



GCSE HISTORY

Paper 1A/C: Russia, 1894–1945: Tsardom and communism

Interpretations Booklet

Interpretations **A** and **B** for use in answering Questions 01, 02 and 03

Interpretation A A special report made in 2003 to the Ukrainian Parliament on the 70th anniversary of the famine which followed Stalin's policy of collectivisation during which millions of Kulaks died. This report recorded interviews with many people who lived through it.

Ukraine was able to break free of the Soviet rule in 1991, when it became an independent nation.

Communist requisition brigades looking to meet the impossibly high grain quotas and fuelled by Soviet hate campaigns against the peasants, acted without mercy, taking away the last crumbs of food from starving families. One survivor reported that 'just before Christmas, they found potatoes that we had planted in our grandfather's garden, and because of that they took everything'.

Interpretation B Lev Kopelev, from his book 'The Education of a True Believer', published in 1980.

Kopelev was a young Communist in the 1930s who went on to become an officer in charge of propaganda in the Red Army. After criticising Soviet atrocities in the Second World War, he was arrested and later went into exile abroad, which is where he wrote this book.

With the rest of my generation, I firmly believed in collectivisation and that the ends justified the means. Our great goal was the triumph of Communism. I saw what 'total collectivisation' meant – how they mercilessly stripped the peasants in the winter of 1932–33. I took part in it myself. I was convinced that I was achieving the great transformation of the countryside; that in the days to come the people who lived there would be better off.

END OF INTERPRETATIONS

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