



# **Examiners' Report**

## **Principal Examiner Feedback**

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**Pearson Edexcel International Advanced  
Level in History (WHI02)**

**Paper 1C: Russia, 1917 – 91: From Lenin to  
Yeltsin**

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## Introduction

It was pleasing to see a number of well-informed and well-written responses from candidates on IAS Paper WHI02 1C which covers the option 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.

In Section A it was clear that some candidates understood what was meant by 'value' and 'weight' in the context of source analysis and evaluation. However, in this series many candidates relied more heavily in their knowledge base, particularly in answering 1b and focused less on the evidence in the source. Some candidates are still writing about limitations in question a and this did impact on the length of part b for some candidates.

In Section B, some candidates produced wholly descriptive essays which were devoid of analysis, but more responses were soundly structured. The most common weakness in Section B essays was the lack of a sharp focus on the precise terms of the question and the date range set by the question and/or focus on the second order concept that was targeted. In some cases candidates struggled to develop sufficient relevant material to address the question and some included material that did not relate to the question.

It remains important to realise that Section A topics are drawn from highlighted topics on the specification whereas 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. There was little evidence on this paper of candidates having insufficient time to answer questions from Sections A and B.

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

### Question 1a)

A good number of candidates demonstrated an understanding of the source and were able to draw out inferences about the purpose of education in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. In particular, these candidates were able to draw out the importance of instilling communist values in youth through education. A number of candidates did not keep a sharp focus on the question and wrote generically about education in the Soviet Union or the purpose of the Komsomol without regard to the source or the focus on 'purpose'. A number of candidates do not go beyond paraphrasing and summarising the source material and this limited their achievement. In addition, many comments on the provenance of the source were highly generic, going little further than noting the provenance of the source in the caption and too many candidates discussed lack of value at the end of their answer and judged upon this, thus undermining an answer that should be focused on value.

Joseph Stalin was the leader of the USSR from 1928 until 1953. Educational policies were very important to him for several reasons.

Source 1 was written and spoken by the Komsomol "The Communist League of Youth", which is valuable as it was their duty <sup>to</sup> Stalin and their job to indoctrinate the youth to follow communist ideas as Stalin was a true Leninist and followed Marxist views.

Firstly, the source is valuable as the need for education was great, as under the Tsar only ~~to~~ 35% of the population was literate so therefore the need for "strengthening and development of <sup>schools</sup> schools" was great. Source one has value as it also states that there is insufficient literacy among young people", Stalin and the Komsomol changed this greatly ~~at~~ because by 1932 95% of the

children ~~with~~ <sup>received</sup> to primary education.

Secondly, Stalin developed a totalitarian dictatorship, which meant he had and wanted complete control over everything, therefore that the source says "school discipline and organization of work in schools" ~~as the~~ gives value for the enquiry of the purpose for education, as children learned to not oppose him at an early age.

Moreover, censorship was great under Stalin as the source states "daily events" were taught in schools, but only the censored version of everything being perfect and controlled. Control was a large reason why education was important, and the source supports this and has value.

Furthermore, possibly one of the largest reasons for education was Stalin's industrialisation policy, where he increased heavy industry. Heavy industry requires skilled labour to make weapons and machinery. ~~as~~ The source has value as it supports that claim by aiming to increase "technical training." Rabfak schools

were introduced to reduce adult illiteracy. By 1939, 94% were literate and the army had compulsory literacy classes. Stating that they lived "its best teachers" may have been true, however many teachers were killed during show trials and the Great Terror.

In conclusion, the source has value and merit as it suggests the reason for educational changes. Reasons such as control, making the population communist, indoctrination and having skilled labour for preparing for the second world war.

This is a secure level 3 response achieving level 3 in all the bullet points in the mark scheme. It draws out a range of inferences from the source and explores them using good contextual knowledge. Value is considered both in terms of the source content and the provenance of the source.

#### Question 1b)

Whilst there were some well-developed responses to this question with good interrogation of the source to establish its weight, too many candidates wrote extensively about collectivisation without regard to the source. This meant that answers tended to fall into levels one and two because their focus on the task was very limited. A number of good answers interrogated the source with confidence and drew out and developed reasoned inferences about the impact of collectivisation on peasant families. The evaluation of the source was done well in a small number of cases with candidate considering the untypical nature of Shevtsova's family and the genuine nature of the plea by a child. However, too many candidates relied on stereotypical phrases such as 'may be biased' and 'could be exaggerating' without providing justification for their claims from the source. A significant number wrote at length about what was not in the source. Unless it can be shown that this is a deliberate attempt at manipulation by the source, this is not successful technique. Candidates are asked to reach judgements about the source provided rather than comment on what could be used instead.

Joseph Stalin was the leader of the USSR from 1928-1953. He made many changes to achieve a totalitarian dictatorship.

One change he made was collectivisation, this had severe impacts on many peasants' lives.

Firstly, Stalin decided to collectivise farms into large farms called kolхозes. He said money and their wealth should be used for industrialisation and new technology for the farms. Stalin promised peasants that being part of a collective farm would only benefit them such as steady wages and food, but in reality this was a lie. Source two has weight as it states "we can't pay <sup>rich</sup> big taxes," which were also used for industrialisation + technology, therefore they are as high as "2000 roubles".

Secondly, Stalin decided to rid the kulaks - liquidation of the class, which resulted in their deaths and as they were angry, they killed all their livestock, which the source

supports and credit can be given "we haven't got any livestock". Stalin wanted to get rid of the private ownership of the land under the kulaks, and the other peasants were not left with "any land." <sup>as it was capitalist</sup>

Furthermore, one can see how the family is very scared of Stalin's terror, as although they knew that it was Stalin's fault, Koba still refers to him as "beloved leader" fear of the OGPU, but also his cult of personality made Stalin liked although his terrible things actions. Weight can be given to extent, as it doesn't explain why Koba still admires him.

Moreover, the holding of the kulaks and the destruction ~~caused~~ of livestock created a huge famine. Alone in Ukraine 2 million people died. The weight can be given to the source as it shows the hardship of the peasant families "we haven't got anything to eat"

~~Another point~~ A point that the source fails to mention, which reduces weight,



is that there were targets for production that were way too high as they were unrealistic. Meeting targets was hard as tractors that were provided were poorly made and could not be used.

This shows even more hardship. Another point the source fails to mention is that although there was great hardship, collective farms managed to produce 10.8 tons to export. This limits the weight given to the source, also 2 million peasants were homeless at the time which also shows even more hardship.

Much weight can be given to the source as the writer of this letter, "Nina Vasilevna Shevtsova", wrote this letter, this is an intimate glimpse into her thoughts. The fact that it was written in 1937 is important as it was ~~in the middle of~~ <sup>during</sup> collectivisation, which she as a peasant farmer's daughter felt the most. Important is also that she is 12 years old, which indicates that her letter is not censored ~~with it~~, it is pure. The letter is a primary first-hand source and weight can be

given due to this.

In conclusion, weight can be given to the source as it really shows an intimate glimpse of the life and hardship of peasant farmers under collectivisation. This letter was never intended for disclosure. It shows how life really was and not what Stalin's propaganda, which was censored, showed. However, some points were not mentioned in the source that also have impacts on their lives, which decreases the weight of the source.

This response enters level 4. In particular it shows a good understanding of the values and concerns from which the source has been drawn. It has a clear awareness of the importance of the nature of the source and the value that can be placed on the youth of the writer.

### Question 2

This was by far the most popular essay question. The best answers were underpinned by a depth of knowledge on the aims of Soviet economic policy in the years 1917-28 and an explicit focus on the extent of change. High scoring answers drew out a continuity in aims including the desire to achieve a Communist economic system and highlighted key changes in aims such as the need to focus on winning the Civil War in the early years of Lenin's rule and the later change to the NEP with the aim to win the support of peasants for the regime. The standard of answers was variable. One of the reasons for the lower-achieving answers was because of the lack of precision in determining the focus of the question, 'aims of Soviet economic policy'. Some veered off into description of policies rather than aims and other answers did not focus on the time period and wrote at length about Stalin's policies in the 1930s and 1940s, and in some cases even reviewed economic policies by Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Candidates' responses would benefit by careful planning before writing which would help with focus on the question.

The aims of the Soviet economic policy has ~~gone~~ varied from ruler to ruler during the years of 1917-28. From 1917-~~1928~~ 1924 Lenin ruled, ~~while in his hand and at~~ till his successor Stalin came about with his ideas and reforms. ~~His~~ Lenin's aims were very different from Stalin's hence the aims of the Soviet economic policy went through a major change, but only upto a certain extent.

Under the rule of Lenin, he wanted to create a society and economy that has never been appeared before ~~in~~ which is the first Communist state. By doing so he is participating in ~~is~~ one of the ~~the~~ greatest social and economic experiments. ~~Lenin~~ to achieve his aims, Lenin, ~~for~~ nationalized heavy industries only and ~~and~~ abolished free trade. However it became crucial for Lenin to come up with a more radical reform due to the outbreak of Civil war. Hence, War Communism was established.

~~War Communism~~ Under war communism, food was requisitioned forcefully by the Red Army and the Red Guards. With that food was also rationed, and the biggest ration was given to red army. Bartering was used under this policy and trade was not allowed. War communism did achieve its purpose of winning the Civil, but the human cost was catastrophic. Peasants resented the fact that their ~~Red~~ surplus produce was taken, hence

They only produced what was needed for themselves. This led to a food shortage which later led to a terrible famine. As a result ~~of~~ ~~the~~ 3-4 million peasants died. Furthermore, this also decreased the standard of living. Most importantly, the harsh lifestyle ~~of~~ under the policy ~~of~~ War Communism led to the biggest shock for Lenin ~~the~~ The sailors of Konstradt base ~~the~~ mutinied. This was a major surprise for ~~these~~ the Bolsheviks as these ~~large~~ ~~sailors~~ sailors were the most loyal supporters for them. This proved Lenin that a change was crucial.

The policy of war communism ~~to~~ under the economic reforms was implemented by the Bolsheviks to win the Civil War. Food was rationed and requisitioned ~~by~~ from the surplus produce of the peasants in order to feed the Red Army and the ~~ind~~ workers ~~and~~ of the industries and factories. This ~~proves~~ that War Communism was ~~proves~~ hence, the main aim of ~~the~~ the Soviet ~~union~~ economic policy at the early stages of Lenin's rule was only to win the war. This policy did not improve ~~a~~ develop ~~a~~ the Russian economy as it was still ~~so~~ backward and ~~a~~ Russia was ~~a~~ still known to be an agrarian nation. However, the aims of the Soviet ~~economy~~ economic policy changed with the outbreak of Konstradt ~~the~~ base mutiny, which led ~~to~~ Lenin to establish another ~~a~~ economic policy, which is known as the New Economic Policy.

If war communism was a step towards communism,

New Economic Policy was a step away from it. The new economic policy included more of capitalist ideas as ~~the~~ Lenin believed that <sup>the</sup> Russian economy needed to recover first, before ~~establish~~ establishing a full communist economy. As a result, Lenin was faced with many oppositions, but he firmly believed that this policy was crucial.

~~New econ~~ Under ~~the~~ the New economic policy, peasants were allowed to sell their surplus produce ~~at~~ at a profit and ~~the~~ free trade was allowed. ~~Only~~ Furthermore, private ownership of businesses and lands was allowed while the others still remained nationalised. This helped to build the agrarian nation economy to a great extent. ~~It~~ For instance, this led to a modernization of the economy with the electrification ~~of~~ of the Russian homes. This improved the status of living and lifestyle of the peasants and the workers.

However, there ~~was~~ were major consequences that arose due to ~~at~~ ~~this~~ the implementation of this policy. ~~Peasants~~ ~~A~~ A wealthier group of peasants rose, known as Kulaks whom they enjoyed the great privileges of NEP. With that, in the cities, ~~at~~ a group called Nepmen also formed. These groups were wealthier groups of people, who greatly benefitted from NEP. Hence this created inequality and unemployment to a great extent.

The aim of the NEP was to stabilize the economy

and to allow ~~the~~ the economy and the nation to recover before ~~it~~ it changes to a complete communist ~~a~~ country. Hence this shows that the aim of the Soviet economic policy greatly differed and changed during the years of 1917-28.

On the other side of the coin, both the policies, ~~and~~ ~~the~~ NEP and War Communism was designed to achieve one important aim, which was to create the first communist state. With that both the ~~policy had~~ policies that was implemented during the years of 1917-28, ~~did was was to~~ ~~the~~ main aim was to modernize and develop the economy. Hence, due to these reasons, it shows that the <sup>aim of the</sup> ~~economy~~ ~~the~~ Soviet economic policies did not really change during the years of 1917-1928.

In conclusion, ~~the~~ <sup>aims of the</sup> Soviet economic policies did change only up to a certain extent as, some of the aims still remained during the years of 1917 to 1928.

This is a good level 3 response. It demonstrates a clear knowledge of Soviet economic policy in the period specified in the question and considers change. The penultimate paragraph does show a real focus on the task. However, it does not reach level 4 because of a variable focus on the question. It tends to explain why policy changed rather than explore the extent of change in the aims.

Compare this response to the following one which achieves level 4.



addition, Lenin's communist beliefs perfectly described the 'industrialist' approach of Kautsky which can be perceived as the aim of ~~the~~ ~~for~~ ~~provisional~~ ~~economic~~ government's economic policies. As a result, the first Soviet aim ~~of~~ in terms of economy under Lenin was establishing a ~~new~~ highly centralised, Communist nature economy in order to ~~abolish~~ the 'rich' class and bring the leadership of ~~the~~ proletariat. For this, Lenin prepared large scale nationalisation of industry, ~~travels~~ ~~degree~~ placed the factories into the hands of proletariat for creating a common industry, ~~but~~ ~~degree~~ also abolished the private ownership of the land and ~~all~~ ~~banks~~ were ~~deposited~~ to People's Bank of Russian Republic so the aim of early 1917 economic policies were ~~switching~~ the economic and political system ~~of~~ to a ~~of~~ proletarian-dictator ~~of~~ organisation. However, a clear evidence for the change, ~~there~~ by the introduction of a civil war between the Whites who were demanding the downfall of ~~the~~ ~~dictator~~ ~~and~~ ~~Reds~~ ~~of~~ made it clear that the economic policies will be ~~the~~ ~~linked~~ for supplying the army, following this, rather than leaving the farmers to cultivate land with their own will under the leadership of Socialism, the aim was ~~switched~~ to supplying the army. Women labor conscriptions were commonplace, industries were ~~equipped~~ with harsh-military style discipline under ~~responsible~~ for making sure that the army was receiving ~~that~~ ~~what~~ it ~~needed~~ ~~needed~~ in terms of ~~the~~ guns and ammunitions, the collaborationist ~~front~~ ~~requirements~~ was also implied for ~~the~~ ~~front~~ ~~feeding~~.



The industrial workers and army ~~for~~ for greater arms production and better fight against whites. As a result, the aim of Soviet Economic policy was switched from the aim of creating socialist economy to ~~the~~ meeting the military demands of the Red Army.

Moreover, another evidence that demonstrates the fact that Soviet economic policy aim changed radically during the period is the move to capitalist NEP policies in 1921. ~~The~~ War conditions between 1918 and 21 brought the Soviet economy to the eve of collapse therefore Lenin's new address in terms of economic policy was creating great national and inclusive happy economy for lifting the society from poverty and economic deterioration. The steel production was raised from 0.2 million tons to 3.2 million tons ~~per~~ per 1921 to 1926 which ~~shows~~ is an example for the change. NEP included private trade in agricultural products, bonus in state enterprises, small-scale private production which was ~~highly~~ highly connected to the capitalist style of economic policies. Therefore it is evident that by the introduction of NEP the Soviet economic policy aims were transformed from supplying the Red Army to economic welfare of the general society. As a result, the aim of economic ~~policy~~ policy changed drastically because of aims' internally different purposes.







more generically about controls over the press. Some candidates wrote descriptively about Khrushchev's rule in the Soviet Union with little regard for the focus of the question and this type of answer did not score highly.

Khrushchev, General Secretary of the Communist Party who turned into the leader of the Soviet Union, ruled from the year 1953 until his fall in 1964. During this time Khrushchev reduced state control over the arts and artists of the Soviet Union immensely as he liberalized the art of creativity and the freedom that came from it. However, he did not completely reduce the power of state over this section of society as he believed that they wielded the power to suppress his reign therefore held control over it to an extent.

Khrushchev believed that creative art was an important tool of propaganda. However unlike Joseph Stalin who led Soviet Union prior to his rule, Khrushchev did not approach propaganda as a tool of complete brainwashing. Stalin used it to create a utopian society where workers were joyous over rapid industrialization, depicting a model society that was falsely "flawless". The aspect of art in propaganda was controlled by Stalin himself. Contrasting this, which proves that Khrushchev did reduce state control over arts is the pieces of art that served propaganda purposes during his rule. "The Lazy Bureaucrat" was an art piece that showed a man on a desk lazily, not taking responsibility. "The Alcoholic" was portraying a drunk man causing havoc, and passed out on his own vomit revealing the irresponsible men in domestic sector. "When two girls meet" was an art

piece that portrayed two women conversating, one very much influenced by western fashion. Through these critical art shown by different artists Khrushchev's rule was openly criticized by he himself, who wanted to raise awareness and humiliate the ignorant men in society as well as talk about "stilyaga" or the style hunters. The allowance of such critical art that depicted the state of Soviet Union as one that needed to be worked on, reveals his emancipation of art as one that is not under the complete control over the state.

Literature, and important form of written art was an extremely prominent feature of Khrushchev's rule that united the reduction of state control over art. In the years between 1954-1955, Il'ina wrote an extremely famous book about the importance of de-Stalinization, and criticized Stalin's regime, specifically his acts of imposing terror. 1961-1962 another book was released by Vladimir Stevdor named "No Bread Alone" where he criticized Stalin's collectivization and support of de-Stalinization. The importance of literature in Khrushchev's rule was abundant as this was not under state control which showed that there were people who supported "de-Stalinization". This showed that the state did allow criticism of leaders prior to his rule.

Khrushchev's reign was one that was lenient on arts and artists. Musicians were allowed to make music. A significant event that showed the reduction of state control over this sector of arts was when an extremely popular opera that

was banned in 1936 played for the first time in 1962 under Khrushchev's rule. Stalin in 1936 had rejected the work of this pianist who was forced to exile due to the humiliation he faced under Stalin's governance however was brought to light in 1962. The return of a controversial artist revealed that Khrushchev had imposed lenience over arts and artists which state control was concerned.

Although Khrushchev's rule was successful in reducing state control, it can also be argued that he did hold back when it was necessary.

Khrushchev believed that artists should devote their skills to portray allegiance to the government as well as signify the successors of socialism and communism. This belief made him take decisions to stifle any attempt of criticism that came at a large scale.

Although writers were allowed to criticize leaders prior to Khrushchev, "Dr. Givago", that criticized Lenin as an insufficient leader and his decisions declared unrighteous revealed that literature was just limited to the criticism of Stalin whom Khrushchev wanted to erase out of the Soviet system, revealed in the twentieth party congress over the "secret speech" and his "de-Stalinization" policies. Khrushchev banned the book and the writer was sent to exile.

After the occurrence of the incidence of "Dr. Givago" the controversial novel the leader between the years of 1961-1964 prosecuted and exiled many writers that criticized Lenin or

Khrushchev. The freedom of writers were limited. Although women were allowed to write about their difficulties of womanhood such as rape and domestic violence in consumer magazines, professional magazines such as "The Teacher's Gazette" revealed that the official liberties given by the state were insufficient.

~~Abstract~~ <sup>Abstract</sup> artform suffered under Khrushchev's rule and as he denounced the art and confiscated it as it served no real purpose. In an arts festival he referred to an abstract art piece as "dog shit".

In conclusion, Khrushchev's reign did without a doubt reduce state control over the arts and artists in Soviet Union, however he was cautious about the amount of freedom given, therefore ensuring his survival and suppression of his reign.

This is a low level 4 response. It explores the key issues and is developed with a range of secure knowledge. It considers both sides of the argument and reaches a judgement, although this is a little weaker than the main body of the response and would benefit from further development.

#### Question 4

There were a small number of answers to this question. The best responses considered political stagnation across the period and debated the extent to which attempts to overcome it were unsuccessful. Most focused on Gorbachev's regime and considered his political reforms and reactions to them. A number of candidates struggled to focus on political stagnation and wrote at length about the economy while others wrote descriptive responses with a focus on the coup. These responses lacked the focus necessary to achieve the higher levels of the mark scheme.



It is not very accurate to say that the attempts of 1982-91, to deal with the political stagnation in the Soviet Union were unsuccessful.

The biggest part of solving the problem is knowing and recognising the problem. Under Brezhnev the Soviet Union stagnated. Brezhnev took over after Khrushchev, who was known for his new ideas and change. Brezhnev reversed a lot of what Khrushchev did. Brezhnev created a stagnation by promoting old members, so there weren't any new ideas around, and he created an oligarchy, the country was run by a handful of people, all working together for their own profit. The higher ups liked Brezhnev as he did things to please them in return for their support. Brezhnev allowed officials to stay in office longer, that created corruption. Putting friends and family in good positions was also normal for Brezhnev's time. This meant that the same old people were in power and directly under them, their family or close supporters. Upon Brezhnev's death a vote started. Two candidates, one was Chernenko, a Brezhnev man, and the other Gorbachev, who wanted change. The oligarchy created caused the votes to go in Chernenko's

favour, even though he was old and sick and in no position to rule, people didn't want things to change, Brezhnev had treated them well. The same year Chernenko dies too. Gorbachev rises to power. He faced some opposition and a lot of people did not like his changes. Glasnost was introduced. The ~~coming~~ coming clean of the Soviet Union regarding Stalin's atrocities. A big hit. Perestroika was to follow. An enemy of Gorbachev, Yeltsin; ~~part~~ took part in a coup to overthrow Gorbachev. It was badly planned but ~~Yeltsin~~ Yeltsin would finish what Gorbachev started. Gorbachev gave more power to the Soviets, ~~which~~ which meant that the communist ~~part~~ parties power was reduced. Yeltsin hit the last nail in the coffin by declaring the communist party illegal and disbanding it. The communist soviet union ceased to exist.

It is not very accurate to say that the attempts to deal with the political stagnation were unsuccessful as in the end, change did happen. There was a lot of opposition, but it was ~~not~~ defeated.

This is a level 3 response. It shows some understanding of the question but is limited in depth. The criteria for judgement are not developed and this prevents the answer from accessing level 4.

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

#### Section A

- Make sure you are aware of the topics highlighted for the source question and have prepared for them
- A careful reading of the sources is needed so that the issues raised are clearly identified
- You must ensure that you draw out inferences, but these should always be directly linked to the source and not driven by contextual knowledge
- You should consider the nature, origin and purpose of the source
- Do not merely restate what the provenance says – think about how it can be used to address the question. In a, this requires a consideration of how it adds value and in b, this requires considering value and limitations
- Contextual knowledge should be used to support the answer, not to drive it, and should be made relevant to the enquiry
- Question 1a does not require a consideration of the limitations of sources
- It is unlikely that weight can be assessed by listing all the things that a source does not deal with.

#### Section B

- Spending a few minutes planning helps to ensure the second order concept is correctly identified
- Candidates must provide more precise contextual knowledge as evidence. Weaker responses lacked depth and sometimes range
- Candidates should avoid a narrative/descriptive approach; this undermines the analysis that is required for the higher levels
- Candidates need to be aware of key dates as identified in the specification so that they can address the questions with chronological precision
- Essay questions are set over a period of at least ten years; candidates need to address the whole time period set in the question
- Candidates should try to explore the links between issues in order to make the structure of the response flow more logically and to enable the integration of analysis.

