforms. In evaluating Interpretation B, answers might argue that Interpretation B, however, underestimates the significance of the reform as a symbol of change even though its purely economic impact was not as great as expected. 		

Interpretations Mark Scheme

<p>Level 6 A 26 - 30</p>	<p>The answer has a very good focus on the question throughout. It has thorough and sustained evaluation of the interpretations, using detailed and accurate knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a convincing and supported analysis of them in relation to the question.</p>
<p>Level 5 B 22 - 25</p>	<p>The answer has a good focus on the question throughout. It has good evaluation of the interpretations, using relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a supported analysis of them in relation to the question.</p>
<p>Level 4 C 17 - 21</p>	<p>The answer is mostly focused on the question. It has evaluation of the interpretations based on generally relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce an analysis of them in relation to the question.</p>
<p>Level 3 D 13 - 17</p>	<p>The answer is partially focused on the question. It has partial evaluation of the interpretations based on some knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue. There may be some use of information from one of the two interpretations to support the evaluation of the other, but the evaluation will not rely on this. There is a limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.</p>
<p>Level 2 E 9 - 12</p>	<p>The answer has a limited focus on the question. Parts of the answer are just description of the interpretations, with evaluation in relation to historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue being weak, and evaluation relying heavily on information drawn from the other interpretation. There is a very limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.</p>
<p>Level 1 N - U 0 - 8</p>	<p>The answer has some relevance to the topic, but not the specific question. The answer consists mostly of description of the interpretations with very limited evaluation based on very generalised knowledge of historical context and minimal or no reference to the wider historical debate. Analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question is either in the form of assertion or lacking.</p>

Sample Interpretations Paper.

Timed: ¹²50 mins

Highlighted afterwards.

1) Evaluate the interpretations in both the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing about the impact of domestic policies of Alexander II

Key phrase "impact of domestic policies"

→ S/L of the serfs
Modernisation of economy
& society.

(i) The two passages certainly present very different views of "the impact of the domestic policies of Alexander II". In Passage A S.J. Lee cites Tolstoy's description of Alexander as "the Tsar Liberator" and continues that they were progressive and "a monumental achievement". This reflects J. Westwood's position that "with the possible exception of Khrushchev, no Russian Star brought so much relief to so many of his people as did Alexander II". By contrast, in Passage B C.P. Watts argues that the reforms "did not go far enough". As such, they failed to modernise the economy or society and created peasants "indebted to the state". This reflects G. Stephenson's view that "nothing Alexander did altered, or was intended to alter, autocracy".

(ii) There is evidence to support Lee's interpretation that the Tsar deserves credit for "the grant of individual freedom and a minimum of civil rights". The ex-serfs were granted the freedom to marry, own property, take legal action, trade and above all they could not be bought or sold. "These were real gains, however often the Mir simply replaced the landlord as the oppressors of the peasants. This led J.A.S. Grenville to correctly describe the Emancipation Edit as "a cruel joke". In particular there are some important omissions from Lee's analysis. There

(iv) (iii) (iii)

ii/

is no reference to the crippling redemption payments which trapped the peasants in debt until 1905, nor the reality that after the Emancipation the ex-serfs were given the worst land to farm.

(iv) Above all, we have Alexander's own words to a group of peasants in 1861 - "work and toil!" by the authorities".

(iii) There is better evidence that the Liberal Reforms helped to modernise Russian society. The improvements to "the entire system of justice, local government and military service" are important,

(iii) although perhaps not as important as the unquestioned introduction of a comprehensive literacy programme. However again we should note that this is not the complete picture.

(iii) The key reforms were drawn up by his reforming ministers like Milyutin (military reforms) and Loris-Melikov (the constitution), and there was a drift to reaction after the first assassination attempt on the Tsar in 1866. This can be seen the rise of Counts Shuvalov and Tolstoy. Equally,

(iv) under Alexander II Reutern did improve the banking and credit facilities, whilst the Emancipation Edict laid the foundation for an internal market to stimulate industrial growth. However there was no reform to agricultural practice, and productivity remained the lowest of any of the Great Powers.

(iii) Lee is thus incorrect when he suggests Alexander's reforms "finally dragged Russia into the present century".

(iii) CP Watts' arguments in Passage B do seem to be the stronger of the interpretations. When Watts writes of the drive to modernise being moderated "by its concern to perpetuate the interests of its ruling social class" he reflects

(iv) the jacking of Milyutin - the most able minister - on the grounds "the nobility describe you as one of the reds." As Moore states, his was an "unsuccessful attempt to combine authority and freedom".

(iii) iii) Equally, Walt's interpretation that "the Emancipation was onerous" for the peasants is reflected by the evidence. In the first four months after the publication of the Edict there were 647 serious peasant riots. As Fyodor Dostoevsky wrote in ~~the~~ "The House of Dead" (published in 1862) "the peasant in all his freedom works harder and longer." The passage is also well supported in suggesting that "there was little interest in industry... and the persistence of obsolete agricultural techniques". The Mir maintained strip farming and the repartition of land. Whilst the rest of Europe experienced an agricultural revolution Russian farming was typified by "Earth Scratching" and the use of the Solcha.

(iv) iv) Thus to conclude Walt's arguments in Passage B are much more convincing. There are serious omissions from Lee's arguments in Passage A. In particular, any consideration of the impact of the 1861 Emancipation that does not consider the impact of the redemption payments and the Mir on the lives of the ex-serfs is incomplete.

What the highlighting means

Reference to the passage.

Use of historians

Use of contemporary evidence / hard evidence.

Evaluation ~ tied to the key terms in the question.

Course language.

↳ Note: Passages ~ not sources in interpretations work.

Comments

- (i) In this introduction I have tried to set out the contrasting interpretations and then tie them to historians' positions.
- (ii) I am leading with the weaker position.
- (iii) Embedded evaluation & judgement about the interpretations
- (iv) High order / hard evidence.
- (v) Sustained conclusion (I was running short of time at this point).