

Examiner’s General Advice on Unit 2

Students in this AS Unit are expected to demonstrate the following skills:

- the ability to recall, select and use appropriate historical knowledge and to communicate it effectively (AO1a)
- historical understanding involving explanation, analysis and judgement, and key concepts such as causation, consequence, change and continuity; and an understanding of the relationships between key features of the period studied (AO1b)
- the ability to analyse and evaluate a range of source material (AO2a)
- the ability to analyse and evaluate how the past has been interpreted and represented in different ways (AO2b).

These skills are also **assessment objectives (AOs)**. All questions will aim to test more than one of these objectives, and in an examination answer will be marked accordingly. On any given examination paper, there will be a planned balance of the various skills across questions to ensure that all are covered. However, individual questions or part questions will focus on certain skills, not necessarily all of them at once. One of the ways of writing an effective answer is therefore to learn to recognise the particular skill that is the focal point of a particular question. However, it is also important to remember that accurate knowledge and understanding are key elements in any AS answer. Generalised statements showing in a source-based question, for example, a student’s awareness that one piece of evidence is less objective and more biased than another will not earn much credit. There must also be a clear indication of some background knowledge and understanding of the topic in addition to the ability to make comparisons and contrasts between sources.

Unit 2 contains **one** compulsory 2-part source-based question plus **one of two** 2-part questions, not source-based, on the chosen option from European, world or British history.

It is important to divide your time well. The first part of each question carries 12 marks; the second part carries 24 marks. You should therefore aim to spend less time on the part (a) questions, or you will risk running out of time on the second and longer part (b) questions.

While Question 1 requires a precise focus on sources and your own knowledge, Questions 2 and 3 do not involve sources. Questions 2 and 3 require demonstration of your own knowledge. There are several skills implicit in this. One element is simple **recall**. You will need to **explain**, for example by giving the reasons for a particular event. This requires more than simply listing a series of reasons from memory – a high-level answer will require you to put these reasons in context and relate them to each other. The 24-mark question will require you to examine a particular historical issue, often dressed in the form of a quotation. You must not only call up your knowledge of the topic, but you must **use** that knowledge in such a way that you are able to **analyse** the issues and produce a **reasoned argument** using the knowledge you do have.

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Historical Issues:
Periods of Change
Unit 2 HIS2L

**The Impact of Stalin’s
Leadership in the USSR, 1924–
1941**

**SOURCES
ACCOMPANYING
EXEMPLAR
QUESTION 1**

SOURCE A

Adapted from a speech by Stalin, December 1929.

The question is this: either *back* to capitalism, or *forward* to socialism. There is no third way. During the last year Soviet power has launched an offensive against capitalist elements in the countryside, with very positive results. We have passed from a policy of *restricting* the exploitative tendencies of the kulaks to the policy of *liquidating* the kulaks as a class. Now we have the material base to break their resistance and replace their output with that of collective and state farms. The expropriation of the kulaks is vital to the formation and development of collective farms. It is ridiculous to go on about the expropriation. You do not lament the loss of the hair of one who has been beheaded. There is another question: should kulaks be permitted to join the collective farms? Of course not, for they are sworn enemies of collectivisation.

SOURCE B

Adapted from an article by Stalin in Pravda, March 1930.

Even enemies have been forced to recognise our major successes in the collective farm movement. *The fundamental turn of the countryside towards socialism can be considered achieved.* But successes have their dark side. They sometimes lead to a spirit of self-importance and conceit: ‘We can do anything. Nothing can stop us.’ People’s heads become dizzy with success, with no room for concern about how to *consolidate* the successes. The success of our policy is based on the *voluntary* nature of collectivisation and *taking into account the diversity of conditions* in various parts of the USSR. collective farms should not be imposed by force. One must not lag behind the movement, which would separate us from the masses. But one should not race ahead, which means to lose contact with the masses.

SOURCE C

From a modern historian’s account.

Collectivisation led to famine, shortages and the ‘crippling’ of Soviet agriculture. As well as being a disaster, collectivisation was also a historic turning point in Russia’s evolution, perhaps more so than the revolution of 1917. Stalin had made a decisive turn towards industry and modernisation. In so doing, he had well and truly shredded the

smychka (alliance between workers and peasants).

Adapted from C. Read, The Stalin Years: A Reader (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003 ISBN 0 333 96343 1) final paragraph p. 85, second paragraph p. 86

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The Impact of Stalin’s
Leadership in the USSR, 1924–
1941

QUESTION 1
(01)

Examiner’s Specific Advice

This question is testing both your knowledge and your ability to use the source material provided. It is important that you do both. The key words are ‘Explain how far’, ‘differ’ and ‘attitudes’. It is not enough just to describe the content of the sources – that will earn very few marks. You need to identify and explain the differences, but also identify and explain any similarities between the sources for a good mark. If you do that well and clearly address ‘how far’, you should get a high level. There is no need to write a full essay – two or three paragraphs should be sufficient.

Exemplar Question

Read the sources and then answer the questions that follow.

Use **Sources A** and **B** and your **own knowledge**.

1 (01) Explain how far the views in **Source B** differ from those in **Source A** in relation to Stalin’s attitudes towards collectivisation.

[12 marks]

Plan

- Identify attitudes in both sources and identify differences and similarities.
- Use own knowledge to explain the content and the context.
- Make a judgement on ‘how far’.

Examiner’s Exemplar Answer 1

In Source A Stalin is enthusiastic about collectivisation. He sees it as the only way forward. The kulaks have to be eliminated and must not be allowed to join the collectives (1). Source B is more moderate. Stalin says that the peasants must not be forced against their will into collectives (2). Stalin heard reports that many peasants had strongly resisted collectivisation, fighting those sent by the Government to impose collectivisation on their villages (3).

(1) This is mainly a summary of the source, although there is a brief comment on the tone.

(2) Again, this is mainly comprehension, although with a reference to the ‘moderate’ tone.

(3) There is a small piece of own knowledge here, although the fact of resistance can be deduced from the source.

Examiner’s Assessment

This is an unconvincing answer. The comprehension is accurate, but the use of both sources is very limited, relying mainly on comprehension. The candidate has identified a difference between the sources, mainly in tone, but no areas where they agree. There is minimal use of own knowledge to explain the sources or their context. Therefore, although accurate, the answer is limited in scope and depth and merits the bottom of Level 2.

Examiner’s Exemplar Answer 2

These two sources, both by Stalin, are from within four months of each other. Yet although there are some similarities, there are significant differences in tone and content. Stalin had already decided on collectivisation by 1929. Like every Communist he was concerned by the reluctance of many peasants to supply grain, and the regime had already had to resort to requisitioning under the ‘Urals/Siberian method’. Stalin distrusted the peasants as capitalists by nature, driven by the profit motive and therefore class enemies, standing in the way of progress as he defined it. He also wanted to control the peasants and use agriculture to support his industrialisation programme (4).

(4) This introductory paragraph uses the candidate’s own knowledge very well to explain the context of the sources, noting the date of the sources and the background to collectivisation. It is a confident beginning.

This distrust of, and contempt for, rich peasants comes through clearly in Source A. Stalin demands no mercy for the kulaks, and rejoices in their elimination as opening the way for socialism in the countryside, although this is not really defined. In contrast, Source B is much more moderate in tone: the use of force is condemned, and Stalin emphasises the importance of the peasants joining the collectives voluntarily. Also, instead of a blanket policy across the USSR, the needs of each region should be considered. Instead of an emphasis on class warfare, the importance of the Government keeping in step with the peasantry is emphasised (5).

(5) This paragraph shows sound comprehension in summarising the differences between the sources in tone and content.

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The sources are not entirely contradictory in attitude. Both emphasise the importance of collectivisation as a means of creating socialism – it is just that in B, Stalin claims it has been achieved, and therefore the regime can ease up. Although there are few details, both Sources imply the disruptive nature of the process, with words like ‘resistance’ and ‘dark side’ (6).

Where there are differences, they can be easily explained. In A, Stalin is determined to take on the kulaks and drive his policies through regardless. By the time of B, Stalin knew there had been enormous resistance, with virtual civil war as peasants fought the Party and Red Army enforcing collectivisation. Agricultural production was severely disrupted. Stalin cynically averted blame from himself on to over-eager officials who were in fact enforcing his policies. In reality, Stalin was just trying to gain a breather, and to resume his policy: soon the collectivisation programme was to continue and be virtually complete within a few years (7).

(6) In this paragraph, the candidate uses the content and tone of the sources concisely to highlight areas of similarity between the sources effectively.

(7) This final paragraph uses own knowledge well to further explain the context of the sources and put the whole issue into perspective, making an effective rounding off of the question.

Examiner’s Assessment

This is a strong answer. The candidate is confident in approach, and does not waste words. There is concise analysis and good use of own knowledge to support the commentary on the sources. Areas of both agreement and disagreement between the sources are explained, with evidence from the sources themselves and use of knowledge to support this. There is awareness of tone, language and content. Because the combination of analysis and understanding is developed, the answer meets the criteria for Level 4.

Mark Scheme

L1:

The answer essentially paraphrases or describes the sources with no development.

[1–2 marks]

L2:

The answer identifies some differences and/or similarities between the sources. There may be some limited own knowledge to explain why Stalin’s attitudes towards collectivisation were what they were.

[3–6 marks]

L3:

The answer identifies both differences and similarities between the sources, and uses own knowledge about Stalin’s attitudes and the events of collectivisation to explain and evaluate the sources. For example, there is evidence in Source B that Stalin has

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modified his views on collectivisation, but there are also areas of agreement between the sources.

[7–9 marks]

L4:

The comparison between sources is well developed. Own knowledge is used effectively to demonstrate good contextual understanding. In this instance there will be a well-sustained examination of how Stalin’s attitudes towards collectivisation remained consistent over time, although there was a temporary modification of attitude during the process for essentially tactical reasons only.

[10–12 marks]

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**The Impact of Stalin’s
Leadership in the USSR, 1924–
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**QUESTION 1
(02)**

Examiner’s Specific Advice

This question requires an essay-type answer, so it is quite demanding. You must use both the sources **and** your own knowledge to get to a high level. In the process of displaying your knowledge and understanding of the topic, there is no obligation to use all three sources equally. However, you should refer to the sources, either with brief quotations or by summarising their arguments as appropriate. To earn the highest marks you must answer the specific question, with a judgement. ‘How far’ is the key phrase. It is not enough just to describe Soviet agriculture in the 1930s, although of course this information is relevant. You must relate what you know about the impact of collectivisation to the organisation of agriculture and to agricultural output, and make a judgement on the overall effect. You should also consider whether the weaknesses in the agricultural sector were also due to other factors besides collectivisation, and if you think this is the case, you should evaluate the extent to which these factors, as opposed to collectivisation, were the most significant factors; or in fact whether all these factors are linked together.

There is no right or wrong answer to the question. The key thing is that you back up your arguments with evidence. Whether you state your argument clearly at the start of your answer, or let the conclusion arrive naturally towards the end, having discussed all your evidence, is entirely up to you. But do remember, good answers are those that are relevant, do more than just describe events or state facts, and answer the specific question set. There is no ideal length, but a good answer is likely to be a mini-essay of several paragraphs in order to cover the necessary material.

Exemplar Question

Read the sources and then answer the questions that follow.

Use **Sources A, B and C** and your **own knowledge**.

1 (02) How far was the policy of collectivisation responsible for weaknesses in the Soviet agricultural sector by 1941?

Plan

- Introduction – the context of collectivisation
- The situation of the agricultural sector in 1941
- Weaknesses in agriculture
- Evidence from the sources
- Contribution of other factors – climate, transport etc.
- Conclusion/judgement – how far was collectivisation responsible for the problems?

Examiner’s Exemplar Answer 1

The sources show both successes and failures in Soviet agriculture by 1941. Source A is not about failure. It is Stalin saying that the country needs to collectivise and that the kulaks must be eliminated, or else there will not be successful modernisation. Source B claims that the countryside is well on the way to socialism, which is a success. Source C claims there is famine and disaster, but also claims that Stalin was heading towards modernisation (1).

Collectivisation caused a lot of problems, especially in the early 1930s. Because many peasants resisted collectivisation and often destroyed their crops and animals rather than have them taken over, production went down and took a long time to recover. However, the Communists did get control of the countryside, which is what Stalin wanted (2). He claimed at the time that collectivisation had worked, although he told Churchill during the war that it had been a really difficult time for the USSR (3). Perhaps agriculture was not much better off than in pre-Communist days.

Examiner’s assessment

Although broadly accurate, this is not an effective answer overall. The sources are treated separately from ‘own knowledge’, and are almost taken at face value, and so are not used very effectively to support an evaluation of the impact of collectivisation. The later use of own knowledge is accurate, but rather brief and underdeveloped. Therefore the overall quality of analysis and evaluation/judgement is limited. The answer merits Level 2: it is an explicit answer, but with limited support.

Examiner’s Exemplar Answer 2

Throughout Soviet history, agriculture had proved to be a weakness in the economy, in that it had never been able to feed the population as a whole in sufficient quantity and quality. The Bolsheviks inherited a war-damaged agricultural economy in 1917, and when the USSR broke up in 1991 agriculture was still one of the weakest sectors of the economy. So in a major sense collectivisation could not have been an improvement. However, as Source C recognises, collectivisation did make a decisive contribution towards industrialisation, which by 1941 had made the USSR a world power and helped it defeat Germany, although this was at the expense of a thriving agricultural sector (4).

(1) There is some accurate comprehension here as the candidate summarises the sources, but just going through each source in turn is not a particularly effective method of answering a specific question.

(2) There is some accurate use of basic own knowledge to evaluate the impact of collectivisation.

(3) This is a potentially useful example, but not much is made of it as evidence, and the final attempt at judgement is not developed.

(4) This is a very effective opening. There is a good sense of perspective over time, and already the candidate shows confidence in attacking the question and making judgements.

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Under NEP, agriculture had recovered from the desperate days of War Communism when reluctant peasants had had their grain seized by the Red Army in the Civil War following the Revolution. In the more stable period of the 1920s, agriculture had recovered. Requisitioning had ceased, and peasants were encouraged to produce and sell on the open market. However, for the Communists, this presented a problem. They disliked the profit motive, and knew that peasants were not selling all they could, mainly because peasants wanted their prices kept high and industry was lagging behind and not producing the goods that peasants wanted to buy (5). Party activists and Stalin saw the peasants as class traitors, concerned only with their own well-being, and it is this class hostility which pours out of Source A. In A, Stalin justifies any measures to rid the country of kulaks. Ruthless war against the peasantry resulted, and even Stalin was concerned about the excesses, as he admitted in B, although he diverted the blame from himself onto over-enthusiastic officials (6). Stalin’s concern was not humanitarian, but because he knew that the resistance and disruption caused by collectivisation had led to dramatic falls in production that threatened his plans for industrialisation and modernisation. This is because the new collective farms were having to supply the new industrial towns with food and provide surplus labour for the factories. Stalin’s claim in Source B that the turn towards socialism had been achieved is just propaganda, unless he equated socialism with the elimination of millions of peasants and not just an increase in production or efficiency. Source C, which has the benefit of hindsight, is balanced: it directly attributes famine and the ‘crippling’ of agriculture to collectivisation, but also recognises that Stalin had made ‘a decisive turn’ towards industry and modernisation. The reference to breaking the alliance between workers and peasants, one of Lenin’s pet themes, is not recognised clearly as a strength or weakness – it is difficult to judge because the importance of this link had probably been exaggerated in the past. Had it ever existed (7)?

Agriculture did improve by about the mid-1930s. With the countryside now under Soviet control, regular grain deliveries kept the towns just about fed, and displaced peasants worked in the factories, so the industrialisation which helped the USSR win the coming war was able to go ahead. But agricultural production was not much greater than at pre-First World War levels. Many of Russia’s best, enterprising farmers had been killed or driven off the land. Productivity was not high, and many peasants put more effort into farming their small household plots than on the collectives. Although there is some evidence that peasants became less hostile, or apathetic, there is also evidence that during the Second World War peasants hoped that the collective farms would be broken up. Agriculture was certainly the poor relation of industry in 1941 (8).

Agriculture could not have improved in the 1930s without a major change in structure or allocation of resources. Bukharin’s policy in the 1920s of ‘enriching the peasantry’

(5) The candidate is showing good knowledge, and explaining the context of collectivisation well, although there is a danger that too much time might be spent on this.

(6) This is good integration of source material and knowledge to support the analysis.

(7) Again, this is good integration of evidence from the sources and own knowledge, and there is balanced evaluation which implicitly shows a knowledge of interpretations.

(8) This is good use of evidence to analyse both the positives and negatives during the 1930s, so it is a balanced response.

(9) Again, the

would not automatically have led to the necessary modernisation (9). What is clear is that agriculture was not modernised by 1941. It could feed the towns, but not the peasants well, and what changes had been made were at enormous human cost. This is why historians have debated the various costs of collectivisation in terms of its perceived successes and failures (10). What improvements had occurred had been in the industrial economy, and politically the regime probably felt that it had benefited from better control of the peasantry – but Stalin had not solved the problem that agriculture was still a major weakness in the economy (11).

candidate shows good perspective here.

(10) Here there is more awareness of interpretations.

(11) The essay ends with a balanced conclusion and judgement – it is a brief conclusion because the evaluation and judgement have already been developed well throughout the answer.

Examiner’s Assessment

This is a very strong answer, meriting Level 5. It is confident throughout. The candidate shows a good range and depth of knowledge, which means that arguments and evaluation are well supported. The question is clearly addressed. There is good perspective over time. The approach is confident but balanced. Sources are integrated well into the analysis. A well-focused and closely argued analysis such as this is usually the hallmark of a Level 5 answer.

Mark Scheme

L1:

The answer is based on **either** own knowledge **or** sources. It is likely to be generalised, descriptive and/or assertive, and with little focus on the question.

[1–6 marks]

L2:

The answer may be based on relevant selection of material **either** from the sources **or** from own knowledge, or they may be combined. The answer will be mainly descriptive about Soviet agriculture up to 1941, with limited links to the question about the impact of collectivisation; or the answer may be explicit about the question but containing limited support.

[7–11 marks]

L3:

The answer shows developed understanding of the issue of how collectivisation impacted upon Soviet agriculture, using material **both** from the sources **and** from own knowledge. The answer is likely to lack depth or balance in assessing the importance of collectivisation or other factors in the process, but will be a relevant response, and there will be some understanding of interpretations.

[12–16 marks]

L4:

The answer shows explicit understanding of the demands of the question and provides a balanced explanation of the impact of collectivisation on agriculture, backed up by appropriate evidence from the sources and own knowledge. There will be a good understanding of interpretations, for example of how important collectivisation was in relation to other factors such as lack of machinery or modern methods of farming. The answer may focus just on collectivisation, or it may balance collectivisation against other relevant factors.

[17–21 marks]

L5:

The answer is well focused and closely argued – supported by precise use of evidence from the sources and own knowledge. There will be a well-developed understanding of interpretations leading to a good understanding, with judgement, of the impact of collectivisation on Soviet agriculture. As with L4, the answer may focus just on collectivisation, or may balance collectivisation against other relevant factors.

[22–24 marks]

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**The Impact of Stalin’s
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**QUESTION 2
(03)**

Examiner’s Specific Advice

This question is testing your knowledge and your ability to communicate it effectively. There is no source material involved. You are required to explain motives for a particular theme, why Stalin promoted ‘Socialism in One Country’. You are not expected to explain all possible motives, but you should certainly find two or three. Therefore the question requires no more than a ‘mini-essay’ of probably two or three paragraphs at most, certainly not a full-length essay. You should aim to give a brief explanation for each motive. A high-level answer might include a brief summary and possibly a conclusion tying the motives together, identifying different types of motive (e.g. personal, political, economic etc.) or deciding whether one motive was more important than others.

The examiner is not looking for sophisticated interpretations, but brief, clear explanations.

Exemplar Question

2 (03) Explain why Stalin supported the policy of ‘Socialism in One Country’ in the mid-1920s.

[12 marks]

Plan

- Introduction - what was Socialism in One Country?
- 1920s context – Stalin’s position
- Political motives
- Economic motives
- Personal motives
- Conclusion – making the links

Examiner’s Exemplar Answer 1

Stalin supported Socialism in One Country because he believed as a Communist that socialism was what the USSR should be moving towards. The NEP was not really socialist, because it allowed privately-owned wealth, and both business people and peasants could make a profit. In a socialist system, everyone would be working for the good of each other, and the Government would make sure that nobody could exploit anyone else (1). Stalin, like other Communists, knew that the USSR was a long way off getting to this stage – therefore they had to concentrate on building up industry and not worrying too much about what was happening outside Russia (2).

(1) Here, one of Stalin’s motives is explained: he wants to move the country towards socialism, because Communists believe that this is fairer than the system of NEP. There is some validity in this, although it is not a very sophisticated or developed answer.

Examiner’s Assessment

This is a valid answer, because two motives for Stalin’s policy are introduced, although neither is developed particularly effectively. Other relevant motives, such as Stalin’s political struggle with his rivals, are ignored. There is no real development of context, except for a brief analysis of aspects of NEP, and there is no conclusion or real attempt to link or prioritise motives. It is more than just description, but the analysis and use of knowledge are fairly basic, so the answer merits Level 2.

(2) Again, this is not well expressed or developed, but it is a motive – Stalin believed that the USSR had to industrialise, and go its own way. Why these two things were necessary is not developed in terms of explaining the phrase ‘Socialism in One Country’.

Examiner’s Exemplar Answer 2

NEP Russia existed between 1921 and 1928. NEP had been introduced as an emergency measure in 1921 because the Soviet regime was widely unpopular. Since the 1917 Revolution it had been fighting a war of survival, which devastated the country, and the policy of seizing grain from the peasants had made the Communists widely unpopular. Lenin had compromised and allowed private agriculture and small-scale industry, to give people an incentive and help the economy recover. Otherwise his regime might have been overthrown. Later Lenin justified NEP also on ideological grounds, saying that it was a necessary stage on the path to socialism (3).

(3) This is a good introduction: it uses own knowledge well to establish the context of NEP and why Communists felt the need for further change.

Nobody had questioned Lenin’s authority, but after his death many Communists showed their unhappiness with NEP. They saw it as reopening class divisions between haves and have-nots. All Communists believed that they should move towards socialism, under which the state would ensure a fairer society by taking control of the means of production, and using them in the interest of the people. They already had this state control in heavy industry. Industrialisation was a necessary part of this process, since Marxists believed that a large industrial working class was the necessary foundation for a

(4) This is an impressive combination of knowledge and analysis. The candidate is establishing why industrialisation and socialism were fundamental goals for all Communists,

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socialist or ‘workers’ state’, which would eventually evolve into Communism. The only real disagreement was how to proceed to industrialisation (4).

including Stalin. This is a well-developed motive.

Some Communists, like Trotsky, still believed that an international approach to socialism should be the priority: a workers’ state could only be safely set up if there were workers’ revolutions in other hostile capitalist countries, so as to bring friendly governments to power. Therefore the USSR should support revolutionary movements elsewhere. Stalin’s approach was relatively new: the idea that socialism and industrialisation could be established in one country like Russia, and that it would make the country strong enough that it could scare or fight off hostile capitalist powers. Once the USSR was socialist, it could then support Marxist movements elsewhere (5).

(5) This paragraph also uses acquired knowledge well: it develops Stalin’s political and economic motives effectively.

Stalin may also have supported this policy because it was increasingly popular with a new generation of young Communists who wanted to concentrate on building their own utopia and not wait for events elsewhere (6).

(6) Yet another motive is briefly developed.

Stalin also had strong political and personal motives for supporting the policy. He was in competition with other leading Communists like Trotsky for influence and even the leadership after Lenin’s death. He needed a different policy from his hated rival Trotsky, who was promoting ‘Permanent’ or ‘World Revolution’ (7).

(7) In this paragraph Stalin’s personal motives are developed well, in the context of his rivalry with colleagues and desire for power.

Therefore Stalin’s policy of Socialism in One Country had a mixture of political, economic, ideological and personal motives. All would have been important to him. The personal motive may even have been the most important: Stalin was not always consistent in his policies, and was ready to change them if it suited his purpose, which increasingly seems to have been to build up his own power and influence both within the country and over the Party (8).

(8) This is a good, balanced conclusion, since it categorises the various motives, and attempts a reasoned judgement on which might have been Stalin’s chief motive in promoting the policy.

Examiner’s Assessment

This is a strong answer. It displays both good, precise knowledge and analytical ability. The knowledge is used confidently and well to explain various types of motive, and incorporated in the judgement at the end is a balanced attempt to prioritise the motives. The answer merits Level 4.

Mark scheme

L1:

The answer is descriptive and only loosely linked to the question, or is explicitly linked but with little support. It is likely to be assertive and generalised.

L2:

[1–2 marks]

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There will be some relevant knowledge and understanding, but the answer will be mainly descriptive about Stalin’s policy of ‘Socialism in One Country’, with few links; or explanations will show limited range and/or depth.

[3–6 marks]

L3:

The answer will show good understanding, with relevant explanations of why Stalin promoted ‘Socialism in One Country’, using appropriate knowledge, although it may not cover all aspects.

[7–9 marks]

L4:

The answer will be well focused on the issue of Stalin’s motives, with a range of explanations, backed up with precise evidence about motives and probably showing a good awareness of links/connections.

[10–12 marks]

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The Impact of Stalin’s Leadership in the USSR, 1924– 1941

QUESTION 2 (04)

Examiner’s Specific Advice

This question is testing several skills and also your knowledge of the topic. It is not a source-based question. Because the question is on a fundamental topic, you are expected to know the main details of the theme, in this case the results of the First Five-Year Plan in the USSR. You are also being required to provide a historical explanation and make a substantiated judgement about the impact.

As always with an essay-type question, relevance is the key – your answer can be reasonably concise as long as you address the precise question. Relevance is more important than elegance of style – do not over worry about presenting your work with neat introductions and conclusions, especially if you are writing under examination conditions.

Remember not to ignore the ‘modern’ aspect – what did *modern* mean in the context of the 1930s? The key thing is not to narrate and describe, but keep the precise question in mind: to what extent was the First Five-Year Plan effective in both industrialising and modernising the USSR?

Most importantly, do make a judgement and back it up with evidence, either with a concluding paragraph or throughout the essay.

You might find it advisable for an essay-type answer of this sort to have a plan, since you will almost certainly be writing several paragraphs.

Exemplar Question

2 (04) ‘The First Five-Year Plan (1928–1933) succeeded in turning the USSR into a

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modern industrial state.’

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[24 marks]

Plan

- Introduction – the Soviet economy in 1928
- Motives for the Plan
- Successes and failures of the Plan
- The economy in 1933
- How modernised and industrialised was the USSR?
- Conclusion

Examiner’s Exemplar Answer 1

Stalin brought in the First Five-Year Plan because he wanted to modernise the USSR. This required a building up of heavy industry. The USSR was still backward compared to developed countries like the USA, Britain and Germany, although these countries were about to go through the Great Depression (1).

The Plan concentrated on building up huge industries like steel and coal, instead of goods which people wanted to buy in the shops. The country needed steel, coal and power, and also defence equipment. The Government set targets for all industries. They were very ambitious targets, and planners decided where the necessary resources should go. Many new workers had to be recruited. Often these were people who had not worked in factories before, and sometimes they were ex-peasants. Many prisoners in labour camps also had to work on projects like canals. The USSR lacked modern equipment and recruited specialists from abroad. They also paid for foreign equipment by selling grain abroad (2).

Not all the targets were met in 1933. Some of the targets wanted an increase in production of 300 per cent. When targets were not met, the Government looked for people to blame: a number of foreign specialists and engineers were tried for sabotage (3).

Some new industrial towns like Magnitogorsk were built. Stalin claimed in 1932 that the Plan had been completed ahead of schedule, although there was so much propaganda that it is difficult for historians to know the truth about this (4).

(1) This first paragraph is about motives for the Plan rather than its impact, although hopefully it will be made relevant later when assessing that impact.

(2) This paragraph displays accurate knowledge, but it is mostly description and needs more precise focus on the question of impact.

(3) Again, this paragraph is not focused on the question.

(4) At the end, the answer peters out, with no real focus on the precise question.

Examiner’s Assessment

This answer has several faults. It contains accurate knowledge, but mostly it is used as description. The answer seems to be focused on whether the Plan was successful or not. This could be made relevant, but the main focus of this question is about successful industrialisation and modernisation. Despite some accurate contextual analysis at the start of the answer, this focus is never returned to, so there is very little relevant analysis or evaluation. Because of this, the answer merits a low Level 2.

Examiner’s Exemplar Answer 2

In NEP Russia in 1928, it was evident that the industrialisation which Communists believed to be necessary to strengthen the country and move it forward into socialism was still a long way off. Despite a recovery from the war years of 1917-21, heavy industry was still lagging well behind Soviet needs. Heavy industry was controlled by the state, but it was heavily subsidised, inefficient and operating at a low level of

(5) This is a good concise introduction. It sets out the economic

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productivity by modern standards (5).

The Five-Year Plan was a new economic model. It was based upon complete Government control. Crucially, the state determined the priorities and set targets to be achieved over five years. The targets were then broken down into short-term targets and the resources were allocated to factories (6).

The Five-year Plan was a massive experiment and meant economic upheaval, with new factories and towns being built and vast amounts of labour conscripted or recruited into the factories. Although the targets were very ambitious, there were some notable successes as well as inefficiency, confusion and some targets not being met. The process was under way by which the USSR was to become a predominantly industrial rather than agricultural country. New hydro-electric power stations provided big increases in energy. Iron and steel production was boosted. Transportation and communications improved. Education improved, leading to more specialists and increased skill levels. Some of the industries were built beyond the Urals, away from western areas which were more vulnerable to invasion. This was to benefit the USSR when Germany invaded in 1941 (7).

The First Five-Year Plan alone could not turn the USSR into a modern industrial state. It was just part of a long-term process. Some of the projects begun in this Plan, such as railway extensions and the steel city of Magnitogorsk, were only completed later. Much of the 1928-32 period was about laying the foundations for later consolidation and development. The First Plan was just a start, although in some ways an impressive one (8).

Much of the Plan was about increasing quantity rather than ensuring quality. The planning system measured success by numerical goals, with no measure of quality. Managers were desperate to meet targets and avoid punishment. Getting the figures right was all that mattered. This was not a recipe for modernisation. Innovation and enterprise were discouraged, because they might hold up production. Where production did increase, it was often not the result of improved technology, but due to sheer hard work by a vastly increased workforce, often female and unskilled. Levels of education and skill fell below what was required for a modern economy. Sometimes workers could not operate new machines properly (9).

Therefore the First Five-Year Plan began a process of rapid industrialisation which was continued several years after 1932, when other priorities like defence became equally or more important. There were still deficiencies in some key areas such as chemicals and modern machine tools. These deficiencies and the fact that quality was uneven, and labour productivity low compared to developed economies, meant that although industry had progressed significantly since the 1920s, modernisation had been only partially achieved. Indeed, the goal of a modern, technology-based and quality-orientated economy remained out of reach not just under Stalin but for

situation in 1928, on the eve of the Plan, very effectively.

(6)Strictly speaking this paragraph is not necessary, because it describes the working of the planning system rather than its impact.

(7) Good own knowledge is combined in this paragraph with analysis and evaluation, and with a strong focus on the question.

(8)This is also an effective paragraph. It contains well-supported analysis/evaluation.

(9)In this paragraph, the candidate uses knowledge skilfully to explain the obstacles in the way of the Plan succeeding.

(10)This is an effective, balanced conclusion, which combines knowledge, longer-term perspective, analysis and supported judgement.

the rest of the USSR’s existence (10).

Examiner’s Assessment

This is a strong answer. It combines a range and depth of relevant knowledge, integrated throughout most of the answer with analysis, balanced evaluation and judgement. The focus is on the issue of ‘modern’ and ‘industrial’ most of the time. The answer merits Level 5.

Mark Scheme

L1:

The answer is descriptive, only loosely linked to the question, or it is an explicit answer with little or no effective support. The answer is likely to be generalised and possibly assertive rather than argued.

[1–6 marks]

L2:

The answer shows some understanding of the impact of the First Five-Year Plan. It may be predominantly descriptive about what happened during the Plan, with some links to the issues of modernisation and industrialisation, or it may have explicit links with relevant but limited support.

[7–11 marks]

L3:

The answer shows developed understanding of the impact of the Plan. There will be some assessment, supported by relevant and well-selected knowledge, although there will probably be a lack of weight of detail and/or balance. There will be some understanding of interpretations.

[12–16 marks]

L4:

There is explicit understanding of the impact of the Plan on modernisation and industrialisation. A balanced argument will be supported by good use of evidence and understanding of interpretations.

[17–21 marks]

L5:

The answers will be well focused and closely argued. The arguments about the impact of the First Five-Year Plan will be supported by precisely chosen evidence leading to a relevant conclusion/judgement, incorporating a well-developed understanding of interpretations and debate.

[22–24 marks]

Sample questions

(a) Explain why Stalin purged the armed forces in the 1930s.

[12 marks]

(b) ‘The Terror ensured that the USSR was well prepared for war in 1941.’

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

[24 marks]

Chronology: Key Events in *the USSR, 1924–41*

1924	Death of Lenin. Stalin publishes <i>Foundations of Leninism</i> .
1925	Trotsky dismissed as Commissar for War. Stalin argues for ‘Socialism in One Country’.
1926	Zinoviev expelled from the Politburo. Stalin attacks the United Opposition.
1927	Trotsky and Kamenev expelled from the Politburo. Trotsky and Zinoviev expelled from the Party. Party agrees to collectivisation.
1928	Grain requisitioned by the Urals-Siberian method. Trotsky exiled to Central Asia. Zinoviev and Kamenev denounce Trotsky. Beginning of collectivisation. Shakhty show trials.
1929	Trotsky exiled from the USSR. Stalin attacks Bukharin and the Right. First Five-Year Plan. Bukharin sacked from the Politburo. Stalin becomes head of the USSR.
1930	Campaign against the kulaks accelerates.
1932	The Great Famine. Zinoviev and Kamenev exiled to Siberia. Proclamation of Socialist Realism.
1933	One third of Party members are sacked. Second Five-Year Plan.
1934	‘Congress of Victors’. The GPU becomes the NKVD. Peasants allowed to have private plots. Murder of Kirov.
1935	Arrest of Zinoviev and Kamenev. Moscow Metro is opened. Stakhanovite programme begins. Almost 10 per cent of Party members expelled.
1936	Stalin Constitution adopted. Show trial and execution of Kamenev and Zinoviev. Yezhov becomes head of the NKVD. Announcement that USSR has achieved socialism.
1937	Further show trials, including Radek. Purge of armed forces. Tukhachevsky and other leading officers executed.
1938	Bukharin, Yagoda and Rykov tried and executed.

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	Beria becomes head of the NKVD. Third Five-Year Plan.
1939	Stalin declares an end to the Terror. The USSR occupies eastern Poland.
1940	Trotsky assassinated in Mexico. Annexation of Baltic States.
1941	The USSR is invaded by Germany.

Teacher’s Resources

1, Role-play exercise. Divide the class into five groups, each representing one of Zinoviev, Trotsky, Kamenev and Bukharin. Each group will prepare and argue its case as to why their individual should become the next leader of the USSR following Lenin’s death in 1924.

2. Consider the first three Five-Year Plans, and list any similarities and differences between the three, in terms of aims, processes and results.

Websites

www.hsc.csu.edu.au/modern_history/national_studies/russia

www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook39.html#The%20Tsarist%20S