

Question 1: Europe of the Dictators, 1918–1941

- 1 ‘Lenin failed to solve Russia’s economic problems.’ How far do you agree? [30]

Mark scheme

- 1 **‘Lenin failed to solve Russia’s economic problems.’ How far do you agree?** [30]

An analysis of Russia’s economic problems in 1917–18 and then of Lenin’s attempts to manage them is expected here. An examination of the situation in 1917–18 would indicate an inheritance of staggering difficulty, and a contrast with the situation in 1924 shows substantial progress, admittedly from a low base.

Total breakdown was the order of the day on Bolshevik accession to power. Infrastructure had collapsed, there was anarchy in the countryside, the governing and managerial class had largely disappeared. Brest-Litovsk saw the disappearance of food and raw materials, civil war raged throughout large parts of Russia as well as foreign invasions. War Communism evidently failed and famine and cannibalism were features of Russia at the time. Hostility to the regime was endemic, both within and outside Russia. The money economy had collapsed and inflation was out of control.

By 1924, the situation had changed radically. Central planning was coming in. The NEP ensured that food production recommenced and that a money economy was beginning to return to normal. Industrial production did not reach 1913 levels until 1926, and then it was only by making use of existing assets. There was a growing awareness of what the problems were by 1924 and a debate growing about possible solutions. Arguably he did little more than apply cosmetic measures to ensure temporary survival and left the attempt to apply an ideologically-based solution to his successors. The evidence points to ‘yes’ but ‘any’ might seem harsh.

Example candidate response – low

Depth Study 1

1 Lenin based his sanctions to govern Russia on Marxism theories. With certain diversions for Russia's economic and political situations, he combined Marxism with his Leninism. As for Russia's economic problems, I agree to a large extent that 'Lenin failed to solve Russia's economic problems.'

~~After~~ I agree to a large extent because after overthrowing the Provisional Government, Lenin first focused his attention to accomplish his rulings in Russia and restore his leadership. By promising to give free elections to the Constituent of Assembly, he disobeyed his promise because of his fear of being overthrown. Supporting the congress of soviets which favor the Bolsheviks more, Lenin replaced many useful officers for his own interests. While people were still starving from WWI, ~~Stalin~~ ^{Lenin} paid great attention to his self interests instead of solving the economic problems. From his focus on restoring leadership in Russia rather than being highly motivated to take advantage of fair election for solutions, I agree to a large extent that he 'failed to solve'.

Moreover, I agree to a large extent because even if people were starving from WWI, Lenin still signed the unfair Brest-Litovsk Treaty. This negotiation with Germany, Austria etc. ended badly because Russia therefore lost 74% of its industry and over 30% of its population. Such treaty didn't pull Russia back on track, instead created further starvation and severe economic problems. Russia lost some of its most resourceful lands because of Lenin's compromise. Nevertheless, such reaction fulfilled Lenin's promise to pull Russia out of the war. Although with ✓

Example candidate response – low, continued

great prices to pay, at least Russians no longer needed to participate the war and sacrificed more working force. From the aspect of avoiding further losing its people, such treaty helped alleviate Russia's economic problems in the long run.

Nevertheless, I agree to this statement to a ~~small~~^{large} extent as Lenin did propose rules like maximized 8 hours' work per day and at most 48 hours per week. Even though socially people could have improved living standards, their output didn't go up tremendously with fewer working hours. Meanwhile, there's education free for children, leading to a decrease in child labor. Though Lenin emancipated the Russians' freedom to a large extent like allowing abortions and legalizing divorce, these sanctions did little to help improving the economic problems. Thus I agree to the statement to a large extent.

However, I agree to a small extent because once Lenin's treating the workers' with minimum wages and maximum working hours, Russians became more motivated. This led to higher efficiency within the given hours. The trainings on workers and children from education also helped cultivating future leaders. In the long run, Lenin might help solving Russia's economic problems as he did give out lands to peasants!

On the other hand, I agree to 'Lenin failed to solve Russia's economic problems' to a small extent because his using cheka to defeat his opponents led to innocent people's death. Claiming eliminating the opponents to the party, he was literally instructing the cheka to take down, shot and kill whoever disrespected him. Such action led to 140,000 people's death, which was ten-times the Tsar murdered. Such cruelty led to

Example candidate response – low, continued

decreased labor for production. Thus the economic problems were hardly solved.

Moreover, while Lenin used Red Terror to attempt to win the Civil War, he murdered innocent men, gathered 30,000 Red Army to fight. Such distribution led to massive deaths of the soldiers and deduction in the production's labor force. Meanwhile, as the military troops needed to be fed, Lenin ordered the peasants to requisitioning the crops, rationing the food and being forbidden to keep extra food. The soldiers could enter any peasants' home to rob food whenever they needed to. If the peasants refused to give in the extra crops, they'll be shot and mercilessly killed. The use of war communism worsened Russia's economic situations as the working forces failed to feed themselves because of the strict and harsh requirement to support the troops. I agree to a large extent as Lenin's efforts towards Red Terror and War Communism decreased labor force and even starved more Russians. The famine started for Lenin's policies, which reflected more serious economic problems due to starvation, ~~and~~ ~~the~~ Chelka and banned of black market.

I agree that Lenin failed to solve Russia's economic problems as he pushed troops so hard that led to Kronstadt Uprising. The soldiers couldn't even bear Lenin's cruel and harsh policies, trying to overthrow him. Under Lenin's govern, soldiers lost their families, unemployment went up and people were starved. Such uprising was suppressed but effectively indicated Lenin's incapability in solving economic problems.

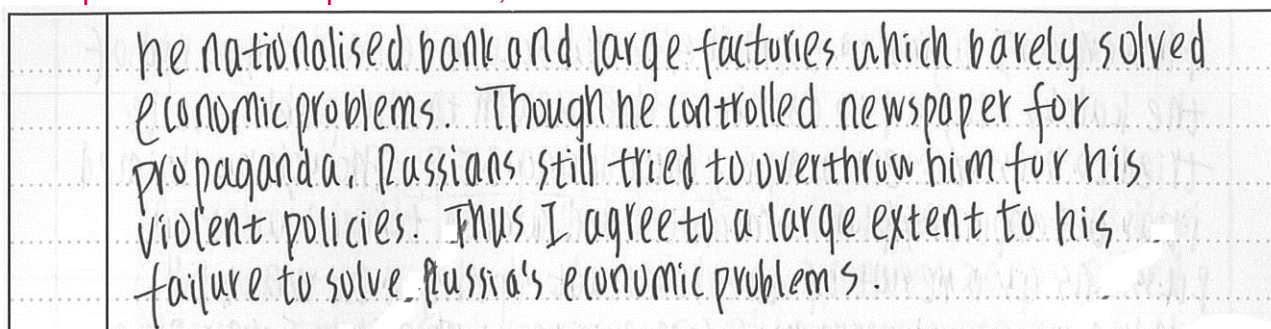
Example candidate response – low, continued

However, I agree to a small extent because Lenin did get rid of the kulaks, trying to distribute the wealth to the public. He tried to boost the economy by introducing NEP. Though he claimed it as a temporary plan which indeed aimed to win over Russians as a result of the Kronstadt Uprising, he was still condemned as a betrayer of Communism. The New Economic Plan actually effectively improved the situations as the peasants were allowed to keep some extra crops. The police wouldn't take these food away because once taxes and required crops were handled to the government. This policy motivated the Russian peasants to continue producing, which increased the agricultural production level. Moreover, ~~so~~ small factories were allowed to operate themselves. As Lenin no longer banned free trades between Russians, they bartered to gain necessities to survive. At least the NEP saved the Russians from receiving ~~3~~ ~~calories~~ calories per day per person on average. Thus I agree to a small extent for Lenin's efforts to solve Russia's economic problems which led to improvements because of NEP.

As Lenin insisted on controlling the big factories and heavy industries, he recruited and trained peasants to work within the firms. I agree to the statement to a small extent as Lenin decreased unemployment rate and solve some economic problems at the time.

Overall, I agree 'Lenin failed to solve Russia's economic problems' to a large extent because he spent great efforts and labor forces on eliminating opponents. Instead of concentrating on production and distributing lands to peasants,

Example candidate response – low, continued



he nationalised bank and large factories which barely solved economic problems. Though he controlled newspaper for propaganda, Russians still tried to overthrow him for his violent policies. Thus I agree to a large extent to his failure to solve Russia's economic problems.

Examiner comment – low

This response did not start well. There seemed to be no connection between the first and second sentences. There was just a statement in the second sentence with no supporting reasons or any indication of balance. More successful answers to this question began by describing the nature and extent of the economic problems facing Russia in the period 1917 to 1924 and then indicated whether Lenin did or did not succeed in dealing with them. The second paragraph gained no credit as it was not linked to economic issues. The lack of any identification of what the economic problems were resulted in low marks. There seemed to be an assumption that there were some problems, but what they were was never made clear. The point about Brest-Litovsk was not developed, and the link between it and the actual question was not apparent. Much the same could be said of the paragraph about the CHEKA. It was only towards the end of the essay with the sections on War Communism and the NEP that credit started to be gained for relevant material and there were signs of a response to the question set. The conclusion did not really seem to fit in with the earlier detail.

For higher marks there needed to be much more focus on the question and careful reflection on the nature and extent of the economic (not political) problems which faced Lenin when he seized power. There needed to be a much higher level of supporting detail linked to the question. Paragraphs needed to have a clearer point made followed by relevant supporting information.

Mark awarded = 14 out of 30