**What type of Tsar will Alexander be?**

*‘Perhaps the best prepared heir-apparent ever to ascend the Russia throne.’*

Extract from a biography written by W.L. Mosse

*‘Tall, like all Romanovs, good-looking and with a very distinguished bearing, but he had less of his father’s majesty and was completely devoid of the latter’s misplaced severity.’*

Extract from an autobiography written in 1905 by A. White, a secretary in the American embassy

*‘The Tsar is the best of men. He would be a wonderful sovereign in a well-organised country and in a time of peace…but he lacks the temperament of a reformer. The empress lacks initiative as well…they are too kind, too pure, to understand people and to rule them. They do not have the energy or the impulse to take charge of events and direct them as they see fit; they lack passion…Without realizing it himself, he has become involved in a struggle with powerful forces and dreadful elements he does not understand…They (the royal couple) do not know where they are going.’*

Extract from A.F. Tiutcheva’s diary entry in Jan 1856,. She was one of the ladies in waiting at the royal court

*‘The people see their monarch as God’s envoy, as their father and all-powerful master. This idea, which has the force, almost of religious feeling, is inseparable from their personal dependency on me, and I am inclined to think that I am not mistaken. The crown gives me a feeling of authority; to forgo it would be to damage the nation’s prestige. The profound respect that the Russian people have accorded the throne of their Tsar from time immemorial, arising from an innate feeling, cannot be dismissed. I would not hesitate to curtail the government’s authoritarianism if I wanted to bring representatives of the nobility or the nation into it. God knows where we will end up regarding the question of the peasants and landowners if the Tsar’s authority is insufficient to exercise decisive influence.’*

Extract from a conversation between Alexander II and Otto von Bismarck in 1861

*‘He completed his education with a 7 month tour, by coach, of 30 Russian province, that included a visit to Siberia, the first by a member of the Imperial family. He followed this with a 16 month tour of the leading countries of Western Europe 1839-9…On his return from his tour, Alexander was given a number of responsible posts by his farther including membership of the Council of state, 1841, and Committee of Ministers, 1842 as well as being recognized as Nicholas’s deputy during the Tsar’s absence. He was also chairman of the committee responsible for building the St Petersburg-Moscow railway. He held a number of military titles and posts as well as a number of important civil appointments. He was made chairman of two Secret Committees on peasant Affairs in 1846 and the Secret Committee on household Serfs, 1848, though he defended the existing order.’*

Extract from Years of Russia and the USSR, 1851-1991

1. Read the above extracts and highlight any comments that indicate that Alexander will be an effective ruler of Russia in the second half of the 19th Century.
2. Note down any evidence that Alexander will be
3. a reformer (someone who wants to change things)
4. a conservative (someone who wants to keep things as they are)