This document contains all of the past paper questions that have been set from this unit. Use them to actively revise – plan answers, write introductions and conclusions (clear line of argument etc). The relevant sections from the mark scheme are included in the same order in the next document.

There are a choice of two questions from each of the HL units you study in the real exam. You have to answer three in total – you can do two from the same section.

**Russia 1853-1924**

May 2015

**9. Examine the reasons for the growth of opposition movements in Russia between 1881 and 1914**

Opposition existed under Alexander II, but the reactionary policies of Alexander III and Nicholas II (for example the weakening power of the Zemstva, the refusal to set up a National Duma and Russification) contributed to the growth of opposition. Opposition groups spanned moderate liberals who wanted a constitutional monarchy to the revolutionary groups such as the Social Revolutionaries (formed in 1901) and the Russian Social Democrats (1900).

The autocratic nature of the regime was one of the main reasons why opposition continued despite the difficulties faced. Both Alexander III and Nicholas II refused to consider constitutional reform that would have satisfied the moderate Liberals.

Industrialisation and the growth of the two major cities, St Petersburg and Moscow, contributed to the support for parties such as the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks; whilst in the countryside, the problem of Land Hunger (because of population growth) made the Social Revolutionaries relatively popular because they advocated land redistribution.

Opposition became open and widespread during 1905 as a consequence of social and economic problems being exacerbated by the strains of the Russo–Japanese War. Some narrative of the events of 1905 may be relevant here, but the main focus should be reasons for opposition.

The limitations of the reforms of 1905 and the Dumas continued to alienate groups such as the Kadets who wanted a real constitutional monarchy and who feared revolution if this did not happen. Poor living and working conditions in the cities and the failure of Stolypin’s attempts to solve the land question increased support for the radical parties.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about in their responses. However, it is not exhaustive and no set answer is required

**10. “Strong political and military leaders were the main factors in Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

Initially, the Bolsheviks appeared weak and outnumbered – controlling only one sixth of Russia. A number of factors acted in their favour so that by 1921 they had more or less dealt with the threat from the Whites. The Bolsheviks had the clear aim to protect the Revolution and they had strong leadership from Lenin and Trotsky.

Lenin provided the political and economic support for the Red Army via the dominance of the party and the policy of War Communism. Trotsky provided effective military leadership for the Red Army, which by 1921 was 5.5 million strong. He used former Tsarist officers to train the army and maintained strict discipline. He provided good strategic leadership, travelling in his special train to key areas for example.

The Bolsheviks also retained control of key areas such as Petrograd and Moscow (the main industrial areas) and had clear lines of communication with their army, whereas the armies of the Whites were physically divided. The Whites also lacked effective leadership (there were 19 governments in Siberia in 1918). External support from the Western powers had largely declined by the end of 1920.

In rural areas, although the policy of War Communism was extremely unpopular, the Whites tended to live off the land causing massive destruction. There was also a fear that a White victory would lead to the loss of land, granted by the 1917 Decree on Land.

Balanced answers should consider both the strength of the Bolsheviks and the weakness of the Whites.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write, there is no set response.

Nov 14

**9. To what extent did Alexander II’s reforms improve the lives of the Russian peasantry?**

The main focus of answers should be whether or not the lives of the Russian peasants improved as a result of emancipation in 1861. The details of the Emancipation Edict could be outlined – the granting of civil rights to peasants and the fact that land was redistributed from the nobility to the peasantry. Analysis could consider whether emancipation actually improved living standards. Issues to consider: the amount and quality of land redistributed; the fact that the Mir and not individuals held the land; the issue of Redemption Dues and its effect on the peasants. Modern historiography suggests that peasant income fell and by 1870 only 50 % of peasants were producing surplus. Many were working at subsistence levels and they lacked the means to improve farming. Thus, limited supplies of land and increased population led to Land Hunger, famines and peasant discontent by the 1890s.

Candidates may refer to other reforms that were necessary corollaries to emancipation such as local government, education, legal and military reforms etc. However the main focus should be on their impact on the lives of the peasants.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about in their responses. However, it is not exhaustive and no set answer is required.

Examiners and moderators are reminded of the need to apply the markbands that provide the “best fit” to the responses given by candidates and to award credit wherever it is possible to do so.

**10. Evaluate the factors that enabled Lenin to ensure the survival of the Soviet State.**

Factors could include Lenin’s willingness to deal ruthlessly with potential opposition both within and outside the Bolshevik party – suppression of the Constituent Assembly; the establishment of the Cheka and the Red Terror. The harsh treatment of opponents during the civil war (the death of the Romanov family), the crushing of the Kronstadt Revolt when the sailors demanded a return to soviet power, the establishment of the one-party state and the Ban on Factionalism within the party itself followed by purges could all be considered.

Other factors could include: policies that were approved of by the Russian people or were effective in dealing with a particular crisis; decrees on Land and Peace 1917; the granting of workers control of economic enterprises. War Communism, although unpopular, was important in supplying the Red Army during the Civil War. This helped in defeating the Whites and their foreign allies. The adoption of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921 stimulated economic recovery and increased the popularity of the regime.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about in their responses. However, it is not exhaustive and no set answer is required.

Examiners and moderators are reminded of the need to apply the markbands that provide the “best fit” to the responses given by candidates and to award credit wherever it is possible to do so.

May 13

**9. To what extent do you agree that Alexander II transformed Russian society?**

The reforms of Alexander II will be well known, the major ones include:

 Emancipation of the Serfs 1861

 local government reforms – zemstva and duma

 legal reforms – trial by jury, independent judiciary

 education reforms – extension of secondary schools and more independence in the universities, reduction of censorship

 military reforms

 attempts to modernize the economy.

The focus of the question is the extent of change, analysis of the impact of reforms will be necessary for higher level marks. Possible points:

 Peasants remained tied to the Mir as a consequence of the burden of Redemption dues.

 Local government tended to be dominated by the nobility. There was no elected national assembly.

 Legal reforms led to the most extensive change as the population had more protection from arbitrary police action. Political cases were often tried separately.

 Education reforms led to the growth of an educated middle class. This group proved problematical as they demanded further reform.

 Military reforms lead to a better educated and more egalitarian army, although exemptions for the nobility were relatively easy.

 Economic change was slow, emancipation did not lead to the emergence of a prosperous peasant class, the nobility used compensation payments to pay off debts rather than invest in Russian industry.

The major change was the emancipation of the serfs but even that was limited as they remained firmly at the bottom of the social hierarchy which otherwise changed very little. Political power remained largely with the autocracy.

**10. Assess the impact of the Russo–Japanese War on the reign of Nicholas II up to 1914.**

The immediate impact of the war was to add to the growth of opposition to the regime. This was shown initially by peasant resistance to conscription and the strikes and demonstrations of 1905 throughout Russia. Nicholas was forced to issue the October Manifesto thus the impact of the war seemed to be significant political change. However “assess” requires candidates to consider how much real change there was. The Fundamental Law of 1906 ensured that the autocracy retained ultimate political power and Stolypin’s repression of opposition reinforced that power. Adjustment of the electorate over the next few years ensured a State Duma that was manageable.

It could be argued that the major impact was the emergence of political opposition groups such as the Social Democrats and Social Revolutionaries into the political arena. Also the growing awareness of the underlying weakness and incompetence of the regime.

In terms of foreign affairs, one impact of the war was the decision to strengthen relations with Britain and France by signing the Triple Entente (1907), which impacted on Russo–German relations.

This is not a “causes” of the February 1917 Revolution question, although some reference could be made to it.

Nov 13

**9. “Alexander III was a political reactionary but an economic moderniser.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

Political reaction could include: his refusal to enact the Loris-Melikov reforms, restoring the position of the nobility in local government by abolishing Justices of the Peace and introducing the role of Land Commandant which was reserved for the nobility. He passed laws (1890 and 1892) which restricted the size of the franchise. He wanted to maintain the position of the nobility and reduce the influence of popular opinion.

His education policies were designed to restrict access, except for the prosperous classes, and increase the influence of the Orthodox Church.

The policy of Russification was designed to maintain the Empire and to silence nationalist demands.

Economically the reign of Alexander III saw a great increase in production from heavy industries such as coal, iron and oil plus expansion of the railway system. However, this was not accompanied by an increase in manufacturing until Witte’s policies of the 1890s encouraged foreign investment.

Agriculture remained stagnant with peasants still suffering the burden of redemption dues and heavy indirect taxation. Despite some reduction of the Poll Tax and the introduction of land banks there was little modernization of agriculture. The government policy of seizing grain to sell abroad discouraged domestic investment.

There will be little debate that Alexander was politically conservative, but more able answers may point out that, on the whole, he was not so different from his father in that both desired to maintain the monarchy. Analysis of economic policies is also likely to lead to the conclusion that he was fairly conservative, despite the appearance of modernization.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may elect to write about, not set content.

Nov 13

**10. Compare and contrast the role of the Soviets in the February and October revolutions of 1917 in Russia**

Comparison: In both cases the Soviets were the elected representatives of workers and soldiers, especially in Petrograd. In both cases the support of the Soviets was important in establishing change in Russia. The Provisional Government could not have been established or functioned without the support of the Petrograd Soviet. Bolshevik control of the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets encouraged Lenin to attempt to seize power. In October the Second All Russian Congress of Soviets approved the Bolshevik seizure of power. At both times the Soviet was the forum for expressing the grievances of soldiers and workers.

Contrast: In February the Soviets were the leaders of opposition to the Tsar and were to some extent instrumental in the collapse of the regime. In October the Soviets did not lead revolutionary change, but approved the Bolshevik actions after the event. They supported the Bolshevik policy of seeking peace, whereas in February the demand was not yet for peace but defending the revolution. In February the Petrograd Soviet, which was dominated by Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, was willing to co-operate with the Provisional Government to some extent because they believed that Russia was not yet ready for extreme revolution. In October the Petrograd Soviet was dominated by the Bolsheviks, with Trotsky as chairman.

The above material is an indication of what candidates may use, not what they have to.

May 12

**9. Compare and contrast the domestic policies of Alexander II (1855–1881) and Alexander III (1881–1894).**

Alexander II’s reign will probably be known in more detail and most candidates are likely to focus more on the contrasts – Alexander II as the Reforming Tsar and Alexander III’s as the Reactionary Tsar. Analysis of contrasts should be supported by reference to specific policies

e.g. Alexander III’s reversal of Zemstva power by the appointment of Land Commandants, increasing control of education, support for the Church, etc. Comparisons could include the key point that both were determined to maintain the monarchy, that both pursued Russian dominance and that both sought economic growth – it is often forgotten that Alexander III appointed Witte as finance minister.

**10. “Lenin was able to consolidate Bolshevik rule in Russia by combining popular policies and repression.” To what extent do you agree with this statement about Bolshevik rule up to 1924?**

Popular policies could include the Decree on Peace and Decree on Land in 1917, the New Economic Policy in the period 1921–1924 which established a compromise economy and ended the rigours of War Communism which was very unpopular. Currency reform also helped stabilize the economy.

Repression – Red Terror (Cheka) in 1918, reintroduction of censorship, the use of force to close the Constituent Assembly, the massacre of the Kronstadt Sailors 1921 and the elimination of Mensheviks and S.R’s and the establishment of the One Party State by 1922.

More able candidates may also point to the fact that the death of the tsar and his family and success in the civil war had eliminated any realistic alternative to Bolshevik rule.

Nov 12

**9. Analyse the causes and consequences of the 1905 revolution in Russia.**

Causes

Industrialization and the growth of an urban working class living and working in poor conditions in the cities. The continuing problem of land hunger and stagnation in the countryside. A discontented moderate middle class element frustrated at the lack of political change. The disaster of the Russo–Japanese war and Bloody Sunday all contributed to anger at the regime and the widespread strikes and disturbances of 1905.

Consequences

Limited political reform – the October Manifesto and the establishment of the State Duma which was accompanied by repression; “Stolypin’s Necktie”.

Stolypin’s reforms, especially in the countryside, were intended to create a prosperous loyal peasant class, “the gamble on the strong”. These were very slow in taking effect – Stolypin felt he needed twenty years. Politically the limited power of the Duma was eroded by 1908 and the electorate reduced in number. The Tsar’s reputation as the “Little Father” was damaged as a result of the repression.

Politically there was little real change and reforms were slow to make an impact. The events of 1905 could be seen as a long term cause of the February 1917 revolution.

If only causes or consequences are addressed, mark out of a maximum of [11 marks].

**10. Compare and contrast the roles of Lenin and Trotsky in the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917.**

For “compare”

 both were intellectuals and important in generating support for the Bolsheviks: Lenin through his policy ideas such as “Peace, Land and Bread” and “All power to the Soviets”; Trotsky as Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet;

 both were aware of the increasing desire to get out of the war and used this popular demand to attract support for the Bolsheviks;

 both were willing to take the risk of a coup despite the fact that Russian conditions did not fit the Marxist model of revolution.

For “contrast”

 Lenin was much more of a politician and used his skills to persuade the Central Committee to attempt the coup in October to coincide with the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets;

 Trotsky was the detailed planner of the coup in his position as chair of the MRC (Military Revolutionary Committee). He organized the Red Guard and decided which key points to seize in Petrograd in order to carry out the coup.

May 11

**9. To what extent were Stolypin’s political and economic policies successful in the years 1906 – 1911?**

Stolypin’s aims need to be identified in order to judge success – maintaining the power of the monarchy whilst modernizing and improving Russia’s economy.

His repression in the post 1905 period and the gradual erosion of the limited powers of the Dumas meant that the Autocracy in Russia retained ultimate political power. Repression (Stolypin’s Necktie) post 1905 led to the continuance of revolutionary opposition and diminishing support for the Tsar even amongst moderates. Economic policies should include encouragement of industrialization; foreign investment/trade; government investment in railways; etc. The industrial workforce reached 6 million by 1912, but only 6 % of exports were manufactured goods. The export of wheat contributed to famines. Stolypin also aimed to improve agriculture (the “gamble on the strong”) as well as establishing a loyal peasant class. There was limited success (by 1916 only two million peasants had their own land). Agriculture was still very backward and unmechanized, and peasant income was very low at GBP26 per annum.

Candidates may use the phrase “too little too late” when assessing Stolypin’s policies and make the point that political opposition was still prevalent and increasing because of the repressive nature of the state and the undermining of the Duma.

10. “There were two revolutions in Russia because of the weakness of the Provisional Government.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Answers need to identify what the Russian people wanted – a successful prosecution of the war; land reform; democracy; effective government; management of the economy to improve life. It would also be appropriate to analyse the strength of the Bolsheviks. Answers may then outline how events increased support for the Bolsheviks and undermined support for the Provisional Government. The delay over land reform and the election of a Constituent Assembly until the autumn; the system of Dual Power with the Soviets; continued failure in the war (Brusilov Offensive); illegal land seizures; military desertions; the attempts to overthrow the PG (July Days and Kornilov Coup) all meant that by October the Bolsheviks had increased support (majorities on the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets) and could risk a coup. Also, Lenin actively worked for a coup in spite of some internal party opposition.

Some students may make reference to the March revolution and suggest that the Provisional Government was not a factor. Credit analysis referring to this, however candidates should focus on the period of Dual Power.

Nov 11

**9. In what ways, and with what success, did Alexander II attempt to modernize Russia and preserve imperial power?**

This will no doubt be a popular question with most candidates agreeing that Alexander did want, and did try to modernize Russia, because it was badly needed, and at the same time preserved his imperial power, for himself and his dynasty.

Many will note the widely accepted view that Alexander thought that Russia should be modernized from above rather than below, and use the same reforms to illustrate their and Alexander’s views. A thematic approach could be to analyse each reform for motives, ways, successes and failures. Some examples follow.

The emancipation of the serfs (1861) did modernize Russia by granting serfs their freedom – a success, but the Mirs and redemption payments that had to be made by the peasants helped to preserve imperial power, and dissatisfied the peasants – and failed to modernize agricultural production.

The judicial reforms were successful in improving justice, but the composition of the courts helped to preserve imperial power. A similar verdict could be reached about the military reforms; the army was modernized, peasants would have been helped by shorter service, and tsardom was not weakened. The introduction of local Dumas satisfied few. Although some local services were improved, Alexander failed to introduce a national Duma, which was either wanted or needed by all classes and the Tsar by 1881. Education was widened and reformed, but later when it was seen to encourage opposition to the Tsar, and help his enemies, some reforms were withdrawn.

The above are some of the comments that could be made, but accept other valid arguments, and analysis, and reward genuine attempts to focus on the demands of the question in a structured answer.

May 10

**9. “His measures of reform did not disguise his belief in the need to maintain autocratic rule.” To what extent do you agree with this view of Alexander II?**

Many candidates will probably agree with the quotation, firstly by saying that Alexander’s motives for reform were to preserve his position and authority as Tsar; that he realized the necessity for reform, especially after Russian failure in the Crimean War; and that reform was better from above than below. A key point for this view is that although the serfs were emancipated and local assemblies instituted, no national assembly, or Duma/parliament, was put in place. Another line of argument could be that emancipation did not satisfy many of the aspirations of the peasants, or improve their economic positions, and that other economic reforms, such as building railways which stimulated growth in coal, iron and other industries, also benefited the monarchy. The army reforms, which were largely successful also supported the maintenance of autocratic rule. Many of the reforms replaced the roles previously filled by the nobility.

The quotation could be challenged by Alexander being called the “Tsar Liberator”, the importance and nature of judicial and educational reforms, as well as an assessment of the enormity of granting freedom and rights to the serfs.

**10. Compare and contrast the causes and nature of the two 1917 Russian Revolutions.**

The factual details of the two Russian Revolutions of 1917, are often confused. The first was in February/March, and the second, often called the Bolshevik Revolution, was in October/November.

Some areas to compare are: both were against the government in power; both were opposed to the current government; both brought great change; the First World War and the hardships it caused was a factor in both; peasants, workers and the Soviets played some part in both. Economic crisis was also a factor in both.

Areas of contrast could include: the first revolution was a spontaneous mass movement which developed out of an almost general strike, whereas the Bolshevik Revolution was more of a coup, planned by the Bolshevik Party; the first was against the Tsar, the second to overthrow the Provisional Government; the Tsar was overthrown in the first, and killed after the second. There was less bloodshed and violence in the second: five soldiers, one sailor and no defenders were killed. The first revolution was unplanned and spontaneous, the second was a coup d’etat.

If only one of the 1917 Revolutions is addressed, mark out of a maximum of [7 marks]

Nov 10

**9. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of Alexander II’s reforms.**

Alexander II’s reforms will be well-known: emancipation of the serfs in 1861; local government reform – judicial, education, military and economic. Better answers should be able to identify his aims (modernizing and strengthening Russia whilst maintaining autocracy).

Analysis should focus on how well this was achieved – limited impact e.g. the replacement of serfdom with “economic serfdom” as a consequence of redemption dues; limited progress in agriculture, as the land was held in common by the Mir. There was no elected national assembly.

Some improvements were made to the legal system (although the state still had arbitrary powers) and education, which contributed to the growth of opposition groups who were frustrated at the limited nature of reform.

The military was relatively successful – evidence of this could include Russia’s success in the 1876 conflict with Turkey.

Developed analysis is required for higher marks.

**10. “Lenin abandoned ideology in order to gain and consolidate power.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?**

Candidates should know about Lenin’s basic aims as he stated them before 1918 (as seen in the April Theses or in his various addresses to the Bolsheviks). For example he was against the bourgeoisie and for the proletariat forming the government. The government would be based on Soviet organizations. Better candidates will be aware that he changed Marx’s ideas on Communism because of the size of the peasant class in Russia and he therefore promised “Peace, Bread and Land”. Candidates should consider Lenin’s government, War Communism and the New Economic Policy in comparing his actions with his promises. The role of the Communist party and the establishment of a single-party state is an area that could also be considered, as well as Lenin’s response to the Krondstadt Mutiny in 1921.

Better candidates may discuss Marx’s ideas on revolution and the nature of the state but these must be linked to Lenin’s policies