



A Level History

7042/1H Tsarist and Communist Russia, 1855-1964

Report on the examination

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General guidance on question types

Question 1: The 'Extract' Question

- Identify, understand and evaluate arguments in each extract in relation to the focus of the question.
- Deploy contextual knowledge selectively and relevantly to assess how convincing the arguments are.

Qualities seen in more successful responses

- Evidence of careful reading of each extract before committing pen to paper.
- Identification of key arguments in each extract in relation to the question set.
- Contextual knowledge deployed appropriately to challenge or corroborate the arguments in relation to the question.
- Balanced assessment with focus on the extent to which arguments are convincing in relation to the question.
- Focus on omissions/ what is not in the extract is very limited - or is avoided altogether – and is only referred to if directly relevant to an argument identified in the extract.

Qualities seen in less successful responses

- Limited understanding of the arguments expressed in each extract, often showing little evidence that the whole extract has been read fully before beginning the answer.
- Tend to either paraphrase the extract with limited evaluation, or to focus on random sentences or phrases.
- Where it is offered, evaluation of arguments may not be focused fully on the question.
- Contextual knowledge sometimes deployed without focus on the question, or without linkage to arguments in the extracts.
- May contain inappropriate and irrelevant references to author provenance and tone.

Questions 2-4: Essay questions

- Demonstrate a clear and full understanding of the question and its demands.
- Provide a balanced, analytical response which reviews the issues raised by the question.
- Provide appropriate and full coverage of the breadth of the question, with appropriate supporting evidence.
- Substantiate judgements on the issues, throughout the answer and/ or in an extended conclusion.

Qualities seen in more successful responses

- Evidence of careful planning seen in the structure and organisation of the answer.
- An analytical approach which avoids lengthy narrative passages.
- Appropriate range, both in relation to chronological coverage and of issues to be considered.
- Balance of treatment, used to advance an argument and with appropriate judgement of the issues.

- Use well selected supporting information.
- Provide an effective introduction which sets out the argument to be advanced and an effective conclusion demonstrating overall judgement.

Qualities seen in less successful responses

- Limited evidence of effective planning and structuring.
- Tendency towards partial responses to the question asked, either in terms of chronology or range of issues to be considered.
- Inclusion of descriptive passages not clearly linked to the question.
- Over-lengthy introductions which do little more than provide contextual information.
- Inclusion of conclusions which repeat points already made
- Issues with, or an absence of, sustained analysis and judgement.
- Occasional use of inappropriate language, such as overuse of first person etc.

Individual questions

Report on Question 1

The main arguments of the extracts on ‘social change in Communist Russia in the years 1917 to 1941’ were accessible to the students, with perhaps extract C proving the most difficult to interpret and evaluate. Some students found it difficult to focus on the issue of ‘social change’ when providing context to evaluate the interpretations, which made their answers less successful. However, there were many answers seen which showed knowledge and awareness of, for example, the experience of women, children, peasants, industrial workers, religious communities, and national minorities.

Extract A

The main argument of the extract, that there was some social freedom under Lenin, but that ‘everything changed’ after 1929, was recognised and usually found to be convincing. Stronger answers were able to cite specific freedoms brought by Lenin, such as the new rights for women, and were able to make pointed comparisons with the subsequent changes brought by Stalin in the 1930s. The extract offered many points which the students could pick up on to demonstrate their knowledge of the historical context, for example the provision of housing, the hours of work, and the experience of the peasants in the collective farms. The more successful answers were able to provide evidence to back up these judgements, for example about the housing conditions in the cities. Less successful answers described change without a particular social focus, for example offering descriptions of collectivisation and its economic impact.

There were two main ways in which the extract was evaluated. The first was to question the extent of the social freedoms under Lenin, referencing for example the hardships of War Communism, or the contradictory nature of some of the ‘freedoms’ given to women, for example the freedom to divorce. The second evaluation made, which was less common, was that the social change in the 1930s had some positive features, for example in the provision of jobs, and for some workers, greater rewards.

Extract B

This was often the strongest evaluation of the three, with the main argument that ‘the Communist state brought...impressive social changes’ being addressed directly, and usually challenged quite forcefully. The sub-arguments about religious change, educational reform and the new constitution were engaged with, with more successful answers showing appropriate knowledge of the impact of the reforms. There were balanced assessments of the consequences of religious policy, good knowledge of the progress made in literacy, and some scepticism about the ‘guarantee of civil liberties’ offered by Stalin in 1936. Less successful answers found it difficult to provide a balanced response, or too readily agreed that the changes were ‘impressive’.

Extract C

Most students were able to identify the phrases which argued that there was a ‘transformation’ of Russian society, and that the changes were ‘very different from the socialist ideals of the October Revolution’. There was quite good knowledge of the removal of the elite in the years following the revolution, including the assassination of the Tsar and his family. There was also awareness that the ‘kulak’ class had survived in the 1920s. There was less secure understanding of the phrase ‘no one should live off the ownership of property’, and some hesitancy in identifying the ‘distinct social group’ that emerged to form the basis of a new hierarchy. Sometimes this was seen as just a very narrow political elite, the Politburo for example. Stronger answers used the existence of the ‘Nomenklatura’ and the Stakhanovite workers as evidence that ‘some were more equal than others’. Successful answers drew

attention to the range of privileges accessible by the party and the favoured workers, for example housing, access to consumer goods and holidays.

Question 1 -Exemplification of Level 5 qualities

Extract B argues that social change under the Communist state was 'impressive' and largely positive. It argues that society became more educated, secure in work and liberated.

The extract relates a 'full-blooded assault on the Orthodox church'. This is somewhat convincing as 40,000 churches were shut down by Stalin and 8,000 priests executed under Lenin. However, it neglects the lack of social change this brought, with 57% still subscribing to Orthodoxy by 1941. This is less convincing. The extract then argues that there was great social change regarding education and adult literacy. This is more convincing as literacy rates rose to over 90% in urban areas and over 80% in rural areas by 1941. The extract then goes on to argue that 'industrialisation came as a blessing'. While it is true that jobs were widely available, the realities of long

that 'industrialisation came as a blessing'. While it is true that jobs were widely available, the realities of long hours, strict discipline, unrealistic targets and shock brigades paint a different picture. It links this to the notion that everyone was guaranteed basic rations. While workers were prioritised in terms of food supply, this was not true for everyone, with around 8 million dying in the famine of 1932/3. In this regard, the extract is less convincing as it presents the social change brought by industrialisation as overly positive. The extract then argues that the 1936 constitution was liberating and democratic. While the constitution itself may look this way, the reality is

that it was largely ignored, with elections being uncontested and the 'Supreme Soviet' only meeting twice a year. Indeed, the years following 1936 saw 700,000 killed in the Great Purge, a society far from guaranteeing 'civil liberties'. In regards to the 1936 constitution, the ~~so~~ extract is less convincing.

On balance, I find this extract ~~to~~ largely unconvincing in regards to social change. While there was some progress which the extract alludes to, it conflates industrial progress and ~~a~~ social progress. This is perhaps most aptly demonstrated by Magnitogorsk; it was indeed an impressive industrial complex, but its 150,000 workers were forced to live in tents and huts.

The student offers a sustained and balanced assessment of the interpretation. The main argument outlined by Acton is immediately identified and briefly developed, showing that the extract has been read in full and understood. The comments on social change in religion, education and in the workforce are presented cogently and evaluated with appropriate evidence. It shows an awareness of the wider experience of the rural population, picking up on the phrase 'everyone was guaranteed basic rations.' It also identifies the significance of the description of industrialisation as a 'blessing', whilst acknowledging that there was some progress. A judgement is made, that Acton has conflated industrial progress and

social progress, and the answer concludes with an appropriate reference to the ‘tents and huts’ of the Magnitogorsk workers. There were many longer evaluations of this extract, but this student has taken the time to read the extract carefully and produce an analytical and controlled response, showing a very good understanding of the interpretation and a strong awareness of the historical context.

Report on Question 2

The most successful responses to this question came from the students who had a secure grasp of the chronology and a range of evidence to deploy, from agriculture, industry and government policy. The question focused on the reign of Alexander II, a period of relatively slow economic development which acted as a preparation for what was to come. Less successful answers became diverted by the more dramatic economic development later in the century, for example the Trans-Siberian railway. Developments in agriculture following the Emancipation were well known, though often this was only seen as a negative which held back progress. The Emancipation Edict was described, without reference to the role that it would play in economic development. The stronger answers took an analytical approach and evaluated the contribution of different sectors of the economy.

Most students readily agreed with the view proposed in the question, that the economy remained ‘weak and underdeveloped’. These twin strands are so closely intertwined that there was no need to distinguish between them and they could be analysed as a single item. Responses which began with a clear argument were the most convincing, especially if they were able to offer the prospect of a balanced argument and were sustained throughout with an analytical approach with a range of appropriate evidence. Balance could be provided by a consideration of the benefits as well as the drawbacks of the emancipation of the serfs, alongside a review of government policy under von Reutern and the promotion of industrial growth by the government, including the encouragement of foreign investment. There was secure knowledge of the credit facilities made available and of the industrial developments in iron and oil, for example. Less successful answers deployed extensive evidence from the period post 1881, for example the policies of Vyshnegradsky and Witte.

Report on Question 3

This was the most popular question and there were many strong answers. The reign of Nicholas II is well known, particularly the events around the 1905 Revolution. The most successful answers showed an awareness of what ‘tsarist autocracy’ looked like and were able to focus on the actions of Nicholas II in the period, without being diverted by excessively descriptive passages. There was also a need to recognise that the question ended in 1914. Breadth could be demonstrated by consideration of material both before and after 1905, although the balance given to these elements might vary depending on the argument deployed. The stronger answers recognised the nature of Nicholas’ inheritance from his father and were aware of his personal qualities and weaknesses. They were able to relate this to the social, economic, and political challenges Nicholas faced, including the rise of opposition groups, the 1905 revolution and the need for agrarian reform.

Less successful answers tending to focus extensively on the events of 1905. They often characterised the period as one of success for Nicholas until 1905, at which point tsarist autocracy was ‘lost’. Narrative sections showed quite good knowledge of the period, especially of the Dumas, but less certainty about how to use this knowledge to answer the question. An example of this was description and comment on the October Manifesto and, much later in the answer, description of the Fundamental Laws, without a recognition of their inter-relatedness. Less successful arguments relied on asserted links to the question after a narrative section.

Question 3 – Exemplification of Level 5 qualities

Plan:

Politically: Fundamental Laws, Oct. Manifesto, 1st Duma, Vyborg, 2nd Duma
July Coup, 3rd, 2200/2500, Union of

Opposition: SRs 2000, SRs 1898 1903 split, Union of Liberation, Potemkin

Socially: 1903-4 Cocheret, 3rd strike in ^{St. Petersburg} ~~factory~~, 1400 strikes, 1894-1906
Middle Classes 33 a year

On his rise to the Throne in 1894, Nicholas II had inherited a frustrated nation. With the process of Russification altering the lives of millions, and the reactionary undoing of Alexander II's reform, the 'unshakable autocrat' Alexander III had submitted the nation. However,

the successor, a man 'not prepared to be a Tsar', had little of the control his father maintained. The years 1894-1914 saw Nicholas attempt to maintain autocracy against several interest groups. He was best able to do so politically, while opposition groups and societal discontent eroded his authority.

In 1894, politically, Tsardom remained supreme. However in the years following, Nicholas would be forced to make concessions. Following the 1905 'Revolution', it was clear a change was needed. After 150,000 marched towards the Winter Palace, Nicholas met representatives to construct the October Manifesto. While Nicholas saw the reforms as damaging to his autocracy, however, in reality they pacified and placated

the groups that opposed him. For one, the right to civic freedom could be granted without any major threat to his power. Meanwhile, the abolition of redemption payments won support with Russia's largest demographic - the peasants. Thirdly, Nicholas promised a representative assembly. Of the contents of the October Manifesto, this had scope to damage Tsarist autocracy most. However, it is important to consider the Fundamental Laws he retained. Able to dissolve, veto, and use emergency powers, Nicholas had granted the intelligentsia what they demanded, while

keeping Tsarist powers firmly in charge. This power was on full display following the manifesto, wherein further opposition was destroyed. Trepov, the Tsar's head of police, used artillery on striking areas, while rancorous leaders were exiled to Siberia. Therefore, with the sound foundations established, politically until 1914 the Tsar maintained autocracy. Dissidents from the first Duma in 1906 fled to Finland. From here, they published the Vyborg appeal; these Kadets calling for tax avoidance were expelled from the Duma. When the second ~~Duma~~ Duma in 1907 contained the Left Wing opposed to reforms in Tsarist interest, emergency powers were used. The July Coup limited voters by 1/6th, promising the nobility. The resulting Duma passed 2200/2500 pieces of legislation, closely subservient to the Tsar. It is clear that the Tsar manufactured the Dumas in a way as to not threaten Tsarist autocracy, therefore allowing him to maintain

his power politically.

However, Nicholas was less effective in dealing with opposition groups that challenged his Tsarist autocracy.

The Social revolutionaries were established in 1901, following loosely Marxist ideas with populist appeal. Over the period, they grew in popularity in urban areas, with half

of their support coming from workers. Between 1901 and 1906, 2000 assassinations were carried out.

The worst of these targeted important Tsarist ministers.

1901 saw the assassination of Bogolepov, head of education. Despite the arrest of the student-assassin, rallies erupted from academic communities, from which 800 more were arrested. This presented a

worrying trend: people were not afraid to show public opposition to the Tsar. In 1904, Plehve was assassinated over his policy with the Japanese war; his death was met with little grievance, and reportedly with celebration in workers districts. Finally, the Tsar's first minister Stolypin, was killed in 1911. An important reformer, as well as head of the Duma, it was a blow to Tsarist autocracy. However, this isn't to say that opposition groups were freely eroding Tsarist autocracy. Yezno Azef, a member of the Tsar's secret police, had infiltrated the SRs, resulting in 4500 arrests. Although only half were imprisoned or executed, it was a symbolic victory, and a show that the Tsar wasn't helpless. Furthermore, Nicholas was able to pacify the Union of Liberation. Established in 1905 as defectors from Marxism, this liberal opposition accepted the constitutional monarchy resulting from the October Manifesto. Overall, Nicholas certainly struggled to maintain Tsarist autocracy against violent opposition groups more than political groups; however, across the period 1894-1914, their assassinations and rallies did not collapse his maintained Tsarist autocracy.

As the ruler of $\frac{1}{6}$ of the world's surface area, Nicholas had to ensure that he maintained Tsarist autocracy socially, and that the general population were kept loyal and subservient to their Tsar. However,

through the period, multiple demographics rebelled against his autocracy. With the largest group, the peasants, discontent erupted. Between 1902-1907, there were over 499 disturbances. In particular, the 'years of the Red Cockerel' 1903-4 saw 15% of manor houses burned to the ground. However, while unrest increased, it's important to consider the target. The victims were primarily nobles, as opposed to the Tsar himself. Generally, the peasants still loved the Tsar, their 'Little Father'; the centenary celebrations of the Romanov dynasty were adored by 80% of the population, the peasants. Within cities, and away from the rural areas, opposition was more focused. There were an average 33 annual strikes in the years 1894-1906, with $\frac{3}{4}$ of these occurring in St. Petersburg. The workers' discontent culminated in Gapon's march onto the Winter Palace; unlike the peasants, the recently expanded working class directed their hate at the Tsar. Even the Middle Class, a generally passive group, ended a 1904 business banquet with chants of 'Down with Monarchy'. Overall, while the Tsar maintained autocracy and power over the peasants and the countryside, urban populations directly opposed him. However, Nicholas was successful in maintaining his autocracy, with strikes brutally put down by Cossacks and soldiers.

Overall, Nicholas II was somewhat successful in maintaining Tsarist power, however in sacrificing part of his autocracy. General discontent and opposition grew during the period, which he had to accommodate for. As a result, the Dumas were established. Although fundamentally controlled by Tsarist autocracy, the formation of this body indicated a loss in true, one-man autocratic power.

The introduction to this essay shows a good awareness of the inheritance of Nicholas II and the process of change which had led to 1894. It sets out a clear argument that Nicholas, who was 'not suited to be a Tsar', faced several challenges and was able to maintain political power, whilst at the same time his authority was eroded. There is clear evidence of planning, and the essay is fully analytical. It examines three related strands, political change, the opposition, and social changes. The content of each section is balanced, with comment on the issue and relevant support at an appropriate level. The essay is by no means comprehensive in its coverage of the period and issues, but it does show a very good understanding of the question and it is well organised and effectively delivered. The judgement that Nicholas was more successful in defeating violent opposition than his political opponents is convincing. There is nuance in the awareness that the peasants 'still loved the Tsar', despite the years of protest. The overall judgement, which is returned to in the conclusion, of a loss of true autocracy yet the maintenance of control by the autocracy, is well-substantiated.

Report on Question 4

This question elicited many thoughtful responses. The strongest answers showed very good knowledge of the regimes of Stalin post 1941 and Khrushchev. The most common argument was that in the period there was an increase in political uncertainty under Khrushchev but also a decline in social hardship. It was equally possible, and perfectly legitimate, to make an alternate case, especially with the wide ranging concept of 'political uncertainty'. The most common approach was to take a broadly chronological framework, but the strongest answers maintained an analytical approach throughout. The war years could be argued as a period of some uncertainty, but the period of High Stalinism was seen as years of 'political certainty'. Even so, the continuation of the terror after the war offered some balance to this view. Good answers showed awareness of the power struggle after the death of Stalin and of the process of de-Stalinisation. There was good knowledge of the social and cultural changes under Khrushchev, although lower scoring answers tended to focus mainly on the Virgin Lands scheme.

A feature of less successful answers was a lack of balance between the two leaders, leading to an answer with limited scope. Another way in which this was evident was in a concentration on political issues for Stalin and social issues for the Khrushchev years. There was a lack of clarity about the power struggle after 1953 and a tendency to exaggerate the changes that Khrushchev brought. Lower scoring answers were presented as a narrative, often with quite general support, and sometimes there was a failure to distinguish between the Stalin regime in the 1930s and the post 1941 period.

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