

ensure that the spring sowing took place.

You might conclude by putting peasant and activist reactions to collectivisation in a wider context of competing aspirations. The *smychka* (the link between the working class and the peasantry), never strong but dear to Bukharin, had been broken. The 25,000ers and Komsomols believed in the cause and in Stalin when he claimed that there was no fortress a Bolshevik could not storm. However, in spite of their work the Bolsheviks remained, in Viola's view, an urban party of fortress stormers who were ultimately unable to penetrate the fortress of agrarian Russia with the idea of socialism. Some activists in time, as Source 2 shows, began to have their own doubts. After collectivisation had been established, apart from a few who benefited as tractor drivers, farm managers or Stakhanovites, the peasants continued to resist by lavishing attention on their private plots and working on the fields of the kolkhozy as little as possible. When Kirov was murdered the NKVD reported that the only note of regret among the Smolensk peasantry was that it had not been Stalin. One rhyme ended:

When Stalin is killed  
They will disband all the kolkhozy

- (b) 'Forced collectivisation may have been an economic failure and a human disaster but it was the only acceptable way forward politically for the Communist party.' Using your own knowledge, and the evidence of all five sources, explain how far you agree with this interpretation. (40 marks)

You are being asked for a judgement on the interpretation of collectivisation expressed in the quotation. Sources 4 and 5 are particularly useful here and open up the debate on whether there were genuine alternatives to Stalin's policy. Viola in Source 5 and Hunter in Source 4 are clearly on opposite sides of the argument.

Hunter and others argue that the NEP did provide a viable system of successful industrialisation. Further, the view in Source 4, using counterfactual analysis, is that Stalin's policies were so wasteful that almost any alternative would have been better economically. Ward in Source 5 concedes that the evidence allows that the NEP would have produced respectable rates of economic growth but that this was 'a direction in which the party never intended to go'. Stalin wanted to build up heavy industry and armaments very fast. Factors like the war scare and ideology, as well as the recurrent grain crises mentioned in Source 3, meant that by 1929 Stalin was determined to bring grain procurements and the peasants under control so that he could launch 'the great

turn'. The NEP had always been regarded as a retreat by party activists, like the young Kopelev (Source 2), who welcomed a return to the heroic atmosphere of the revolution and the civil war.

Both Sources 3 and 4 raise the issue of whether forced collectivisation failed to provide resources for industry. Recent research confirms that in the critical years 1928-32 there was no net transfer of resources from agriculture to industry. More tractors were needed but still did not make up for the slaughter of horses and, as Source 3 states, police and troops were sent to control the peasantry. This is crucial in the discussion of whether collectivisation was an economic failure. The wastefulness of collectivisation and the inefficiency of the kolkhozy, referred to in Sources 3 and 4, will need amplifying from your own knowledge. However, the second paragraph of Source 3 argues that Stalin could draw up a favourable balance sheet. It looks both at the political and economic impact of collectivisation. Raising state grain procurements was more important to Stalin than making agriculture more productive. Control over the peasants would allow Stalin to increase the pace of industrialisation, defeat the Right and bring the party fully behind him. Some historians have argued that he needed the 'Stalin Revolution' (the Five Year Plans, collectivisation and the terror) psychologically to put himself on a par with Lenin.

The sources agree that collectivisation was a human disaster: you should mention the number of deaths. Conquest argued that the Ukrainian famine 1932-3 was deliberate genocide but other historians reply that these deaths were due to collectivisation and poor weather which squeezed the peasants. Stalin refused to ask for outside help as Lenin had done in 1921. The primary sources are less central to part (b) but the scale of the disaster should be explored with reference to Source 2. From your own knowledge you should bring in the loss of the most effective farmers, the kulaks, and the prolonged impact on peasant morale - the word 'serfdom' in Source 1 is deliberately chosen.

To sum up, you need to develop your own answer to the question by selecting appropriate material from the sources and your own knowledge. An awareness of debate among historians is helpful but don't be distracted by this. You should not recount the Nove/Millar debate on whether Stalin was necessary, but you must have a view on whether there were alternative paths to collectivisation available to the communists and what its impact was in economic and human terms.

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