

Grade 9 Answer

Interpretation Evaluation

8/8
Marks

Question:

Which interpretation gives the more convincing opinion about the popularity of the NEP? Explain your answer based on your contextual knowledge and what it says in Interpretations A and B. (8 marks)

Answer:

Interpretation A is more convincing in explaining the popularity of the NEP, as it highlights the positive effects the policy had on ordinary people's lives in the early 1920s. Victor Serge, a member of the Russian Communist Party, writes from a perspective that reflects the immediate benefits of the NEP. He mentions a rapid improvement in conditions, including the reduction of famine and speculation, which were significant problems following the Russian Civil War and War Communism. The reopening of restaurants and the availability of consumer goods, such as pastries, illustrate how the NEP brought tangible improvements to the economy and daily life. This aligns with historical knowledge, as the NEP allowed private ownership of businesses that employed less than twenty people, and allowed free trade in grain. This led to economic recovery and improved living standards for many Russians.

In contrast, Interpretation B, by Vladimir Brovkin, focuses more on the ideological concerns within the Bolshevik Party rather than the experiences of ordinary people. It accurately reflects that the NEP was seen by many Bolsheviks as a temporary retreat from socialism, a necessary evil to stabilize the country. However, it overlooks the immediate popularity of the NEP among the wider population, which was more concerned with survival and economic recovery than with ideological purity. While it is true that the NEP was never intended to be a long-term solution, and many Bolsheviks were uncomfortable with it, this does not diminish the fact that it was popular with many people at the time due to its practical benefits, for example grain production increased by 50% in 1923. Overall, Interpretation A provides a more convincing account of the popularity of the NEP because it focuses on the policy's immediate economic success and its positive impact on people's lives, whereas Interpretation B primarily addresses the ideological concerns of the Bolsheviks, which were less relevant to the general population.

Feedback:

This answer would get 8/8 marks because the pupil has given a complex evaluation of the interpretations based on contextual knowledge, and they have given their overall judgement on which interpretation is more convincing, with reasoning.



Interpretation A

From 'Memoirs of a Revolutionary' by Victor Serge, published in 1945. Serge was a member of the Russian Communist Party.

The New Economic Policy was, in the space of a few months, already giving marvellous results. From one week to the next, the famine and the speculation were diminishing perceptibly.

Restaurants were opening again and, wonder of wonders, pastries which were actually edible were on sale as a rouble apiece. The public was beginning to recover its breath, and people were apt to talk about the return of capitalism, which was synonymous with prosperity.

Interpretation B

From Russia After Lenin: Politics, Culture, and Society, 1921-29 by Vladimir Brovkin published in 2005.

Brovkin is a Russian-born historian.

The terms in which Lenin defined the relationship between the old economic policy (war communism) and the new (NEP) were of offensive and retreat, construction and pause, leaving no room for a positive acceptance of the NEP in Bolshevik minds. NEP was never conceived of as a path to socialism but as a detour, as a temporary obstacle to overcome. The Bolshevik Party desperately needed a role to play; it needed a reaffirmation that it was leading Russia and not simply waiting for the conditions to arise when the socialist offensive could resume.

[http://www.orlandofiges.info/section9_TheNewEconomicPolicy/OppositiontotheNEP.php]