

A-LEVEL

History

Component 2T The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the
Soviet Empire, 1953–2000

Mark scheme

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June 2017

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It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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June 2017

A-level

Component 2T The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953–2000

Section A

- 01** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the August coup of 1991.

[30 marks]

Target: AO2

Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within the historical context.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Shows a very good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with a strong awareness of the historical context to present a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. The answer will convey a substantiated judgement. The response demonstrates a very good understanding of context. **25-30**
- L4:** Shows a good understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance and combines this with an awareness of the historical context to provide a balanced argument on their value for the particular purpose given in the question. Judgements may, however, be partial or limited in substantiation. The response demonstrates a good understanding of context. **19-24**
- L3:** Shows some understanding of all three sources in relation to both content and provenance together with some awareness of the historical context. There may, however, be some imbalance in the degree of breadth and depth of comment offered on all three sources and the analysis may not be fully convincing. The answer will make some attempt to consider the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates an understanding of context. **13-18**
- L2:** The answer will be partial. It may, for example, provide some comment on the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question but only address one or two of the sources, or focus exclusively on content (or provenance), or it may consider all three sources but fail to address the value of the sources for the particular purpose given in the question. The response demonstrates some understanding of context. **7-12**
- L1:** The answer will offer some comment on the value of at least one source in relation to the purpose given in the question but the response will be limited and may be partially inaccurate. Comments are likely to be unsupported, vague or generalist. The response demonstrates limited understanding of context. **1-6**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Students must deploy knowledge of the historical context to show an understanding of the relationship between the sources and the issues raised in the question, when assessing the significance of provenance, the arguments deployed in the sources and the tone and emphasis of the sources. Descriptive answers which fail to do this should be awarded no more than Level 2 at best. Answers should address both the value and the limitations of the sources for the particular question and purpose given.

Source A: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis:

- this source comes from a well-informed Communist official, addressing an ‘inside’ audience of people high in the Party, not for general public consumption. It is valuable because it is likely to reflect honest concerns about the situation that led to the August coup
- the timing, January 1991, is significant: much of the ‘Soviet Empire’ has recently broken away from the USSR, reflecting the end of the Cold War and spreading demands for reform. It is valuable because it shows how many Communists were blaming *perestroika* (i.e. Gorbachev) for endangering the whole economic and political system
- it may be seen as less valuable because the tone is partisan and persuasive: phrases like ‘so-called democrats’ and ‘taught to meekly accept the business class’ reflect the speaker’s hostility to accelerated, uncontrolled reform.

Content and argument:

- *Perestroika* has ‘not taken place’ – because its aims have been altered, taking it away from the Party. This is an implicit criticism of Gorbachev and his supporters; answers may use own knowledge to explain why many in the Party were ready to blame him
- the people have been ‘deprived of their past’ (true Communism) and pushed into dangerous uncertainty. Again, it is clearly implied Gorbachev is to blame; answers may use own knowledge to demonstrate how ordinary people saw themselves as worse off at this time
- the Party is to blame for letting this happen; answers might use own knowledge to identify and explain the stiffening resistance to Gorbachev within the Party
- the argument is very anti-capitalist and ready to attack ‘political movements with no interest in socialist aims’. Answers may use own knowledge to explain the role and influence of reformers and ‘modernisers’ advising Gorbachev (and the influence of the West).

Source B: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:

Provenance, tone and emphasis:

- the source is valuable because it reflects the spontaneous reaction of ‘an ordinary person’; and how difficult it was for such people to know what was really going on
- it may be seen as less valuable because it is based on a not very well-informed outlook; and there is no way of knowing how typical it was

- the tone is immediate and personal, with no evident intention to project a partisan viewpoint.

Content and argument:

- the main theme is shock and surprise, and the difficulty of finding out what was really happening. Own knowledge of other similar reactions could be used to develop this
- the viewpoint is of someone not very politically engaged but who feels that he must do his best to find out more
- at first, he accepts the view of the State Emergency Committee and shows willingness to see them 'restore order' and deal harshly with Yeltsin
- the final sentence indicates a re-assessment of what had happened and a new scepticism about political manipulation. Own knowledge could be used to develop this; either to criticise the manipulation of the State Emergency Committee, or to attack Yeltsin for his manipulation of events to increase his own power.

Source C: in assessing the value of this source, students may refer to the following:**Provenance, tone and emphasis:**

- it is valuable because this author is a prominent political leader, who reveals the extreme nationalist views, and hostility towards the new Russia, that were a reaction against the venture of August 1991
- his book was written in 1993, soon after the events described, reflecting the dismay felt by many people about the perceived social breakdown in Russia
- it is less valuable because its tone is partisan and aggressive towards the 'half-drunk Muscovites' who attacked soldiers; and to the 'Democratic Russia people' who inflamed the situation; to match this, he is very sympathetic to 'our lads'.

Content and argument:

- Zhirinovsky does accept, grudgingly, that the deployment of the troops might have been 'unjustified' – but his main theme is that the reaction against the troops was 'awful'. Answers might use own knowledge of the events of August to corroborate or refute this
- there is strong, patriotic support for 'our lads' (the soldiers). Answers might use own knowledge of the spontaneous reactions of Moscow citizens in order to challenge this; and/or to comment on Zhirinovsky's political position as an extreme nationalist and untypical
- he defends the State Emergency Committee (the men who deposed Gorbachev) and attacks the 'Democratic Russia people' (Yeltsin and his supporters)
- answers may use own knowledge of Yeltsin's actions, and the extent of popular support for Yeltsin, to comment on the motives behind the August coup, and the reasons for its failure.

Section B

02 ‘Nikita Khrushchev was overthrown in 1964 despite his mostly successful policies.’

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16-20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6-10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Answers should be able to present a range of evidence and arguments to assess the extent of success and failure in Khrushchev's policies between 1953 and 1964. Material about longer-term consequences after 1964 MAY be used to comment on this, but it should be directly applied to the question, and is NOT a requirement.

Arguments/factors suggesting that Nikita Khrushchev was overthrown in 1964 despite his mostly successful policies might include:

- it can be argued that Khrushchev's urgent attempts at 'De-Stalinisation' were indeed necessary because of Stalin's dreadful legacy, Khrushchev's rivals in the Politburo knew and understood this, but were frightened of radical change
- Khrushchev did bring about a 'thaw' – releasing prisoners from the *gulag* and enabling more cultural freedoms. This was a necessary change of direction but it alarmed the Old Guard
- Khrushchev did succeed in defusing Cold War tensions and moving towards peaceful coexistence. His policies over Berlin in 1958–1961 were both necessary and effective; and he handled the outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis well
- there were major successes in science and technology. The Seven Year Plan may have been rushed and over-ambitious but did achieve some significant successes, especially in industry
- the cult of terror was successfully ended. Beria was the last leading politician to be eliminated by judicial murder. Khrushchev's fate in 1964 (dismissed but allowed to live on in grumpy retirement) was a symbol of change for the better.

Arguments/factors challenging the view that Nikita Khrushchev was overthrown in 1964 despite his mostly successful policies might include:

- change may have been necessary but not the wild rush with which Khrushchev acted. His colleagues were right to overthrow him in 1964
- his agricultural policies were a disaster (e.g. the Virgin Lands Scheme)
- his Seven Year Plan was over-ambitious and mismanaged, repeating many of the mistakes of Stalin's plans in the 1930s. It was unnecessary and unsuccessful – he caused his own downfall
- his foreign policies were provocative and counter-productive, throwing away very good opportunities for improved relations with the West by provoking the Cuba crisis. This was an unnecessary failure, weakening his political position
- he failed to understand the limitations of the Soviet system and created dangerous instability inside the regime, contributing to his own downfall.

One feature of higher-level answers may be the ability to differentiate between what was 'necessary and/or 'successful', perhaps explaining how Khrushchev was forced into rushed and risky policies by the severity of the crises facing the USSR; and by the entrenched resistance to reform from the Old Guard.

- 03** To what extent was the 1968 Prague Spring similar to the 1956 Hungarian Rising? **[25 marks]**

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16-20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6-10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Answers should be able to present a balanced assessment of similarities and differences in analysing the outcome of the two events, the reform movements and the response of the USSR.

Arguments/factors suggesting that the 1968 Prague Spring was similar to the 1956 Hungarian Rising might include:

- both reform movements were initiated by loyal Communists who did not intend to open rebellion against the USSR
- both movements became more radical as events developed; partly because of encouragement from Western influences
- both movements were initially encouraged by the policies of 'de-Stalinisation initiated by the Soviet leadership'
- both movements were crushed by Soviet armed force (in each case after being deceived by Soviet pretence of compromise)
- in each case, Nagy in Hungary and Dubcek in Czechoslovakia, could be accused of being naïve and unrealistic.

Arguments/factors challenging the view that the 1968 Prague Spring was similar to the 1956 Hungarian Rising might include:

- Dubcek and his colleagues thought they were deliberately and carefully avoiding the 'mistakes' made in Hungary in 1956
- the Budapest Rising became overtly nationalistic and 'separatist' in a way the leaders of the Prague Spring were careful to avoid
- in 1956 armed force was from the USSR alone; in 1968 it was a carefully coordinated joint action by Warsaw Pact forces, following a stated 'Brezhnev Doctrine'
- in 1956 many Hungarians genuinely believed the West would intervene; Dubcek knew in 1968 there was no chance of this
- the 1956 rising became violent and revolutionary; the Prague Spring did not (this helps to explain why Nagy and allies were murdered, but the Czechoslovakia leaders in 1968 were not).

One feature of high-quality answers may be skilful differentiation between aspects that might show degrees of difference and/or similarity in order to reach a balanced argument as to which was greater.

04 ‘Instability in the satellite states in the years 1981 to 1989 was due to Western influences.’

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Target: AO1

Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

Generic Mark Scheme

- L5:** Answers will display a very good understanding of the full demands of the question. They will be well-organised and effectively delivered. The supporting information will be well-selected, specific and precise. It will show a very good understanding of key features, issues and concepts. The answer will be fully analytical with a balanced argument and well-substantiated judgement. **21-25**
- L4:** Answers will display a good understanding of the demands of the question. It will be well-organised and effectively communicated. There will be a range of clear and specific supporting information showing a good understanding of key features and issues, together with some conceptual awareness. The answer will be analytical in style with a range of direct comment relating to the question. The answer will be well-balanced with some judgement, which may, however, be only partially substantiated. **16-20**
- L3:** Answers will show an understanding of the question and will supply a range of largely accurate information which will show an awareness of some of the key issues and features, but may, however, be unspecific or lack precision of detail. The answer will be effectively organised and show adequate communication skills. There will be a good deal of comment in relation to the question and the answer will display some balance, but a number of statements may be inadequately supported and generalist. **11-15**
- L2:** The answer is descriptive or partial, showing some awareness of the question but a failure to grasp its full demands. There will be some attempt to convey material in an organised way although communication skills may be limited. There will be some appropriate information showing understanding of some key features and/or issues, but the answer may be very limited in scope and/or contain inaccuracy and irrelevance. There will be some, but limited, comment in relation to the question and statements will, for the most part, be unsupported and generalist. **6-10**
- L1:** The question has not been properly understood and the response shows limited organisational and communication skills. The information conveyed is irrelevant or extremely limited. There may be some unsupported, vague or generalist comment. **1-5**
- Nothing worthy of credit. **0**

Indicative content

Note: This content is not prescriptive and students are not obliged to refer to the material contained in this mark scheme. Any legitimate answer will be assessed on its merits according to the generic levels scheme.

Answers should be able to present a range of evidence and arguments to assess the importance of Western influences in causing instability in the satellite states. ‘Western influences’ can be broadly defined, the actions of Reagan and Western European leaders; the role of Pope John Paul II; peace activists; cultural effects of the media. It cannot be expected that coverage of these aspects will be comprehensive.

Arguments/factors suggesting that instability in the satellite states in the years 1981 to 1989 was due to Western influences might include:

- from 1979–1981 assertive leaders emerged (Reagan, Thatcher, the Polish Pope) at the forefront of the ‘New Cold War’, highlighting weaknesses in the Soviet Bloc and encouraging demands for change
- moves towards *détente* in the 1970s, including the Helsinki Accords, and organisations such as Charter 77, encouraged reform movements inside the Soviet Bloc
- the influence of Western media, especially TV, was pervasive. One example of its effects was *Solidarity* in Poland, which deliberately maximised Western coverage
- the success of Western leaders in establishing good relations with Gorbachev from 1986 accelerated the impetus for change in the satellite states.

Arguments/factors challenging the view that instability in the satellite states in the years 1981 to 1989 was due to Western influences might include:

- the key factor was the decay and stagnation of the USSR under Brezhnev
- the overriding reason was internal pressures for reform: the trade union movement in Poland; Neues Forum in the GDR etc.
- the Communist system depended on repression, as shown in 1956 and 1968. When leaders such as Gorbachev and Krenz backed away from this, the system collapsed
- Communist regimes could only last as long as the Cold War did. By the 1980s, the Cold War was in its final phase.

One feature of higher-level answers may be the ability to make links between the various factors involved, perhaps explaining how Western influences accentuated internal weaknesses within the Soviet Empire.