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History Unit 2: WHI02

Paper 1C: Russia: 1917-91: From Lenin to Yeltsin

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Introduction

It was pleasing to see a number of responses of a decent standard from candidates attempting the AS Paper WHI02/1C Russia, 1917-91 From Lenin to Yeltsin. The paper is divided into two sections. Section A contains a compulsory two-part question for the option studied, each part based on one source. It assesses source analysis and evaluation skills (AO2). Section B comprises a choice of essays that assess understanding of the period in depth (AO1) by targeting five second order concepts - cause, consequence, change/ continuity, similarity/difference and significance.

Candidates tend to find Section A more challenging than Section B mainly because some of them were not clear on what was meant by 'value' and 'weight' in the context of source analysis and evaluation. Some candidates' responses lacked the detailed knowledge base required in Section A to add contextual material to support/challenge points derived from the sources. The ability range was diverse, but the design of the paper allowed all abilities to be catered for. Furthermore, in Section B, few candidates produced wholly descriptive essays which were devoid of analysis and, for the most part, responses were soundly structured. The most common weakness in Section B essays was a lack of knowledge about the topic in the question selected. It is important to realise that Section A and Section B questions may be set from any part of any Key Topic, and, as a result, full coverage of the specification is enormously important.

The candidates' performance on individual questions is considered in the next section.

Question 1

- (a) On Question 1(a), stronger responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the source material on the reasons for the stagnation of the economy under Brezhnev and showed analysis by selecting some key points relevant to the question, explaining their meaning and selecting material to support valid inferences (e.g. the economy stagnated because the command economy failed). Knowledge of the historical context concerning the reasons for the stagnation of the economy under Brezhnev was also confidently deployed in higher scoring answers to explain or support inferences, as well as to expand or confirm some matters of detail (e.g. the central planning was inefficient, technology was outdated and the obsession with growth led to the placing of a low priority on cost and quality). In addition, evaluation of the source material was related to the specified enquiry and based on valid criteria to show the value of the source. Similarly, explanation of utility referred relevantly to the nature or purpose of the source material or the position of the author (e.g. Volkogonov's account was written after the fall of the Soviet Union which meant he had more freedom to provide a critical account of the management of the economy). However, there was a number of weaker responses demonstrated limited understanding of the source material on the reasons stagnation of the economy under Brezhnev. The most common problem here was to write entirely from own knowledge without making reference to the source. This type of response cannot score highly. Many scripts lacked the development of inferences with reference to the source material and use of explanation. Weaker candidates continue to drift into arguments concerning 'lack of value' which is not rewarded in part a. Furthermore, although the concept

of utility was often addressed by noting some aspects of source provenance, it was frequently based on questionable assumptions.

SECTION A

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Study Source 1 in the Sources Booklet before you answer this question.

- 1 (a) Why is Source 1 valuable to the historian for an enquiry into the reasons for the stagnation of the economy under Brezhnev?

Explain your answer using the source, the information given about it and your own knowledge of the historical context.

(10)

The source is valuable to the Historian for an enquiry into reasons for stagnation under Brezhnev as it states 'Rates of growth in many spheres of industry were zero'. This gives insight into some of the effects of Brezhnev trying to reverse Decentralization of the economy from Krushchev.

It gives further worth as it states 'Agriculture was in a state of terminal sickness.' This indication of the stagnation of Agriculture can be derived from poor agricultural equipment ~~and~~ like motorised farming with few spare parts in case of repair.

'Politburo regularly allocated hundreds of tonnes of gold to buy food from the West'. This gives more worth as it gives insight into the USSR's failure to produce enough grain to feed its own people. Due to growing discontent among the Soviet people during Brezhnev's



premiere, incentive to work as well as produce or work with quality was extremely low.

Furthermore the source states 'more and more goods were in short supply' leading to 'increased *black market economy' this statement gives the source worth as it indicates the extremely low rates of both industrial and farming production.

Moreover the source states stagnation was largely caused by 'excessive efforts in the military sphere' indeed military campaigns of the USSR such as the invasion of Afghanistan cost the Union dearly in Russian lives as well as over a million dollars every day.

Lastly it states 'Brezhnev could not grasp the significance of the fact that defence took much too big a share. This gives the source worth as it indicates the stagnation of the economy was partly to do with a stagnant advisory cabinet. Indeed much of Brezhnev's government was over the age of 60-70 leading to a buffer of new ideas and his premiere being dubbed a 'cult without personality'!

Due to the providence of the source being a book written and published long after the period of stagnation, the source has



relatively more worth as well as its author being a head of the Department of propaganda 1970-91 the writer would have considerable insight into this period of stagnation which gives the source more worth.

In conclusion the source has considerable worth to the historian as it gives insight to the reasons for stagnation as well as having a reasonably reliable provenance.

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This script shows the qualities of a level 3 response. The candidate begins to develop inferences and uses contextual knowledge to support the inferences. There is some evaluation based on valid criteria.

(b) On Question 1(b) stronger responses demonstrated understanding of the source material on the advantages of Stalin's collectivisation programme for the Russia peasant and showed analysis by selecting key points relevant to the question, explaining their meaning and selecting material to support valid inferences (e.g. collectivisation would allow improvement in farming by the introduction of modern machinery). Knowledge of the historical context concerning the advantages of Stalin's collectivisation programme for the Russia peasant was also confidently deployed in higher scoring answers to explain or support inferences as well as to expand, confirm or challenge some matters of detail (e.g. Collectivisation was beneficial to the peasants because of the introduction of large machinery such as tractors, which would be supplied by the state through huge machine and tractor stations). In addition, evaluation of the source material was related to the specified enquiry and explanation of weight referred relevantly to the nature or purpose of the source material or the position of the author (e.g. the speech is by Joseph Stalin who was responsible for the policy of collectivisation and clearly in a position to comment on its advantages). Judgements were also based on valid criteria such as the propaganda nature of the speech. Weaker responses demonstrated limited understanding of the source material on the advantages of Stalin's collectivisation programme for the Russia peasant and attempted some analysis by selecting and summarising information and making undeveloped inferences relevant to the question. A number of candidates knew little about the collectivisation programme, and those candidates tended to accept Stalin's claims unquestioningly. Some responses struggled to ascribe weight to the evidence and set statements about value and limitations in juxtaposition and judgements were based on questionable assumptions.

Study Source 2 in the Sources Booklet before you answer this question.

(b) How much weight do you give to the evidence of Source 2 for an enquiry into the advantages of Stalin's collectivisation programme for the Russian peasant?

Explain your answer, using the source, the information given about it and your own knowledge of the historical context.

(15)

Source 2 is a primary source from a speech entitled 'Work in the Countryside' by Stalin in which he speaks about his policy of collectivisation. As the audience ^{are members of} ~~belong to~~ the Communist Party and Stalin is the speaker, the source ~~would~~ ^{is only} ~~only~~ ^{has} the positive impacts of collectivisation for the Russian peasants. Therefore, Source 2 is ~~scarcely~~ ^{not} very ~~reliable~~ valuable for an enquiry into the advantages of Stalin's collectivisation, especially since ~~there~~ ^{the source} ~~is no~~ ^{has} no personal opinion from peasants regarding how they felt about the policy.

Firstly, Stalin criticizes the individually owned farms; "At that time the individual peasant himself had to take care of sowing and harvesting." ~~Here, Stalin is trying to say that~~ & This quotation signifies how much of a burden individual farms were for the peasants as they had to do everything by themselves without help. Stalin also mentions, "to be left without bread and fall a victim to starvation." This shows that the source is not very ^{valuable} ~~reliable~~ as when peasants had individual farms, they could keep their produce to themselves and live on it. However, Collectivisation



was the policy in which peasants were to hand in all of their surplus to the State and in return were rewarded with machinery and not food. As a result, Collectivisation left the people without bread and as victims to starvation. Stalin's words are unreliable as he would favour his own policies and would not talk about its negativities with the members of the Communist Party as it might cause him to lose support. Source 2 is not very valuable due to the above mentioned reasons.

Source 2 states, "collective farmer now has fewer cares than when he was on his individual farm." This statement is true to an extent giving very little weight to the source. This is because collective farming did ~~bring~~ ^{draw} the peasants ~~closer~~ closer to one another and established teamwork for they worked together. Moreover, in case of emergencies unlike in private owned farms they "can & shift the responsibility to, and rely upon, other members of the collective farm." This would lift the burden of ~~not~~ working alone and make work much easier for the farmers. This was only one of the very few advantages Collectivisation brought for the peasants. Despite this, the policy did leave the peasants with a lot of worries even though "the cares and responsibility for the ~~farm~~ are now shared by all the



collective farmers" ~~for~~ leads to source 2 being less valuable.

Peasants faced a lot of disadvantages during Collectivisation ~~for which~~ ^{non of} which Stalin has mentioned in his speech. Firstly, as mentioned above it was not the individual farms that lead to ~~lack of~~ ^{lack of} access to bread or starvation, it was Collectivisation which ~~is~~ led to these things. This is proven as ~~in~~ the policy takes all of the peasants' produce and surplus from them and in return only supply them with machinery instead of food. The reward they were given could only be used for the ~~deve~~ improvement of Stalin's policy and not the people. Collectivisation brought further disadvantages. As they refused to hand in their surplus, ~~for~~ food was requisitioned forcefully. This created starvation, as well as food shortages. As a result, peasants began burning their own crops and slaughtering their animals. Stalin reacted by arresting kulaks and five million of them were shot dead. People were dying out of hunger. Collectivisation did modernize Russia, however it was not beneficial for the peasants. Therefore, Source 2 is not very valuable for an enquiry into the advantages of Stalin's Collectivisation programme for the Russian peasant.

All in all, Source 2 is not very ^{valuable} ~~valuable~~. Collectivisation ^{caused} ~~left~~ the chaos on the countryside and this



is never a sign for advantages to occur.
Collectivisation made the peasants turn against their
own ~~produce~~^{produce}. Stalin is right about the peasants not
having to work alone. ~~However~~ However, it
was disastrous in the country side. In addition to
what the historical context proves for ~~Source~~^{Source} 2 ^{not} being
valuable, the source is originated from Stalin
himself. Due to this, no ~~spee~~ source which is
addressed by him would criticize his own policies
neither would it state even one negative consequence
it would have on the people. Stalin would believe
for his policies to be the best. This is why
Source 2 is not very reliable for an enquiry into
the advantages of Stalin's collectivisation programme for the
Russian peasants.

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This is a level 4 entry response demonstrating a mixture of level 3 and level 4 qualities that place it at the borderline of level 4.

Question 2

This was the most popular essay question. On Question 2, stronger responses were targeted on how accurate it is to say that Khrushchev's attempts to reform the Soviet system in the years 1953-64 were a complete failure. These also included an analysis of relationships between key issues and a focus on the concept (consequence/impact) in the question. Sufficient knowledge to develop the argument was demonstrated too (e.g. de-Stalinisation, decentralisation of the party, the impact of the reform of the economy). Judgements made about whether Khrushchev's attempts to reform the Soviet system were a complete failure were reasoned and based on clear criteria. Higher scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated. Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of whether Khrushchev's attempts to reform the Soviet system in the years 1953-64 were a complete failure. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on consequence/impact in relation to failures and successes or were essentially a description of policies and events during the period under discussion. Some candidates developed extensive material on foreign policy which was not the focus of this question which is focused on Khrushchev's domestic reforms. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was evident, it tended to lack range/depth. Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen question number: Question 2 Question 3 Question 4

Nikita Khrushchev was the leader of USSR after Stalin's death, from 1953 to 1964. Khrushchev is famous as the man who took a step away from Stalinism and tried to reform the Soviet system as per the foundations laid by Marx and Lenin. ~~It~~ How successful he was in doing so is a question of debate.

Khrushchev attempted to change the Soviet system in all aspects. This included agriculture, industry, arts and culture, foreign policy and ~~then~~ getting rid of terror. This essay will look into how successful he was in reforming each of the aspects.

Agricultural policy under Stalin, collectivization, was a disastrous failure. To combat this, Khrushchev introduced the Virgin Lands Scheme in 1954 which included farming in the ^{new} areas of Siberia and Kazakhstan. Khrushchev toured the countryside, enquiring peasants about their problems and listening to them, a move no Russian leader had until date taken trouble to do. This brought the peasants more closer to the government and gave them a sense of belonging. ~~The~~ 50000 new tractors and fertilizers were sent to these areas which were farmed by young volunteers. Initially, the harvests improved and productions increased to the pre-collectivization levels. However, this was not a sustainable harvest as after 1956, harvests fell ~~and~~ never to rise in his rule again. This was due to the lack of measures taken by the government to protect the harvests from the sand storms that were experienced in the region. The soil too became



exhausted and USSR ended found herself importing grain from USA and Australia at a time she was in the superpower race with USA. Khrushchev's attempt at reforming the agriculture of the country was ineffective and ~~the~~ it was a failure. His failure in agricultural policy is one of the main reasons for his fall in power in 1964.

As for reforming the industry, he continued the Five Year Plans, which were to be Three Year Plans from now. The 6th Five Year Plan for the first time concentrated on the production of light industry consumer goods such as TVs, radios, washing machines and sewing machines. In order to do this, hundreds of Regional economic councils were set up to ~~go~~ handle production locally. Khrushchev wanted to de-centralise the government (Stalin had created a highly centralised state where all orders came from Moscow). By setting up the regional economic councils, Khrushchev was successful in de-centralising the government, although the councils were not as effective. Workers were given better pay and minimum wage was introduced, the wages depended on output and ~~the~~ factories were allowed to make profits instead of just meeting quotas, so these reforms increased the ~~effi~~ productivity and improved the efficiency of the industries. In addition, pensions were given out and ~~social~~ social security schemes improved ~~to~~ the standard of living and the purchasing power of the Russians increased under Khrushchev. Perhaps the biggest success of Khrushchev came when USSR beat USA in the space race to ~~send~~ send the first manned satellite to space ~~to~~ (Yuri Gagarin 1961). Therefore, industry under Khrushchev was reformed, for the better.



Khrushchev was a strong admirer of literature and arts. For the first time, under his rule books and novels criticizing Stalin were published. These included works of Solzhenitsyn which became famous internationally. However, Khrushchev had his limitations. If the books criticized the current rule, they would be dismissed, banned and the writer expelled from the writers union. Unlike Stalin, at least these writers did not end up in gulags.

Regarding religion, Khrushchev was suspicious about the ~~an~~ high influence of the Orthodox Church in the lives of the Russians. He banned religious meetings and closed down hundreds of churches. Life became increasingly difficult for Christians ~~in~~ under Khrushchev as they could not hold gatherings even in public homes without the approval of the state. His reform regarding religion therefore can be viewed as a failure as he lost popularity due to his action.

Khrushchev's biggest failure is arguably his ~~p~~ foreign policy. Although in his de-stalinization speech he mentioned that peaceful co-existence with the West was not only possible but necessary if war was to be avoided, his actions ~~it~~ spoke differently. He pushed USSR into a Cold War with USA ~~and~~ instead of cooperating with the West. In 1961 the Cuban Missile crisis almost started a nuclear war and the Berlin Blockade in Germany was unsuccessful. Chinese Communist government accused Khrushchev's government of being revisionist and relations between the two communist powers worsened, which Khrushchev made no attempt to heal. His extrovert personality did little to help him. (once in a heated discussion



in the UN, Khrushchev banged the table with his shoe) and it lost him several support both in the global community and locally. Khrushchev's changes in foreign policy was a disastrous failure which coming leaders too will suffer.

Khrushchev wanted to make the Russian state more people friendly and less ruthless. Therefore he abolished the KGB (secret police) and it is noteworthy that the gulags emptied, political prisoners were given amnesty and the atmosphere became more relaxed under Khrushchev. His reforms to make the Russian society more relaxed was highly successful (this period is known in Russian history as the Thaw).

In the de-stalinization speech Khrushchev mentioned that socialism could be achieved in other ways than the way Stalin had pursued and suggested that he would allow different roads to socialism. This sparked independence movements in Hungary and Poland. Khrushchev's limits were tested here as tanks were sent in to crush the Hungarian Uprising and he refused to listen to the UN as well. In this way, Khrushchev's policy of allowing different roads to socialism existed only in paper.

~~to~~ ~~the~~ Khrushchev also aimed at making the party stronger than the individual in power. He did not want a repetition of the cult of personality of Stalin. He was highly successful in ~~the~~ giving the powers to the Central ~~Committee~~ Committee of the party rather than letting the ~~the~~ cult of personality to rule. This is evident as Khrushchev himself was dismissed by the Central Committee in 1964.



In short, Nikita Khrushchev's rule is a mixture of successes and failures. When he was successful in reforming the industry, he was a failure internationally. But he must be given due credit for the move away from a dictatorship; he de-stalinized Russia which is perhaps the biggest reform USSR needed then.



This is a level 4 response with a clear focus on judging the failures and successes of reforms. There is an occasional wander into irrelevant material and the occasional inaccuracy but the clear argument and relevant support place it into level 4.

Question 3

There were a small number of responses to this question and the majority were weak and lacking in focus on how far the Soviet government's treatment of culture changed in the years 1917-53. The question asked candidates to reach a judgement about the extent of change in the treatment of culture and required candidates to explore those changes to relevant areas of culture including art, music and film. However, a large number of those candidates who tackled this question focused on areas of social policy such as the changing policies towards women. Such answer could not score highly since they were not relevant to the question.

Question 4

There were very few responses to this question.

The stronger responses targeted the extent to which Soviet education policy was successful in the years 1918-41 and included an analysis of the links between key factors and a clear focus on the concept (consequence). Sufficient knowledge to develop the argument (primary, secondary and higher education, control of the curriculum and teachers and the focus on literacy) was demonstrated. Judgements made about the extent to which Soviet education policy was successful in the years 1918-41 were reasoned and based on clear criteria. Higher scoring answers were also clearly organised and effectively communicated. Weaker responses tended to be generalised and, at best, offered a fairly simple, limited analysis of the extent to which Soviet education policy was successful in relevant period. Low scoring answers also often lacked focus on consequence or were essentially a description of some policies in the relevant period. Where some analysis using relevant knowledge was often evident, it tended to lack range/depth. Furthermore, such responses were often fairly brief, lacked coherence and structure, and made unsubstantiated or weakly supported judgements.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Section A

Value of Source Question 1(a)

- Candidates must be more prepared to make valid inferences rather than to paraphrase the source
- Candidates should be prepared to back up inferences by adding additional contextual knowledge from beyond the source
- Candidates need to move beyond stereotypical approaches to the nature/purpose and authorship of the source e.g. look at the specific stance and/or purpose of the writer
- Candidates should avoid writing about the deficiencies of the source when assessing its value to the enquiry

Weight of Source Question 1(b)

- Candidates should be prepared to assess the weight of the source for an enquiry by being aware that the author is writing for a specific audience. Be aware of the values and concerns of that audience.
- Candidates should try to distinguish between fact and opinion by using their contextual knowledge of the period

- In coming to a judgement about the nature/purpose of the source, candidates should take account of the weight that may be given to the author's evidence in the light of his or her stance and/or purpose
- In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to assess reliability by considering what has been perhaps deliberately omitted from the source

Section B

Essay questions

- Candidates must use more factual details as evidence to develop their answers. Weaker responses lacked depth and sometimes range
- Candidates should take a few minutes to plan their answer before beginning to write
- Candidates should pick out three or four key themes and then provide an analysis of (for e.g.) the target significance mentioned in the question, setting its importance against other themes rather than providing a description of each
- Candidates need to ensure that the knowledge they select is relevant to the theme of the question and the time period set in the question
- Candidates would benefit from paying careful attention to key phrases in the question when analysing and use them throughout the essay to prevent deviation from the central issues and concepts
- Candidates should try to explore links between issues to make the structure flow more logically and the arguments more integrated.

