



A-level HISTORY 7042/2N

Component 2N Revolution and dictatorship: Russia, 1917–1953

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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Supporting Marking Guidance

A separate Supporting Marking Guidance document has been created for use in this series and any future series.

It has been written by the senior examining team. It applies to all A-level History options. The purpose of the guidance is to clarify key aspects of the mark scheme and further ensure consistency of approach across all options. The guidance does not reflect a change in the standard applied, but clarification and amplification of the standard. We hope that the guidance document will aid you in your understanding of how the standard should be applied and deepen your understanding of how the key aspects of the mark scheme work. The Supporting Marking Guidance should always be used in conjunction with the mark scheme, and any relevant examiner standardising and teacher training material.

Examiners can find the Supporting Marking Guidance on the associate extranet.

Teachers can find the Supporting Marking Guidance alongside the current mark scheme on Centre Services on results day. It will also be published with any future assessment materials on the public website.

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity, you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level, you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly Level 3 with a small amount of Level 4 material it would be placed in Level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the Level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A

- 0 1** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the collapse of Nicholas II's political authority.

[30 marks]*Target: AO2*

Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25–30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19–24**
- L3:** Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13–18**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7–12**
- L1:** The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1–6**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.

Source A: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- from a report by the Okhrana, the source should be well-informed about revolutionary groups amongst the proletariat in Petrograd, therefore adding value
- written in October 1916 after two years of the war, the source should have a strong understanding of the impact of the First World War on the Russian people and on opposition to the Tsarist regime, therefore adding value
- given the focus and purpose of the Okhrana was primarily to infiltrate, report on and disrupt revolutionary political groups, the focus of the source could over-emphasise these aspects of opposition to the regime. This could potentially detract from the value of the source
- the tone of the source is matter of fact but with an underlying sense of increasing despair. This could be seen as valuable, revealing the seriously weakening political authority of the regime towards the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917.

Content and argument

- the first argument of the source, that it was restrictions on the liberties of the working classes which have caused greater hostility to the government could be challenged. Revolutionary ideology had been growing in strength in Russia for over a decade and was exacerbated more by poor leadership of the war effort and food shortages on the home front
- the argument that there were close relations between revolutionary workers in Petrograd and soldiers at the front is valuable. The Bolsheviks were very active in spreading their propaganda and inciting disobedience amongst soldiers on the front lines. This had contributed to the growing number of desertions in the army through 1916 and into 1917
- the argument that many felt that a revolution would happen soon, and that the Tsarist regime would not be able to resist it, could be seen as valuable. The revolution broke out just four months later, and the participation of soldiers and sailors in the revolution was crucial to the downfall of the Tsar
- conversely, it could be argued that the revolution, when it came, was spontaneous and unexpected. It took revolutionary groups, such as the Bolsheviks by surprise. Very few in Russia at the start of February 1917 would have predicted the imminent demise of the Tsarist regime.

Source B: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- the speech by Milyukov will give a good impression of the frustration of many members of the Duma with the way in which the war effort had been led and co-ordinated. Therefore, it has value in revealing the lack of support for the regime amongst leading democratic politicians
- delivered in November 1916, the speech has value in expressing the frustrations that had built up over two years of war, particularly amongst members of the Duma who had been excluded from any responsibility for the co-ordination of the war effort
- the value of the source could be questioned due to the fact that it is primarily an expression of frustration by a liberal politician with how the government had been organised. It does not take into account the discontent of the proletariat and of revolutionary political groups. Milyukov wanted a continuation of the war effort and a constitutional monarchy, which were aims not shared by other opponents of the regime
- the tone of the source is very strident, which could be seen as valuable by revealing the depth of frustration felt by members of the 'Progressive Bloc' in the Duma. However, this could also undermine the value as Milyukov is perhaps exaggerating the extent of his opposition to the Tsarist regime for rhetorical effect.

Content and argument

- the argument that the government had proved incapable of running the war effort effectively can be seen as valuable. Nicholas' decision to take personal charge of the military in 1915 had had no positive impact on the war and the government had not organised the economy effectively to provide the army with sufficient war materiel
- the source argues that the government has refused to organise the country in the way suggested by the Duma, ie involving the Duma in leading the war effort. This could be seen as valuable as Nicholas stubbornly adhered to the principle of autocracy through the war and eventually ordered the Duma to disband in early 1917
- ultimately, members of the Duma formed the Provisional Committee in February 1917, of which Milyukov was a member. This was a crucial moment in the downfall of the Tsar as soon afterwards the army leadership transferred its loyalty to the Provisional Committee. Therefore, the source could be seen as valuable by emphasising the importance of opposition within the Duma to the Tsarist government
- conversely, the content of the source could be seen as focusing rather too narrowly on the priorities of middle-class liberal politicians and not on the motivations and actions of the proletariat, revolutionary socialists and ordinary soldiers, which contributed to the Tsar's downfall.

Source C: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis

- George Buchanan, as the British Ambassador to Russia, would have met Nicholas II many times and would have been able to observe his style of leadership and its impact on Russia from close quarters, therefore making the source valuable
- written in 1923, the source has the benefit of hindsight with Buchanan able to look back at events in Russia over the previous five years and provide a considered assessment of Nicholas II's reign
- the source could be argued to lack value in that Buchanan's view of Russia, as the British Ambassador, would have been skewed towards the royal family and leading politicians. He would not have had much contact with the proletariat or revolutionary groups, therefore his assessment of the situation has a rather narrow focus
- the tone of the source is measured and balanced, with a degree of sympathy for Nicholas II alongside criticism. Buchanan is able to see the positives in the Tsar and Tsarina, as well as their limitations as rulers, which could be seen as adding to the value of the source

Content and argument

- the argument presented about Nicholas II's personality can be seen as valuable. Nicholas was not a natural autocrat but remained committed to the principle of autocracy with disastrous consequences. Consequently, he refused to countenance a constitutional monarchy even in February 1917, thereby losing the support of moderate liberals
- the argument that Nicholas was dominated by his wife can also be seen as valuable. Alexandra was a stronger character and influenced Nicholas to rule as an autocrat. Her influence over ministerial appointments coupled with the disastrous war effort led to the rise of rumours suggesting that she was a German agent, which undermined the credibility of the whole regime
- both Alexandra and Nicholas were heavily influenced by Rasputin until December 1916, which further undermined the respect in which many Russians held the Tsarist regime. The source refers to his influence over Church appointments, which is a valuable contribution to understanding the reasons for the collapse in the Tsar's political authority
- it could be argued that the overall focus of the source on Nicholas' personal failings as Tsar provides a rather narrow explanation of the collapse of his authority. The economic and political problems facing Russia in 1917 had significant long- and short-term causes, which may well have been beyond the capabilities of any Tsar to resolve.

Section B

- 0 2** How far was the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War due to Trotsky's leadership of the Red Army?

[25 marks]*Target: AO1*

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War was due to Trotsky's leadership of the Red Army might include:

- Trotsky travelled over 65 000 miles during the war to visit the frontlines as often as possible. In doing so, he was able to maintain the morale of the Red Army by meeting soldiers in person and delivering effective motivational speeches
- Trotsky made the controversial, but ultimately effective, decision to use 50 000 former Tsarist army officers who had significant experience from the First World War. The families of many of these officers were held hostage on Trotsky's orders to ensure their compliance
- Trotsky appointed political commissars to all army units to provide political oversight of orders and actions. Furthermore, harsh discipline was enforced with frequent use of the death penalty and use of the Cheka behind the lines to shoot deserters
- Trotsky was a brilliant propagandist who used a range of methods to inspire both the Red Army and the general population to bear hardships and make sacrifices in the pursuit of victory
- despite having no formal military training, Trotsky proved a competent General and strategist, however, he was prepared to defer to the professional opinion of more experienced officers, such as Tukhachevsky, in the interests of a Red victory.

Arguments challenging the view that the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War was due to Trotsky's leadership of the Red Army might include:

- Trotsky has been criticised for his lack of military experience and strategic know-how. It can be argued that the successful military strategy employed by the Red Army was due to the more experienced commanders, such as Tukhachevsky
- the Reds had the advantage of controlling the central regions of Russia, including the key cities of Petrograd and Moscow. This gave them control of most of the population, the railway network and the armaments factories. In contrast, the Whites were widely dispersed across the less developed parts of Russia
- the Whites were a very diverse set of forces with little co-ordination between them. White Generals operated independently and fought for different objectives. Discipline amongst the Whites' armies was significantly worse than in the Red Army. Ill-discipline and corruption were rife and very little was done to win over the support of the peasants or general population
- foreign intervention did more to undermine the Whites' campaign than help it. Levels of assistance were very limited and diminished rapidly after the end of the First World War. Furthermore, foreign assistance gave the Reds a propaganda opportunity to exploit
- Lenin provided overall leadership for the communist state in support of the total war effort, whereas Trotsky's leadership was more focused on the Red Army. Lenin ensured that the economy was geared to supporting the army and he contributed the most to the propaganda drive to ensure support from workers and peasants for the Reds.

Overall, students may conclude that Trotsky's leadership of the Red Army was crucial in the Reds' victory. He proved to be a very adept military commander, making the most of his own skills of motivation and propaganda, whilst being prepared to defer to the greater knowledge of more experienced Generals. Furthermore, Trotsky was prepared to utilise terror and harsh discipline to ensure loyalty and drive from all ranks of the Red Army. However, alternatively, students may argue that Trotsky was not a particularly skilled General and he also benefited from the wider advantages enjoyed by the Reds. His use of a special train depended on their control of the railway network, and the Red Army was well-supplied with armaments due to their control of the central regions. Furthermore, as a total war effort, much depended on Lenin's abilities to focus society and the economy on supporting the Red Army.

- 0 3** 'In the years 1929 to 1939, Stalin's policy of collectivisation had a positive impact on the Soviet economy.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21–25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16–20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information, which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11–15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1–5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that in the years 1929 to 1939, Stalin's policy of collectivisation had a positive impact on the Soviet economy might include:

- collectivisation enabled the state to procure larger quantities of grain, which was used to feed the growing urban population and therefore support the industrial transformation achieved under the Five Year Plans
- increased state procurement of grain also contributed to increased grain exports, which raised money for the state to invest in industrialisation
- collectivisation caused millions of peasants to move from the countryside to the cities, thereby swelling the size of the urban workforce, supporting the development of industry
- collectivisation enabled greater mechanisation of agriculture, eg through increased use of tractors and the building of mechanised processing plants on many collective farms. By the end of the 1930s overall grain production was higher than it had been under the NEP.
- collectivisation provided for greater education, health and childcare support in the countryside, which improved the quality of the agricultural workforce and enabled more female peasants to work.

Arguments challenging the view that in the years 1929 to 1939, Stalin's policy of collectivisation had a positive impact on the Soviet economy might include:

- peasant resistance to collectivisation had a devastating effect on livestock levels in the USSR. These did not recover until well after the Second World War
- peasant resentment of collectivisation led to decreased productivity. Grain production fell to below pre-First World War levels in the early 1930s.
- there were insufficient tractors and other machinery produced in relation to the overall need from collectivised farms. By 1939, only 1 in 40 collectivised farms had an MTS station
- collectivisation stripped the countryside of its most talented and enterprising farmers. The purge of the kulaks resulted in a significant loss of agricultural expertise. In addition, the party officials brought in to run the collective farms often had very little knowledge of agriculture
- the impact of collectivisation caused a devastating famine in the southern USSR in the years 1932 to 1934. Millions of peasants died causing a humanitarian disaster and weakening the agricultural workforce in those regions for many years.

Students may conclude that collectivisation did help the development of the Soviet economy by supporting the transformation of industry through providing manpower and food for the urban proletariat, as well as raising money from exports to fund industrialisation. Furthermore, collectivisation laid the foundations of a more mechanised form of agriculture, so even though the extent of mechanisation did not reach the levels envisaged in 1929, there was progress in the development of agriculture. Alternatively, however, students may conclude that the negative impact of collectivisation on the peasants overshadowed the wider benefits. In 1939, Soviet agriculture was still suffering from the consequences of the conflict between state and peasantry over the implementation of collectivisation. Although forced collectivisation did provide resources to support the Five Year Plans, the imbalance between agriculture and industry, and the ongoing resentment towards collectivisation amongst the peasantry, were issues which held back the development of the Soviet economy in the 1930s.

- 0 4** 'Propaganda was more important than terror in strengthening the Stalinist dictatorship in the years 1945 to 1953.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

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- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way, although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6–10**
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- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Arguments supporting the view that propaganda was more important than terror in strengthening the Stalinist dictatorship in the years 1945 to 1953 might include:

- the cult of personality reached new heights following victory in the Great Patriotic War. Stalin was hailed as the genius who had co-ordinated the USSR's victory and this was endlessly re-emphasised in propaganda and cultural output
- the state's total control over propaganda, the media and artistic production meant that the general population had no alternative views or information. The impression of Stalin as an omniscient genius was inescapable in the period of High Stalinism
- the Zhdanovshchina 'cleansed' Soviet cultural output of bourgeois, western influences. Many were expelled from the Union of Soviet Writers. Highly respected figures, such as Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Eisenstein all had their work censored or banned. As a result, cultural output reinforced the propagandist socialist realism demanded by the regime.
- Stalin's 70th birthday celebrations were the apogee of the cult of personality. Many towns were renamed after him, hundreds of statues were erected in his honour and paintings commissioned to celebrate his career.

Arguments challenging the view that propaganda was more important than terror in strengthening the Stalinist dictatorship in the years 1945 to 1953 might include:

- the harsh treatment of returning prisoners of war, many of whom were sent to the gulags, and the purging of former army officers, sent the very clear message that no 'ideological contamination' was to be tolerated. Such action, in the immediate aftermath of celebrations of victory in 1945, sent a clear signal that no-one was safe from the reach of state terror
- there was a significant expansion of the gulag system under Beria's leadership after the war. Beria's own personality and the ruthlessness of the secret police under his command strengthened the regime
- Stalin used terror to maintain his total domination of the party. The purge of the Leningrad Party in 1949 reinforced Stalin's total control and over 2000 officials, many of them executed, were replaced by pro-Stalin loyalists. The Mingrelian Purge of 1951/52 aimed to limit Beria's growing power within the party and state
- the importance of terror in the Stalinist system is demonstrated by the largely invented 'Doctors' Plot' of 1952, which Stalin manufactured and drove forward in order to sow fear and inflame nationalistic feeling. The anti-Semitic aspects of the 'Doctors' Plot' were used to undermine the positions of Molotov and Kalinin whose Jewish wives were imprisoned
- terror could be seen as essential to the control and effectiveness of propaganda. Purges of 'unreliable' authors and artists ensured the production of propaganda and cultural output fully focused on reinforcing the control of the regime.

Overall, students might conclude that the nature of the cult of personality, and propaganda more generally, reached new heights after 1945 fuelled by the elation of victory in the war. The combination of victory and propaganda focused on Stalin's responsibility for this was a powerful cocktail influencing many Soviet citizens into adulation of the leader. Furthermore, it could be argued that state terror was more targeted at specific people after 1945, and that the majority of Soviet citizens had learned to live under the shadow of the terror state. Therefore, the nature of terror was something that they had become more accustomed to. However, alternatively, students may argue that terror was a more powerful tool of totalitarian control in this period as people conformed more out of fear of arrest and execution, than out of an enthusiasm for the regime motivated by propaganda. Much of the public celebration of Stalin, and the cultural output of these years, can be seen as motivated by a desire to avoid the attentions of the secret police.