

## AQA Examination-style questions

(a) Explain why Nicholas issued the October Manifesto in 1905.

(12 marks)



To explain why the manifesto was issued you will clearly need to provide some context – both of the immediate reasons behind the pronouncement, the general reasons that had provoked revolution in 1905, and the broad opposition to autocracy which had led to demands for constitutional reform. It would probably be sensible to look at these three areas in this order so that it is clear that you understand why the manifesto was issued in October 1905, rather than sooner, or later.

(b) How successful was the tsarist autocracy in reasserting its authority by the end of 1905?

(24 marks)



To answer this question you will need to balance the restoration of tsarist authority against the ways in which autocratic power had been weakened and authority lost through the events of 1905. You should decide what your argument will be before you begin to write and should guard against presenting a narrative account of the year by considering different aspects of tsarist authority, so as to provide a *thematic* rather than a chronological answer.

## 4 The tsarist regime, 1906–1914

### 6 The Dumas and the work of Stolypin

*In this chapter you will learn about:*

- the new constitution set up in the aftermath of revolution
- the problems associated with the new Dumas
- Stolypin's attempts to carry through agrarian reform between 1906 and 1911
- the extent of change in the countryside by 1911.

On September 14th 1911, Pyotr Stolypin, Prime Minister of Russia, was enjoying an evening's performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* at the Kiev Opera House. Stolypin was sitting in the stalls, while Tsar Nicholas II and his family were also in attendance, in the royal box. No doubt the troubles of the last few years were forgotten as all relaxed for the evening. However, just after the royal family had left their box, during the second interval, two sounds were heard. Nicholas later said that he thought a glass had been dropped, and he went back into his box to look. Below him, he could see a group of officers and others trying to drag someone along, whilst women were shrieking and Stolypin was standing unsteadily and looking towards him.

Dmitrii Bogrov had shot Stolypin in the arm and the chest but the wounded man had risen from his chair, removed his gloves and unbuttoned his jacket. Nicholas saw his bloodied waistcoat and watched as he raised his left hand to make the sign of the cross to him. Stolypin slowly sank down again crying, 'I am happy to die for the tsar', Stolypin lived on for four more days and Nicholas visited him in hospital, begging the minister to forgive him for bringing him to this end. Bogrov was hanged ten days later.

Having led a brief administration, which gave rise to a series of major reforms, this was to be the end of Russia's third Prime Minister.

#### ■ The work of the Dumas

##### The new constitution

Although the October Manifesto had provided no precise detail as to what the election arrangements for, or powers of, the promised Duma would be, over the following months, a new constitutional arrangement was drawn up with two legislative houses, as shown in Figure 2.

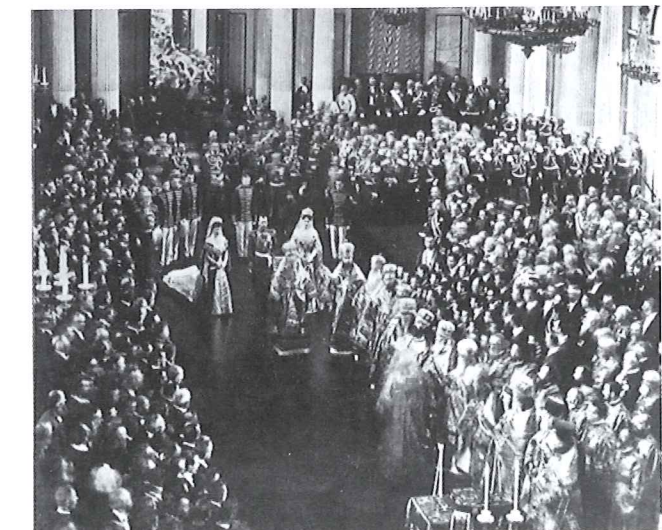


Fig. 1 The Duma opened amidst great expectation in April 1906



**Government (Council of Ministers under the Prime Minister)**

- The government (Council of Ministers under the Prime Minister) was to be appointed exclusively by the Tsar. The government was responsible to the Crown, not the Duma



**Lower Chamber (The State Duma)**

- Lower Chamber – The State Duma – members elected under a system of indirect voting by estates – heavily weighted in favour of the nobility and peasants (who were assumed to be the crown’s natural allies).
- Deputies were to be elected for a five-year term.



**Upper Chamber (The State Council)**

- Upper Chamber – The State Council – half elected by Zemstva, half appointed by the tsar – noble representatives from the major social, religious, educational and financial institutions.



The two houses had equal legislative power and all legislation also had to receive the approval of the tsar. Any one of the three bodies could veto legislation.

Fig. 2 The new Russian constitution and indirect voting

**The Fundamental Laws**

Five days before the first Duma met, Nicholas issued a series of Fundamental Laws (April 23 1906) defining his view of power. The laws stated that the tsar:

- possesses supreme administrative power;
- is supreme leader of all foreign relations;
- has supreme command over all land and sea forces of the Russian state;
- has the sole power to appoint and dismiss government ministers;

**Key terms**

**Indirect voting:** every man over 25 could vote but only those with more than 400 acres could vote directly. Other groups had an indirect vote. The country was divided into districts, and each elected a delegate to vote in the general election on their behalf. The result was that the vote was weighted 31 per cent landowners, 42 per cent peasants and 27 per cent town dwellers

- has the sole power to declare war, conclude peace and negotiate treaties with foreign states;
- has the right to overturn verdicts and sentences given in a court of law.

The tsar also had complete control over military expenditure and household expenses and the right to control the Orthodox Church.

The Emperor of All Russia has supreme autocratic power. It is ordained by God himself that his authority should be submitted to, not only out of fear but out of a genuine sense of duty.

Article 4 To the All-Russian Emperor belongs supreme autocratic power.

Article 9 No legislative act may come into force without the Emperor’s ratification.

Article 87 The Emperor may rule by decree in emergency circumstances when the Duma is not in session.

Article 105 The Emperor may dissolve the Duma as he wishes.

1

**Political groupings**

There were to be four Dumas. The main political parties which contested the elections (in addition to the independent candidates and fringe groupings) were:

Party	Details
Social Democratic Workers’ party (SD) – divided between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks	Founded 1898. Committed to Marxism. Split in 1903. Bolsheviks: Led by Vladimir Lenin. Believed in discipline, centralisation, organisation and the role of the proletariat under party guidance. From 1905 favoured a peasant/proletariat alliance. Mensheviks: Led by Yulii Martov. Believed in co-operation with bourgeoisie/liberals rather than peasantry and the use of legal channels of opposition.
Social Revolutionaries (SR)	Founded in 1901; led by Viktor Chernov. Favoured populist ideas of re-distribution of land and nationalisation. Left of party favoured terrorism to achieve aims.
Trudoviks (Labour group)	Non-revolutionary break-away from SR party of moderate liberal views but with no formal programme. Favoured nationalisation of non-peasant land, a constituent assembly, a minimum wage and 8-hour working day. Supported by peasants and intelligentsia.
Kadets (Constitutional Democrats)	Led by Pavel Milyukov (1859–1943). A central liberal party which favoured a constitutional monarchy with parliamentary government; full civil rights; compulsory redistribution of large private estates – with compensation and legal settlement of workers’ disputes.
Octobrists (Union of 17th October)	Leaders included Alexander Guchkov (1862–1936). A moderate conservative party which accepted the October Manifesto and opposed further concessions to workers or peasants. Supported by wealthy landowners and industrialists.
Progressists	A loose grouping of businessmen who favoured moderate reform.
Rightists – including the ‘Union of the Russian People’	Leaders included Vladimir Purishkevich (1870–1920). The Union of Russian People was extremely right-wing, favouring monarchism, chauvinism, Orthodoxy, pan-slavism and anti-semitism. Promoted violent attacks on the left-wing and pogroms through its street-fighting gangs, the Black Hundreds. Other rightists shared conservative views but were less extreme.
Nationalist and religious groupings	Ukrainians, Poles, Georgians, Muslims – all seeking rights and greater independence.

**Activity**

**Thinking and analysis**

Create a table of two columns. On one side write down the ways in which the new Russian governmental arrangements appeared democratic and on the other write down the ways in which they restricted the emergence of democracy.



The results were as follows (see Figure 3):

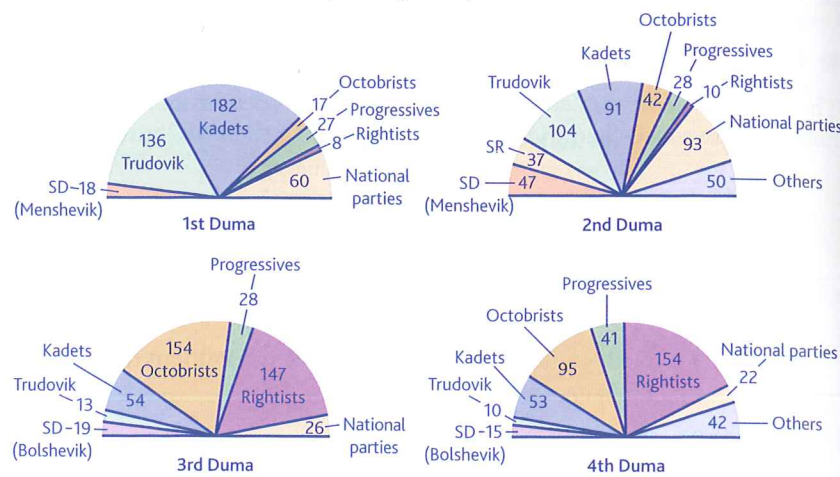


Fig. 3 Duma election results, 1906–14

**Activity**  
**Statistical analysis**  
 Before reading further, study Figure 3. What changes can you observe in the make-up of these four Dumas?

**The four Dumas**

**The First Duma, May–July 1906**

A national election campaign took place through the winter of 1905–06. The Bolsheviks and Social Revolutionaries refused to participate, as did the extreme right-wing Union of Russian People. This meant that the first state duma, optimistically referred to as the ‘Duma of National Hopes’ was overwhelmingly radical-liberal in composition. The Kadets fought a skilful campaign and won the largest number of seats of any grouping. More than a third of the new deputies (191) were peasants and peasant farmers made up the single biggest professional group. There was also a strong group of deputies to the left of the Kadets, who were strongly critical of the tsar and his ministers.

They met at the Tauride palace in St Petersburg on May 1st 1906.

Maurice Baring, the English journalist writing for the *Morning Post*, attended one of its first sessions:

I had the good fortune to gain admission to the Duma yesterday afternoon. I think it is the most interesting sight I have ever seen.

One saw peasants in their long black coats, some of them wearing military medals and crosses; priests; tartars; Poles; men in every kind of dress except uniform. When the sitting began I went up into the gallery. The members go to their appointed places, on which their cards are fixed and the impression of diversity of dress and type becomes still stronger and more picturesque.

You see dignified old men in frock coats; aggressively democratic-looking intellectuals with long hair and pince nez; a Polish Bishop dressed in purple; men without collars; members of the proletariat; men in loose Russian shorts with belts and men dressed in the costume of two centuries ago.

They were a motley band and commentators commented on the ‘uncivilised’ manners of some of the peasant deputies, who threw their smoke ash onto the polished floors and spat out the husks of the sunflower seeds they liked to chew. It was said that the tsar’s mother was upset for several days after witnessing all these commoners in the palace.

2

No sooner had the elections taken place than Sergei Witte, the architect of the October Manifesto and head of Nicholas’s Council of Ministers resigned, under pressure from reactionary influences at Court. This was a blow to the hopes of the liberals who no doubt hoped that, under his guidance, a form of government would evolve whereby ministers would take note of the Duma’s views and work together with it in the formulation of policies. Witte was replaced by Ivan Goremykin, an old-fashioned conservative, and since the government had been able to negotiate a large loan of 2,250 million gold francs from France in April 1906 to keep it solvent, there was no need for it to rely on the Duma for the approval of the budget.

From the outset, Nicholas found the first Duma too radical. Almost their first act was to pass an ‘Address to the throne’ in which they requested a political amnesty, the abolition of the State Council, the transfer of ministerial responsibility to the Duma, the compulsory seizure of the lands of the gentry, without compensation, universal and direct male suffrage, the abandonment of the emergency laws, the abolition of the death penalty and a reform of the civil service. Nicholas ordered Goremykin to inform the Duma that their demands were ‘totally inadmissible’, whereupon the Duma passed a vote of ‘no confidence’ in the government and demanded the resignation of the tsar’s ministers. In the uncertainty as to what to do, the resolution was simply ignored until, 10 weeks later, the Duma was dissolved and Goremykin replaced as Prime Minister by Stolypin, who had a reputation as a hard-liner for his resolute measures when faced with unrest in his Province of Saratov.

At this, around 200 delegates (including 120 Kadets, of which Prince Lvov was one) travelled to the Finnish town of Vyborg and issued an appeal to citizens to refuse to pay taxes or do military service. It met with no popular response and the government punished those that had signed the appeal by disenfranchising them and giving them a three month-prison sentence. This deprived the Kadets of their most active leaders, although since the most prominent Kadet, Milyukov, was neither a deputy nor a signatory, he was not involved.

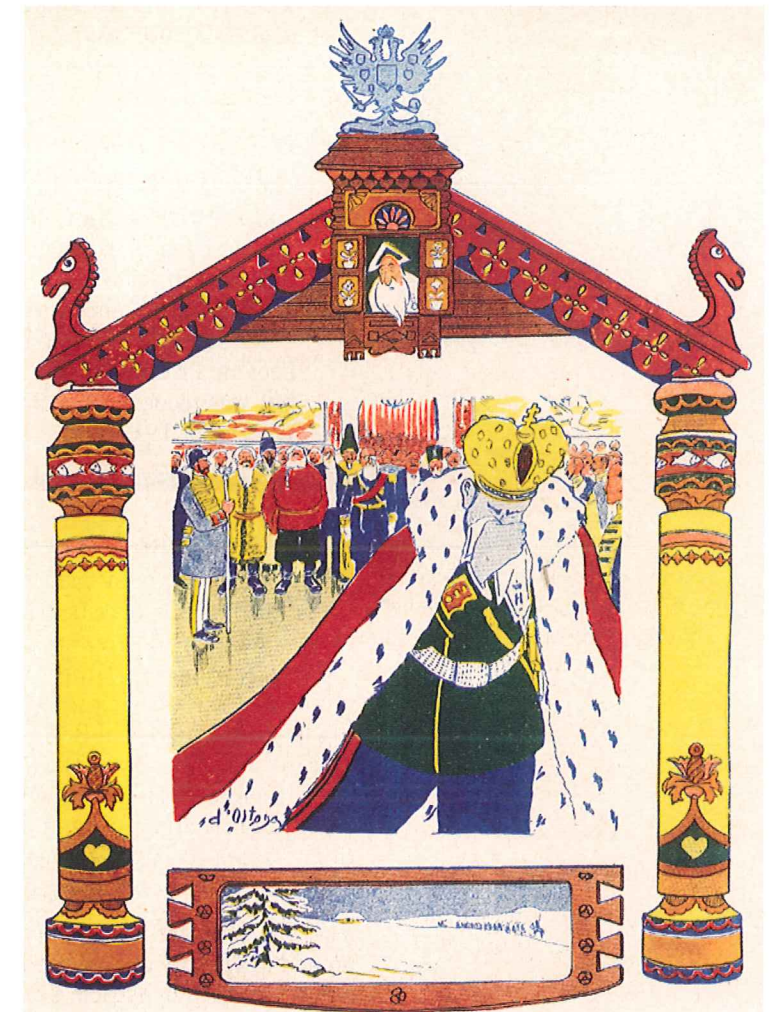


Fig. 4 ‘Oh, how these deputies stink!’ Tsar Nicholas II holds his nose as the Duma assembles – why do you think this is?

**Cross-reference**  
 Milyukov is profiled on page 80.





Fig. 5 Prince Georgi Lvov

Key profiles

Prince Lvov

Prince Georgi Yevgenyevich Lvov (1861–1925) began his career as a lawyer and worked in the civil service until 1893. In 1905 he joined the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets) and won election to the first Duma. He became chairman of the All-Russian Union of Zemstvos in 1914 and was the head of the Provisional Government of Russia, after the tsar's abdication, from March to July 1917. Although later arrested by the Bolsheviks, he escaped and lived out his days in Paris.

Ivan Goremykin

Ivan Goremykin (1839–1917) was a lawyer with strongly conservative political views. He had served as minister for internal affairs between 1895 and 1899, before becoming Prime Minister in 1906. He was soon forced to resign in July, 1906, after disagreements with the first Duma, and was replaced by Peter Stolypin. Goremykin was a close ally of Rasputin and again became Prime Minister in 1914. He retired in February 1916 but was recognised as an ex-tsarist and murdered by mobs in December 1917.

The Second Duma, February–June 1907

Stolypin's government tried to influence the elections to the next Duma, supporting the Octobrists, who more than doubled their representation. However, partly because of the disenfranchisement of the leading Kadets, the more moderate-liberal centre was reduced in size and the more extreme left-wing increased enormously because the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries decided to participate. Only some 30 representatives from the first Duma were returned and the Duma soon received the nickname, the 'Duma of National Anger' because it was even more oppositional than its predecessor. Neither the left nor the right wanted the Duma experiment to succeed and they succeeded in crippling it as a political force.

Stolypin struggled to find any support for the agrarian reform programme he had drawn up and resorted to passing legislation under the emergency powers granted by Article 87, while the Duma was not in session. When the Duma refused to ratify this, he spread a story about a Social Democrat (SD) plot to assassinate the tsar. When the Duma deputies refused to waive the Social Democrats' immunity from arrest, (a right of all Duma delegates), Stolypin simply dissolved the Duma. The SD delegates were immediately arrested and exiled and an (illegal) emergency law brought in to alter the franchise. The weight of the peasants, workers and national minorities was drastically reduced and the representation of the gentry increased.

The Third Duma, November 1907–June 1912

Not surprisingly, the groups which favoured the government, the Octobrists and Rightists, won the majority of seats, while the Kadets and socialists were much reduced in size as well as being divided in principles. This time the Duma's nickname in radical circles was the 'Duma of Lords and Lackeys'. Generally, this Duma was far more submissive and it agreed 2,200 of 2,500 government proposals – including important

Cross-reference

Stolypin is profiled and his programme of agrarian reform is covered on pages 98–101.

proposals for agricultural reform, presented by Stolypin. However, it is a sign of how unpopular the tsarist regime had become that even this Duma proved confrontational at times. There were disputes over naval staff, Stolypin's proposals to extend primary education and some of his local government reforms. By 1911 the Octobrists had turned into government opponents and the Duma had to be suspended twice, while the government forced through legislation under emergency provisions. Although the Duma ran its course, by 1912 it was clear that the Duma system was not working and had no control over the actions of the tsar or his government.

The Fourth Duma, November 1912–17

The party groupings were broadly similar in the final Duma, although the Octobrists did considerably less well, creating a greater rift between right and left. However, it was a relatively docile body and the new Prime Minister, Kokovtsov, who replaced Stolypin after his assassination in 1911 and remained in this post until 1914, proclaimed, 'Thank God we still have no parliament'. He simply ignored the Duma and its influence declined. It was too divided to fight back, and in any case, the workers again seized the initiative with a revival of direct action and strike activity in these years down to the outbreak of war.

Activity

Class activity

Convene your own class Duma. Half the class should be Duma deputies, ready to pose questions and the other half can represent the tsar and his ministers and provide suitable replies. Perhaps you might even employ a secretary to take the minutes.

Activities

Class discussion

1 How effective was the Duma experiment?

Complete the following chart which highlights some of the achievements of the Dumas, with balancing criticisms.

Consider the material for and against, and write a speech either in defence of the Dumas or condemning them. Present the best speeches in class and try to come to a balanced judgement.

Achievements of the Dumas	Criticisms of the Dumas
A centre for political discussion which enabled the tsar and ministers to gauge popular feeling	
Helped spread democracy by encouraging public political debate as their activities were reported in the press	
Used their powers e.g. approving the budget and questioning ministers to good effect	
Approved important reforms	
A promising experiment which would have succeeded but was never given enough time to show its true worth	

2 Consider this quotation from the modern historian, Alan Wood

'A tragic drama it certainly was; a revolution it was not. After 1905 there was no real devolution of political power, which still rested in the hands of an irresolute Emperor and his appointed ministers. There was no radical redistribution of property and no realignment of the hierarchical class structure of society. The principles

of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationalism still provided the regime with its ideological bedrock. The traditional institutions of the state – bureaucracy, church, military and police – continued to function unaltered. And the Romanov Empire remained – bruised but unbroken.'

In the light of what Wood has written, would you agree or disagree that the events of 1905 deserve to be called a 'revolution'? Explain your answer.