

Study Extracts 1 and 2 in the Extracts Booklet before you answer this question.

- 5 Historians have different views about the reasons for the fall of the Soviet Union. Analyse and evaluate the extracts and use your knowledge of the issues to explain your answer to the following question.

How far do you agree with the view that the collapse of the Soviet Union came about because of the USSR's economic weaknesses?

(20)

In Extract 1, the author talks about how one of Gorbachev's many failures was not helping an already slow and bad economy, which decreased his popularity. ~~I agree with this as~~ This is mostly valuable confirmation as since ~~he was~~ his population was ultimately declining, many more people had wished for Boris Yeltsin to take over as leader. Also in the extract, the source states that "radical reformers were too slow and the aims of glasnost and perestroika were not being achieved". This ~~was~~ is questionable as Gorbachev would be unknown for implementing many reforms in a short space of time, which ~~as~~ would possibly be the reason for the fall of the USSR. Overall, I agree that there was economic weakness that caused living standards to decline, but not the



(Section C continued) idea that his reforms were "too slow".

In extract 1, there seems to be more of a valid explanation on why the USSR collapsed. In the source, the author writes "what Maslow could offer by way of economic rewards was poor indeed compared to the West", this suggests that under Gorbachev, there was more of a competition with ~~the west~~ USA, whose economy was better than ever. "This disaster devastated the authority and legitimacy of the Soviet Regime" this criticises the way that Gorbachev lead the Soviet Union, and his many reforms didn't work well with the public. It seems that in the source, the reasons for the collapse is due to many reforms, competition with the West and the major unpopularity of Gorbachev.

Overall, I disagree with the idea that the collapse of the USSR was due to economic weakness as Source 1 complained that ~~to~~ his reforms were "too slow". ~~This~~ Gorbachev's many reforms didn't work



(Section C continued)

as he wasn't giving them
~~any~~ any time to work. Source 2
is more of an actual reason for
the collapse, due to competition with
the West and his attempt at gaining
popularity by many reforms.

