

Guided reading of Michael Lynch – The Emancipation of the Russian Serfs, 1861: A Charter of Freedom or an Act of Betrayal.

Make a set of detailed NOTES on the article and answer complete the 10 questions that follow.

1. The title of the article includes the words 'emancipation; 'serfs'; 'charter''. What do these three words mean?
2. What was a 'serf' in the context of Russia in the mid-nineteenth century?
3. What were the key features of 'serfdom' in Tsarist Russia?
4. Give 3-4 reasons why some people in Russia were calling for the abolition of serfdom in the 1850s.
5. What role to the Crimean War play in the decision to 'emancipate' the serfs?
6. Analyse the quotations from Alexander II in the last paragraph of page 2. What does Alexander II mean by each sentence?
7. Analyse the section which begins on page 3 titled 'Betrayal of the Peasant'.
 - (a) List some of the limitations or restrictions of the 'emancipation' for peasants
 - (b) List some of the advantages for the nobles / nobility
 - (c) List some of the advantages for the government.
8. Use page 4, in what ways does the author argue that the 'Emancipation of the Serfs' was significant?
9. Read the last 5 paragraphs. How does the author justify his argument that 'emancipation was essentially a failure.' Try to give five reasons cited by the author.
10. Have a think about the 3 questions in the final 'Issues to Debate' section.

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