



A Level History

7042/2N Revolution and Dictatorship: Russia, 1917-1953

Report on the examination

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General guidance on question types

Question 1: The 'Source' Question

- An assessment of the value (and limitations, where appropriate) of each source in relation to the question set.
- Students should address the content and provenance of sources and use their own knowledge to support their evaluation. Where relevant, students could also consider the emphasis and tone of a source in their assessment of the value in relation to the question set.

Qualities seen in more successful responses

- A clear judgement is made about the value of the sources in relation to the question set.
- Answers move beyond a balanced description and provide an argument driven by the student's judgement overall about a source's value in relation to the question set.
- Comments on tone, when used, focus on the value of the source to an historian studying the given issue in the question.
- The content and provenance of the sources is understood, and relevant and accurate knowledge is used to assess value in relation to the question set.
- There is roughly equal treatment of all three sources.

Qualities seen in less successful responses

- Follows a very rigid structure and/or relies heavily on pre-learned phrases, which convey a sense that answers have not understood the sources set.
- Confusion over terminology and exactly what makes a source valuable. Words such as 'bias' are often used without being able to explain how this links to a judgement on value. Bias may well be the reason that a source is valuable.
- Answers that ignore the historical focus set in the question. Answers give a general evaluation of the source without explaining how it might be valuable to a historian studying a set topic.
- Over-reliance on lengthy quotations with little supporting knowledge and/or explicit assessment of value in relation to the question set.

Questions 2-4: Essay questions

- Demonstrate a clear and full understanding of the question and its demands.
- Provide a balanced, analytical response which reviews the issues raised by the question.
- Provide appropriate and full coverage of the question, with appropriate supporting evidence.
- Substantiate judgements on the issues, throughout the answer and/ or in an extended conclusion.

Qualities seen in more successful responses

- Evidence of careful planning seen in the structure and organisation of the answer.
- An analytical approach which avoids lengthy narrative passages.
- Appropriate range, both in relation to any date range identified in the question and of issues to be considered.

- Balance of treatment, used to advance an argument and with appropriate judgement of the issues.
- Use of well selected supporting information.
- Provide an effective introduction which sets out the argument to be advanced and an effective conclusion demonstrating overall judgement.

Qualities seen in less successful responses

- Limited evidence of effective planning and structuring.
- Tendency towards partial responses to the question asked, either in terms of the date range specified in the question or range of issues to be considered.
- Inclusion of descriptive passages not clearly linked to the question.
- Over-lengthy introductions which do little more than provide contextual information.
- Inclusion of conclusions which repeat points already made.
- Issues with, or an absence of, sustained analysis and judgement.
- Occasional use of inappropriate language, such as over-use of first person etc.

Individual questions

Report on Question 1

An issue was raised with the provenance of Source A. The name of the meeting which led to the publication of Source A was incorrectly stated on the question paper as the ‘Communist Party (CPSU) Congress’. In fact, the source came from a conference of the Russian Communist Party held in January 1924. The actual Communist Party Congress was held in May of that year. This minor error did not have any impact on candidates’ responses as the date of the source was correctly ascribed and this was the important context, i.e. around the time of the death of Lenin, which candidates picked up on. As there was only one communist party in the USSR at this time, the inaccuracy in the name of the meeting in the provenance of the source did not affect candidates’ responses. We are sorry for this error.

The source-based question was on a mainstream and well understood aspect of the course and, therefore, the majority of candidates understood the context of the sources and were able to provide some meaningful commentary on their provenance and content. The one drawback of this, in some responses, is that candidates were not always precisely selective about which aspects of their own contextual knowledge of the power struggle to include. Therefore, some responses were given a mark in Level 3 due to the somewhat generalised nature of the supporting information. Stronger responses – in Levels 4 and 5 – were more selective and linked contextual knowledge more precisely to the content and argument in each source. Responses in Level 2, tended to misunderstand one of the sources – most commonly Source B – or provided hardly any supporting contextual information, relying almost entirely on the content and provenance included in the sources themselves. At the top end, the very best responses provided substantiated judgement on each source. Sources A and C, in particular, are extremely valuable in the context of the power struggle and candidates achieving Level 5 were able to convincingly explain this. Good responses, in Level 4, showed a good level of understanding but were often rather too cautiously balanced in judgement.

Source A

The majority of candidates recognised that this source was from around the time of Lenin’s death and were able to provide some contextual comment to demonstrate an understanding that this statement was issued in the early stages of the power struggle. Most candidates also recognised that this source is valuable as a statement from the Triumvirate expressing some of their lines of attack towards Trotsky. More developed responses often went on to explain how the source is valuable in demonstrating Stalin’s increasing influence over the Party, linking this to his role as General Secretary. Attempting to provide balance, many candidates argued that the source lacks some value as it is ‘biased’ against Trotsky, but these comments were often rather unconvincing. The ‘bias’ in the source is ultimately very useful in understanding the nature of the power struggle, revealing Stalin’s tactics in outmanoeuvring his main rival for power. This was a judgement provided in stronger responses.

In terms of the content and argument in the source, most candidates commented on the accusation of factionalism and how this was central to how the power struggle played out in these years. Many candidates also commented on the reference to ‘Leninism’ and were able to provide some supporting context around how Stalin positioned himself as the ‘heir to Lenin’ whereas Trotsky did not. Better responses developed this latter point with contextual explanation around Trotsky’s opposition to Lenin’s NEP. A smaller, but not insignificant, number of candidates also picked up on the phrase ‘completely un-Bolshevik’ and were able to relate this to Trotsky’s Menshevik past and how this was used against him.

Far fewer candidates were able to comment effectively on the reference in the first line to Trotsky's accusations of a 'lack of democracy and excessive bureaucracy' in the Party.

Source B

This proved to be the most challenging of the sources, although most candidates were able to provide sufficient comment to support an overall mark in at least Level 3. Weaker responses demonstrated a lack of insight into the provenance of the source. Comments such as suggesting that Preobrazhensky would not provide valuable evidence as he was exiled in 1927 and therefore missed the final two years of the power struggle were not convincing; nor were comments that as an economist he would know a lot about economic policy in the 1920s. More effectively, many candidates commented on Preobrazhensky's association with Trotsky and how that could provide valuable evidence of the policy arguments that were central to the power struggle. In addition, most candidates were able to pick up on the obvious limitation of the source in that Preobrazhensky is clearly under pressure to renounce his previous views and praise Stalin in 1934. Stronger answers also linked this to the tone of the source, picking out exaggerated phrases such as 'Stalin's remarkable far-sightedness.' Less effective were comments arguing that the source is valuable as it shows how much power Stalin had by 1934. These comments lacked a precise focus on the question.

In terms of the content and argument of the source, the most common point assessed was the reference to 'permanent revolution.' Most candidates in Level 3 and above were able to explain how this was an important policy debate during the power struggle, which Stalin won with his contrasting vision of 'Socialism in One Country'. Many candidates also picked up on the reference to 'collectivisation' and were able to link this to Stalin's ultimate success in the power struggle when he overcame the Right Opposition. Less effective responses sometimes drifted into a more general discussion of the success or otherwise of collectivisation after 1929, which was clearly not relevant to the question. The aspect of the source which proved more challenging, and which was often a differentiator between Level 3 and the higher levels, is the content on economic policy. Average and weaker candidates often confused the references to 'New Economics' and 'western capitalism' with the NEP, leading some to state that it shows that Trotsky supported the NEP, which is clearly inaccurate. Stronger candidates were able to explain that Trotsky was proposing a far more forceful policy towards the peasants – akin to the war communism of the Civil War period – and that Stalin supported the NEP in the mid-1920s before switching to collectivisation, which proved to be central to his ability to win the power struggle.

Source C

Overall, this source was the one candidates assessed the best. Most responses successfully identified Kamenev and Bukharin as very valuable witnesses to the events of the power struggle. In addition, the nature of the source as private notes, which were not published until much later, was an aspect of the provenance that most candidates used effectively to argue in favour of the value of the source. Far less convincing were speculative comments that the later publication date could mean that parts of the source could have been altered. Attempting to provide balance, many candidates pointed out that Kamenev and Bukharin were not impartial observers of the power struggle. At the average to weaker end of the scale, such comments did not move much past a statement that Bukharin and Kamenev would be 'biased' against Stalin because they had lost out to him in the power struggle. Stronger responses were able to develop this aspect of analysis into the judgement that the provenance and content of this source are immensely valuable to historians as they reveal the thoughts and feelings of those rivals that Stalin had outmanoeuvred by 1928.

In terms of the content and argument of the source, most candidates picked up on the quote that Stalin 'changes his theory according to whom he needs to get rid of.' To varying degrees, this was linked effectively to candidates' wider contextual knowledge of Stalin's shifting position on the NEP through the 1920s. Many candidates also picked up on the reference to factionalism in the final sentence and how Kamenev, in particular, had fallen victim to the ban on factions in 1927. Weaker responses often focused on the quotes 'a police state' and 'Stalin frightens people' and provided contextual information about the NKVD, show trials and terror which was generalist and not focused precisely on the question.

Stronger responses often understood that Kamenev's initial question in the source is very revealing of his naivety and of how Stalin was underestimated by his rivals throughout the power struggle. Some stronger candidates also focused on the reference to 'a terrible fear of a party split' and were able to link this to their contextual knowledge of how Stalin was able to always appear on the majority side in party debates and therefore to depict his rivals as factionalists, which undermined their standing.

Question 1 -Exemplification of Level 5 qualities

The assessment of Source C below demonstrates a very good understanding of content, argument, provenance and tone, all of which are linked explicitly to the value of the source for the purpose identified in the question. The whole assessment builds a substantiated judgement, convincingly arguing that the source is 'hugely' valuable to an historian. The evaluation of this source does not contain balance; however, this is not a barrier for access to Level 5 if there is balance present in the assessment of other sources in the response.

Source C from a conversation between Bukharin and Kamenev, two of the contender for power in the struggle from 1924 - 29, is hugely valuable to a historian studying the period. Firstly, noting that the notes were not published until 1993 is valuable, as it suggests the need to keep these conversations private in 1928, in turn reflecting the vast power Stalin had already been able to accrue in terms of censorship of ideas. The source is valuable in suggesting the genuine fear that surrounded Stalin, Lenin's testament may have been ignored after it was written, but the suggestion that the comrades found a way of "removing Stalin" would still have lingered on the minds of key figures like Bukharin and Kamenev, their discussions fall in line with Lenin's statement that he would not possess the "sufficient caution" to be a leader, and thus are valuable in highlighting the extent to which Stalin's failings as a leader were known. Kamenev's question about the severity of the struggle is also valuable as it highlights the extent to which key figures such as Bukharin and Kamenev, some of the most intelligent theoreticians in the party no less, were still underestimating Stalin. Bukharin seems to have realised the truth, but the questions existence shows that there remained doubts about Stalin's actual threat, and his appearances alongside Bukharin, their tight-knit Duumvirate were enough to make it appear as if there was no leadership struggle and Lenin's ideal of collective leadership was strong. The source is therefore valuable in it's presentation of Stalin, as not only does it show the extent to which he had aquired power by 1928, but also in demonstrating the criticisms of Stalin's leadership, his ruthless, ideologically-ambiguous nature, and how key figures of the power struggle were still hesitant to his real threat despite understanding them.

The source is also valuable in suggesting Bukharin's character throughout the leadership struggle, and is valuable in highlighting potential reasons for his political failings. He states "Rykov, Tomsky and I" as if they were an alliance of sorts, which is valuable as it suggests Bukharin was being forced out of his position as the "darling of the party", someone who could appeal to all sides by 1928, Stalin was already occupying this middle-ground territory in regards to political ideology, and therefore Bukharin was becoming increasingly isolated, forced to align with figures on the right of the party such as Tomsky and Rykov. Yet it also is valuable in showing his naivety, aligning himself somewhat with the likes of Zinoviev and Kamenev, despite the fact that by 1928 their power in the party had been significantly reduced given their decision to switch away from Stalin's troika and towards Trotsky. ✓

Bukharin was a man ill-suited to party infighting, and therefore his desire to not appear as a "factionalist" rings true, and is valuable in suggesting that Bukharin's conciliatory approach may have been his downfall. ✓ The source's tone is desperate, specifically in Bukharin's fear of becoming "a police state", but his softness was an issue that was attacked by Stalin, and despite this desperation, Bukharin is presented as someone unable to do anything about it. He feels the need to maintain his conciliatory approach, Stalin had become too difficult to attack, but the source is valuable in suggesting that this may not have been born out of Bukharin's inherent character, but given his sheer lack of power, even by 1928. The source is therefore valuable given it highlights key traits of Bukharin's character that made him ill-suited to win the leadership struggle, and suggests that Stalin's success, may have been just as much down to his own personal shrewdness and Machiavellian cunning, as it was the mistakes made by those vying for control. ✓

Report on Question 2

This proved to be the most difficult of the essay questions, which was reflected in a lower average mark for 02 compared to 03 and 04. The phrase 'by the end of 1917' was not focused on precisely by many candidates who instead often offered an account of the changing fortunes of the Bolsheviks throughout 1917. Content on the February/March revolution was not deemed relevant to the question as this predated Lenin's return to Russia; the Bolsheviks had no 'authority' within Russia at this point. Content on Lenin's April Theses, and the growing popularity of the Bolsheviks thereafter, was credited to an extent, however, this was often presented in a generalist and/or descriptive manner which was indicative of Level 2. Narrative accounts of the July Days and the Kornilov Affair were of limited value. Some candidates did link these events to a general argument that the Bolsheviks' popularity was increasing during 1917 but, again, this was more often than not generalist and/or descriptive, and therefore also indicative of Level 2. Many candidates continued this style of approach through to the October/November revolution. Answers which ended at this point were not awarded a mark above Level 2 due to partial coverage of the focus of the question. Some content on the months November to December was required to access Level 3 and above.

Responses achieving Level 3 provided some relevant content on the two months following the October/November Revolution. Most commonly this included references to Lenin's decrees on land, peace, workers' control and the press. In Level 3 these references tended to be rather brief and undeveloped. Candidates often mentioned the use of the Cheka to clamp down on opposition, in particular bourgeois opponents, as well as political opponents such as the Mensheviks and SRs. Level 3 answers usually achieved some balance but, as above, this tended to lack depth and development. The most common evidence offered in balance was the result of the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which demonstrated that the Bolsheviks did not have widespread support across the country. However, even in Level 3, there was quite a bit of imprecision in relation to the chronological focus of the question. The shutting down of the Constituent Assembly (Jan 1918) and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918) were often not used in a relevant manner, although this was possible as explained below in relation to stronger answers.

Responses in Levels 4 and 5 included content on the same points referenced above but were able to develop these points more fully. For example, balance was often achieved by pointing out that although the decree on peace was popular, limited progress had been made towards achieving this by the end of 1917. Likewise, the decree on land was more of a reflection of the Bolsheviks' lack of authority in the countryside rather than winning genuine support from the peasants. Stronger candidates were able to use the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly as evidence that, although the Bolsheviks had clearly not performed well in the election, the popularity of other parties was not a serious obstacle to the strengthening of their authority by the end of 1917. To make the opposite argument, many stronger candidates used the outbreak of the Civil War as evidence that the Bolsheviks' authority was still weak by the end of 1917 as there was considerable opposition which led to the outbreak of the war three months later. Finally, there was much better understanding in Level 4 and Level 5 answers of the nature of the Bolshevik state created by Lenin with effective explanations of the structure of Sovnarkom in relation to the other political parties and the new government.

Report on Question 3

This was an accessible question, which proved to be the most popular with candidates. The open-ended nature of the wording of the question led to a variety of responses: some candidates chose to focus solely on the economic aspects of the Five-Year Plans, whereas others assessed the question of 'failure' in a more wide-ranging context, considering social, political and/or ideological aspects of success/failure. However, points concerning collectivisation and the development of agriculture were not considered relevant to the question as these policies were not specifically part of the Five-Year Plans and are accordingly referenced in a separate bullet point in the specification. However, it was possible for candidates to link the Five-Year Plans and collectivisation in a way that was relevant, for example the Five-Year Plans failed to produce enough tractors to support collectivisation, or the collectivisation process forced millions of peasants into the towns and cities which benefited the Five-Year Plans by expanding the proletariat. These points tended to appear in stronger answers. Most references to collectivisation assessed the success and failure of that policy in isolation and were not credited.

Most candidates had a secure body of contextual knowledge to draw on to answer this question. There were many references to the expansion of iron, coal and electricity output in the First Five Year Plan. Commentary on the Second Five Year Plan was dominated by references to Magnitogorsk, Stakhanovites, 'gigantomania' and prestige projects (although the impact of the Moscow metro on the economy of the whole USSR was routinely exaggerated). In addition, the vast majority of candidates understood that the main focus of the Third Five Year Plan was on rearmament and defence production. In balancing out these 'successes,' most candidates focused on missed targets and low levels of production of lighter consumer goods as evidence of 'failure.' This was often linked to the social 'failure' of the Five-Year Plans in the very difficult standard of living endured by Soviet citizens in the 1930s. Balanced coverage of this nature was typical of Level 3 and Level 4 answers.

The main differentiating factor between Levels 3 and 4 was the quality of analysis provided. Stronger answers, in Level 4, tended to show an understanding that the development of heavier industries and defence production were Stalin's priorities in this period and that the 'social failures' around living conditions and consumer goods were not the main focus or aim of the plans. Level 3 answers did not provide such analytical insight, more often simply restating the balance already achieved that there was expansion of industry but at a social cost. The strongest answers, in Level 5, provided more developed analysis and judgement of the success/failure of the Five-Year Plans in different contexts. Therefore, substantiated judgement at this level was often achieved in relation to economic, social, political and/or ideological aspects.

Report on Question 4

This question was the second most popular of the essays and proved equally accessible as 03. Candidates were able identify a range of relevant factors, including Stalin's leadership (positive and negative aspects), the size and climate of the USSR, Germany's weaknesses and mistakes, the resilience of the Soviet people and aid from the Allies. Candidates interpreted the meaning of 'wartime' in different ways – some more precise than others. Stalin's over-reliance on the Nazi-Soviet Pact and his refusal to believe intelligence reports of the build-up of German troops were considered relevant to his 'wartime' leadership. Conversely, the achievements of the Five-Year Plans in creating a command economy able to deliver high levels armaments was not considered directly relevant to his wartime leadership, however, some candidates used this effectively as an alternative factor to balance against Stalin's wartime leadership in analysing the statement in the question.

Level 3 candidates usually identified three or four of the above factors and provided a reasonable level of factual detail and some analytical comment in support. Overall evaluation in Level 3 answers tended to be restricted to the judgement that Stalin's leadership was not entirely responsible for the Soviet victory as there were lots of factors involved. As is to be expected, Level 4 and 5 responses provided a greater range and depth of supporting information and developed the analysis further. This most often came in a more comparative evaluation of the relative importance of factors, making an argument that Stalin's leadership or another factor was the most important, whilst acknowledging that the victory was not entirely down to Stalin's leadership. Alternatively, analysis at these higher levels sometimes argued that Stalin's leadership was weak at the start of the war but improved over time. In addition, stronger answers often made links between factors, for example arguing that Stalin was essentially lucky that, in the early stages when his leadership was poor, other factors such as German weaknesses and the size of Russia bailed him out. Such evaluation sometimes continued that when Stalin's leadership subsequently improved, the die had already been cast and the USSR's inherent strengths of population size and economic production levels would have been enough to secure victory without Stalin's input.

Question 3 -Exemplification of Level 5 qualities

This response is fully analytical in style and is very well-organised and delivered. There is a very good conceptual understanding throughout which is supported by well-selected contextual information. The answer has balance and judgement in every section, covering the economic, political and ideological aspects of the Five-Year Plans. The introduction sets out the overall argument which will be made, and this is delivered throughout the answer, and reiterated in conclusion, thereby providing a coherent and consistent argument.

It can be argued that the statement lacks validity given that there were some significant successes of the Five-Year Plans which allowed Stalin to meet his aims. For example, Stalin significantly improved the economy through rapid industrialisation and therefore industrial production increased. As well, Stalin was able to use the Plans to increase his political position and therefore consolidate his personal, and military strength, through the economic improvement. Lastly, Stalin was able to have ideological successes, which also benefitted him politically. However it can be argued that this was somewhat a failure due to the social inequality created.

Firstly, it can be argued that the Five Year Plans were not a failure due to their economic success. For example, Stalin was able to carry out his policy of rapid industrialisation which significantly improved economic stability, such as allowing the economy to grow by 14% each year. Furthermore, the production of heavy goods substantially increased with coal production increasing by 90 million tonnes, and steel output trebling. This demonstrates that the Plans were not an economic failure as they successfully met Stalin's aims and provided the economy with greater stability. In addition, Stalin was able to improve the infrastructure of Russia through developing industrial cities such as Magnitogorsk, which became industrial centres for shipbuilding and oil refining. Through expanding Russian infrastructure, Stalin not only improved the economy, but also their production of

industrial goods, which enabled them to become more self-sufficient. However, it can be argued that the economic conditions had not improved, making the Plans a failure. For example, there was a significant lack in the quality and quantity of consumer goods available in Russia, as well as cramped living conditions, and rationing which worse than during the NEP. This demonstrates that Five-Year Plans were not a complete economic success as they did not improve the economic conditions which people endured, however, it can be argued, that Stalin had little concern for the welfare of his people and therefore improving their economic conditions was never an aim of the Plans and did not define its success, suggesting that it was not a failure. Overall, it can be argued that the Five-Year plans were not an economic failure as they significantly increased production, to meet Stalin's priority of rapid industrialisation.

Moreover, it can be argued that the Five Year Plans met Stalin's political aims so were not a failure. Firstly, Stalin was able to establish his position of supremacy through implementing the Plans as he used them to create an economic policy which equalled the prestige of Lenin's NEP. This demonstrates that Stalin was able to consolidate his political power through the Plans as they increased his popularity within the Party and enabled him to be equated to the same level as Lenin. Furthermore, through the Plans, Stalin was able to increase his control over the workers, especially as he forced many peasants to become workers, for example, he imposed

strict discipline within factories such as fines and dismissal for slowness and lateness, and forbid strikes. This enabled Stalin to increase his political position through implementing his power over a large proportion of the population, showing that the Plans were not a failure. Furthermore, Stalin equated the stability of the USSR to the security of his own position and therefore began to develop his military power at the end of the 1930s, as war became more imminent. For example, Stalin emphasized rearmament through the creation of 9 new aircraft factories; this shows that Stalin attempted to develop the military strength of the USSR, which can also be considered a political success. However, it can be argued that although this was the most successful area of his Plans, it was only able to be achieved through the economic success which had laid the foundations, through industrialisation, to be able to rearm. Overall, it can be argued that the Plans were not a political failure as Stalin was able to use them to consolidate his position of supremacy, although military power had not been fully established by the end of the 1930s.

Lastly, it can be argued that Stalin's aims of ideology were somewhat achieved through the Five year Plans, but this was the aim that was least successful. Under Marxism, Stalin believed that industrialisation was necessary in order to create a Communist society and develop a stronger country and therefore through

Achieving this, ~~that~~ he had ideological success. ✓
Moreover, under the Five Year Plans, the proletariat increased from 18% to 50%. and this also demonstrates the ideological success of the Plans, as it created a larger workforce, which was necessary to achieve industrialisation and Marxism. ✓ However, it can be argued that this aim was not driven by ideology, but instead Stalin used it to meet his political aims, especially as ideology was a lesser priority. ~~However~~ Moreover it can be argued that Stalin did not achieve socialist ideology through the Plans as he created a hierarchical system, dominated by the Party elite, as well as wage differentials, which were used for Stakhanovites and more successful workers. ✓ This highlights that there was significant inequality in society, which shows the Plans to be an ideological failure.
Furthermore, the rights of women decreased in the Great Retreat such as ~~to~~ through banning abortion and divorce; this shows that Stalin did not have ideological success as he failed to create a utopian Marxist society. Overall, it can be argued that Stalin gave the least priority to his ideological aims, causing it to be a failure, through the social inequality it created. The only successes he had in this area were more motivated by his political aims also.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the view has limited validity as it can be argued that Stalin was able to successfully meet his economic aims of the Plans. This also enabled him to successfully achieve his political aims through

Making him more popular in the Party, and establishing the strength of the USSR. However, it can be argued that the 5 Year Plans were an ideological failure in some ways as they did not create the socialist society desired by Communists due to the hierarchy which emerged. However, it can be argued that ideology was not Stalin's main aim of the Five-year Plan, and therefore it was necessary to sacrifice it to achieve his political aims, which were most successful. ~~and~~ This shows that the Plans were not a failure.

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