

Grade 9 Answer

Interpretation Differences

4/4
Marks

Question:

Study Interpretations 1 and 2. They give different views about the Cult of Stalin. What is the main difference between these two views? Explain your answer, using details from both interpretations. (4 marks)

Answer:

Interpretation 1 gives the view that the Cult of Stalin was very unpopular, and many artists 'committed suicide rather than do what the state ordered them to do'. This suggests that the Cult of Stalin was not successful, and artists did not follow the Social Realism for of art that glorified Stalin.

In contrast, Interpretation 2 gives the view that the Cult of Stalin was successful during Stalin's reign, and so many people attended his funeral, some were 'crushed to death'. This suggests that the Cult of Stalin was effective in getting citizens to belief that Stalin was a great leader, and that his regime was popular.

Feedback:

This answer would get 4/4 marks because the pupil has identified a difference in the interpretations, giving evidence for this difference, and making an inference based on the evidence.

Source B

Source B: A propaganda poster from 1952 of Joseph Stalin. The text reads: 'Forward to the victory of communism!'



Source C

Source C: A poem written in 1933 by Osip Mandelstam, a Russian poet, which resulted in Mandelstam being sent to a NKVD labour camp where he died.

**We live, deaf to the land beneath us,
Ten steps away no one hears our speeches,
All we hear is the Kremlin mountaineer,
The murderer and peasant-slayer.
His fingers are fat as grubs
And the words, final as lead weights, fall
from his lips,
His cockroach whiskers leer
And his boot tops gleam.
Around him a rabble of thin-necked leaders -
fawning half-men for him to play with.
The whinny, purr or whine
As he prates and points a finger,
One by one forging his laws, to be flung
Like horseshoes at the head, to the eye or the
groin.
And every killing is a treat
For the broad-chested Ossete.**

Interpretation 1

Interpretation 1: C N Trueman "Life in USSR under Stalin" published on historylearningsite.co.uk in 2015

Stalin developed what became known as a "personality cult". Artists painted pictures glorifying Stalin and he dominated many pictures. It was not unusual for Stalin to be in a white suit so that he stood out from the crowd. He gained the nickname "Uncle Joe" which was an attempt to develop an image of a kind, homely man who was the 'father' of all Russians. This was all called "Social Realism". Those who wrote poems and novels had to do the same – write about Stalin in a manner which gloried him. Some artists and authors were so depressed by all this that they committed suicide rather than do what the state ordered them to do. Many others tried to leave the country.

Interpretation 2

Interpretation 2: An article written by Julia Kenny for 'The York Historian' published in 2018.

The image of Stalin had penetrated society and bound all the people to his constant presence, regardless of their education or background. The cult was always visually forced upon them. Even during the famines, it was said that there was “no bread on the table but Stalin on the wall.” At Stalin’s funeral the crowds were such that many were crushed to death. Stalinist propaganda served well in masking the darker side of the regime, and in bending the truth. For most people, it was not until years after the regime that they realised its flaws.