

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 GCE

History

Advanced Subsidiary

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations

Option 1E: Russia, 1917-91: from Lenin to Yeltsin

Wednesday 18 May 2016 – Afternoon

Extracts Booklet

Paper Reference

8HI0/1E

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Extracts for use with Section C.

Extract 1: From J. N. Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour: Russian History 1812-1992*, 4th edition published 1993.

Until the very end Gorbachev resisted the break-up of the USSR, but it was his insistence on *glasnost* and his reservations about the use of force that made this break-up possible. Multinational empires always present problems and this was made worse in the USSR's case by the absence of natural frontiers separating the nations within the Soviet Union. The Bolshevik solution of a confederation of national territories with small, varying degrees of self-government had proved to be workable so long as the central Soviet regime kept nationalist feelings under tight control. Under Gorbachev, *glasnost*, the preference for political rather than authoritarian solutions, and the election of genuine republican parliaments gave pent-up national feeling an opportunity of expression. Gorbachev did not foresee the extent to which *perestroika* would be undermined by nationalism. He foresaw friction but not the grinding, unrelenting movement towards independence from centralised Soviet power.

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Extract 2: From Martin McCauley, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, published 2008.

After 1980 the Soviet economy went into rapid decline. This meant a drop in living standards for most people. Gorbachev's attempts at economic reform provoked a collapse. One of the reasons for this was that economic reform needs time to produce positive results, but Gorbachev was impatient and introduced more radical reforms to accelerate growth. He eventually wrecked the system because he was quite unqualified for the role he had to play. He had little understanding of economics. This meant he was influenced by economists who promised him success. When it did not happen, he listened to more radical economists. None of these economists had ever worked in a market economy, let alone industry. They were all theorists who assumed that the planned economy was endlessly flexible. Hence they had no understanding of the consequences of any of their reforms.

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