
History

Paper 2R (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 01 Student 1

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0 11/11/15

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

From source A and source B we are given two opposing perspectives on soviet expansion within Eastern Europe. Source A spoken by Winston Churchill in Fulton Missouri on the 6th of March 1946, we see the point of view in which soviet expansion is a threat to 'permanent peace'. Whereas source B, written by Joseph Stalin on 16th of March 1946 in the soviet newspaper 'Pravda' informs us that the USSR have genuine security threats and soviet expansion in Eastern Europe is justified.

Source A, as previously mentioned was spoken in Winston Churchill's (now famous) Iron Curtain speech in Fulton, Missouri. Fulton was the then president, Harry. S. Truman's hometown. Churchill had been invited as a guest speaker on behalf of the British government. However the real reason for Churchill to make his speech was to express to the public the supposed threat which the USSR was causing in Eastern Europe. Some historians argue that Churchill may have said the speech as he was a respected figure internationally and if he talked about the USSR's apparent wrong doings then it would not be considered a threat by the USSR. If Truman had said the speech then Joseph Stalin may have considered the speech a threat by the USA. Throughout the speech language such as.. the tone of criticism and also warning to the 'western' public. Due to the language and tone of the speech we can see that Churchill is attempting to warn the rest of the world about the threat that the soviets pose.

The context of Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech is that the Soviet Union want to take control of Eastern Europe, unfairly, in order to grow their economical and political strength. As Churchill says; Stalin 'desires' the 'fruits of war' furthermore Churchill is informing people of the breaking of the declaration of liberated Europe, which was agreed open at Yalta by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill and that the Americans can not practice the same 'Isolationist' approach they took in world war one. Consequently Churchill is asking for the USA to stop or prevent, the spread of communism, perhaps in fear Western Europe will fall into it. At the time Stalin had just imposed a communist government in Poland and broke the declaration of liberated Europe. This can be seen to be the cause of Churchill's speech.

Source B was written by Stalin in the Soviet controlled newspaper 'Pravda', the text is in response to Churchill's speech in Fulton, Missouri ten days before. The reason for this response was to justify the USSR's actions in Eastern Europe and to stress the security threats that Stalin believed the Soviet Union faced. In Stalin's writing a lexical field of sympathy and loss is used, words such as 'expulsion' 'loss' and 'sacrifice' contribute.

Within the writing Stalin informs the reader that the Soviet Union had 'irrevocably lost about 7 million people' and uses this to justify 'gaining back' the people in Eastern Europe. Stalin further suggests that through the USSR's involvement in world war two the eastern Europeans were freed from the 'Hitlerite yoke'. As well as this Stalin stresses the security threats to the Soviet Union which occurred from Eastern Europe and admits that eastern European countries are loyal to Moscow. Some Historians believe that Stalin's actions in the east of Europe are justified because American expansionism was also taking place at the same time. The IMF and World Bank were both informed in 1943 and were symbols of American imperialism in Europe, it can be argued that the USA were being unfair to allow themselves to expand in Europe but not the soviets.

I believe that both sources are equally as valuable in explaining why there were differences between the USSR and Western powers in 1946 as source A shows the objections for soviet expansionism and source B shows the justification for it. This difference in views is the underlying factor of the differences between east and west and only when we analyse both sources do these differences become clear. Source A explains to us how capitalist countries viewed the USSR cond. Shows us how the USSR justified its expansion and that the hostility from the west (capitalist countries) were completely unfair. This difference in view can also be seen to ultimately lead to the cold war.

Commentary – Level 4

The answer has an over lengthy introduction and is largely descriptive. As such, although students like to present an introduction, this one is of little value.

The assessment of Source A is strong in the deployment of knowledge of context when assessing the content and argument of the speech, with appropriate references, for example, to Yalta and developments in Poland. There needs to be comment, however, on how such references add to the value of the speech: it is not enough to offer knowledge of context without assessing how this adds or detracts from the value of the source.

The attempt to assess provenance and tone is limited. The answer accurately deploys knowledge as to the location of the speech, but does not add comment as to how this adds to the value (or detracts from it). The audience is likely to have been sympathetic and this comment and its significance, needs to be made. Assessment of tone is limited to assertions: it would be useful to quote directly from the speech to justify these.

Similar comments apply to the assessment of Source B, with the answer demonstrating good understanding of what Stalin is arguing with appropriate supporting detail. Comment on tone is also more effective, with direct quotations to support the assessment, although there is no development of the importance of the provenance of the source.

The references to 'some historians' should be discouraged. Historiographical understanding is not required in Component 2 and 'some historians' is an unhelpful phrase.

The concluding paragraph seeks to assess relative value and is well argued. There is not a necessarily right/wrong conclusion and the answer reflects this.

The underlying weakness of an answer which has some strengths is that comment and assessment are not consistently linked to relative value, the core purpose of the exercise.

Given secure understanding of context and a well-argued and appropriate conclusion, the answer would achieve bottom of Level 4.