Unit Y318. Thematic Study and Interpretations
Russia and its Rulers, 1855-1964

Booklet 5: The Depth Studies and the Interpretations
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### Depth Study 1: Alexander II’s Domestic Reforms

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### Depth Study 2: The Provisional Government

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<td>Changes in urban and rural living and working conditions.</td>
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<td>The impact of the continuing war.</td>
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<td>Reasons for the overthrow of the Provisional government.</td>
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### Depth Study 3: Khrushchev in Power 1956-1964

<table>
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<th>The aims of Khrushchev</th>
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<td>The nature of his government; opposition, methods and enforcement of repression in Russia and its satellites; the extent and impact of reform.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in urban and rural living and working conditions.</td>
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<td>Limitations on personal, political and religious freedom.</td>
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<td>Extent of economic and social changes including economic planning and the Virgin Lands Scheme.</td>
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</table>
Alexander III
Events in the reign of Alexander II:

- Russia defeated in Crimean War (1856)- leading to the Crimea effect.
- The Emancipation Edict of 1861. The landowners, however, got to decide which land went to the peasants and which land they kept- they kept the best bits, and the former serfs got the leftovers. The serfs also had to pay redemption payments to the landowners. The *Mir* (the village commune, who made decisions on local agricultural matters) became responsible for collecting taxes and essentially, controlled the peasants. The peasants were now restricted by the *Mir* instead of the landowner and it could be argued that the Emancipation Edict actually tightened control over the peasants.
- January Uprising (1863)- Polish upset they were not emancipated.
- Universities became self-governing bodies (1863).
- Zemstva formed (1864)
- Judicial system reformed with local courts dealing with minor offences and district courts dealing with more serious crimes. Trial by jury introduced. Justices of the Peace appointed for local, minor offences- elected by Zemstva. Creation of a bar system, in which barristers had to be properly qualified and give free legal advice to peasants (1864).
- Censorship relaxed (1865). Failed assassination attempt in St Petersburg (1865)
- Many nobles, ministers and the future Alexander III, felt that the reforms had gone too far, destroying the old order, allowing an influx of Western ideas and persuaded Alexander to replace liberal ministers with more conservative ones (1866).
- Trial by jury removed for political crimes (1869).
- Elected town councils introduced (1870). Railway mania years saw substantial government investment in Railway construction (1870-3).
- Dimitri Tolstoy, minister for education, insisted on a return to a classical curriculum. Universities were forbidden from including any subjects that encouraged critical thinking (1871).
- As part of a major reform of the armed services, military service was extended to all classes, inhumane punishments were abolished, military colleges were set up and modern weapons were introduced (1874).
- Populist ‘Go to the People’ campaign spread by nihilists and narodniks. Their aim was to persuade peasants to rise up against the regime by stirring up resentment at their lack of land and the taxes they had to pay. More than 1500 were arrested (1874). Another Populist “Go to the People” (1876). Trial of the 193 – populists were put on trial as populist revolutionaries who spread propaganda against the Russian government (1877)
- A number of Populists that had evaded capture set up ‘Land and Liberty’ but it soon became clear that the peasants were not interested in joining a full scale revolution. (1877)
- Russo-Turkish War began. Russia declared war on Turkey in support of the Balkan States who were fighting against Turkish rule. (1877)
- General Mezentsev, head of the Third Section and Prince Kropotkin were assassinated by members of the ‘Land and Liberty’ group. The assassins escaped amid a wave of popular support. (1878)
- The war with Turkey ended with the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano. The Russians had secured autonomy for the Balkan States and created Bulgaria under Russian protection. However, Britain and Austro-Hungary protested against this and Bulgaria was split under the Treaty of Berlin (1878).
- ‘Land and Liberty’ split into two groups – Black Partition and The People’s Will. (1879). The People’s Will declared that the Tsar had to be removed (1879)
- A poor harvest in 1879 led to famine in 1880. A spate of arrests severely weakened the Black Partition group (1880).
- Alexander II assassinated by the ‘People’s Will’ group. He was succeeded by his son, Alexander III who was much more conservative than his father.
Key debate 1: How ‘liberal’ was Russian government from 1855-1881?

Page 4 contains a timeline of some of the key events of Alexander II’s reign. Use this, plus any other knowledge you have in your booklets, plus pages 64-65 of the textbook and 76 of the Revision guide to add any arguments to either side of the debate.

DEBATE VIEW
Traditional View: that Alexander II was the Tsar Liberator.

Historian: J.N. Westwood “with the possible exceptions of Khrushchev and Gorbachev, no Russian ruler brought so much relief to so many of his people as did Alexander II, autocratic and conservative though he was”.

DEBATE VIEW
The Tsar was only making some concessions to win support.

Some consensus among historians that Alexander II never wavered from being an autocrat.

Emancipation proved the first in a series of measures that Alexander produced as part of a programme that included legal and administrative reform and the extension of press and university freedoms. But behind all these reforms lay an ulterior motive. Alexander II was not being liberal for its own sake. According to official records kept by the Ministry of the Interior there had been 712 peasant uprisings in Russia between 1826 and 1854. By granting some of the measures that the intelligentsia had called for, while in fact tightening control over the peasants, Alexander intended to lessen the social and political threat to the established system that those figures frighteningly represented. Above all, he hoped that an emancipated peasantry, thankful for the gifts that a bountiful tsar had given them, would provide physically fitter and morally worthier recruits for Russia’s armies, the symbol and guarantee of Russia’s greatness as a nation.

How convincing is the interpretation?
Key Debate 2: To what extent did reforms made by Alexander II improve the status of the Russian peasants?

Don’t forget that you have the main timeline of events on page 4, but it may also be worth looking at this small section.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Continuity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Work discipline</strong></td>
<td>Peasant unrest could be dealt with by moving rural workers off the land and into industry.</td>
<td>Peasants were still controlled by strict rules and regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land ownership</strong></td>
<td>Serfs freed. Peasants could own property, run their own commercial enterprises and marry who they wished.</td>
<td>Nobles got the best of the land, peasants had to pay for the landowners compensation through redemption payments. Peasants still controlled by the Mir. Control by the Mir limited investment and improvements in agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A growing urban society?</strong></td>
<td>Large numbers of peasants were moving towards cities and towns to take up employment in industry. Some peasants were part of an ‘aristocracy of labour’ where individuals who developed special skills offered their services as teams (artels).</td>
<td>Russia remained a very rural society, with the lower classes amounting to about 80% of the population-dependent on agriculture.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social structure</strong></td>
<td>Nobility in decline- extravagant spending and the emergence of a small but significant middle class. Many nobility had mortgaged their land to pay off debts and sold big chunks to peasants. By the mid-1870s, the gentry owned about 200 million acres, but it fell to 140 million acres with peasants accounting for the purchases.</td>
<td>Still, nobility remained and kept the tsar in autocracy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education: before 1864, wealth individuals provided funds for schools (reading, writing, maths, some religious instruction). Achievement low: only 7% army recruits were literate.</strong></td>
<td>Alexander II introduced major education reforms in 1864校友董事会 were run by the Zemstva and they were responsible for the administration and expansion of elementary education. Impact: number of available school places rose, especially in more isolated places. Quality and variety of provision also improved. Secondary schools: new code introduced by Alexander II, allowing modern subjects (languages, science and maths- which might engender a ‘spirit of revolution’ according to some conservatives). Number of pupils in secondary education doubled from 1855-1865.</td>
<td>Boards dominated by clergy, nobility and government officials, so education wasn’t entirely equal across Russia, and they weren’t sure what would be provided. Dmitri Tolstoy took away control from the Zemstva, and the ministry of education had almost total control over the schools-length of school day/year, inspectorate, appointment of teachers. Middle classes mainly benefited from increase in secondary school places. Tolstoy and other conservatives campaigned for only children of the nobility to go to university and Tolstoy manipulated the system (exams, curriculum) to ensure only nobility went.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Universities</strong></td>
<td>Statute of 1863 gave them autonomy.</td>
<td>Ministry of education had final say on what was to be taught.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>Quickly put up and cheaply done. Poor quality and overcrowding. Yes, there was change, but not for the better. Led to unrest.</td>
<td>Peasant housing was mostly the same. No reforms under Alexander II.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Food shortages</strong></td>
<td>Alexander II put the Zemstva in charge of drawing up emergency measures to deal with famines.</td>
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Key Debate 2: To what extent did reforms made by Alexander II improve the status of the Russian peasants?

Pages 4 and 7 contain a timeline of some of the key events of Alexander II’s reign. Use this, plus any other knowledge you have in your booklets, plus pages 118-119 of the textbook and 78 of the Revision guide to add any arguments to either side of the debate.

**DEBATE VIEW**

‘Tsar Liberator’ - mainly because of the Emancipation Edict. He intentionally carried out reforms that granted Russian peasants greater freedoms so that they could lead better lives.

**DEBATE VIEW**

The liberator title was not deserved. The Tsar was only concerned with making concessions to win support.

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<th>Opposition from</th>
<th>Peasants</th>
<th>Landowners</th>
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<tr>
<td>The impact of the Emancipation Edict</td>
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<td>Other reforms</td>
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Interpretations on Key Debate 2: To what extent did reforms made by Alexander II improve the status of the Russian peasants?

Task:
- Pull out the sections of both passages that we can explain using own knowledge (*it is really important that the interpretation is explained, not paraphrased or described*)
- Apply your own knowledge to the question: what support can we offer the arguments in the passages? What challenges can we offer the arguments in the passages? (*this is really the key issue to success in the question*)
- Evaluate how convincing the arguments in the passages were. Compare these arguments and come to a conclusion about which is the most convincing?

Question: Evaluate the interpretations in both of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of how the policies of Alexander II impacted on the lives of the Russian people.

Passage A
The main events of his reign were, first and very foremost the freeing of the serfs; then, and partly in connection with this reform, real changes in local government, justice, education and the army. As so often happens, reform and relaxation were followed by protests, manifested notably by a revolutionary movement. The ‘Tsar Emancipator’ also had to cope with two burdens that had afflicted his father; cholera and the Poles. These trials led to reaction, and there was a partial return to tactics of repression. However, just before his assassination and having, as he thought, succeeded in calming the Empire, Alexander was considering a new series of reforms to relieve political pressures. Throughout the reign there was steady economic progress expansion in Central Asia, some attempt to overcome the financial consequences of the Crimean War and a continuation of railway-building. In foreign affairs there was a rather unnecessary war against Turkey but Alexander was able to avoid other large-scale conflicts.

Passage B
In view of Alexander II’s character— he was rather indolent and indecisive and despite public displays of emotion and kindheartedness capable of maintaining a severe police regime with all its attendant cruelties— it is surprising that it was especially his reign that became associated with the period of great reforms in Russian history. To the extent that in an autocracy good deeds are credited to the autocrat personally, he earned the title ‘Tsar Liberator’. Nevertheless, his personal contribution to reforms was less positive than his more admiring biographers would have us believe. In many ways his influence impeded the practical realisation of reforms that had become law. He was indecisive and throughout his reign alternated between reforming impulses and reaction. As his advisers he selected both true reformers such as Dimitri Milyutin and extreme conservatives, men such as Dimitri Tolstoy, and kept both in office simultaneously, it was only with reluctance that Alexander took up the root cause of Russia’s social ills, the problem of the serfs. Once a programme of emancipation had been devised, the other practical reforms of his reign followed from that.

The ‘great reforms’ of the 1860s did not liberate the Russian people. The process was so gradual, and the contrast between aspirations, the laws of the state and the realities of the situation were so star, that the degree of discontent was raised more by the hope of reform than satisfied by their application.

Key Debate 3: How far were Alexander II’s reforms due to the Crimean War?

One of the issues with this particular debate are the issues with correlation is no proof of causation. For example:

![Graph showing correlation between Nicolas Cage films and people drowning in pools.](image)

This graph says that there is a relationship between the amount of films Nicolas Cage is in and the amount of people who drown in a pool (Nicolas Cage films cause more people to drown in pools)

Or is it the more people that drown in pools, the more films I make???

In Russia’s case, does the Crimean War actually cause Alexander’s reforms, or do they simply correlate?

This is the debate in this question.

Important Events to be aware of:

- There had been an increasing number of peasant revolts dating back to the 1770s.
- Alexander II appointed Dmitry Milyutin to carry out significant reforms in the Russian armed forces. The changes included universal military conscription, introduced for all social classes on 1 January 1874. Prior to this new regulation, as of 1861, conscription was compulsorily enforced only for the peasantry. Conscription had, prior to this reform, been 25 years for serfs that were drafted by their landowners, which was widely considered to be a life sentence. Other military reforms included extending the reserve forces and the military district system, which split the Russian states into 15 military districts, a system still in use over a hundred years later. The building of strategic railways and an emphasis on the military education of the officer corps comprised further reforms. Corporal punishment in the military and branding of soldiers as punishment were banned.
- Growing industry (such as the development of railway routes) was causing demands for more labour to work on projects- therefore serfdom would need to be abolished for this to be possible.
- Population growth put pressure on the system of subsistence farming (farming to feed the family) rather than surplus (extra produced to sell). Famines therefore became more frequent, because (as more peasants moved to the towns) demand for food outstripped supply.
Key Debate 3: How far were Alexander II’s reforms due to the Crimean War?

Use the notes above, page 168-169 of your textbook and page 80 of the revision guide to create your debate on this page.

His reforms were motivated by the desire to preserve autocracy

All my reforms were motivated by the Crimean War

His reforms were motivated by other concerns
Interpretation task
Read the interpretation and practice your skills on it.

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in this passage are in relation to an analysis of the influence of the Crimean War on Alexander II’s reforms.

Passage A

The Crimean War was both a reason for and an effect of key adjustments in Tsarist policy on autocracy. The first of these was the decision of Alexander II, immediately after his accession in 1855, to introduce major reforms, even though Nicholas I had generally resisted change. A key factor was Russia’s poor performance in the Crimean War (1854-56), a reflection on the recruiting system, the military leadership, the supply chain and the bureaucratic inefficiency. The result was a series of reforms, beginning with the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and proceeding to the updating of local government (1864 and 1870), changes in military organisation and the recruiting system (1874) and improvements in education. Such developments were intended to strengthen, not weaken the autocratic base; they also increased Alexander II’s awareness of Russia’s advantages as a modernised power against its traditional rival- the Ottoman Empire.

Key Debate 4: How far were issues relating to the Empire and minorities neglected by Alexander II?

You will need the following information to help you understand the debates around this topic.

**Poland**
The Polish rebellion was caused by the problem of land, policies of Wielopolski and the role of the Catholic Church in Polish society.

**Wielopolski policies**
Wielopolski was conservative and pro-Russian. He undertook educational reforms, increasing the number of Polish-language schools and establishing in Warsaw the "Main School" (University of Warsaw). He also enacted banking-system reforms and agricultural reform (rents instead of serfdom for peasants).

He felt that the Russian Empire's difficult internal and international situation would force the Tsarist administration to make certain concessions to the Polish nobility. On the other hand, the Polish nobility should – in his opinion – accept Tsarist rule and take part in the Empire's political life instead of calling for independence.

Wielopolski proposed acceptance of the Romanov dynasty's everlasting rule over Poland, expecting in turn from the Tsar the restoration of Polish liberties, a semi-independent government, curtailment of censorship, and the closure of Russian Military Courts. His proposal, unfortunately, was rejected, and the Tsar decided to make various limited concessions only when it was too late, and the streets of Warsaw were running with blood: "No constitution, no Polish Army, nothing like political autonomy; instead administrative freedoms with nominations for Poles, not excluding Russians"

Wielopolski knew that the Poles' fervent desire for independence was coming to a head, something he wanted to avoid at all costs. In an attempt to derail the Polish national movement, he organized the conscription of young Polish activists into the Russian Army (for 20-year service). That decision is what provoked the January Uprising of 1863, that is, the very outcome Wielopolski wished to avoid.

**A brief History of the relationship between Russia and the Catholic Church**
Nicholas I (Tsar before Alexander) had attempted Russification of the Catholic Church. He closed Polish institutions of higher learning and secularized lands of the Catholic Church. The Russian language was forced upon the Poles in secondary schools, and the works of leading Polish authors were banned.

In the late 1850s, with Tsar Alexander II in power and moving in the direction of reforms, amnesty was granted to those Poles who had resisted the Russians. The Poles were granted municipal elections, and Poles replaced Russian officials in subordinate governmental offices. There were demonstrations by the Poles in 1860, on the anniversary of the Warsaw uprising of 1830, and another demonstration in 1861 in which Russians fired into the crowd killing several demonstrators. Alexander was hesitant concerning his policy toward the Poles, but by 1862, he restored all that Tsar Nicholas had taken away, including the restoration of Catholic bishoprics and the right of Poles to elect provincial and local assemblies – everything except the right to convolve a national assembly (a parliament).

In London and Paris, Polish exiles were organizing resistance to Russian rule over the Poles, encouraging another uprising against Russian rule. It began in January 1863, when young Poles protesting conscription into the Russian army were joined by various others, including high ranking Polish officers serving in Russia's army. The rebellion spread to the Lithuanians (also mostly Roman Catholic) and to the Byelorussians (who were mostly Eastern Orthodox). A lack of military strength forced the rebels to resort to guerrilla warfare. With hundreds of thousands of troops, the Russians crushed the resistance in the summer of 1864. In response to the rebellion, Tsar Alexander II resorted to hardline repression. He ended Polish autonomy again. There were public executions of 128 rebels and deportations of 12,000 to Siberia. Property of the Catholic Church was confiscated. The Polish language was banned at official places. Poles were forbidden from acquiring landed estates. Teachers, Orthodox priests, and landlords from Russia moved in among the Byelorussians. Money confiscated
as penalties from the conquered helped finance in the conquered territory the construction of Orthodox churches and was used to support Orthodox priests.

**Alexander II and the Polish Rebellion of 1863**

Alexander II tried to compromise with the Polish government by allowing it to frame its own land-reform programme. Extremists in Poland opposed the proposals (including those of conscription) and rebellion erupted. The peasants were actually split—some supported the rebellion, others supported the tsar.

The rebellion was ruthlessly suppressed in 1864, the tsar imposed reforms which benefited the peasants to the detriment of the nobility. According to Russian official information, 396 persons were executed and 18,672 were exiled to Siberia. The government confiscated 1,660 estates in Poland and 1,794 in Lithuania. A 10% income tax was imposed on all estates as a war indemnity. Only in 1869 was this tax reduced to 5% on all incomes. Serfdom was abolished in Russian Poland on 19 February 1864—which was done in a way to ruin the nobility as punishment for their involvement. It was the only area where peasants paid the market price in redemption for the land (the average for the empire was 34% above the market price). All land taken from Polish peasants since 1846 was to be returned without redemption payments. The ex-serfs could only sell land to other peasants, not the nobility. 90% of the ex-serfs in the empire who actually gained land after 1861 were in the 8 western provinces. Along with Romania, Polish landless or domestic serfs were the only ones to be given land after serfdom was abolished. All this was to punish the nobility’s role in the risings of 1830 and 1863. The government took over all the church estates and funds, and abolished monasteries and convents. With the exception of religious instruction, all other studies in the schools were ordered to be in the Russian. Russian also became the official language of the country, used exclusively in all offices of the general and local government. All traces of former Polish autonomy were removed and the kingdom was divided into ten provinces, each with an appointed Russian military governor and all under complete control of the Governor-General at Warsaw. All former Polish government functionaries were deprived of their positions and replaced by Russian officials. This also demonstrates that Alexander II actually began the process of Russification in Russia—not Alexander III. Alexander II was maintaining order across the whole of the empire.

**Other national minorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Minority</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>An official commission was set up in 1876 to investigate separatist activity in the Ukraine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>In 1863, Alexander II re-convened the Diet of Finland and initiated several reforms increasing Finland’s autonomy within the Russian Empire, including establishment of its own currency, the markka. Liberation of business led to increased foreign investment and industrial development. Finland also got its first railways, separately established under Finnish administration. Finally, the elevation of Finnish from a language of the common people to a national language equal to Swedish opened opportunities for a larger proportion of the society. Alexander II is still regarded as &quot;The Good Tsar&quot; in Finland. These reforms could be seen as results of a genuine belief that reforms were easier to test in Finland than in the whole of Russia. They may also be seen as a reward for the loyalty of its relatively western-oriented population during the Crimean War and during the Polish uprising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Baltic Germans</td>
<td>Latvia and Estonia. There was rising nationalism in both states, from the middle class intelligentsia- in literature and in newspapers. The Tsar was concerned about maintain regional stability and was liberal towards them- allowing nationalist feeling but keeping control over these states.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>Some categories of Jews were allowed to live outside the Pale of Settlement (so no longer restricted to a specific area of the Empire). This mostly applied to merchants and doctors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>Significant Russian expansion into Central Asia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Debate 4: How far were issues relating to the Empire and minorities neglected by Alexander II?

Use your notes, pages 14-15 of this booklet, pages 218-219 of the textbook and page 82 of the revision guide to complete the debate page.

Yes: Alexander II did neglect the Empire and minorities

No: Alexander II did not neglect the Empire and minorities
Interpretation task
Read the interpretation and practice your skills on it.

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in this passage are in relation to an analysis of how far Alexander II’s reforms allowed a rise in Polish nationalism.

Passage A

Right at the outset, Alexander II’s civic reforms faced a challenge in the most sensitive region of the empire. By restoring a degree of Polish autonomy, promoting the expansion of primary education, planning the reopening of Warsaw University, and encouraging public discussion of the emancipation of the serfs, Alexander stimulated the Polish elites to feel themselves once again the leaders of a potential nation. While some Poles, led by Marquis Alexander Wielopolski believed it was in Poland’s best interests to work with the Russian government to take reform further and regain Polish civic nationhood, others wanted to use the opportunity to move swiftly to full independence and the reclamation of the eastern territories in Lithuania and Belorussia which Poland had lost in the 18th century partitions.

The Provisional Government
Key Debate 1: To what extent was the Provisional Government doomed to fail from the start?

Important dates for the Provisional Government

1915
August: Some members of the Fourth Duma organised themselves into a Progressive Bloc and called for the Tsar to change his government ministers for those with the confidence of the public.
6th September: Tsar Nicholas took personal charge of the army and dismissed the Duma.

1917
January: 150,000 workers took to the streets of Petrograd on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday to protest at the desperate situation many were in – lack of food, poor living conditions and Russia’s continued participation in a war that was going from bad to worse.
February: Strikes and unrest continued in Petrograd amid calls for the Tsar to be overthrown.
22nd February: 20,000 workers from the Putilov Ironworks went on strike.
23rd February: The annual International Women’s Day march from the suburbs to the centre of Petrograd picked up Putilov strikers, students and factory workers joined in swelling the numbers of protestors to nearly a quarter of a million people.
23rd – 25th February: People continued to demonstrate on the streets, toppling statues of the Tsar and waving red revolutionary flags.
26th February: Nicholas ordered the Duma to disband but it refused to do so.
27th February: Nicholas ordered troops onto the streets to remove the protestors by force. Although some complied killing around 40 protestors. This angered the protestors, and 65,000 soldiers refused to fire on demonstrators and joined them.
27th February: A meeting of the Duma discussed the future of Russia. They established a Provisional Committee of The Duma and demanded that the Tsar abdicate immediately. At the same time the army generals ordered the soldiers off the streets telling them to support the Provisional Committee instead.
The Petrograd Soviet was formed, comprised mainly of Mensheviks it called for representatives of the workers to attend a meeting on 28th February.
28th February: A meeting of the Petrograd Soviet took place and a Provisional Executive Committee was elected. Nicholas II decided to return to Petrograd. However, his train was diverted by railway workers.
28th February: The Kronstadt sailors mutinied and put pressure on the Petrograd Soviet to allow army regiments to elect committees which in turn would be able to send representatives to the Petrograd Soviet.
2nd March: Nicholas II reluctantly abdicated as Tsar. He named his younger brother Mikhail as the new Tsar, a position which he refused. The Royal family were placed under virtual house arrest.
2nd March: First Provisional government was formed, led by Prince Lvov, a member of the Kadet party.
March-May: The new Provisional Government had set about removing all traces of the Tsarist system amid a mood of optimism. Reforms were put in place, Tsarist sympathisers were removed and soviets were established to represent the workers and peasants. However, Prince Lvov was aware that he led a Provisional Government and that many more drastic reforms should wait to be implemented by a fully elected

The Members of the Cabinet of the Provisional Government:

Nobles and wealthy landowners: Prince Georgy Lvov (PM and interior minister), V.N. Lvov (Procurator of the Holy Synod).
Wealthy industrialists/businessmen: Guchkov (Minister for War and Navy), Tereschenko (Minister of finance).
Well known: Prince Georgy Lvov, Milyukov (foreign minister), Guchkov.
Former Duma members: all of them.
government. Yet this very delay in implementing reforms undermined support for the Provisional Government.

April: Land Committees were set up to collect information regarding land ownership that would be used to implement reforms. However, impatient peasants seized property that they believed they had a right to.

3rd April: Lenin returned to Russia.

7th April: Lenin’s April Theses published in Pravda.

21st April: Lenin attempted to effect a new revolution and the overthrow of the Provisional Government but only a small number of people turned out onto the streets in support.

May: Leon Trotsky returned to Russia. The Provisional Government’s failure to take Russia out of the War was an unpopular move. More importantly it led to unrest in the army and the number of deserters increased to more than 365,000. Army generals called for more power to restore order in the ranks but the Provisional Government, fearful of an army coup refused.

May to June: The Provisional Government established committees to represent the demands of the workers but still allowed factory owners to decide working hours and conditions. This frustrated the workers who had hoped for improvements in their conditions and in June 175,000 workers went on strike.

9th June: The Bolsheviks tried to effect revolution by trying to use the June Offensive on the Eastern Front to turn people against the Provisional Government. However, the Bolsheviks failed to gain the support of the Petrograd Soviet and it failed.

2nd July: Leon Trotsky joined the Bolsheviks, convinced that only they had the leadership to overthrow the Provisional Government.

3rd – 4th July: Demonstrations against government in Petrograd ‘July Days’ – Workers were joined on the streets by soldiers and the Kronstadt sailors calling for power to the Soviets.

4th July: Prince Lvov resigned, unable to control the liberals and socialists within the Provisional government.

5th July: The Government blamed the July days on Bolshevik leaders and many, including Trotsky, were arrested. Lenin escaped to Finland

18th July: The Socialist Alexander Kerensky became Prime Minister.

26th – 30th August: General Kornilov (commander of the Russian troops) called for tough measures to restore discipline in the army and to increase economic output. However, although these measures would have helped to restore order they went against the spirit of the Provisional Government. With much of Petrograd at a standstill following the July Days, Kornilov called for martial law to be established in the city. Kerensky refused and fearing an attempted takeover by Kornilov called on the Kronstadt sailors to come to his defence. He also agreed to arm the Bolshevik ‘Red Guards’ so that they could defend the city. Kornilov’s troops travelled by train to Petrograd but railway workers stopped the trains and persuaded the soldiers to desert.

1st September: Kornilov was arrested. Kerensky was persuaded to release those Bolsheviks that had been imprisoned following the July Days.

September: Leon Trotsky became leader of the Petrograd Soviet. He worked closely with Lenin to plan a Bolshevik takeover. Support for the Bolsheviks had grown and by the end of September had reached 200,000.

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**Lenin’s April Theses**

- Russia’s involvement in WWI should end immediately.
- The Revolution needed to move to a second stage where power was given to the proletariat and peasants.
- Lenin did not support the Provisional Government.
- The people should be persuaded that the Soviet is the only possible revolutionary government.
- Landed estates should be confiscated.
- There should be a single national bank.
- Production of goods should be controlled by the soviet.
- Police, army and bureaucracy should be abolished.
- International organisations should spread the revolution worldwide.
7th October: Lenin returned to Petrograd
9th October: The Bolsheviks established a Military Revolutionary Committee led by Trotsky
10th October: Lenin attended a meeting of the Bolshevik Central Committee and called for a Bolshevik Revolution
24th October: Armed workers, Bolshevik Red Guards and the Kronstadt sailors occupied key buildings around the city of Petrograd.
25th October: Alexander Kerensky left Petrograd in disguise bound for the front line. The remaining members of the Provisional Government met in the Winter Palace and were still there when armed Bolshevik supporters entered the Palace. They were arrested.
26th October: A congress of Soviets was held which appointed the first Soviet government and appointed Lenin as Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars. Josef Stalin was made Commissar for Nationalities
28th, 29th October: The Provisional Government’s Cossacks and officer cadets advanced on Petrograd.
30th October: The Provisional Government’s force were defeated by a large force of Red Guards at Pulkovo Heights on the outskirts of Petrograd.
12th November: The election that had been promised by the Provisional Government after the February revolution took place. The Socialist Revolutionaries received the most votes but they were not a fully united party. They were split between the left Socialist Revolutionaries who supported Lenin and joined him in forming a coalition government and the moderate Socialist Revolutionaries led by Viktor Chernov. Lenin needed to formulate a plan to prevent the moderate Socialist Revolutionaries challenging the Bolshevik rule.
November: Alexander Kerensky rallied those loyal to the Provisional Government and there was fighting between the two factions especially around Moscow. However, Lenin agreed to talk to other party members and Kerensky lost much support. He eventually fled firstly to France and then to the USA.
2nd December: Lenin created the Supreme Council of National Economy (Vesenkha). His aim was to bring the economy under central government control.

Task to help you pick out the strengths and weaknesses of the Provisional Government
There is a lot of detail in the timeline above and a lot of events that take place.
You will need to copy and complete the mind map below onto A3 paper (or find some other way of laying it out, if mind maps don’t work for you) in order to plot out the different areas of the debate.
Use the timeline, textbook (pages 65-68) and revision guide (pages 86-87).
Key Debate 1: To what extent was the Provisional Government doomed to fail from the start?

Interpretations Task
Two passages!
Question: Evaluate the interpretations in both of the passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the successes and failures of the Provisional Government.

Passage A

With successive reshuffles that gave moderate socialists more influence, the Provisional Government lasted more than seven months. This in itself was quite an achievement, for it had little power and faced enormous problems. The Soviet’s Order No. 1 threatened to deprive the government of an effective army. The old police, by general consent, had been disbanded, but the militia which was to replace them never became an effective force. The Soviet, because it controlled the workers’ organisations, could deny vital services if it so chose; thus the measures taken by the Provisional Government needed the acquiescence of the Soviet leaders if they were to be effective. The Provisional Government, co-opted from the members of a Dumas elected on a narrow franchise and consisting of gentlemen favouring a western-style parliamentary democracy, could hardly claim to be a popular government, even though it was popularly accepted for the time being.


Passage B

Although it had ruled Russia for over 300 years, the Romanov dynasty collapsed in just a few days. Its passing was mourned by few of its former subjects. There was no serious attempt to reinstate Nicholas II, not even by Nicholas himself! The whole country seemed to breathe a sigh of relief, and looked forward to a better future they believed Russia’s new government would bring. There was, in the words of historian Christopher Read, a ‘nationwide honeymoon. For the only time in its history, the Russian Empire was united’. Kerensky, the sole socialist member of the new Provisional Government, wrote in his memoirs of the new atmosphere of hope in Russia. Despite the good intentions of Kerensky and his colleagues, it proved difficult to create a new order which satisfied all Russians. The new Provisional Government had to face those same problems, exacerbated by Russia’s involvement in the war that the tsarist government had failed to solve, as well as to meet the eager expectations of 160 million people. In fact the Provisional Government proved quite unable to deliver what was expected. It was increasingly seen as a product of the old regime and as unrepresentative of the Russian people. Perhaps it would have been impossible for any government to succeed in the circumstances it inherited. The government lasted only a few weeks before being replaced by another, and then another. The ‘honeymoon’ was soon over and its authority gradually slipped away.

Key Debate 2: why is the Provisional Government often viewed as one that was reluctant to carry out reforms?

Task 1: Provisional Government Reforms

a) Look at your Provisional Government timeline on page 19-21. What reforms can you spot? Highlight them!

b) The public announcement of the formation of the Provisional Government

Public announcement of the formation of the Provisional Government was made. It was published in Izvestia the day after its formation. The announcement stated the declaration of government:

- Full and immediate amnesty on all issues political and religious, including: terrorist acts, military uprisings, and agrarian crimes etc.
- Freedom of word, press, unions, assemblies, and strikes with spread of political freedoms to military servicemen within the restrictions allowed by military-technical conditions.
- Abolition of all hereditary, religious, and national class restrictions.
- Immediate preparations for the convocation on basis of universal, equal, secret, and direct vote for the Constituent Assembly which will determine the form of government and the constitution.
- Replacement of the police with a public militsiya and its elected chairmanship subordinated to the local authorities.
- Elections to the authorities of local self-government on basis of universal, direct, equal, and secret vote.
- Non-disarmament and non-withdrawal out of Petrograd the military units participating in the revolution movement.
- Under preservation of strict discipline in ranks and performing a military service - elimination of all restrictions for soldiers in the use of public rights granted to all other citizens.

It also said, "The provisional government feels obliged to add that it is not intended to take advantage of military circumstances for any delay in implementing the above reforms and measures.

c) Other areas of democratization:
The rise of local organizations, such as trade unions and rural institutions, and the devolution of power within Russian government gave rise to democratization. It is difficult to say that the Provisional Government desired the rise of these powerful, local institutions. As stated in the previous section, some politicians within the Provisional Government advocated the rise of these institutions. Local government bodies had discretionary authority when deciding which Provisional Government laws to implement. For example, institutions that held power in rural areas were quick to implement national laws regarding the peasantry’s use of idle land. Real enforcement power was in the hands of these local institutions and the soviets. Russian historian W.E. Mosse points out, this time period represented "the only time in modern Russian history when the Russian people were able to play a significant part in the shaping of their destinies"

You can get more information on the reforms of the Provisional government from page 120 of your textbook (you may also find it helpful to reread pages 65-68) and page 88 of your revision guide to help you complete the diagram on the next page that will summarise your debate.
Key Debate 2: why is the Provisional Government often viewed as one that was reluctant to carry out reforms?

"the greatest feature of the government was inactivity..."

"by not being reforming, the Provisional government is considered to have led to rejection by the 'vast majority of the army and population'"

Debate view: Martin McCauley (1995)- the Provisional Government could have carried out economic and social reforms that would have helped it maintain power.

"McCauley’s claim that there was a lack of urgency about the government seems unfair given the scope of internal and external challenges it faced"

Debate view: early changes were not intended as reforms but as principles to aid major political change- meanwhile the war and internal and external challenges explained why reforms were lacking.
Interpretations Task
Two passages!
Question: Evaluate the interpretations in both of the passages and explain which you think has the more convincing assessment of the Provisional Government’s approach to reform.

Passage A

The liberal reforms after March 1917 were more whole hearted than those of the Tsars but freedom of press, movement, association, political activity and the end of political police and control added to the problem. The enemies of democracy got free rein. The ability to change enough to meet a crisis situation was a common feature of the Provisional Government and the Tsars. The peasant land seizures were neither prevented nor recognised, leaving a state of uncertainty in the countryside. If the government had issued a land decree accepting the new ownership, then perhaps the history of Russia might have been different. But that would have been asking the liberal middle class politicians to betray their entire ethos of respect for property and law and order.


Passage B

The Provisional Government saw itself as a wartime government of national confidence and salvation, above class or party interests, whose purpose was to see the country through to the ending of the war and the election of a Constituent Assembly, which alone could give a legal sanction to social and political reforms. With speed, the Provisional Government passed a series of reforms in the spring of 1917. Russia overnight was effectively transformed into the ‘freest country in the world’ (Lenin). These reforms established a new culture of democracy. But the abstract language of political democracy was soon absorbed into ideas of social class. The word ‘democracy’ was popularly used as a social category: it was understood to mean the ‘common people’ or the ‘labouring masses’ whose opposite was not ‘dictatorship’ but the bourgeoisie.
Key Debate 3: How far was the First World War responsible for the downfall of the Provisional Government?

Most of the knowledge for this particular debate is related to what we have already got, therefore we can launch straight into the debate. Textbook- pages 169-170, revision guide- page 90, plus anything from the previous debates.

Pessimists: the Provisional Government was doomed to failure regardless of war.

Optimists: it was the continuation of the war that meant the new regime struggled to establish its authority.
Key Debate 3: How far was the First World War responsible for the downfall of the Provisional Government?

Another day, another set of interpretations to work through. Really test the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations using your detailed knowledge. Which interpretation is more convincing in its explanation of the impact of the First World War on the fate of the Provisional Government?

Passage A

None of the participants in the March Revolution [of 1917] would have chosen the regime that was to come to power in October 1917. Nor should any natural impetus be deduced moving towards a Bolshevik takeover. The Provisional Government could have succeeded in setting up a permanent successor to the Tsarist system. That it failed to do so was due to the continuing impact of the war. This prevented the Provisional Government from addressing popular demands for land redistribution, industrial reorganisation and constitutional reform. Instead the real beneficiaries were the Bolsheviks, who were able, in Lenin’s words, to turn the ‘capitalist war into a civil war’. Historians are now divided as to whether the Bolsheviks launched a minority conspiracy-based coup or whether they led a popular backlash against an unpopular government. But, either way, it was the war that made the crucial difference - in breaking the patterns of traditional loyalties. Without the war the Bolsheviks could not have overthrown the Provisional Government: they had, after all, already shown themselves incapable of threatening its predecessor.

The Duma committee which tried to run Russia until its overthrow by the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution made what seems a tragic decision to continue the war, yet at the time it was popular. Apart from Lenin’s Bolsheviks who adopted the famous ‘Peace, Bread and Land’ slogan in the April Theses, all political groups supported the war. Russia’s reputation with its allies was at state; Germans were intensely unpopular and there was little desire for previous sacrifice to be in vain. Too often demonstrations in the summer [of 1917] are shown in documentaries and even in textbooks to be against the war, while their banners actually read not ‘Mir’ (peace) but ‘Voina’ (war). Lenin was careful not to say too much about peace while the June offensive was being prepared and rumours of his association with the Germans made him unpopular with the troops. However, the failure of the Kerensky attacks in June ended this period of war fever. It did not however bring Lenin into power. The July days failed; revolutionary soldiers were disarmed by loyal troops. The bulk of the forces were still loyal to the Provisional Government by August 1917. It was the attempted Kornilov coup of September, when he launched army units on Petrograd following Kerensky’s dismissal of him as commander in chief of the army that was a major turning point and revived the Bolsheviks. The attempted coup by Kornilov and the failure of Kerensky at a vital moment to establish clear leadership coupled with the failures in war and the organisational ability of the Bolsheviks all came together. It is doubtful if war alone was the key factor in bringing the Bolsheviks to power.

Mike Wells, Russia and its Rulers 1855-1964, Heinemann, 2008
Key Debate 4: To what extent did opposition from national minorities lead to the fall of the Provisional Government?

The Provisional Government, on taking power, immediately introduced freedom of speech and assembly and lifted the tsarist restrictions on minorities.

Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unsuccessful</th>
<th>Successful</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine – Ukrainians demanded self-government and the moderate socialists in the government made concessions to them. Outraged the Liberals. Also problematic because the Ukraine contained the most valuable farmland available in Russia.</td>
<td>In Poland, where they had the least influence, the Provisional Government promised independence, in hope that in exchange they would receive help on the warfront.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As soon as the Tsars regime failed the Finns and Poles wanted independence and reform.</td>
<td>Discrimination was made illegal by the Provisional Gov. at their first meeting with the Soviets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most nationalities- when the Provisional Government offered some degree of autonomy- interpreted that as wanting separation from Russia.</td>
<td>Not really successful BUT: the Provisional Government argued that only the constituent assembly could make such decision regarding the rights of National Minorities- however- this postponement did lead to tensions between the Provisional Government and the Ukraine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was ethnic and national friction within the lower classes, e.g. In Petrograd, when rumours circulated the government sought to shut down factories, the Russian workers isolated the small minority of Chinese workers as likely candidates for unemployment.</td>
<td>Although much of this was undermined by the formation of local soviets. Autonomy of the regions was tied with the more particular concerns of workers and peasants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Acton “The main battle lines of 1917 were not between one nation and another but between officers and soldiers, landowners and peasants, employers and workers”</td>
<td>In the Transcaucasus – demands for self-rule were met by the formation of a Special Transcaucasian Committee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ukraine (a little more detail for you)

National life in Ukraine quickened with the revival of a Ukrainian press and the formation of numerous cultural and professional associations, as well as political parties. In March, on the initiative of these new organizations, the Central Rada (“Council”) was formed in Kiev as a Ukrainian representative body. In April the more broadly convened All-Ukrainian National Congress declared the Central Rada to be the highest national authority in Ukraine and elected the historian Mykhaylo Hrushevsky as its head. The stated goal of the Central Rada was territorial autonomy for Ukraine and the transformation of Russia into a democratic, federative republic. Although the Provisional Government recognized Ukraine’s right to autonomy and the Central Rada as a legitimate representative body, there were unresolved disputes over its territorial jurisdiction and political prerogatives. Locally, especially in the Russified cities of eastern Ukraine, the Rada also had to compete with the increasingly radical soviets of workers’ and soldiers’ deputies, whose support in the Ukrainian population, however, was quite limited.
Key Debate 4: To what extent did opposition from national minorities lead to the fall of the Provisional Government?
Use the textbook (pages 219-220) and the revision guide (page 92) as well as the information above to assess the debates.

Debate view 1: The Provisional Government did ignore national minorities and this was a mistake.

Debate view 2: The Provisional Government did not ignore the national minorities.

Debate view 3: The Provisional Government fell for other reasons than national minorities.
Key Debate 4: To what extent did opposition from national minorities lead to the fall of the Provisional Government?

Some interpretations to assess on this issue of national minorities. How far do these interpretations support the statement “opposition from national minorities led to the fall of the Provisional Government”?

PASSAGE A: The emergence of independent nation-states in the Russian Empire, February 1917-November 1917

The February Revolution in Russia marked the beginning of an extended period of imperial collapse in Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Although the primary cause of the revolution was political - it reflected the inability of the imperial Russian establishment to inspire the confidence of the educated elites and the military - it was also linked to inter-ethnic relations. With the imperial centre gone irretrievably, national groups began to assert themselves and make bids for independence, as the weak Provisional Government in Petrograd looked on helplessly.


PASSAGE B: From February to the October Revolution, 1917

The period of less than eight months [February to October Revolution] can be characterised as one in which a complex, widening set of interacting revolutions emerged and developed. The main driving force was a popular movement comprising peasants, workers, soldiers and sailors who began to assert their rights and demands through a vast network of, for the most part, spontaneously organised committees. The overwhelming majority of the population was associated with this movement in one form or another. However, the situation was further complicated, not least by the fundamental divisions within the elites; the right demanded ‘order’ through firm authoritarianism and, if necessary, a military dictatorship. Liberals sought to establish a form of representative democracy. In addition, there was an increasing number of national revolutions, with Finns, Poles and, more ambiguously, Ukrainians in the forefront. Add to this the crucial social revolutions, with gender revolution as an important component, as well as cultural and religious revolution and the period takes on a massive complexity. It has rightly been called a ‘kaleidoscope of revolutions’.
Khrushchev
Key Debate 1: How far did de-Stalinisation represent a genuine break with the past?

Stalin Denounced by Nikita Khrushchev
By Richard Cavendish
Published in History Today Volume 56 Issue 2 February 2006

The Soviet leader gave his famous speech on 'The Personality Cult and its Consequences' in a closed session on February 25th, 1956.

The twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union assembled in Moscow in the Great Hall of the Kremlin on February 14th, 1956. It was the first since the death of Josef Stalin in 1953, but almost nothing was said about the dead leader until, in closed session on the 25th, 1,500 delegates and many invited visitors listened to an amazing speech by Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the party, on 'The Personality Cult and its Consequences'.

Khrushchev denounced Stalin, the cult of personality he had fostered and the crimes he had perpetrated, including the execution, torture and imprisonment of loyal party members on false charges. He blamed Stalin for foreign policy errors, for the failings of Soviet agriculture, for ordering mass terror and for mistakes that had led to appalling loss of life in the Second World War and the German occupation of huge areas of Soviet territory.

Khrushchev's audience heard him in almost complete silence, broken only by astonished murmurs. The delegates did not dare even to look at each other as the party secretary piled one horrifying accusation on another for four solid hours. At the end there was no applause and the audience left in a state of shock.

One of those who heard the speech was the young Alexander Yakovlev, later a leading architect of perestroika, who recalled that it shook him to his roots. He sensed Khrushchev was telling the truth, but it was a truth that frightened him. Generations in the Soviet Union had revered Stalin and linked their lives and hopes with him. Now the past was being shattered and what they had all lived by was being destroyed. 'Everything crumbled, never to be made whole again.'

It was an extraordinarily dangerous and daring thing for Khrushchev to do. Solzhenitsyn believed that he spoke out of 'a movement of the heart', a genuine impulse to do good. Others have pointed out, more cynically, that it tarred other party leaders with the Stalinist brush, to the ostentatiously repentant Khrushchev's advantage. It deflected blame from the party and the system on to Stalin's shoulders. A few months later it was announced that the congress had called for measures 'for removing wholly and entirely the cult of the individual, foreign to Marxism-Leninism... in every aspect of party, governmental and ideological activity.'

The speech was reported in the foreign media the next day. In March the Central Committee had the text distributed to the party branches, where it was read out. Inside the Soviet Union it would help to create greater freedom, in time. Plenty of Stalinist henchmen and functionaries were still determined to resist de-Stalinization, but thousands of political prisoners were released and others posthumously rehabilitated. Abroad, Khrushchev's words cut the ground from under the feet of Communist party members and leftwing intellectuals who had spent years denying reports of what was going on in the Soviet Union. Many party members left in disgust.

At the party congress in 1961 Khrushchev repeated his attack on Stalin's memory, this time in open session, and other speakers denounced Stalin's crimes. The late leader's body was removed from its place alongside Lenin in the mausoleum in Red Square, and the names of Stalingrad and other such places were changed. When Khrushchev fell from power in 1964, he became an un-person, but was not executed, imprisoned or even banished to Mongolia. The Soviet Union had changed.
Key Debate 1: How far did de-Stalinisation represent a genuine break from the past?

Use the article above, plus pages 68-70 (textbook), pages 96-97 (revision guide) to complete the following.

**A short summary of Stalin’s Russia** (this will help you identify the break from the past)

- **Continuity between Khrushchev and Stalin’s regimes**
- **Khrushchev moved away from centralisation**
- **Successful changes to the Communist system**

**The arguments**

- **Khrushchev had little opposition**
- **Opposition**
- **Khrushchev had lots of opposition**
- **Khrushchev’s fall from power (see next page)**
Khrushchev's Fall from Power (from an “On This Day” article in the New York Times)

Some of the very extrovert traits that gave Mr. Khrushchev his human dimensions accounted for his downfall. By nature an impatient and impulsive man, he promised his people more than he could deliver. With two excellent harvests in 1956 and 1958, he pledged in 1959 that in seven years the per capita real income of Soviet citizens would rise by 40 per cent and that the minimum wage would be doubled. There would also be a 40-hour week. And by 1970, agriculture and industry would be producing more than their American counterparts.

One of the keys to the new era of plenty was a gigantic stride in meat and grain production. But try and improvise as he might, he could not achieve an output to match his grandiose expectations. He flew in the face of experts by trying to grow corn in unsuitable areas. in opening up so-called virgin lands in Siberia and in too-hasty reorganization of the cumbersome farm and industrial bureaucracy. The result was that economic and bureaucratic dislocation contributed heavily to his ouster. And not the least of those who turned against him were the bureaucrats whose traditional ways and power relationships he threatened.

Another ingredient in Mr. Khrushchev's ouster was the failure of his gamble in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 to pay off. Although he claimed at the time to have obtained what he wanted--an American pledge not to attack Cuba--many in the Kremlin believed that the affair was a first-class miscalculation.

He was damaged also by the American U-2 spy plane incident in 1960 and the subsequent breakup of a Paris summit meeting with President Eisenhower. After Mr. Khrushchev's first visit to the United States, he insisted to his colleagues that President Eisenhower was a reasonable man and that statesmen could promote international amity through personal understandings. This homespun theory was severely strained when the U-2 was shot down over the Soviet Union and President Eisenhower took the responsibility.

For a fourth thing, his bumptious conduct then and on other occasions, such as the shoe-banging at the United Nations, embarrassed some of his associates who felt that more dignity befitted the leader of a great superpower. Some of them, too, had been bullied by their leader in explosions of temper and were delighted to vote his ouster.

Ranged against him, too, were powerful voices in the army. To allocate capital for agricultural supplies and machinery, he was obliged to cut down on spending for heavy industry and defence. The army, which had earlier supported him, was dismayed by his schemes to achieve defence at the lowest possible cost and elements of the officer corps, whose jobs were threatened, joined in the pressure against him.

Mr. Khrushchev also caused alarm by the escalation of his quarrel with Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese leader. The Soviet leader's China policy seemed to many Soviet and other Communists to threaten the fraternal spirit of world Communism. His handling of the Mao situation was cited specifically in his ouster.

An additional count against him was his action in splitting the Communist party into industrial and agricultural sections, to enhance party control of all aspects of the economy. The party, in effect, was to concentrate on economic, not political, tasks. The step was taken precipitately in 1962. According to Mark Frankland, a British expert on Mr. Khrushchev's fall, "the plan was bound to upset just those party officials on whom Khrushchev had to a large extent built his own power."

"In particular," Mr. Frankland noted, "it threatened the interests of the regional party bosses by splitting their domains in two and so reducing their status and influence."

Finally, there was Mr. Khrushchev's willfulness as well as what seemed an increasing tendency to take the spotlight. His enemies accused him of both lack of foresight and building a cult of personality. He did indeed push his plans through the Politburo and was unwilling to accept frustration of his ideas. And he did seem to insist on adulation.

The combination of all his shortcomings came to more than outweigh his virtues in the eyes of his colleagues, and he was pensioned off in October, 1964. But it was a measure of the changes he had wrought that he was voted out of office, not shot, and that some of his key policies, such as peaceful coexistence and arms limitation and emphasis on Soviet consumer needs, were taken up by his successors, albeit in a less flamboyant fashion.
Key Debate 1: How far did de-Stalinisation represent a genuine break from the past?

With reference to the passage and your contextual knowledge, how convincing do you find the passage as an explanation for Khrushchev’s motives for introducing de-Stalinisation.

Passage A

The twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union assembled in Moscow in the Great Hall of the Kremlin on February 14th, 1956. It was the first since the death of Josef Stalin in 1953, but almost nothing was said about the dead leader until, in closed session on the 25th, 1,500 delegates and many invited visitors listened to an amazing speech by Nikita Khrushchev. First Secretary of the party, on ‘The Personality Cult and its Consequences’. Khrushchev denounced Stalin, the cult of personality he had fostered and the crimes he had perpetrated, including the execution, torture and imprisonment of loyal party members on false charges. He blamed Stalin for foreign policy errors, for the failings of Soviet agriculture, for ordering mass terror and for mistakes that had led to appalling loss of life in the Second World War and the German occupation of huge areas of Soviet territory. Khrushchev’s audience heard him in almost complete silence, broken only by astonished murmurs. The delegates did not dare even to look at each other as the party secretary piled on horrifying accusation on another for four solid hours. At the end there was no applause and the audience left in a state of shock. It was an extraordinarily dangerous and daring thing for Khrushchev to do. Solzhenitsyn believed that he spoke out of a ‘movement of the heart’, a genuine impulse to do good. Others have pointed out, more cynically, that it tarred other party leaders with the Stalinist brush, to the ostentatiously repentant Khrushchev’s advantage. It deflected blame from the party and the system on to Stalin’s shoulders. A few months later it was announced that the congress had called for measures ‘for removing wholly and entirely the cult of the individual, foreign to Marxism-Leninism... in every aspect of party, governmental and ideological activity’.
Key Debate 2: To what extent were the economic and social reforms made by Khrushchev a failure?

The economic and social reforms of Khrushchev

Virgin Lands Policy and agriculture

Khrushchev had a different strategy for the creation of higher living standards. His ‘Virgin Lands’ programme, launched in February 1954, envisaged a substantial increase in food supplies, not by placing further pressure upon the peasantry, but by exploiting vast areas of land that had never previously been used for agriculture. Between 1954 and 1956, young Party members and members of Komsomol helped to bring 36 million hectares of such land, equivalent to the total farmland of Canada. During this period, 300,000 people emigrated to areas of Western Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Caucasus. At last agricultural production showed significant improvement: the grain harvest in 1956 stood at 125 million tons, compared with 82.5 million tons three years earlier. The policy also constituted a very important change in the balance of the Soviet economy, and a major departure from the practices of the Stalinist economy. As David Christian has written, ‘the Soviet countryside ceased to be an exploited colony of the Soviet town. Instead it became a massive recipient of investment resources and subsidies’.

However, Khrushchev believed that the best food for livestock was corn. He hoped to transform the Ukrainian steppe into a corn-growing region. The new Virgin Lands would be used for cereal growing. In the first years, the harvest was good and it seemed that Khrushchev’s plans were going to pay off. Between 1950 and 1960, agricultural production increased by 43 million tons with 29 million coming from the Virgin Lands. Khrushchev bragged that he could make the USSR self-sufficient in food production and even become an export nation. By the early 1960s, however, poor rainfall and soil erosion had destroyed the early gains of his programme. In addition, much of the mechanised equipment produced within the USSR was sent to the Virgin Lands, thereby delaying further improvements in agricultural output in European Russia. Unfortunately for Khrushchev, 1963 was a drought year, which led to a shortage of bread right across the USSR.

Virgin Land areas were mostly rural settlements with small populations. The incredible speed with which Virgin Land workers were recruited and transported to the Virgin Lands created major housing and food shortages. The poor living conditions caused many workers to quickly pack up and leave within the first months to years of arriving in the Virgin Lands. The number of workers on the state farms in Kazakhstan increased by 322,000 from 1954-1957, but in this time only 1,800,000 m² of housing was built. The people who were attracted to the Virgin Land settlements were young men from poor villages, orphans, and released prisoners because even though the living conditions were poor, it was still an improvement in their lifestyles. While the food shortages in Virgin Land settlements were solved by 1956, the housing problem remained an issue past the end of the 1950s.

As a consequence of the poor living conditions and constant out-migration, there were shortages of workers on the new Virgin Land state farms. Between 1957-1960, 24,000 specialists of all disciplines were sent to work in the Virgin Land districts of Kazakhstan, and during the same time period 14,000 specialists left due to poor living conditions. Additionally, the workers who did stay were mostly young and inexperienced, lacking the skills to work the machinery and farm efficiently. To deal with the issue, a decree was issued in Kazakhstan at the end of 1959 that ordered the full-time training of 65,000 new tractorists and an additional 50,000 in off-duty time. However, due to resource restraints, less than half that number received training. As a short-term solution, the government began paying about 250,000 experienced farmers per year from southern regions of Kazakhstan to come to work in the Virgin Lands after they completed their own harvests.
The dryland conditions in the Virgin Land areas, especially Kazakhstan, were not conducive to monoculture farming. The area got only 200 to 350 mm of rain yearly and the majority tended to fall in July and August, when the grain was ripening and at harvest time, whereas drought usually occurred in spring when the immature shoots needed the most water. Furthermore, the vegetation period was short and the area was prone to cold spells and frosts as late as early fall. Strong winds blew snow from the fields in winter and caused soil erosion in the spring. The soil was also characterized by high salt content. The intensive monoculture farming of the Virgin Lands campaign, with 83% of the total cropland in 1958-1959 being covered by grain, depleted the soil of necessary nutrients. This is likely one of the major causes for the gradual decrease in Virgin Land productivity after 1959.

In 1963 Khrushchev began an initiative to widely expand fertilizer production and availability throughout the Soviet Union in order to increase the productivity of the Virgin Lands. The USSR only possessed 20 million tons of fertilizers for every 218 million hectares (2,180,000 km2) as opposed to the United States, which possessed 35 million tons of fertilizer for every 118 million hectares (1,180,000 km2) of land. Khrushchev ordered 60 new fertilizer factories to be built. Even so, the productivity of the Virgin Lands continued to decline and never got close to replicating the record harvest of 1956.

Very little infrastructure existed in the Virgin Land provinces prior to Khrushchev’s announcement of the campaign. Consequently, when harvesting began there were minimal storage facilities for the crops. This caused substantial amounts of the crop yield to be left in the fields to rot. Furthermore, lack of storage facilities caused farmers to hastily harvest the entire crop during suitable weather, leading to ripe and unripe grain often being mixed together. This raised the moisture content and caused the grain to spoil. The loss of spoiled grain in this manner (referred to as dockage) often accounted for the loss of 10-15% of crop output. Harvests in Kazakhstan in 1956, 1958, and 1959 respectively were 23.8, 21.9, and 19.9 million tons of grain, whereas the storage capacity of Kazakhstan in 1960 was only 10 million tons of grain.

Another setback for Khrushchev was his decision to abolish the Motor Tractor Stations in the countryside. During Stalin’s time the MTSs had been important institutions in developing the collective farm method of agriculture through the provision of tractors and other mechanised machinery. They were also important centres for political control over collective farms. However, MTSs provided yet another layer of bureaucracy obstructing efficient farming. Collective farms had to negotiate with the MTSs for their services and farmers were never quite sure when the MTS would perform their work. Removing this layer of bureaucracy made sense, but the speed at which the change was introduced—just one year—badly affected agriculture. Many collective farms did not possess the expertise to maintain machinery. As a result, agricultural machine making actually declined during Khrushchev’s period as leader. Khrushchev’s failures in agriculture were an important contributory factor in his removal from power in 1964.

Decentralisation of control and its impact on the people

Following the denunciation of Stalin in 1956, Khrushchev planned two major changes to the Soviet system of government. One was the democratisation of the Communist Party. From 1954-1964, the Party membership increased from 6.9 million to 11 million. Most of the new members were listed as workers and peasants. As part of the way to increase ‘democracy’ within the CPSU, Khrushchev revived ‘comrades courts’, led by ordinary party members, which dealt with minor offences. A range of other reforms also indicated that the emphases of the Soviet economic and social systems were shifting. Tuition fees for higher education were abandoned, pensions were increased and housing was given higher priority in economic planning. The control of the Soviet economy was significantly
decentralised with much initiative removed from the ministries in Moscow and delegated to local officials.

Khrushchev also began the decentralisation of control. Part of the process was to transfer power from the Soviet central government to the governments of the fifteen republics which comprised the USSR. In 1957 the process reached its height, with the creation of the ‘svnarkhozy’- 105 regional councils given authority over economic development. Under Stalin, all economic planning had been centrally controlled through Gosplan, which monitored the implementation of the ‘Five Year Economic Plans’. Both of these policies aimed at undermining the remnants of Stalinism and improving the standard of living of the Soviet people. The privileged position of Communist Party members under Stalin was widely resented and to address this, Khrushchev introduced major changes to labour policy within the USSR. He narrowed the differences in pay between rich and poor, and he decriminalised absenteeism from work. Linked with these changes came reform of housing and education policy. From 1955-1964 a rapid housing construction programme doubled the amount of homes within the USSR. Most of the new homes, however, were in poorly made, high rise blocks of flats which appeared in the suburbs of Soviet cities. In education, Khrushchev abolished university fees in 1958, allowing the children of ordinary workers to receive higher education.

**Housing**

On 31 July 1957 the Communist party decreed to increase housing construction and Khrushchev launched plans for building private apartments that differed from the old, communal apartments that had come before. Khrushchev stated that it was important “not only to provide people with good homes, but also to teach them...to live correctly.” He saw a high living standard as a precondition leading the path on the transition to full communism and believed that private apartments could achieve this. Although Khrushchev’s time in office marked a time of openness and liberalization primarily located in the public sphere (known as the Khrushchev Thaw), the emergence of private housing allowed for a new formulation of a private sphere in Soviet life.

Soviet rhetoric after WWII exemplified a shift in emphasis from heavy industry to the importance of consumer goods and housing. The Seven-Year Plan was launched in 1958 and promised to build 12 million city apartments and 7 million rural houses. Alongside the increased number of private apartments was the emergence of changing attitudes toward the family. The prior Soviet ideology disdained conceptions of the traditional family, especially under Stalin, who created the vision of a large, collective family under his paternal leadership. The new emphasis on private housing created hope that the Thaw-era private realm would provide an escape from the intensities of public life and the eye of the government. The prior abolition of private homes and the individual kitchen attempted to move away from the domestic regime that imprisoned women. Instead, the government tried to implement public dining, socialized housework, and collective childcare. However, in March 1958, Khrushchev admitted to the Supreme Soviet his embarrassment about the public perception of Soviet women as unhappily relegated to the ranks of a manual labourer. The new private housing provided individual kitchens for many families for the first time. The new technologies of the kitchen came to be associated with the projects of modernization in the era of the Cold War’s “peaceful competition.”

Housing was addressed in part by the Khrushchyovka is an unofficial name of type of low-cost, concrete-paneled or brick three- to five-storied apartment building which was developed in the USSR during the early 1960s, during the time its namesake Nikita Khrushchev directed the Soviet government. They were, however, poorly constructed and small.
Key Debate 2: To what extent were the economic and social reforms made by Khrushchev a failure?

a) The three main views in the debate largely boil down to:
   1. It was Khrushchev’s fault: his ideas were poorly thought out which caused a change in how much support he got for them.
   2. Khrushchev’s innovative and radical changes were largely unsuccessful because of a lack of cooperation from senior Communist Party officials and bureaucrats.
   3. Khrushchev’s reforms were a considerable achievement within the context he was working in.

Collect an A3 sheet and create a mind map/ create a table of the evidence in order to go through the different arguments and assess those debates. You can also use pages 98-99 of the revision guide and pages 120-121 of the textbook.

b) The Interpretations
Which interpretation is most convincing about the impact that Khrushchev had on improving the living and working conditions of the Russian people?

Passage A

The most ambitious of Khrushchev’s reforms was the Virgin Lands campaign, in which hundreds of thousands of young men and women volunteered to work and settle on the steppelands of Kazakhstan. Khrushchev promoted the campaign as a ‘Leninist’ response to the crisis of collectivised agriculture. The collective farms were too inefficient to feed the Soviet population. Propaganda trumpeted the achievements of the settlers on the Virgin Lands. But its results were mixed: 40 million hectares of new land were brought into production between 1954-1963, and grain output rose as a result, enough to end food shortages in the short term; but harvest yields were variable, and steadily declined from 1958, largely because there was not enough fertiliser to compensate for the poor soil.

Passage B

Historians have come to term the decade or so following the death of Stalin in 1953 as the ‘thaw’: the word is used as a metaphor not only for the early signs of relaxation in the international Cold War tensions, but also for the easing of the frost cultural and social relations that existed within the Soviet Union. After 1956, Khrushchev’s promotion of ‘peaceful coexistence with the West’ included the belief that the Soviet Union should imitate and borrow from capitalist countries in order to boost the socialist economy. His aim was that the Soviet Union should eventually overtake the capitalist economies in levels of output and growth. To some extent, Khrushchev’s aims to modernise the Soviet Union, to bring the country prosperity and success, to improve health and welfare and to raise the everyday living standards of the Soviet population can be seen as common goals of all contemporary governments. His period of office notably saw the emergence of a material culture and the beginnings of a consumer society in the Soviet Union.
Key Debate 3: How effectively did Khrushchev deal with the challenges posed by the Cold War?

For this one, you will need to read the reading from Flagship History, Russia, 1855-1964 (page 166-167), the textbook (page 171-172) and the revision guide (page 100-101)

DEBATE: Khrushchev dealt successfully with the Cold War; “inspirational and innovative”

DEBATE: Khrushchev did not deal successfully with the Cold War; “erratic and impulsive”

OR BOTH?
Key Debate 3: How effectively did Khrushchev deal with the challenges posed by the Cold War?

Interpretations task: Which interpretation do you think is most convincing as an assessment of Khrushchev’s success during the Cold War?

Passage A

The Berlin Crisis was not a product of Khrushchev’s bad temper. He started the Crisis because he was genuinely concerned by West German designs against the GDR and for nuclear armament. Even the threat of the loss of the GDR was intolerable in those times for the Soviet leadership. Inspired in all likelihood by the crisis in the Far East, Khrushchev hoped to force the United States to acquiesce to the existence of ‘two Germanys’ just as they had acquiesced in, indeed supported the existence of, ‘two Chinas’ in the Far East. Khrushchev always expected to manage the Crisis without resorting to brinkmanship\(^1\) with the United States. In the first year of the Crisis his diplomacy scored an unexpected success: the trip to the United States and Eisenhower’s acceptance of a return invitation to come to the Soviet Union. But during the second year, when the U2\(^2\) incident occurred and the prospect of détente\(^3\) faded, Khrushchev found himself a hostage of his political and ideological commitments. Instead of maintaining the tension to bring the West to the negotiating table, the Soviet leader tied his own hands by promising to sign a separate peace treaty with the GDR. As Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated, many in the Kremlin, including Khrushchev himself, began to wonder if it would not be better to ally the Soviet foreign policy with a militant Chinese line rather than to continue to play diplomatic games with the West. The pressures from Ulbricht certainly contributed to this dilemma.


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Passage B

In his memoirs, written in the late 1960s, Khrushchev claimed that it was as an international statesman that he had made his greatest contribution to the USSR. This claim deserves attention. He had been one of the first statesmen in any country to develop ‘summitry’ as a standard form of international diplomacy. He had presided over the USSR’s transition into a super-power, triumphantly watching it become a pioneer in space. He had been the first Soviet leader to declare that his country no longer thought in terms of an inevitable armed struggle between the forces of socialism and capitalism, and the first to recognize co-existence as a principle governing the relationship between states. These were not inconsiderable achievements.


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\(^1\) the art or practice of pursuing a dangerous policy to the limits of safety before stopping, especially in politics.

\(^2\) The 1960 U-2 incident occurred during the Cold War on 1 May 1960 when a United States U-2 spy plane was shot down while spying in Soviet airspace. This caused a planned conference between the US and USSR to be called off.

\(^3\) Easing of tensions
Key debate 4: ‘Courageous failure’- how valid is this assessment of Khrushchev’s policy towards minorities, satellite states and Asia?

China

A summary of the Sino-Soviet Split

The Sino-Soviet split began in the late 1950's and became a major diplomatic conflict between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) whose leader was Mao Zedong and the USSR whose leader at that time was Joseph Stalin.

During the 1950's China worked with a large number of Soviet advisers who encouraged the Chinese leaders to follow the Russian model of development with an emphasis on heavy industry funded by taxes and levies from the peasantry whilst making consumer goods a low priority.

When Stalin died in 1953, Mao felt he was now the senior leader and was resentful when the new Soviet leaders Malenkov and Khrushchev did not recognise this. Mao had ignored many of Stalin's requests but he had respected him as a world leader. In 1956 Khrushchev denounced Stalin during his Secret Speech and although Mao didn't react publicly he was infuriated.

In 1959, Khrushchev held a summit meeting with US President Dwight Eisenhower. The Soviets were alarmed by developments within China and sought to appease the West. They also refused to honour their earlier commitment to help China develop nuclear weapons and support Mao in his border dispute with India. Mao was offended by these actions he felt Khrushchev was being to accommodating to Western demands. However, the Soviet leadership were well aware that the Americans could match their nuclear power and so sought to engage them in dialogue and negotiations that would avoid the outbreak of war and were determined not to give Mao nuclear weapons. By June 1960 the split between Russia and China became public when Khrushchev and Peng Zhen (China) openly clashed.

During 1962, international events caused the final split between the Soviet Union and China. Mao criticised Khrushchev for backing down in the Cuban Missile Crisis and Khrushchev responded by declaring that Mao's policies would lead to nuclear war.

By 1965, the Sino-Soviet split was an established fact, and the onset of Mao's Cultural Revolution severed all contact between not only the two countries but between China and most of the rest of the world.

Khrushchev in Water-Wings Mike Dash, for the Smithsonian Magazine (online)

Khrushchev's first state visit to China, in 1954, had proved difficult; Khrushchev’s memoirs disparagingly describe the atmosphere as “typically oriental. Everybody was unbelievably courteous and ingratiating, but I saw through their hypocrisy.... I remember that when I came back I told my comrades, ‘Conflict with China is inevitable.’ ” Returning in the summer of 1958 after several stunning Soviet successes in the space race, including Sputnik and an orbit of the earth made by a capsule carrying a dog named Laika, the Soviet leader was amazed at the coolness of the senior Chinese officials who gathered to meet him at the airport. “No red carpet, no guards of honor, and no hugs,” interpreter Li Yuernen recalled—and worse followed when the Soviets unpacked in their hotel. Remembering Stalin’s treatment of him all too clearly, Mao had given orders that Khrushchev
be put up in an old establishment with no air conditioning, leaving the Russians gasping in the
sweltering humidity of high summer in Beijing.

When talks began the next morning, Mao flatly refused a Soviet proposal for joint defense initiatives,
at one point leaping up to wave his finger in Khrushchev’s face. He chain-smoked, although
Khrushchev hated smoking, and treated his Soviet counterpart (says Khrushchev biographer William
Taubman) like “a particularly dense student.” Mao then proposed that the discussions continue the
next day at his private residence inside the Communist Party’s inner sanctum, a luxury compound
known as Zonghanhai.

Mao had plainly done his homework. He knew how poorly educated Khrushchev was, and he also
knew a good deal about his habits and his weaknesses. Above all, he had discovered that the portly
Russian—who weighed over 200 pounds and when disrobed displayed a stomach resembling a
beach ball—had never learned to swim. Mao, in contrast, loved swimming, something that his party
made repeated use of in its propaganda. So when Mao turned up at the talks of August 3 dressed in
a bathrobe and slippers, Khrushchev immediately suspected trouble, and his fears were realized
when an aide produced an outsize pair of green bathing trunks and Mao insisted that his guest join
him in his outdoor pool.

A private swimming pool was an unimaginable luxury in the China of the 1950s, but Mao made good
use of his on this occasion, swimming up and down while continuing the conversation in rapid
Chinese. Soviet and Chinese interpreters jogged along at poolside, struggling to make out what the
chairman was saying in between splashes and gasps for air. Khrushchev, meanwhile, stood
uncomfortably in the children’s end of the pool until Mao, with more than a touch of malice,
suggested that he join him in the deeper water.

A flotation device was suddenly produced—Lorenz Lüthi describes it as a “life belt,” while Henry
Kissinger prefers “water wings.” Either way, the result was scarcely dignified. Mao, says Lüthi,
covered his head with “a handkerchief with knots at all the corners” and swept up and down the
pool while Khrushchev struggled to stay afloat. After considerable exertion, the Soviet leader was
able to get moving, “paddling like a dog” in a desperate attempt to keep up. “It was an unforgettable
picture,” said his aide Oleg Troyanovskii, “the appearance of two well-fed leaders in swimming
trunks, discussing questions of great policy under splashes of water.”

Mao, Taubman relates, “watched Khrushchev’s clumsy efforts with obvious relish and then dived in
the deep end and swam back and forth using several different strokes.” The chairman’s personal
physician, Li Zhisui, believed that he was playing the role of emperor, “treating Khrushchev like a
barbarian come to pay tribute.”

Khrushchev played the scene down in his memoirs, acknowledging that “of course we could not
compete with him when it came to long distance swimming” and insisting that “most of the time we
lay around like seals on warm sand or a rug and talked.” But he revealed his true feelings a few years
later in a speech to an audience of artists and writers: “He’s a prizewinning swimmer, and I’m a
miner. Between us, I basically flop around when I swim; I’m not very good at it. But he swims
around, showing off, all the while expounding his political views…. It was Mao’s way of putting
himself in an advantageous position”.

Read more: http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/krushchev-in-water-wings-on-mao-
humiliation-and-the-sino-soviet-split-80852370/#R4OM12sWT8GdhxzF.99
Key debate 4: ‘Courageous failure’- how valid is this assessment of Khrushchev’s policy towards minorities, satellite states and Asia?

The debate for this one is fairly simple. You may find it helpful to use your nationalities and satellites booklet, plus the textbook (pages 221-222) and the Revision Guide (pages 102-103) to complete this section. As well as China, you will need to look specifically at Yugoslavia, Germany and Hungary.

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The Sino-Soviet split during Khrushchev’s rule was mainly the result of disputes over Marxist-Leninist ideology. The first point of ideological disagreement between the Soviet Union and China emerged in 1955 over the Stalinist socioeconomic development model. Facing a structural economic crisis, Mao replaced the development model that the People’s Republic of China had inherited from the late Josef Stalin with a development strategy resembling earlier Soviet policies that had already been discredited in the USSR. Despite its failure, Mao returned to their basic ideas in the Great Leap Forward of 1958-1960 only to reap disaster. De-Stalinisation in the Soviet Union provided the second moment of ideological conflict. While Khrushchev’s Secret Speech in February 1956 was rooted mainly in domestic necessities, it reverberated throughout the socialist world. As a result, over the course of 1956 and 1957, Mao and Khrushchev took up opposite positions on Stalin as theoretician and practitioner. Third, Sino-Soviet ideological disputes arose over the correct method of dealing with imperialism. Launched in early 1956 as well, Khrushchev’s policy of peaceful coexistence with the United States did not cause immediate conflict with the Chinese Communists because they were preoccupied with de-Stalinisation. From late 1957, however, tensions over this policy grew, and by the mid-1960s dominated Sino-Soviet relations. Most other points of Sino-Soviet conflict were either the result of these ideological disagreements or of lesser importance. Security disputes- such as the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958- and economic disagreements- in particular trade and the sudden withdrawal of the Soviet specialists from China in 1960- arose as the consequence of ideological arguments.