

## Section 1: Russia in transition, 1905–1924

### Chapter 1: The causes and impact of the Revolutions of 1917

#### 1.1 What were the causes of the revolutions of 1917?

##### Exam practice (page 14)

Use Source A and your own knowledge to describe Rasputin's influence over the Russian royal family. [3 marks]

**Sample answer:** Source A shows the Tsar and Tsarina being cared for by Rasputin. Rasputin is portrayed as a large powerful individual who appears to be in control of the royal family. The Tsar and Tsarina had come to rely upon Rasputin to control the blood disorder that their son Alexis suffered from. When the Tsar left St. Petersburg in 1915 to direct the war effort from the front the control of the Russian government was left in the hands of the Tsarina and Rasputin. Many nobles disliked the influence Rasputin had over the royal family.

**Comment:** This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. The candidate has described the cartoon, detailing how Rasputin was portrayed as exercising control over the Royal Family. Referring to the importance of Rasputin in controlling the medical condition of Alexis shows own knowledge, as does the mention of his influence over the Tsarina in directing the affairs of government whilst the Tsar was away at the front. There is good use of the source and own knowledge to present a reasoned and informed account.

#### 1.2 What were the main developments during the Bolshevik seizure of power?

##### Exam practice (page 15)

Explain why revolution broke out in Russia in February 1917. [6 marks]

**Sample answer:** The First World War caused extensive economic hardship in Russia. Harsh working conditions resulted in the outbreak of strikes in February 1917, one of the largest being at the Putilov steelworks. As the strikes grew in number the Tsar ordered soldiers to break up the demonstrations, which only increased the tension. The severe winter of 1916-17 had caused food and fuel shortages and resulted in higher food prices and increased rationing. The Tsar and his ministers were blamed for failing to solve these problems. Another cause of discontent was the growing unpopularity of the rule of the Tsarina and her relationship with Rasputin. Many nobles disliked the influence Rasputin exercised over the royal family. Also, Russia's heavy defeats in the First World War were blamed on the weak leadership of the Tsar, who had moved to the front to take charge of directing Russia's war effort. The high cost of fighting the war together with the constant drain upon essential supplies caused growing frustration and hardship within Russia. It was therefore a combination of factors that caused revolution to break out in Russia in February 1917.

**Comment:** This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is detailed and well structured, and covers a range of key factors: the impact of economic hardship caused by the war; growing industrial unrest; the impact of the severe winter of 1916-17; the unpopularity of the

Tsarina and Rasputin, and the failure of the Tsar to direct Russia's war effort. The final sentence provides a summary.

### Exam practice (page 18)

How far was the leadership of Lenin the main reason for Bolshevik success in their seizure of power in October 1917? In your answer you should discuss the leadership of Lenin and other factors that enabled the Bolsheviks to seize power in October 1917. [12 marks & 3 marks for SPaG]

**Sample answer:** While Lenin clearly played a very important role in the success of the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917, that success was also due to other factors such as Trotsky's control and direction as well as the weaknesses of the Provisional Government.

As leader of the Bolshevik Party Lenin was the main person in charge. Following his return to Petrograd from exile in Finland on 7<sup>th</sup> October he persuaded the Bolshevik Central Committee to agree to an uprising. Lenin was a gifted public speaker who used his simple slogans to win support. Through his 'April Theses' he won support with such slogans as 'Peace, Bread and Land' and 'All power to the Soviets'. By mid-October the Bolshevik Party had 340,000 members and Lenin was its mouthpiece. On 23<sup>rd</sup> October, as the power of the Provisional Government dwindled, Lenin ordered the revolution to begin. During the night of 24<sup>th</sup>–25<sup>th</sup> October Red Guards took control of key points in Petrograd and by the 26<sup>th</sup> the Provisional Government had collapsed and Lenin could proclaim a new all-Bolshevik government.

However, while Lenin gave the orders, it was Trotsky who took control of directing and organising the seizure of power from his headquarters in the Smolny Institute. He commanded the Red Guards and ran the Military Revolutionary Committee. Trotsky therefore played a key role in ensuring the success of the seizure of power. What made the task easier was the weakness of the Provisional Government. Its power had been weakened due to competition with the Petrograd Soviet during the period of Dual Power. It had no control over the armed forces and its decision to continue with the war was highly unpopular. There were few who were prepared to fight to save the Provisional Government.

A combination of factors therefore contributed to the success of the Bolsheviks in their seizure of power in October 1917. Lenin's leadership and public speaking ability undoubtedly rallied the Bolsheviks and it was his insistence that the 'time was right' that resulted in the coup taking place when it did. However, his contribution must be gauged alongside other factors such as the contribution of Trotsky who managed the Red Guards during the seizure of power. He played a key role but he did so under the leadership of Lenin. Another key factor was the weakness of the Provisional Government and the unwillingness of citizens to fight to save it.

**Comment:** This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is a well-developed two-sided argument which is supported with specific factual detail. The leadership qualities of Lenin are identified and explained with supporting examples of his decisions and slogans. The counter-argument is explored and alternative factors are discussed, such as the contribution of Trotsky and the weaknesses of the Provisional Government. The essay concludes with a reasoned judgement and a clear link back to the question. The quality of SPaG is high throughout the essay.

### 1.3 What were the consequences of the revolutions of 1917?

#### Exam practice (page 19)

Outline briefly the key reforms passed by the Sovnarkom during November and December 1917. [4 marks]

**Sample answer:** During November and December 1917 the Sovnarkom passed a number of decrees to help create a Bolshevik state. Many of the reforms were intended to win over the workers and peasants such as the Decree on Land which redistributed land which had belonged to the Tsar, the Church and wealthy Russian nobles. The Decree on Work introduced an eight hour day and a 48 hour working week for industrial workers. Some decrees were designed to make the Bolshevik Party stronger by abolishing all other political parties, introducing the Cheka and controlling the press. By such reforms the Sovnarkom helped to turn Russia into a one party state, ruled according to the beliefs of the Bolshevik Party.

**Comment:** This response bears the characteristics of a top performing answer which identifies a number of specific reforms and describes their key features in some detail. The answer has range, depth and displays a mature understanding of the reforms of the Sovnarkom.

## Chapter 2: The causes and impact of the Civil War, 1918–1921

### 2.2 What were the main developments during the Civil War?

#### Exam practice (page 23)

Describe the part played by foreign powers in the Civil War. [4 marks]

**Sample answer:** Foreign powers intervened in the Civil War to support the Whites in their fight against the Red Army of the Bolsheviks. Britain, France, the USA and Japan all feared the spread of Communism and supplied the White forces in the hope of restoring the Tsar to power and keeping Russia in the war. Britain sent the North Russian Expeditionary Force to Archangel in the Baltic and also ships to the Black Sea. France sent troops to fight against Bolshevik forces in the Ukraine. The Japanese sent an army into Siberia in the hope of pushing back Bolshevik forces. America supplied troops to support British and French forces in Archangel and to Siberia to limit the spread of Japanese forces. However, by 1921 most of these forces had been withdrawn and the White forces faced defeat at the hands of the Red Army. Foreign intervention had failed to stop Lenin and the Bolsheviks from taking control of Russia.

**Comment:** This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. It is accurate and well-informed, being supported with good factual detail. Reference is made to the specific actions of Britain, France, the USA and Japan in supporting White forces in the Civil War. A brief comment is made on the geographical regions in which these countries operated. The concluding sentence makes the point that all this effort came to nothing, as the Whites lost the Civil War, despite receiving help from the foreign powers.

#### Exam practice (page 24)

Explain why the Tsar and his family were murdered in 1918. [6 marks]

**Sample answer:** The decision to murder the Royal Family was taken by Lenin in July 1918 because the situation was getting critical. The Tsar and his family were held captive by Red Army forces in the town of Ekaterinburg in the Ural Mountains. By early July the Czech Legion was approaching the town and there was the possibility that the Royal Family could be rescued by the Whites. Lenin did not want this to happen as it would be a great boost to the Whites. The Tsar's rescue would also serve to lower the morale of the Red Forces. For these reasons Lenin ordered the murder of Tsar and his family which took place on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1918.

**Comment:** This response bears the characteristics of a top performing answer that includes relevant factual detail which covers several key reasons such as the approaching White forces, Lenin not wanting the Tsar to be rescued by the White forces, and the effect such a rescue would have on the morale of the Red forces.

### 2.3 Why were the Reds able to win the Civil War?

#### Exam practice (page 26)

Why do Sources A and B have different views about the strength of the White forces during the Civil War? [8 marks]

**Sample answer:** Sources A and B have different views about the strength of White forces during the Civil War. Source A is the viewpoint of Y. Kukushkin, a Communist author who highlights the importance of the Red Army success by saying that the White forces were better equipped, better trained and their army was much larger in number. They faced the Red Army which was made up of workers and peasants, not trained soldiers but they had the advantage of being loyal and devoted to the aims and beliefs of the Bolsheviks. Source A is clearly very biased and is taken from a history of the USSR written by a Communist historian in 1981 and was subject to censorship. This contrasts with Source B which says that the White forces were dispersed along the edges of the Russian empire. They were made up of many different nationalities and did not cooperate that well. These forces had different policies and aims and did not trust each other. Source B is the interpretation of the historian Philip Ingram writing in a GCSE history textbook in 1997. Ingram would have researched this event and was writing with the benefit of hindsight enabling him to produce a more reasoned and balanced interpretation. The circumstances under which both sources were produced explain why they differ so much in their interpretation of the strengths of the White forces during the Civil War. Source A is the official Communist version of the events which displays elements of bias, while Source B is a balanced and more reflective interpretation of events.

**Comment:** This response displays the characteristics of a high performing answer. The candidate has performed a thorough evaluation of each source, with clear reference to content, origin and purpose. The content has been explained and put into context. There is good evaluation of both attributions, referring to the authors and the nature of their publications, spelling out the reasons for possible bias and/or reliability issues. The concluding paragraph compares and contrasts both sources, providing a judgement upon why they differ in their interpretation of the strength of White forces.

## Chapter 3: The development of the Communist state, 1921–1924

### 3.1 Why did Lenin introduce the New Economic Policy and how successful was it?

#### Exam practice (page 28)

Describe the key features of the New Economic Policy. [4 marks]

**Sample answer:** The NEP was introduced by Lenin in 1921 to win back the support of the people after the hardship of the policy of war Communism. It was intended to be a temporary measure to help the country get back on its feet. Lenin wanted to revive the economy and so to help industry he allowed small factories of fewer than 20 workers to be returned to their owners and allowed them to make a profit. To encourage economic growth traders known as Nepmen were allowed to buy goods and sell them at a profit. To help boost farming, peasants were allowed to keep surplus grain

after they had paid their taxes and sell it for profit. This led to the emergence of better-off peasants known as Kulaks. Lenin allowed some private enterprise but all key industries such as coal and steel as well as the transport and the banking system remained under state control. The NEP was meant to be a temporary measure.

**Comment:** This response displays the characteristics of a top performing answer which is structured and well informed. Several key features of the NEP are described in detail, using specific terminology such as Nepmen and Kulaks. The answer displays both range and depth of detail.

### 3.2 Did Lenin succeed in establishing a Communist state in Russia?

#### Exam practice (page 31)

How important was the use of propaganda and censorship in the establishment of a Communist state? [8 marks]

**Sample answer:** Propaganda and censorship played an important part in the establishment of a Communist state. Through the use of propaganda Lenin was able to spread his political ideas and indoctrinate the Russian people in Communist beliefs. Lenin used all sorts of media such as posters, banners, films, the radio and the press. Agitprop trains and boats toured the country to spread Communist ideology. The Party had its own newspapers and films like Sergei Eisenstein's 'October' helped spread the message of the power of the people and their importance to the Communist Party. Equally important was the use of censorship which controlled what was written and broadcast about the regime. This ensured there was no negative publicity and only positive information was printed about the Party, its policies and its leaders. Censorship of books, newspapers, films and radio broadcasts was therefore important to the Communist regime and supported the use of propaganda to spread the Party message.

**Comment:** This response displays the characteristics of a top performing answer. It deals equally with both factors mentioned in the question, identifies several reasons to help explain the importance of propaganda and censorship in helping to establish a Communist state in Russia. A judgement on 'how important' is made at the end of the answer.

### 3.3 What was Lenin's legacy to Russia?

#### Exam practice (page 34)

Why do Sources A and B have different views about the qualities of Lenin as a leader? [8 marks]

**Sample answer:** Sources A and B have very different views about Lenin because of who wrote them. Source A was written by a member of the Bolshevik Party's Central Committee in January 1924, at the time of Lenin's death. The Bolshevik Party would have viewed its leader, Lenin, as a great man and in the source refers to him as a genius, a man who had a fearless mind and who took action to protect the rights of the workers. He moved mountains and was deserving of praise. Source B gives a very different picture of Lenin and is part of an obituary notice published in 'The Times' on 23 January 1924. Many people in Britain did not like the Communist system Lenin had set up in Russia. The upper class readers of this newspaper would fear communism. The source says that Lenin had no scruples and did not really care about the Russian people. It says the system he created caused economic ruin, famine and barbarism. The two sources differ in their views because one is an official view of Lenin by the Bolshevik Party and the other is the view of an upper class British newspaper whose readers feared Communism.

**Comment:** This response displays the characteristics of a top performing answer. It has compared the content of both sources, illustrating how their views of Lenin differ. The authors of both sources have been evaluated and a judgement has been made to explain why they hold contrasting but biased views. This judgement is reinforced in the concluding sentence.