



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International A Level

In History (WHI02) Paper 1C

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## **Examiner Report: WHIO2 1C Russia, 1917-91: From Lenin to Yeltsin**

### **Introduction**

It was pleasing to see a range of well-informed and well-written responses from candidates on IAS Paper WHIO2 1C which covers the 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 common with the previous series, candidates found Section A more challenging than Section B although there are signs that candidates' achievements are becoming more balanced on the two sections. Some candidates were still not clear on what was meant by 'value' and 'weight' in the context of source analysis and evaluation. Performance in Section A was also affected by the absence of the detailed knowledge base required to add contextual material to support/challenge points derived from the sources. Most candidates did use their time effectively and, although a few responses were quite brief, there was little evidence on this paper of candidates having insufficient time to answer questions both sections. The ability range was diverse, but the design of the paper allowed all abilities to be catered for. Furthermore, in Section B, most responses had an analytical focus and there were very fewer that were 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 the lack of a sharp focus on the precise terms of the question and/or the second order concept that was targeted. This meant that some candidates wrote at length on topics that were only peripherally related to the question or which did not cover the whole time period.

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)**

Most candidates understood the question and were able to comprehend the source and comment on what it revealed about approaches to education in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. There were some strong inferences developed about what was revealed about equality under a Marxist regime and some candidates were able to support their inferences by well-selected knowledge about the Soviet system. In some cases, there was evidence of miscomprehension where the teacher being out of the classroom was seen as absenteeism rather than an approach to education. Surprisingly, no candidates referred to Lunacharsky and progressive teaching as part of their contextual understanding. Some candidates strayed from focus and compared the approach to their own education. Some candidates were able to use the attributes of the source effectively to develop their ideas about the value of the source from an American journalist. Those candidates who

discussed the limitations could not be rewarded for that part of their answer as it is not the focus of part a responses.

### 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 approaches to education in the Soviet Union in the 1920s?

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

(10)

Source 1 is valuable primarily because of its provenance, the nature of its reporting, and the fact that the contents is true/verified by historical events, although it doesn't provide much depth.

Source 1 describes the ~~functioning~~ <sup>functioning</sup> day to day ~~organisation~~ <sup>functioning</sup> of one school in the first paragraph, then generalises/gives a general reflection on the broader (overall) situation in ~~the whole~~ <sup>much of the</sup> USSR in the next paragraph. In paragraph 1, Source 1 shows itself to be valuable <sup>to an enquiry into approaches to Soviet education</sup> because it ~~describes in great detail~~ <sup>describes in great detail</sup> the day to day ~~functioning~~ <sup>and organisation</sup> of a school. For example, it describes student independence/lack of teacher control ("students in higher grades receive tasks ... they are then left free to carry out these tasks as they see fit ... students left almost entirely to their own resources ... teacher gives help only when asked."). This is corroborated by the present knowledge of the educational system at that time, which reflected the political changes of old, Tsaristic autocracy to new, free

Sociopolitical organizations of workers and peasants, in the shape of casting aside the old education system which was autocratic, rigid, and limited free thinking and organization, to one where students were free to choose their tasks as well as leaders ("discipline in hands and organisations elected by students themselves"). Given that education is a relatively neutral topic (as opposed to politics and economics etc), there is further weight added to this detailed description of one school, and hence it can be seen to be valuable.

Furthermore, Source 1 is valuable because it helps to provide a general overview of education in schools <sup>in much of</sup> ~~across~~ the USSR. The ~~source~~ <sup>source</sup> not only describes ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> school in detail, but ~~then~~ <sup>much of the</sup> says this is the situation across ~~the whole~~ <sup>the whole</sup> country: ("Students in higher grades... as they see fit, imply that this is carried out on a large scale by not explicitly ~~point~~ <sup>saying</sup> that it was restricted to a few schools). The maintenance of discipline is also described in a general way, also implying large scale implementation of such an approach. The bigger picture is further helped by the fact that the source compares this Soviet approach to education to that of other countries ("while one soldier witnesses disorder, one is unwilling



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to find strict order usually seen in other countries.")

The presence of the source also lends it some value. It is from Chamberlain, an American journalist in Moscow, who passed information to US intelligence. At this time (1920s), the US and USSR were bitter opponents, with the US having just some years only sent troops to aid the Whites in the Russian Civil War. Thus, as an American, especially as a journalist, he might be inclined to provide a negative (if not more neutral) picture. Therefore, because he presents the information neutrally combined with his background, this lends further weight to his description.

However, the source does have some limitations. It describes only one type of approach to education in the USSR, mostly in the cities. For example, it fails to discuss how some of the older, more rigid schools remained, especially in the countryside, and also fails to distinguish between regional differences in education (e.g. cities were more liberal in this manner and had better educational resources, while rural schools were the opposite). Furthermore, it also fails to describe the religious schools. Despite the anti-church (and religion generally) policy of the new regime since Lenin's power, Muslim schools were still allowed to operate, especially in central Asia. Thus, the source provides good detail on one type of school which was often seen (and hence a large part of the picture), but misses other aspects.

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This is a very good level 3 response. It draws out number of inferences, e.g. student independence', and uses contextual knowledge to support and develop them. In terms of value, it makes a range of clear and focused comments, particularly on the final page. The comments on limitations are not relevant and not rewarded.

### Question 1b)

Candidates understood the source material and were able to select from it to develop some inferences about the status of women in Stalinist Russia. There were some effective answers that weighed up the strengths and limitations of the source and used this as a basis to reach a judgement



about the weight that should be attached to the source for the enquiry. Some candidates made effective comments about the nature of the source as a Soviet newspaper and considered its reliability in the light of its obvious partiality as an instrument of Soviet propaganda. The best responses were able to interrogate the evidence in the light of their contextual knowledge and consider how applicable the examples in the newspaper were to the great mass of Soviet women at that time. However, there were a considerable number that attached free standing knowledge about policy towards women which did not satisfy the criteria in the higher levels of the mark scheme. There were also some candidates who did not use any contextual knowledge to answer the question and consequently they were not rewarded in bullet point 2 of the mark scheme.

**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 status of women in Stalinist Russia?

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

(15 marks) 14

Source 2 is written by a newspaper of the Communist Party in the USSR called Pravda. Pravda was the main <sup>party</sup> ~~political~~ newspaper and was purported to ~~be~~ read by large audiences. It was a newspaper, whose main features related to propaganda. It was used largely for prog propaganda by the Communist Party. Furthermore, this article is written after Stalin's "great ~~retreat~~ retreat" of 1936, when he reverted on many moral values <sup>of</sup> ~~towards~~ women in the USSR, <sup>mainly</sup> ~~such as~~ the Family Code, ~~and~~ "This made it more difficult for women to divorce from men, and reverted to traditional values. As she mentions, women have gained "political ~~matt~~ maturity". While this is true, it was going to stagnate for the coming years, because of Stalin's policies towards women after the "great retreat". For the time at it was written, it shows how it was still widely held that women were on the rise in the USSR. If it had been written a few years later, the reaction to this article may have been different.

Source 1 is valuable, because it shows to ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> historian, how women held many positions within the government. However, the only woman at the time, who had ever held a high ranking position within the government, had been



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Alexandra Kollontai, at the beginning of the USSR in the 1920s. Yet, this article highlights how fascist elements had been abolished and how women had many more rights in the USSR than other countries for the time. The USSR was pioneering in female-emancipation, allowing females to vote. It also mentions how women <sup>with children</sup> had ~~some~~ many benefits, which holds an unknown truth, because statistics in the USSR were always unreliable. Therefore, Source 11 is valuable in some regards, to the historian.

However, this article was published in the Pravda newspaper, which was a communist party newspaper. This clearly impairs the ~~authentic~~ authenticity of the information given, without ~~first~~ first investigating it. This leaves the historian with a reduced face-value of this article.

~~This article~~ This article holds a lot of value to the historian, so long as the information is fact-checked, which will reveal that some holds value and other ~~does~~ does not. There are most definitely definitely some things mentioned that are biased such as "the many millions of benefits given to mothers with many children", which has a lack of evidence, of how substantiated it was. This could be tied to Stalin's "Great retreat", where he reversed to traditional values, which would explain why mothers would get many benefits.

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This is a strong level 4 response. It examines the source and comments on the way that the material in it can be used. Contextual knowledge is used effectively to discuss the limitations of the source and finally the source is weighed by looking at its content, nature and reliability in order to reach a judgement.

## Question 2



This was the most popular essay question. Most candidates had knowledge of economic policy under Stalin and Khrushchev, although many did struggle to focus on industry and tended to write at greater length on agriculture. Most candidates were stronger in looking at Stalin and the Five-Year Plans rather than on Khrushchev. Most candidates were able to address the second order concept – similarity and difference- to some degree, although, in weaker responses, the comparison tended to be minimal and the policies were described separately. Candidates who tried to focus on industry and carry out a comparison were able to access level 3, whilst those responses with a sharper focus and good supporting knowledge were able to access level 4.

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**

Sec B 23

Khrushchev's policies to industry did differ to an extent to that of Stalin's policies. These policies were especially changed due to de-stalinisation, which led to a change in centralisation, less and authoritarianism in hope to reform the economy and satisfaction.

Khrushchev's main policy was to aim was de-stalinisation which resulted in the central committee to lose power. Stalin had set up a common economy, also known as planned economy, whereby members of the central committee made targets which were to be met by businesses. This led to the rise of quantity over quality. Many products were shoddy goods and unusable. Khrushchev believed that a decentralised economy would allow a more productive workforce supplying better quality goods. This was due to the managers of each industry having a better knowledge about production figure and local issues. Previously under Stalin, the central committee had made plans on targets, however and goods, however these



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were often based off hare-brained schemes.

Under Khrushchev the central committee lost ~~their~~ some of their influence which was then given to the Sovnarkozy. These ~~were regional~~ left production targets and price ~~be demanded~~ decided by regional people who had more knowledge about their industry. This led to a more productive rise. However, this was a difficult and not always successful implementation, this was because the central committee was <sup>reluctant</sup> ~~willing~~ to reduce the power they had gained from their work in the government.

Another difference in Stalin's policies and Khrushchev's policies towards industry was the use of terror as incentives. ~~Under~~ During the Stalin era workers had to be efficient and meet targets. This was because of the ~~normatizatsiya system~~ terror. If they were not efficient they were ridiculed by other members of the workforce and sometimes even deported to the Gulag for not following socialist order and not supporting ~~the comrades'~~ or even betraying the communist revolution of 1917. If they were deported they were taken away by the ~~KGB~~ ~~KGB~~ NKVD and put into forced labour camps. When Khrushchev came to power he dismantled the Gulag to a great extent <sup>\*</sup> releasing prisoners who had been accused of amnesty.

\* not completely



Instead of using the use of terror to ~~make~~ make the soviet population work, Khrushchev set up social welfare, housing, ~~and~~ social benefits ~~workers~~ could then with and ~~on~~ the industry on consumer goods. This allowed workers to live a higher standard of living. With the focus on consumer goods in the seven-year plan, Khrushchev took away the massive heavy industry which had existed under Stalin. This meant that they were able to buy things from the money they had earned. With the turn ~~to~~ away from heavy industry more investment was put into agriculture and consumer goods.

With Khrushchev

The decrease investment in heavy industry and more investment in agricultural industry meant more machinery could be made for agrarian uses. This was done through ~~the~~ by the MTC they provided tractors and tools for the collectives to make more efficient use of the lands. ~~How~~ The government under Khrushchev also promoted to build science and engineering institutions near to industries. This allowed more innovation in industries to make more use of the technical advances especially for agriculture. ~~Even~~ ~~with~~ Some time industries would make use of these new technologies, however many left them to



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rust in fear of falling behind in production measures and targets. However, Khrushchev was not able to move completely away from the heavy industry. This was greatly due to the opposition faced from the conservative party which was reluctant to impose innovation in industries other than the heavy industry. With the rise of the Cold War the conservative party was also supported by the military-MIC- which ~~wanted~~ wanted to increase investment in the arms industry.

~~Khrushchev also attempted to reduce centralisation through~~

Khrushchev had attempted to reduce centralisation of economic targets by introducing *sovnarkozy*. It did have an effect but it was greatly held back by party members in the central committee which had gained their position during the Stalin years in which they rose through the nomenklatura system. Khrushchev did try to reduce the influence of presidium members by introducing a three year maximum ~~working~~ working tenure. This however, reduced his popularity even more. In terms of motivation for the general workforce Stalin had introduced terror, ~~exploited~~ exploited by the secret police, ~~the NKVD~~. Whereby the NKVD



would arrest ~~lazy~~ workers if targets were not met. Khrushchev had reduced the terror of the NKVD by putting them under the control of the KGB. This halted ~~un~~arbitrary arrests or arrests where targets of industry were not met. Instead he implemented a system which was to encourage workers by social stability and increased living standards.

Stalin had based his economy on heavy industry, Khrushchev wanted to create a workers paradise and with the ~~the~~ main industry of heavy industry this was not possible. He created industry which would help the production of agricultural goods and create more consumer goods. Industries which had - especially during WWII - been heavy industries had to be converted for the use of consumer goods. eg bicycles. Khrushchev tried to have a big economic reconstruction from the tight control Stalin had over the economy but it was slow to change and some ~~things~~ <sup>policies</sup> did remain the same, \* due to difficulties in changing the opinion of the presidium members

\* ~~it~~ had only changed slightly or ~~had not not~~



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This response achieved a secure level 4. It has focus on the second order concept and the key issues and is supported by well selected knowledge. It does reach judgements although the conclusion is more of a summary than a judgement.

### Question 3

There was only one response to this question which showed some focus on the issue of dissidence with a particular emphasis on religious dissidence and the impact of the measures used to suppress it.

### Question 4

There were a number of strong responses to this question that accessed level 4. These responses had secure knowledge of the period and were able to discuss the significance of Yeltsin's election as president of Russia in combination with alternative factors such as Gorbachev's reforms and their failure, the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and its impact on the USSR, weaknesses in the economy and resistance within the Communist Party. Weaker responses tended to focus on economic problems in general and often lapsed into describing the Brezhnev regime.

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  Section 24

It is very accurate to say that Yeltsin's election as president of Russia in June 1991 was the most significant development in the weakening of Soviet government in the years 1982-91 because it symbolised the glasnost policy which created a greater freedom and democratisation which led to other factors such as the resurgence of nationalist values of the republics at the same time to criticise the economic policies economic policy.

It is very accurate to say that Yeltsin's election as president of Russia in June 1991 was the most significant development in the weakening of Soviet government in the years 1982-91 because it was a symbol of the glasnost policy which was crucial in the destruction of the USSR, in fact Yeltsin was elected due to this policy as Gorbachev allowed to move away from Brezhnev's political stagnation and so proposed so proposed elections of candidates in the republics. This was a move towards democratisation that had many consequences. This was also the case with the liberalisation of the media, which allowed many foreign books and movies to be shown. Due to this greater information of the public and the idea that people had greater freedom to have a choice, the Russian people voted Yeltsin as the president of Russia winning with a 65% of votes, this was highly significant.

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for the ~~development~~ a weakening of the Soviet Union because of the loss of power of the Communist Party in the USSR, as Russia occupied 90% of the Soviet Union, but it also symbolised a new era completely new of social control and political power concentration. This makes Yeltsin's election as president of Russia in 1991 the most significant development in the weakening of Soviet government in the years 1982-1991 because it symbolised the greater freedom and democratisation as well as the change of political power.

Another factor that had a huge impact in the weakening of Soviet government in the years 1982-1991 was the economic policy of Perestroika. This economic policy was a total failure. Firstly, the ban on alcohol was a huge failure because it did not make the 4.5 billion alcoholics to de-insoucinate (as people drank a homemade alcohol called samogon) but it made the government lose 67 billion roubles from vodka production. This ~~was really~~ had a horrible effect on the economy. Furthermore, Gorbachev introduced the law of private enterprise and the law of cooperatives which seemed successful because in 1990 about 200,000 cooperatives were created, however, due to the stagnation of the market, the products could not be sold at the price that they should have been sold, therefore the laws introduced did little to revitalise the economy. All this played a very important role in the weakening





of the Soviet Union because the living standards of people did not ~~of~~ increase, and Gorbachev's government started to lose great popularity. As in 1982, Gorbachev had a 52% of popularity and by 1990 he had 31%. ~~moreover~~ ~~the~~ ~~edge~~ this weakened the Soviet Union by ~~creating~~ <sup>creating</sup> a social exasperation. However, without ~~the~~ Glasnost, Perestroika would not have been as important because the liberalisation of the media allowed Soviet citizens to compare their living standards of the west, before there had been worst economic situations, however due to the policy of glasnost people could now compare their situation to the western situation and have an opinion about it without being taken to a swing as before. This created a great social unrest which debilitated hugely the Soviet Union. So without ~~the~~ Glasnost's ~~effects~~ ~~the~~ effects, the most important one Yeltsin's elections, the economic problems would not have been such a problem. Therefore it is hugely accurate to state that Yeltsin's election as President of Russia in June 1991 was the most significant development in the weakening of Soviet government in the years 1982-91.

Another factor that had a huge ~~factor~~ impact in the weakening of the Soviet Union, was the resurgence of the nationalist voices of the republics of the USSR. ~~The~~ Local leaders who favoured the communist regime



had always been put in place in the republic governments. However, Gorbachev decided that the place should be covered by those who had greater competences. This caused great unrest within the population because it meant that local governments could be occupied by Russians, to which there was a great rejection in the republics. ~~These led to many political protests.~~ Furthermore, the republic citizens related the economic recession to the new leaders of the republics which further increased the hatred opinion of the citizens of the republics. In fact this led to the collapse of the Soviet Union as many republics started to riot against these policies. For example there were many violent riots in Baku which made the government lose control of Azerbaijan. Then there was a further revolt in the Baltic states which led to their independence and the fall of the Berlin Wall. This had great importance in the weakening of the USSR, however Glasnost, symbolized by Yeltsin's election had a greater impact because it allowed the republics to have ~~got~~ a voice and Gorbachev acted in a very peaceful way, unlike other leaders who would have crushed the riots immediately. Such as Khrushchev with the Hungarian



revolution therefore, ~~that~~ it is very accurate to say that Yeltsin's election ~~is~~ was the most significant development because it gave power to the republics to criticise the communist government and to act towards independence without being treated upon violently.

Overall, it is very accurate to say that Yeltsin's election was the most significant development in the weakening of the USSR because it allowed the nationalist sentiment to have a voice and actions and it allowed criticism of economic perestroika, as his election symbolised glasnost, which was already the most important development of the weakening and the further destruction of the USSR.



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This is a top level 4 response with excellent analysis. The range is good including Yeltsin (the given factor) and the alternatives of Gorbachev's reforms and their failure, and developments in the satellite states. The criteria developed for judgement are a real strength and there is a sustained argument which leads to a judgement on relative significance.

## **Paper Summary**

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
- Be prepared to back up inferences by adding additional contextual knowledge from beyond the source
- 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
- Avoid writing about the deficiencies of the source when assessing its value to the enquiry.

#### **Weight of Source Question (1(b)/2(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.
- In assessing weight, it is perfectly permissible to use contextual knowledge to support/challenge statements and claims made in the source
- Try to distinguish between fact and opinion by using your contextual knowledge of the period
- Knowledge should be integrated with the source evidence, to discuss the inferences drawn and their validity in the light of the contextual understanding of the period.
- In coming to a judgement about the nature/purpose of the source, take account of the weight you may be able to give 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. However, simply stating that a source is limited because it does not cover certain events or developments does not establish weight since no source can be comprehensive.

### **Section B**

#### **Essay questions**

- Candidates must provide more factual details as evidence. Weaker responses lacked depth and sometimes range
- Take a few minutes to plan your answer before you begin to write your response
- 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
- Pay more 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

- Pay careful attention to the date range in the question. Plan the answer with a focus on this range and avoid lengthy exploration of events outside of the time period set
- Try to explore links between issues to make the structure flow more logically and the arguments more integrated.