



History

Paper 2R (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 01 Student 2

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0 06/01/16

Specimen Answer plus commentary

The following student response is intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. This response has not been completed under timed examination conditions. It is not intended to be viewed as a 'model' answer and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Paper 2R (AS): Specimen question paper

01 With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two sources is more valuable in explaining why there were differences between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union in 1946?

[25 marks]

Student response

In 1946, the two wartime allies of the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) rapidly shifted to seeing each other as rivals and potential enemies. Dollar diplomacy, America's pursuit of retaining its atomic monopoly and digging aims go, post-war Europe, in particular Germany, created a rift between the two super powers exacerbated by suspicions of each other's ideologies and motives. The other Western powers, especially Britain, also started to fall into line with American thinking in viewing the USSR as a threat both sources are extremely valuable at explaining the roots of these differences at the start of 1946.

Source A is a great assessment of the Western view of the Soviet Union by 1946. It is an extract from a speech given by Winston Churchill in Missouri on 6 March. As Churchill was a British politician, he would have had no partisan commitments in America and would therefore have been able to speak much more explicitly than any US senator or congressman. Furthermore, this is a speech, and Churchill is using it to try and change the opinion of his American audience, which can be seen through his use of rhetorical techniques like inclusive language 'our difficulties and dangers'. Therefore, we can expect it to honestly present Churchill's opinion at this time. This makes the source valuable since, although he had recently lost a General Election, Churchill still retained an enormous amount of respect, and ordinary people and strategists alike would have respected his opinion, particularly as Churchill had been proved right by the second world war (SWW) at least in many people's eyes, that granting concessions to dictators, appeasement, doesn't work. Churchill unambiguously alludes to this when he mentions 'losing our eyes to the west's problems'. Furthermore, as this source is from a speech it would have been widely known, and the Soviet Union would certainly have been aware of it. Indeed, Stalin said it may as well have been a 'declaration of war' it adopts a strident, unapologetic tone (the Soviets want 'totalitarian control'; the West must see 'the establishment of... freedom and democracy- contrary to Soviet aims). Therefore the source is highly valuable in explaining not only the Western view of the USSR, but also why the USSR came to see the West as threatening.

By contrast, Source B, in its own way provocative, spells out clearly the Soviet perception of the West. The source comes from an interview with Stalin in Pravda in May. By this stage, Joseph Stalin was the unquestioned leader of the communist party, having appointed himself Generalissimo and dismissed by generals in 1945, for example. Therefore his views and intentions were the intentions of the soviet state. This potentially makes the source more valuable than A, which only - elates the opinion of one (all be it influential) western political. Also, Pravda was the official newspaper of the Communist Party, so the source's function is to clearly spell out the USSR's policy to the millions of Soviet citizens, again increasing the source's value in explaining how the two powers came to be at

loggerheads. The patriotic tone of the source ('sacrifices of the soviet people') shows how great offence Stalin took at efforts by the west to limit their influence, although, interestingly, he is ambiguous about naming these powers ('some quarters') which perhaps suggests he is afraid to directly provoke America, which at this stage was far more powerful militarily. This source shows the cocktail of mistrust, resentment and anxiety Stalin felt towards the West and furthermore explains to some extent the split between the countries.

Source A gives a limited and only picture of Soviet activities in 1941. In eastern Europe minority communist parties were being lifted 'to pre-eminence and power far beyond their numbers'. To some extent this was true – for example democratic elections scheduled for February in Poland were postponed; Romania just 2 opposition politicians were in the government – but doesn't give the whole picture in Yugoslavia, for instance democracy continued. Churchill argues that this is contrary to the 'liberated Europe' the allies had fought for – a charged phrase given the 'declaration of liberated Europe' which Stalin had signed at Yalta in February 1945; the implication is that Stalin was going back on his wartime promises. In Churchill's analysis, the USSR's aim was 'indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines'. It certainly may have seemed that way to the West in 1946. Soviet troops were still in northern Iran past their 1 March deadline for withdrawal, for example. However, in hindsight his 1944 agreement with Churchill that Greece should remain within Britain's sphere of influence by not sending aid and materiele to Greek communist in the civil war; recognised Tiang's nationalist government in China; provided only meagre support to the Chinese communist party. More fundamentally, historians have suggested that Stalin's real aim was not to roll out communism across Eurasia, but merely ensure security for the USSR. JL Gaddis names 'security for himself' as Stalin's main aim at this stage. Therefore, the source's value comes not from giving a precise analysis of what the soviet Union's real strategy was in 1946 but in illustrating how this was perceived by the West, which informs the West's increasingly tough stance in 1946, widening the differences between this.

Source b gives an insightful look into what Stalin actually thought in 1946. Throughout the source there is a dogged, persistent focus on Germany 'battles with the Germans', through German occupation', the Hitlerite yoke. 'The SWW had been devastating for the Soviet Union: 7 million people (in reality probably more) had been killed; the USSR's GNP had fallen by a third, 100,000 collective farms had been laid waste. Therefore it is fully understandable that Stalin should be so ferried of a resurgent Germany, which had invaded his country twice in 30 years. This helps explain how later actions by the Anglo-American (in July Britain and America merged their German Zones of occupation to create the Bizone; in September, secretary of state Byrnes announced relaxations of curbs on German industrial production), so alarmed the USSR – Stalin's advisor, believed Germany could be an economic superpower again within 18 years – and created difference between the Western powers and the USSR. By contrast, America had suggested war losses of just 300,000 (0.25% of the pre-war population) and had minimum fighting on home soil. Therefore, one of the valuable aspects of this source is that it sheds light on how Americans and the Soviet Union's radically different experiences of war helped lead to a rift.

Source B also makes clear some of the USSR's motives. Stalin says that the ~Soviet Union wants to 'ensure its security for the future', by fostering governments on it, borders who are 'loyal in relations to the USSR. This is in complete contrast with Source A, which place, the 'expansion of.. doctrines' at the head of Soviet forigne policy (the West saw the USSR as essentially ideologically driven trauma, influenced by the 'Long telegram' and 'Clifford Elsey repeat' came to share this view. This makes the sources valuable set against each other as we can see how the world views of the West and USSR

were opposing and increasingly in compatible by 1946.

Overall, both sources complement each other by explaining how, by taking different lessons from the SWW (the USSR feared a resurgent Germany and believed its sacrifice of 7 million war dead shouldn't entitle it to a say in post war Europe, the USA believed that the Munich analogy showed it was wrong to acquiesce to dictators demands and that the job of liberating Europe, began in the SWW, needed to be finished caused their foreign policies to divert. Source B is the more useful because, coming from the Soviet leader himself, it more closely emphasises official Soviet ideology and policy aims, whereas Source A, although it went on to influence Western foreign policy, was only one of a number of factors which did so and, by referencing the USSR; experience of the SWW, reminds us of an important influence on Soviet thinking which source A neglects.

Commentary – Level 5

This is a very strong and comprehensive answer. It assesses the significance of the provenance of each source and supports this assessment with evidence and makes relevant comment on the tone of each source. Perhaps the major strength of the answer is the balanced assessment that is made of the two sources by using knowledge of context to assess how far the sources have validity and accuracy. The answer also contains high level judgement and sophistication in places commenting, for example, on the value of source A both for understanding the west's position and the Soviet Union's.

This would achieve top Level 5. It is not 'perfect', but answers do not need to be to be awarded the top mark.