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# AS HISTORY

The Crisis of Communism: the USSR and the Soviet Empire, 1953–2000  
Component 2T Crisis in the Soviet Union, 1953–2000

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Tuesday 23 May 2017      Afternoon      Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

## Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 16-page answer book.

## Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 7041/2T.
- Answer **two** questions.  
In **Section A** answer Question 01.  
In **Section B** answer **either** Question 02 **or** Question 03.

## Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 50.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

## Advice

- You are advised to spend about:
  - 50 minutes on Section A
  - 40 minutes on Section B.

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**Section A**

Answer Question 01.

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**Source A**

From Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, February 1956.

It turns out that many people declared to be 'enemies of the state' in 1937/38 were never enemies, spies, wreckers, etc. They had always remained honest communists. They had been slandered or, under torture, they had confessed to all sorts of unbelievable crimes. Of the 139 members of the Central Committee elected at the 17th Congress, 98 were arrested and shot. That is 70 per cent.

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[Consternation in the hall]

This happened because of Stalin's abuse of power in instituting a reign of terror. Stalin had raised himself so far above the Party and people that he no longer took any account of the Party. We must now decisively, once and for all, debunk the cult of personality.

**Source B**

From Mikhail Gorbachev's memoirs, published in 1995. Gorbachev was not present at the 1956 Congress. He joined the Party in 1952 but the first Congress he attended was in 1961.

History will never forget Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's personality cult. It is, of course, true that Khrushchev's secret report to the 20th Party Congress was excessively subjective. To attribute the complex problem of totalitarianism simply to external factors and the evil character of a dictator was a hard-hitting tactic – but it did not reveal the real truth. Khrushchev's personal political aims were also transparent: by being the first to denounce the personality cult, he shrewdly isolated his closest rivals and antagonists who, together with Khrushchev himself, had been Stalin's closest associates. But the criticism of Stalin aroused hopes for a reform of the system. Khrushchev and his supporters must be given full credit for this.

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With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two sources is more valuable in explaining the beginning of 'de-Stalinisation' in 1956?

[25 marks]

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**Section B**

Answer **either** Question 02 **or** Question 03.

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**Either**

**0 2** 'In 1982, the Soviet Union was politically and economically stable.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

**[25 marks]**

**or**

**0 3** 'The crisis facing Russia in the years 1991 to 2000 was entirely due to Boris Yeltsin.'

Explain why you agree or disagree with this view.

**[25 marks]**

**END OF QUESTIONS**

**There are no questions printed on this page**

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