

AS LEVEL
Candidate Style Answers

HISTORY A

H505
For first teaching in 2015

Unit 2 Interpretations Y239-Y244

Version 1



Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Y239 – African Kingdoms c. 1400-1800 | 4 |
| High level answer | 4 |
| Medium level answer | 6 |
| Y240 – Russia 1645-1741 | 7 |
| High level answer | 7 |
| Medium level answer | 9 |
| Y241 – The Rise and Decline of the Mughal Empire in India | 10 |
| High level answer | 10 |
| Medium level answer | 12 |
| Y242 – The American Revolution 1740-96 | 13 |
| High level answer | 13 |
| Medium level answer | 14 |
| Y243 – The French Revolution and Napoleon 1774-1815 | 15 |
| High level answer | 15 |
| Medium level answer | 17 |
| Y244 – France 1814-70 | 18 |
| High level answer | 18 |
| Medium level answer | 20 |

Introduction

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCE History A specification and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

This content has been produced by senior OCR examiners, with the support of the Subject Specialist, to illustrate how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provide some commentary on what factors contribute to an overall grading. The candidate style answers are not written in a way that is intended to replicate student work but to demonstrate what a **'HIGH LEVEL'** or **'MEDIUM LEVEL'** response might include, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions.

As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

Y239 – African Kingdoms c. 1400-1800

'By the 1720s access to firearms had allowed the rulers of Dahomey to create an autocratic regime.'

From: R. Guiseppi, *Africa and The Africans In The Age Of The Atlantic Slave Trade*, 1992

Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied.

High level answer

This interpretation puts forward the view that Dahomey's access to modern weaponry, in particular the gun, enabled it to become an autocratic regime. It argues that Dahomey had a system of government whereby the leadership ruled supremely from a central point. Other interpretations would argue that autocracy in Dahomey was not a new phenomenon and was in keeping with 'modern' European nations of the time.

There is much to support this viewpoint. Military skill was long seen as the ultimate sign of power within the region. Access to firearms enabled Dahomey to create a strong autocratic rule. This is particularly evident by the centralisation of government that occurs throughout the last half of the 17th century. Access to European supplies was central in the creation of an autocratic ruler in Dahomey. Firearms form a big part of this. Through its use of the slave trade, Dahomey was able to secure the weaponry that helped its rulers to maintain its power and, indeed, forge a more autocratic rule and create a centralised system of power. Under King Agaja they used the strength of their superior weaponry to conquer neighbouring countries and as they expanded outwards they disposed of local customs and rulers and instituted their own, further enhancing their autocratic rule. This was all achieved through the use of advanced weaponry and though they had military strength in the past, without those weapons it would be debated that such success could have been achieved showing that access to firearms allowed the rulers of Dahomey to create an autocratic regime.

It can be argued, though, that this interpretation has many limitations and, indeed, other interpretations are better suited to either explaining the development of autocracy in Dahomey and it has been argued that Dahomey was run based on the modern European idea of a national state. By the early 1600s Dahomey was governed by a series of rulers who had absolute power over the people who lived there. It had a strong centralised government, the king would appoint all positions of authority and all subjects were subservient to the king. By the 1700s the kings were considered, by some historians, to be quite enlightened in their attitudes aiming to create a happy community. By the middle of the 18th century a system of centralised government was in place, with bureaucrats acting in various positions like prime ministers and finance ministers. This would suggest that Dahomey had, and always was, an autocratic nation though not one ruled exclusively by the king. This is further supported by others who believe that the King did not rule supremely in the country and that it had more in common with a constitutional monarchy with the country governed instead by a council of ministers, of which the king was a part. There was also the Great Council, delegates of which represented all regions of the nation, that met yearly and was the supreme decision making body of the country. The concept was that the Great Council would meet yearly and decide how the council of minister should deal with the various issues of the day. This would certainly suggest that Dahomey was not a traditional autocracy, thereby making the interpretation inaccurate, or at the least incomplete as it stands. Firearms, undoubtedly, support Dahomey's military might. It is important to remember, though, that military skill was the ultimate sign of power and authority, and whilst firearms form a part of that, it can be argued that the strength of Dahomey military, as highlighted in the many successful battles of the 1720s, as a whole gave Dahomey the ability to create an autocratic state. It is also worth mentioning that whatever autocracy Dahomey possessed, Oyo was still the superior state and Dahomey was tributary to it, which again highlights how the interpretation could be incorrect as despite retaining domestic control, Oyo was in overall control. The rulers of Dahomey also used other methods to retain control, including an extensive spy network, the Agbajigbeto, who rooted out enemies on behalf of the king and kept his power secure. Economic factors as well play a part in how the autocratic regime developed. The use of the slave trade, as previously mentioned, gave Dahomey access to supplies and finance from European powers.

The wealth that it obtained meant the rulers were able to forge a more autocratic system of government through its control of trade and the economy which would mean it was more than just firearms that led allowed the rulers of Dahomey to create an autocratic regime. When Kpengla tried to reform trade policy and ban all trade in slaved with Oyo, he was resisted at every turn, showing his power wasn't absolute and the slave trade was a key aspect of keeping the rulers in power.

Examiner commentary

The answer shows a clear understanding of the Interpretation and is able to analyse the view offered. It shows a good understanding of the debate about the reasons for the creation of autocratic rule in Dahomey. It considers other views and both supports and challenges the given Interpretation with reference to specific examples and knowledge, resulting in a well-supported evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Interpretation and would therefore be placed in Level 5.

Medium level answer

The interpretation was written in 1992 by R. Guiseppi and it claims that access to firearms allowed the Dahomey rulers to create an autocratic regime. Historians have disagreed over the importance of the firearms in this creation, though. Some interpretation claim it was the economic power of Dahomey that led to it being able to rule absolutely and others claim that this is too simplistic and military might is more than just guns and ammo. Furthermore, the argument against Dahomey being a true autocracy has also been made.

In supporting the interpretation, Dahomey gained access to weapons from European powers through the slave trade. They were able to conquer their neighbouring countries as a result of having superior weapons and impose their own beliefs and values, and more specifically those of the ruler, on the lands taken. Having first gained access in the mid-1600s, it became clear that Dahomey's rulers began a process of centralising government. All provinces and regions had to obey the absolute authority of the king and if they didn't they were attacked. No one would dare disobey, though, as the threat of superior weapons was strong. In addition, Dahomey society was such that ultimate power resided with those who had the strength, militarily, which the rulers, using its modern for the time weaponry, clearly had.

There were other factors in bringing about autocracy in the country. There was a deep rooted tradition of autocratic government within Dahomey that started long before the firearm was introduced in society. The economy, as well, played a strong part in creating the Dahomey autocracy. The slave trade provided a lot of wealth to the individual rulers, and through it they could control the population. It required a strong centralised government in order to run effectively and when it failed the King was removed, highlighting the importance of the slave trade as a means of creating an autocratic regime. The country also had a strong network of spies and informants who were used by the rulers to keep the population in line and root out any dissenting views. Firearms were just a part of the overall belief in power coming from military skill. Strategy and victory in battle go hand in hand and the use of 'modern' weapons merely enhanced that.

Examiner commentary

The answer shows some understanding of the debate about the creation of autocratic rule in Dahomey. The knowledge used to test the Interpretation is rather general, with the result that the evaluation is limited. Similarly, the understanding of the historical debate is not fully developed, although there is some awareness of other interpretations. There is enough understanding to take this to Level 3.

Y240 – Russia 1645-1741

'Despite the energy which Peter put into modernisation, the transformation which he effected was only partial.'

M Rady, *The Tsars, Russia, Poland and the Ukraine*, 1990

Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied.

High level answer

This interpretation refers to the energy which Peter put into modernisation, which cannot be doubted, even though it could be said that modernisation was more a means to an end of military power and expansion. The view that the transformation was only partial can certainly be defended by looking at aspects of Russian life which were not modernised and the fact that changes often did not last. However, if looked at from the point of view of the Russia which Peter inherited and some of the long-lasting effects of modernisation, then this view can be challenged. Total modernisation was probably not possible, but to say that it was 'partial' ignores the changes made in key aspects of Russian life.

The transformation which Peter pursued energetically, especially after seeing the progress that the West had made during his tour of western Europe could be said to have been partial. There was a great deal of superficial change, for example the creation of a showpiece capital, St. Petersburg, using western architects and creating a modern city to make the point that the older Russia of Moscow, the symbol of backward, inward-looking aspects of Russian life had been abandoned. However, urban development in Russia as a whole was not on this level. Changes to the manners of the nobility, famously the removal of beards and the table of Ranks of 1722 which created a service nobility on the Prussian model have been seen as only partial change. The masses of Russia remained unaffected and the extension of serfdom put a gap between the nobility and the people that did not seem very modern. The idea of a progression of nobles through service to the state was not fully enforced and abandoned by Peter's successor leaving a closed noble caste that lacked the modern social mobility of say Britain.

There was an interest in education, but state schooling remained limited and was directed mainly towards military ends. There were modernisations of the government, but these two could be said to have been partial. The increase in government revenue seemed to be a feature of the modern government, particularly Sweden, on which Peter modelled his reforms, for example the creation of separate government departments. The census ordered in 1710 and again in 1719 was a clear example of more modern government being aware of the state of the country and the number of taxable inhabitants. However the methods used were more reminiscent of old Russia with brutal tax collection, complex taxes on a wide variety of items (including cucumbers and beards) and with armed supervision of the new Senate and with members being executed by being broken on the wheel. The brutality which pervaded the regime, for example in Peter's treatment of his son and his feverish attempts to find those who had aided his escape, the public executions of the Streltsi and the devotion to war which absorbed 4/5 of all revenue undermined the 'modernity' of Peter's emulation of aspects of the West.

On the other hand, viewed from the Russia Peter inherited, the Westernisation does seem more than 'partial'. The fundamental change in the nobility, even if not totally sustained, amounted to a new relationship between the boyars and the state and was based on the Prussian model. While serfdom was strengthened the demands made on the nobles in return strengthened the state, as did its control over the Church. This put Russia far more into line with the more developed modern states of the period. It could be said that a lack of a parliament reduced the 'modernisation' but only Britain had a developed parliament and it was more effective centralised and uniform administration that was the key to Westernisation in this period. The development of trade, too, was a key aspect which put Russia more on a par with France, Britain and the Netherlands.

The subsidising of industrial concerns set a precedent for later expansion and the understanding of the importance of naval power was a key element in making Russia more modern. The capital itself was, of course, unique in Russia but it moved Russian thinking westwards and remained the capital until 1917. The attraction of foreign administrators, engineers, architects again set a precedent that the Russian court would not be isolated or medieval. Thus 'only partial' could be said to be too dismissive of the scale of Peter's achievements, for all their faults and limitation.

In the end, Rady's view is the more accurate, though, as Lionel Kochan has written there was 'a tiny minority educated in Western ideas' but Russia remained overwhelmingly backward. Steeped in poverty, illiteracy, devoted to a traditional way of life and regarding the Tsar's government as alien and remote. There were limitations to what the energy of one reforming monarch could do.

Examiner commentary

The interpretation is dealt with directly and different interpretations – i.e. way of looking at the scale and significance of Peter's changes are offered. In both cases the viewpoint is assessed by looking at support for the views and objections. The answer is analytical and evaluative and would receive a level 5.

Medium level answer

Rady argues that Peter was very energetic and that his modernisation of Russia was only partial. Peter was determined that Russia should be more modern and after touring western Europe sometimes in disguise he was keen that Russia should come into line with modern western ideas of government, warfare, technology and education. He wanted, too, a 'window on the West', which he achieved by building the new city of St. Petersburg on the Baltic. This symbolised a change in Russia away from the old medieval capital of Moscow with its wooden buildings and its Kremlin. St Petersburg was more modern and civilised with palaces and gardens. Peter insisted that his nobles adopt western ways so he did modernise. The old boyars had to shave their beards and wear western clothes. They had to serve the state. The same was true of the Church, which was also brought under state control. Peter wanted to increase trade with the West and also use this to create more income for the state. He promoted new industries and used foreign workers and foreign technology. Peter was very conscious that Russia had over mighty nobles and he looked at absolute monarchs like Louis XIV. However some say, like the quotation from Rady, that the modernisation was only partial because of the elements which did not change or were not very successful. Russia was a large country and the Tsar could not control all of it. Also he was very distracted by wars so he did not always have a chance to put these ideas into practice. Thus the changes were not all as widespread as he would have liked. So it is true that some of his modernisation was only partial and that outside St Petersburg there was less change.

Another interpretation stresses how successful Peter was in his reforms and his foreign policy and that he brought Russia much more into line with the West. He admired the West and his visit convinced him that trade and strong government would help Russia. When he returned from his foreign trip he found the bodyguard, the Streltsi in revolt and he crushed the revolt harshly. He also dealt harshly with his son Alexis who was less eager for change, so he was very determined to make changes and much of what he did changed Russia forever.

Some interpretations say that Peter was more successful in some reforms than others and so he did more than partially modernise and less than completely modernise. These views have access to the Russian archives, which opened after the Cold War and make a more balanced judgement. He did introduce major changes, especially in forcing the nobles to be more western and in boosting the economy, but he also did little to change the countryside and there were still serfs, which seemed more like medieval Russia.

Examiner commentary

This answer does attempt some explanation of the view in the question and some alternatives. There is some factual knowledge but it is not always used and there is some descriptive writing. The material which supports the different possible views is variable in depth, but the interpretation is considered and a direct answer emerges.

Y241 – The Rise and Decline of the Mughal Empire in India

'[Akbar was] a great man by any standard: a brilliant soldier and a statesman, a fine athlete and polo-player, a successful architect and a profound thinker.'

From: W Seymour, *Splendour of the Early Mughals*, History Today Vol.18, Issue 12, Dec 1968

Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied.

High level answer

The greatness of Akbar was widely accepted by contemporaries and he had a mythical and almost God-like status. The attributes in the quotation – his military victories, particularly the very decisive battle of Panipat in November 1566 which established his authority and the successful siege of Chitor, and his domination of Bengal all confirmed his military reputation. He was devoted to hunting and bow legged from riding. He was known for the buildings he commissioned at Agra and the new capital at Sikri. He was intensely interested in philosophy and thought, though illiterate and attempted to find a common ground between the religions in his domains. However though there is evidence to support the overall view of a multi-faceted great man, there are alternative views about Akbar. The suggestion that he was an enlightened ruler may be challenged by the view that he was in essence a savage medieval warrior emperor, intent on war and conquest for its own sake. The profound thought often showed a contradiction in outlook about religion. His interest in good government for which he was famous was often patchy in execution and his relations with his son ended in estrangement. Thus there is a contradictory view. Older writers like Edwardes and Garrett, *Mughal Rule in India* see him as finally transforming Mughal rule from that of military invaders to a permanent Indian dynasty, justifying the view of W.Seymour that he was 'a great man by any standard' but more modern views see more qualifications with Abraham Eraly in *The Mughal Throne* seeing Akbar for all his intellectual refinements as a ruthless warlord driven by land hunger and blood lust, so less than 'a great man by any standards'.

In terms of statesmanship, the Mughal rule could be said to have been put on a more regular footing by administrative changes to support the interpretation. There was more concern for the welfare of subjects, for example abolishing the enslaving of prisoners of war; the ending of pilgrim tax for Hindus and in 1564 the ending of the jizya, the population tax on non-Muslims. The state became less one of Muslim conquerors and more one which recognised the rights of a variety of subjects. The administrative changes were important enough for them to be incorporated into British rule in India. Officials were arranged in tiered ranks and a hierarchy imposed; there were also measures to reduce corruption like reducing jagir assignments and having lists of soldiers and horses for which officials claimed money. and Akbar was an enthusiastic legislator and took special interest in the impartial administration of justice. The mastery of Northern India was a remarkable achievement, given the precarious position Akbar was in when he ascended the throne. Akbar was aware of the importance of the South but sensible enough to try and negotiate settlements with the rulers until he had dealt with the danger from Abdulla Khan Uzbek in the North East. He did not arrive at the head of an army until 1599 and then his successes were due to dividing his enemies and bribery as well as military might.

In terms of war, territorial growth and government, there are objections to the very favourable interpretation of the quotation, given the high costs and the problems of over extension by ambitions in the Deccan. Also there was a gap between the issuing of decrees and the actual enforcement of equal justice and fair revenue collection. The Emperor was forced to withdraw his abolition of jizya before being able to reinstate it and much depended on the personal relations between the Emperor and his key lords and administrators. It would be unrealistic to think of a fully-fledged administrative system dealing effectively with matters of justice and revenue collection. However, it could be said that the ability of Akbar to establish control over a diverse area; to begin to regularise and institutionalise the state and to wage effective warfare justified in contemporary terms his greatness and his reputation in transforming the scope and nature of Mughal rule.

Less favourable views consider the overweening ambition of Akbar and some evidence of mental and emotional instability and failure to achieve consistency. This is particularly evident in aspects of religious policy. Many of his Muslim subjects were uncertain about the orthodoxy of the Emperor, while concessions to other faiths were not always consistent. His major project, the establishment of a sort of common core of spiritual belief in a new unifying faith called the Din Ilahi was not pursued. Sometimes he seemed an orthodox Muslim as with the foundation of Allahabad, sometimes he seemed to inhabit a heterodox philosophical world or to make concessions to Hindu subjects which divided the Empire without offering security and toleration. The energy noted in the quotation sometimes led to attempts to regulate the Empire in terms of social and sexual behaviour that could not be enforced. The costs of war were considerable and the position in the last period of the Emperor's rule was made insecure by the poor relations with his son Selim who was responsible for the assassination of one of Akbar's closest advisers.

Much depends on the consideration of the situation when Akbar ascended the throne. His territories were ill-defined; there were rivals from the house of Suri. Control over Kabul and the Punjab was uncertain and Humayun had really only been master of Delhi and Agra. Mughal rule was not systematically organised and its forces not uniformly strong. Given this, the changes between 1556 and 1605 for all their limitations do seem to support the view that Akbar was a great man.

Examiner commentary

In this high level answer, the possible interpretations are explained. The structure is clear and the interpretation in the question is considered carefully, though not all of its points are dealt with equally. However there is use of knowledge to explain why the view of greatness is held and also this view is evaluated. The alternative views about aspects of the rule are explained and there is some evaluation in terms of looking at the position at the start of the reign. There is analysis and not narrative and the key element in the interpretation is considered. Though the answer mentions some authorities, this is not the key point in why it is a high level answer.

Medium level answer

The interpretation sees Akbar as a great ruler because of his statesmanship and his personal qualities. As an outstanding soldier, statesman, athlete and thinker, as well as for the wonderful buildings he left as a legacy, Akbar should be thought of as great. When he came to the throne in 1556 he faced a great many problems and he imposed his authority over his enemies and regained the key Mughal cities of Delhi and Agra. The Mughals had been Muslim warriors and he maintained that tradition by establishing authority over neighbouring areas, by gaining lands and by successful control first over Northern India and then attempting to assert control over the South, the Deccan. These military achievements needed money and men and so he reformed the administration and the tax system. He set up new ways of governing and new administrative areas and officials. The whole nature of Mughal rule changed. He also was sure to try and gain the support not only of the Muslims but also of the Hindus and the other religions of a much larger empire. Personally he was very like the description given in the quote as he was a very keen sportsman and rider and he was very interesting in knowledge and religion.

One of the most significant victories that Akbar had was the battle of Panipat. There was a danger that the Mughals would simply be forced out of India and have to fall back on Afghanistan. The defeat of the successful general Hemu meant that the Mughals were to be dominant in India and owed a lot to Akbar. The capture of Delhi and Agra restored key bases for further expansion. There was also the conquest of Malwa and Gondwana which added to the Mughal Empire. These and other conquests and the later expansion into the South were very important. Thus Akbar was called 'Akbar the Great' and deserved his title. Before Akbar the influence and power of the Mughals was not as great and he laid the foundations that lasted until the British came and were stronger.

Akbar was very respected at the time and some saw him as a sort of God and he was also considered to be very wise because of his interest in religion and philosophy as the interpretation says.

There were some failures however and he faced rebellion and disloyalty from his son at the end of the reign and some problems in enforcing the many laws he passed and the many changes he made to government. Also his wars led him to have to suppress rebellions and so he faced increasing costs. His most famous reform was the abolition of the tax on non-Muslims, which showed that he was the ruler of all India and not just the ruler of the Muslims, but this did make him seem as though he was not really a Muslim. His major heritage was the building he did in Agra and Delhi and in his new capital, which showed the magnificence of his rule.

Examiner commentary

Though there is quite a lot of knowledge in this medium level answer, it is not really used to evaluate the views and not all of it is very directly linked to an analysis of the interpretation. There is some linkage, but this is not very developed. The quality of both knowledge and explanation is rather variable with some generalisations. However, there is some response to the question and some awareness of different possible views.

Y242 – The American Revolution 1740-96

'Foreign Policy left Americans far more divided in 1796 than in 1789.'

From: Paul Boyer, *The Enduring Vision*, 4th Edition, 2000

Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied.

High level answer

The Interpretation puts forward two clear views; firstly that America was more divided in 1796 than it was in 1789 and secondly that the cause of the division was foreign policy. However, others have questioned both of these assumptions and argued that America was no more divided or even more united in 1796, whilst others have argued that if America was more divided in 1796 it was not because of foreign policy but more because of political issues.

Foreign policy was certainly an issue in 1796 and there is evidence to support the claim in the interpretation that it made America more divided. There were two main developments that support this view, the first was reaction to the French Revolution and the policy that should be followed towards France. This event certainly helped to divide America as Federalists were convinced that the events in France showed the dangers of popular government and how it could degenerate into mob rule, whilst Republicans sympathized with the revolutionaries. This divided America politically and determined political allegiance and therefore the interpretation is correct to emphasise its importance. The view that foreign policy further divided America is reinforced by France's declaration of war on Britain in 1793 as it further widened division in America as it raised the question of America's obligation to France. The two were allied and America therefore had an obligation to defend French possessions in the Caribbean, but others in America disagreed strongly and argued that the agreement was not valid because it was made with a government that had been overthrown and, more importantly, were concerned about trade with Britain. Further foreign policy divisions surfaced over Jay's Treaty with Britain in 1794, with Republicans denouncing it as a surrender and the divisions became clear when its ratification struggled to pass the Senate as it did not bring about the commercial treaty America wanted or bring compensation for the slave Britain had taken in 1783, moreover the treaty accepted Britain's position on neutral rights at sea. Foreign policy was undoubtedly a divisive issue but whether it was more divisive than other issues is a matter of debate.

The interpretation ignores the other issues that divided America in 1796. Most importantly, party strife was becoming a major issue, some of it caused by foreign policy, but much of it caused by the need to find a successor to Washington who retired in 1796. The Presidency became a party question and therefore added to division and this was enhanced by the geographical division that accompanied it with Adams gaining nearly all his votes in the north and Jefferson in the South and the new states, such as Kentucky and Tennessee. The political divisions between the Federalists and Republicans were therefore an important issue and the growing sectional division between the north and south further exacerbated this and was not caused by foreign policy but by economic, social and cultural differences. Therefore there were other issues that played at least as great, if not larger role in the division. However, the interpretation also ignored the fact that the divisions may not have been as intense as Jefferson was accepted as President and the country was able to unite around foreign policy successes such as the Treaty of San Lorenzo and the common dislike of Britain.

Examiner commentary

This is a very full answer, which clearly understands the debate about division within America in 1796. There is excellent support for the evaluation, with accurate, detailed and relevant knowledge applied to support and challenge the given interpretation. It would be unrealistic to expect more detailed explanation, for example on the Jay Treaty, but the salient points to show how it increased division are made.

The response is aware that America may not have been more divided, although it could be argued that could have been developed, but again in the time allowed it is not possible to cover everything in depth. The answer implies that there was less division when it considers the successes of the period.

Medium level answer

Boyer, writing in *The Enduring Vision*, in 2000 argues that foreign policy was the most important cause of division in America in 1796. He is therefore also suggesting that America, despite defeating the British in the War of Independence, was still divided, and he says that it was more divided in 1796 than it had been during the War. There are other views which say that other factors caused the divisions and some also argue that America was not as divided in 1796 as it was in 1783. The following paragraphs will examine the arguments for and against this view.

The French Revolution had a big impact on America. The French had supported America in their struggle with Britain and the two nations were allies. Many Americans had supported the overthrow of the French monarch but there were different attitudes towards the new government and the policies that had been followed since Louis had been executed. France was also at war with Britain and there were different attitudes in America about what to do, some wanted to support France but others did not as it would damage trade with Britain, which brought in considerable sums of revenue. There were some in America who argued that America was militarily and financially weak and therefore could not fight despite the treaty with France. In the end America signed a treaty with Britain, Jay's Treaty, which was not completely popular as it did not get the commercial terms America wanted nor the compensation. However, the treaty was mostly a success as Britain gave up its forts and an economic boom followed as trade with Britain and its empire increased dramatically.

There were other issues in America in 1796. There were political divisions between the Federalists and Republicans and also a growing north south divide because of growing economic, social and cultural divisions. This divide was also seen because of the retirement in 1796 of George Washington and the contest for the Presidency between Adams and Jefferson. Jefferson was elected winning most of his votes in the South and Adams most of his in the north. However, Jefferson was accepted as President which might mean the divide was not as great as some think. There were also some successes in the period between 1783 and 1796 so America cannot have been that divided.

Examiner commentary

There is some understanding of the debate about the extent of division within America and the causes of it. The response is aware of some of the foreign policy issues that caused division, but these are described, often quite generally, and not well linked to the interpretation. Similarly, with the counter-view, the response is aware there were other issues that divided America, but they are described not analysed or evaluated. The answer largely describes issues in America and, at best any evaluation is implied.

Y243 – The French Revolution and Napoleon 1774-1815

'Despite the authoritarian nature of his regime, Napoleon did maintain the great gains of the Revolution.'

From: D.Rees, *France in Revolution*, 2008

Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied.

High level answer

The interpretation of D.Rees sees Napoleon's as an authoritarian regime but also one which maintained the gains of the Revolution. The debate about Napoleon's regime does concern whether with a constitution, Napoleon can be seen as truly authoritarian. However the wider debate is about whether he maintained the gains of the Revolution or destroyed those gains. The argument that he maintained the gains depends on identifying those gains. Before 1789 France had a weak government who did not administer France in an equal way because of class privileges. The Revolution introduced uniform administration and ended privilege. The key elements of the Revolution were 'liberty', 'equality' and 'fraternity'. The people from being considered mere subjects were seen as sovereign. They gained the liberty of voting for parliaments and liberty from aristocratic feudal dues or the burden of monarchy. The Revolution bound people together in a desire to pursue a more idealistic life. In Rees' view the coming of Napoleon did not destroy those gains. The monarchy did not return. There was a form of Constitutional rule. There was equality before the law and more equality of opportunity. The binding together of Frenchmen continues in the Napoleonic wars as much as the Revolutionary Wars against the injustice of the kings of other parts of Europe. The reforms of the Consulate in particular confirmed key gains of the Revolution. The alternative view is that with a military/police state Napoleon destroyed key gains. The Constitution was a sham, which merely justified dictatorship. Inequality returned with the Empire and the official status of the Catholic Church. Repression eroded liberty. Napoleon was not the maintainer of the gains of the Revolution but someone whose repressive rule prefigured the dictatorial regimes of the twentieth century.

The first view that he maintained the Revolution is based on the continuation of constitutional rule despite the coup of Brumaire. The Constitution of the Year X maintained a separate senate and corps legislative elected on a wider suffrage than some of the assemblies of the Revolution. The Code Napoleon enshrined key rights of equality before the law. The modernisation of administration of the Revolution was continued under Napoleon and his Prefects. Privilege no longer guided the collection of taxes or the imposition of feudal dues. There was authoritarianism as the interpretation states, but by modern standards the degree of repression and the powers of policed arrest and censorship were limited and not nearly as violent or terrible as in the time of the Revolutionary Terror. Napoleon's empire may seemed to have restored royalty but it was an empire in which high positions were open to the talents and one in which constitutional rule was maintained. The view is open to some question and much depends which part of the Revolution is being discussed. The highly centralised controlling state which organised the nation for war in 1793 is not the same as the constitutional monarchy which struggles to establish itself in 1789. It could be argued that it was this that was not maintained by a constitution which was limited. The elected part could offer only a discussion about laws, while the Senate which passed them was nominated. At local level Prefects and mayors were the agents of Napoleon's government as indeed were many parish priests ordered to preach loyalty to the state. Ideals of liberty were hardly met by the repression of Napoleon's army to both left and right and also by the censorship. The Concordat of 1802 flagrantly broke with the equality of the Revolution by giving Catholicism official status.

The alternative interpretation is that Napoleon destroyed the Revolution. This is based on the steady growth in personal power from being First Consul to Consul for Life to being Emperor. The power that Napoleon gained was not used as in the case of the Revolution to spread revolutionary ideas to Europe. The Empire was ruled by members of Napoleon's family and often existing elites were allowed to keep power. The introduction of revolutionary reforms was often subordinated to the needs of France or Napoleon himself.

The suppression of nationalism in Europe speaks more of an imperialist expansion more in line with former kings than a revolutionary statesman. The power of the police under Fouché; the lack of reforms offered to women or to the workers, who were placed under control by banning unions and introducing the livret and the heavy conscription and militarisation suggests that there was more links between authoritarianism and policy towards revolutionary gains than the interpretation of Rees suggests. However, this does not mean that there was a complete return to the Ancien Régime. The Church, for example regained official status, but not its privileges or lands. The transfer of property to the middle classes which was a feature of the Revolution was maintained; the aristocracy, though courted by Napoleon to take on leading positions, never recovered its status or property. The new elites came from more modest backgrounds and Napoleon's military commanders had risen by ability. Napoleon's administration remained fully based on the treating his subjects equally and maintaining efficient, uniform central power of a type that the revolutionaries of 1789 had hoped for from the Estates general. The creation of law codes, which summed up the lengthy legal work of the Revolution, indicated that there was no return to inequality or no imposition of absolutist view of law. The Code Napoleon was a revolutionary measure which endured.

Napoleonic France has been seen as neither a state that was a sort of authoritarian version of the Revolution nor a state which eroded the gains of the Revolution in favour of a police state, but a continuation of the type of enlightened despotism of eighteenth century rulers. However the continuing existence of representative institutions and the establishment of legal codes argues against this. For most of the time Napoleon's France was a state at war so centralised rule and some repression and ignoring of legal procedures (as in the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, for instance) might be seen as inevitable. In general Rees's view of an authoritarian state which kept at least some of the gains of the Revolution can be justified.

Examiner commentary

This high level response establishes a clear view of the debate and includes different interpretations. There is a balanced evaluation of the interpretations and the knowledge is used effectively in relation to this and does not become self-standing or narrational.

Medium level answer

Napoleon was indeed an authoritarian figure and he did little to maintain the ideas of the Revolution so the interpretation is justified in part but not in all its view. Napoleon came from a Corsican family so was always an outsider in France, which he wished to rule in his own way. He came to power because he was a successful general and he and some other conspirators overthrew the Directory in 1789. So he took power and he was not voted in. He then increased his power by becoming first one of three consuls, then consul for life, escaping the influence of the other two. He then became Emperor in 1804, ending the revolutionary tradition of a republic and going back to monarchy. This was not in any revolutionary tradition but more a return to the days before 1789. He was very concerned with his own power. The Constitution gave little power to the people and Napoleon ruled directly through his Prefects and his mayors, so he could increase taxes and get men for his armies rather than rule in the interests of the French people. This went against the ideas of the Revolution for liberty, fraternity and equality. Because Napoleon was so powerful and because he relied on his family so much and his new nobility, the people were not consulted and did not become the force that they had been during the Revolution. There could be no repeat of mass demonstrations because Napoleon would have used his troops as he did in the Whiff of Grapeshot before he came to power. The Revolution aimed at fraternity but Napoleon wanted to go to war and so for most of the time in power France was fighting other counties in Europe. By 1812 this had become for Napoleon's personal power and he led a huge army into Russia without proper equipment. This shows the ambition of one man was dominating France.

Napoleon introduced reforms but these were for his own power. He introduced the bank of France and he also introduced the new legal code called the Napoleonic Code, which was very unfair to women. He also introduced new schools but these were very strict and mainly for Napoleon not to spread revolutionary ideas and they were also censored. Napoleon was mainly interested in educating soldiers for his armies and raising taxes for war. This was a very military state so it is difficult to agree with D Rees except when he writes that France was authoritarian.

There have been many views about Napoleon. Stephen Englund thinks he was more democratic than does Corelli Barnett and Felix Markham who thought he was not very revolutionary. Some people think he was like Hitler or Mussolini and was a dictator. There are many different interpretations because Napoleon has sometimes been seen as a hero and sometimes just as a brutal dictator.

Examiner commentary

There is some knowledge in this medium level answer to support the view of the interpretation given but there is limited detailed support for any evaluation and views tend to be explained. The amount of assessment is quite limited and the views of some authors seem to be rather added on.

Y244 – France 1814-70

'The argument that Napoleon deserves no credit for the liberalisation of the Empire, because he had no choice in the matter if he wished to survive, is a persuasive one.'

Randell, France: *Monarchy, Republic and Empire 1814–70*, 1986

Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied.

High level answer

This interpretation argues that the liberalisation of the Empire did not spring from any sympathy that Napoleon III had for liberal ideas but was purely a matter of political necessity. The alternative view is that Napoleon III was a ruler who had had liberal sympathies in the past but saw that France needed order after a long period of political instability. The economic liberalism of the 1850s was followed by political liberalisation, not all of which came in a time of a crisis and that Napoleon III was not the political rogue that Victor Hugo accused of being, simply adapting to survive but with a genuine vision of a prosperous and stable France which would move towards greater liberalisation. Had the crisis of 1870 not ended in humiliation and defeat, then it is possible that a different view of Napoleon III might be common.

The case for Napoleon III simply being an opportunist can be made on the basis of the coup of 1852, the arrest of 27,000 opponents and the direct appeals to the masses by plebiscites, such as the one which approved of his establishment of the Second Empire, together with ongoing police activity against opposition, censorship and the maintenance of a weak 'rubber stamp' corps legislative in emulation of the authoritarianism of his uncle. All this was made possible by an economic situation that was favourable to France. Thus while France was prosperous with the development of railways, easy credit, a three-fold increase in trade and the greater freedom for banks to lend and businesses to grow, the thrust was towards greater economic liberalisation but little was done to change politically. Foreign policy successes such as the gaining of Nice and Savoy and successful participation in the Crimean War and alignment with Catholic interests offered enough support for the Emperor not to need to change politically. France was obviously booming as was shown by the development of Paris. However when the regime was less successful both economically and in terms of overseas policies in the 1860s, then to avoid the fate that had befallen Charles X and Louis Philippe, the Emperor was forced to introduce a more liberal empire to spread the blame and allow a safely valve for criticism. The popular support from the direct link with the masses could no longer be relied on. The shortage of cotton during the US Civil war, damage done to the silk and wine industries, the competition from Britain following the Cobden Chevalier treaty, the collapse of Credit Mobilier, the failure in Mexico and the rise of Prussia all made the regime more vulnerable and the Emperor was virtually forced to turn to a new form of rule by inviting Ollivier to form a responsible ministry and relaxing control of opposition views. This is a compelling view and Napoleon III did have a reputation as an opportunist. However, it does ignore the economic liberalisation of the 1850s and moves even before the less favourable climate of the 1860s to move away from authoritarianism, for example the political amnesty of 1860 and greater powers given to the Corps legislative to debate the address from the Imperial throne and to discuss and approve budget proposals. Marx saw only repression 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity have been replaced by artillery, cavalry and infantry' but the regime did offer a degree of popular consultation, did maintain a constitution and was prepared to make some changes even before the changing circumstances of the 1860s.

The alternative view of the regime is more positive. Theodore Zeldin saw it as an attempt to break a vicious circle of revolution and reaction that had dogged France since 1789. In this view there was a genuine concern to balance liberty and order – shown by the existence of both consultation and repression and by an awareness of first the economic and then the political needs of the middle classes. By the end the Emperor even subordinated defence needs to the wishes of the assembly to reduce spending and delayed the modernisation of the army. Ironically this helped to bring about his defeat in 1870 rather than ensuring his survival. Napoleon was not unaware of the liberal tradition.

Napoleon I had not abandoned the Constitution and in 1815 proposed a more liberal constitution, so the family tradition which Napoleon III worked with was not entirely authoritarian. The fact was that there was in existence an opposition to call on and Ollivier had not been eliminated. Of course circumstances played their part and one cannot ignore the much less favourable context of the 1860s with its economic and political failures, but the view that greater liberalisation was entirely a cynical desire to survive may be too simplistic.

Examiner commentary

This high level answer shows a clear understanding of a possible debate with the interpretation well explained and contextual material used to explain it and then to evaluate it. Alternative more sympathetic views are considered and there is also some evaluation. This is an analytical answer which deals directly with the interpretation and its strengths and weaknesses.

Medium level answer

Napoleon III was the nephew of Napoleon I and carried on a lot of his uncle's work. Like Napoleon I he was authoritarian and cared little for liberal ideas, preferring a mixture of imposed authority which was supported by publicity, prestige projects and at least for a while economic prosperity. He was a shallow ruler – a 'sphinx without a secret' and he fell in a humiliating way by being captured on the battlefield. By the time of the liberalisation of the Empire, he was facing considerable problems at home and abroad.

Abroad, he faced the rise of Prussia. Bismarck had created a North German Confederation and defeated Austria without France being consulted. This showed that France was no longer the greatest power in Europe and Napoleon did not get any compensation from Bismarck. Bismarck humiliated him by promoting a Prussian prince to the throne of Spain, which would have resulted in the encirclement of France. Also Napoleon had been humiliated in Mexico when French forces failed to prevent the overthrow and execution of the monarch whom France had backed. So Napoleon was no longer as popular as he had been and this led him to try and gain more popularity by being more liberal. There were similar problems with the economy as there were crashes and industry and trade did not grow at the same pace as during the 1850s when there was more prosperity. Again, Napoleon was less popular so he had to do something to make himself more popular and his solution was to be more liberal.

He reduced censorship, released political prisoners, allowed a freer press and made Olliver the prime minister and allowed parliament to debate and have control over the budget. If he had not been so unpopular because of financial and foreign policy issues he might not have been forced to do this, so in order to survive he had to make changes.

When he took power in 1852 as Emperor he had been popular as a plebiscite gave him a large majority and he used these plebiscites in the reign to make sure that he did have popular support. The middle classes were pleased by many of his policies, for example railways and the rebuilding of Paris which gave France one of the most modern and artistic capital cities in Europe and was a symbol of the prosperity of France, though it also gave Napoleon security because of its wide streets which would allow troops to clear away protesters, so this shows Napoleon was aware of the need to be able to survive and conforms the view that he needed to make changes to survive as with the liberalisation of the Empire.

Napoleon was not totally authoritarian like twentieth century dictators, though and he had been a revolutionary in his youth, so he may not have liberalised simply to survive but because he did believe in having support from a wide variety of people. He wanted to keep a balance between liberty and order and he wanted France to be great and well governed as it had been in the days of Napoleon I. When he was being successful he did not need to consult the parliament but when he was not he changed the system to become more liberal.

Examiner commentary

This medium level answer does understand the interpretation and there is some use of knowledge to explain it. However, the debate is not very developed, though there is some awareness of a possible alternative argument. Not all factual material is very well used.



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