



History

Paper 2R (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 01 Student 3

Specimen Answer and Commentary

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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

The two sources allow us to see the differences between the two 'camps' in the Cold War. The first of these quotes can be seen as the more relevant, spoken by Winston Churchill in Fulton, Missouri, during the sixth of March, 1946, shows to us a mistrust of the Soviets, by the ex-Prime Minister. He is seen to be claiming that Eastern Europe has had "Communist parties, which were very small" were raised to positions of leadership by the Soviet Union. We can see an example of this as being true if we look at Poland, where Communist control was forcibly introduced with a variety of tactics, including leaving the Polish resistance to fall at the hands of the Nazi's whilst defending the capital.

Since the provenance of the first source is Churchill, the ex-Prime Minister of Britain, his view could be seen as a biased one, as before and during the start of the Second World War, we could see mistrust of the Soviets, which was only put aside to stop Nazi Germany. With the lack of a common enemy, it is understandable that Churchill does not see Europe to contain "the essentials of a permanent peace". Another issue with it being that Churchill is the ex-Prime Minister. With him being removed from office, he no longer has up to date information about Soviet activities. Meaning the differences he explains may not have been correct at the time.

Churchill's tone in the speech is shown to be of making the residents of Fulton see the threat a Soviet Eastern Europe posed, with use of "Totalitarian control", we can see Churchill's subtle attempts into making references between the Communists and Fascists. This shows the lack of trust a person such as Winston Churchill had of his War time allies and the aggressive nature of Churchill's speech against the Soviet leadership. This tone increases the value of the source as it allows us to see how an ex-Western leader feels about the Soviets.

This quote show us the why differences between the two sides, as we can see, whilst Churchill and the West strives for "Freedom and Democracy", he sees Stalin and the Communists and striving for "the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power"; as if claiming that Communist Russia wanted the world under their "Totalitarian control". Which, if we look at their aggressive tactics to take control of Eastern European states, including supposed assassination of a Czech government official, it is understandable why Churchill sees the threat of Communism, and more specifically, Russia. These facts make this source more effective in showing us the differences between the West and Soviet powers.

The second source, an interview with Josef Stalin in Pravda, a Government-owned Soviet newspaper, ten days after Churchill's speech, shows more of a look back at the countries achievements through the Second World War, focusing on "battles with the Germans" as well as the

loss of “about 7 million people”. However, even though this is more looking back on the past, it does enable us to see the reasoning behind Soviet expansion, albeit, not as effectively as the first source.

The provenance is Josef Stalin, the Soviet leader, which makes him both reliable, due to him having up to date information about events, however, it also makes him unreliable, as it means he is not likely to talk against his own country, and indeed, we can see him showing the heroic side of Russia, over the villainous side, in the speech, with the “sacrifices of the Soviet people which enabled the liberation of Europe”. The provenance makes the source less valuable as, whilst being from a primary source, it is from one that cannot be trusted to be truthful on his views.

The tone of Stalin’s speech links more in line with making people see the good side of the USSR. Where Churchill foreboded war, this interview with Stalin makes it seem as if he is trying to keep what is left of the Grand Alliance together. Whilst we know this fails, and tensions continue to arise, it could give the impression that Stalin wanted peace to survive, even if it meant that Communism couldn’t expand, which was in line with his policy of ‘Communism in one state’ over Marx’s ‘World Revolution’. This again lowers the value as it means we are not shown the differences Stalin feels there are.

What Stalin says does not really give an idea of how he felt about the Western Nations, however, by looking at the tone of the interview; it may seem as if he is trying to let peace reign. However, due to the nature of his speech, it is only possible to presume what Stalin’s motives were, due to him focusing on the past rather the future and present. The lack of facts in Stalin’s interview on his relationship with the Western Powers makes Churchill’s Iron Curtain speech more valuable in explaining why there were differences between the USSR and the Western Powers.

Overall, Churchill’s speech allows us to see the view the Western Powers had of the Soviet Union, as well as the differences, whereas Stalin’s speech does very little to allow us to see the foreign policy of the USSR. Therefore Churchill’s speech is more valuable in answering the question as it allows us to see the inner workings of the Western Leadership, and how they truly felt about the Communist Country.

Commentary – Level 3

There is a consistent attempt to answer the question directly, but the answer has a number of weaknesses. The major weakness is that Source B is not clearly understood in terms of what Stalin is actually arguing. It is not a speech which suggests that Stalin argues that there should be peace at almost any cost, including the lack of expansion into Eastern Europe. Fundamentally, at the end of the speech, Stalin is justifying the expansion into Eastern Europe on the basis of the sufferings of the USSR during the war. The answer fails to develop key aspect of provenance in Source A especially, such as the significance of the occasion and location of the speech. It is also speculative about how secure Churchill’s understanding was and does not deploy sufficient knowledge of context to support what is written.