

HISTORY (WORLD AFFAIRS 1917–1991)

Paper 2158/12

Paper 1

Key messages

- It is important that candidates read each part of every question they select to answer.
- Accurate supporting information is essential if high marks are to be awarded.

General comments

The excellence of many scripts was rooted in firmly held knowledge of World Affairs, 1917–1991. Such responses reflected close study of the period and also careful consideration of what was required in the questions attempted, thereby avoiding the irrelevance that was to be found in less successful work and which is referred to in reports on individual questions below. Written work was therefore in these cases informed, relevant and appropriately presented. Those who succeeded less well generally did so as a result of deficiencies in these directions.

All sections of the paper, with the exception of **Section E**, attracted the work of the candidates, though as indicated above a number of questions virtually throughout were not popular. In **Section E** it appears that candidates prepared only for likely questions on the Arab-Israeli disputes and neglected other aspects of the topic.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

There was variable work on this popular question. Any study of the peace settlement of 1919–20 requires a competent grasp of geography. Shortcomings were apparent in this respect; particularly in **(a)** where many asserted that the Sudetenland was obtained from Germany and in **(c)** where territories released by the demise of Austria-Hungary were too generously distributed by the candidates to Yugoslavia. Some of those who made accurate geographical references lacked clear knowledge of specific areas of relevance. The last part received well-argued responses, some extending their analysis to the eve of the Second World War.

Question 2

This was less popular than **Question 1** and was generally handled less effectively. The question was specifically about 'former colonies', yet a distinct number of candidates wrote about the general territorial arrangements made in 1919–20 and neglected the question's focus; others appeared to be misled by the reference to the League of Nations and devoted their entire answer to a discussion of the League. The best responses wrote knowledgeably on the mandates element of the last part of the question.

Question 3

This was both popular and better attempted than the opening two questions. A number of weaker answers were insecure in terms of the chronology and did not observe the time sequence in **(d)** and **(e)**, thus permitting the Battle of Britain to continue into the Blitz and beyond and extending discussion of Operation Barbarossa as far as the Battle of Stalingrad. The last part of the question was often well attempted. The majority of candidates observed the given time frame and were able to present a range of salient reasons for Nazi success.

Question 4

Truman was perhaps the best developed of these three statesmen, and his role in the Cold War was often well exemplified with balance throughout his time as president. There were also helpful references to Khrushchev's role in the 'thaw', Berlin and Cuba, but a number wrote about his modernisation programmes which had no relevance to this question. Tito, while the more demanding of the three, attracted weaker comment, many not perceiving his stance between the two sides and some evidently not recognising who he

was. Similarly, in the last part, discussion of Mao was not limited to the Cold War and a number of responses wasted valuable time by discussing other aspects of his regime.

Question 5

Relevant geographical knowledge was used to good effect in answers, but once again the time frame was not strictly observed, with background on the French presence earlier and on post-1965 Cold War developments being given too much emphasis in some responses. Most mentioned the changing 'government' of Vietnam, but the 'fighting' received greater emphasis. In the last part there was a tendency to focus more on the US withdrawal than on My Lai's importance in it; indeed, many answers suggested poor knowledge of what actually happened at My Lai and who was responsible for the massacre.

Question 6

While **(b)** and **(d)** were often quite well attempted, there was significant weakness in work on the remaining three – and all received some coverage. Thus in **(a)** the 'formation' was missed and often the response proceeded to the March on Rome. In **(c)**, the least popular option, it was too often asserted that the fascists occupied the factories. Only the best of those who attempted **(e)** recognised the vital link to the murder of Matteotti. In the last part of the question there were frequent references to Matteotti which, in many cases, were not relevant. However, a number of candidates did develop their responses on other aspects of 'control'.

Question 7

Parts **(a)** and **(b)** were essentially concerned with Hitler's increasing control from 1935 to 1939, but too many candidates muddled their responses by ignoring the specific dates given in each part; material relevant to **(b)** was sometimes put in **(a)** and vice versa. A number of candidates regarded **(b)** as an invitation to write generally about Nazi Germany and not specifically about the extension of control; unfocused comment on economic progress was often presented and was not relevant. Candidates had less difficulty with relevance in the last part of the question and were able to make useful comment on the general acceptability of the regime in Germany and its crushing totalitarianism.

Question 11

This proved to be a popular question and most candidates attempted it well, with relevance and clear, well-informed balance between 'advantage' and 'disadvantage'. It is the type of question that requires broadly based yet precisely rendered supportive references and in some cases these were rather weakly presented. While many were aware of the Sacco and Vanzetti trial, some were rather hazy on the details and hence unable to link it to 'importance' in US history.

Question 12

Of the four New Deal features the TVA and the AAA were the most confidently handled. Many candidates recognised the economic and political significance of the TVA. It was also widely known that the AAA meant a reduction in wheat production, with the better candidates helpfully indicating why. The role of the NRA was less well known, though many indicated the value of the 'Blue Eagle' label. Detailed knowledge of the Social Security Act was not commonly seen and many responses made rather vague references. The last part of the question was usually quite well done, with many responses making detailed references to short comings and gaps in New Deal legislation.

Question 14

Each aspect of the first part of the question was covered. In **(d)** some candidates missed the reference to the 'break-in' and there was some confusion on what was taken in the Watergate building and what was later demanded from the White House. There were few attempts at **(c)** but these were exceptionally well informed. Parts **(a)** and **(b)** were often effectively contextualised in the struggle for civil rights, while **(e)** was the least popular element and received rather vague responses. In the last part, most balanced Johnson's domestic record with his role in Vietnam, but answers could have gone further in their assessment.

Question 16

The most effective responses noted that the focus of this question was entirely on the year 1917. In weaker responses parts **(d)** and **(e)** were too often developed beyond that year. Knowledge of the chosen three was

in many cases competent. Some responses were not entirely balanced and some less well informed candidates became confused between Kerensky and Lvov. The last part, with its specific focus on July 1917, was generally handled well and many candidates demonstrated secure and detailed knowledge.

Question 17

The basic subject matter of this question was generally well known. Part **(b)** was perhaps best attempted although a number of responses did not take into account any positive outcomes of industrial development or collectivisation. In part **(a)** more might have been made of the objectives, methods and achievements of the Five-Year Plans which were fundamental to the question. There were balanced attempts at the last part, often balancing economic and military gain against the repression which was characteristic of the decade.

Question 18

The first part covered three years (1942–45) of fairly balanced fighting, yet this balance was not generally to be found in answers. Responses often began with quite knowledgeable accounts of Stalingrad but then they tended to develop on rather brief and general lines. Some candidates were well informed on Kursk but a significant proportion of responses gave little attention to Berlin in 1945, although it was indicated in the question. Answers to the last part of the question were often more successfully undertaken than the first part; certainly many offered more detailed support to their responses here.

Question 19

Most candidates were aware of the main themes required to answer this question, but a number might have improved their responses by considering a broader range of issue or by more precision in supporting detail. Thus, salient themes such as decentralisation, destalinisation, and the virgin lands campaign were often alluded to but not developed. As in the previous question, the second part was often more successful and many candidates took the opportunity to include a discussion of foreign affairs as a reason for Khrushchev's fall.

Question 22

Most responses offered balanced and reasonably informed accounts of the specific wars of 1967 and 1973 and of the peace that emerged in 1978. In a number of cases this material was not well developed, nor was there much attempt to look at the continuing aspects of warfare epitomised by PLO activity. The response to the last part was generally restricted to a discussion of the USA and the USSR, with competent links to the situation in the Middle East.

Question 25

The main trends of apartheid policy and resistance to it were apparent in most answers, but often detail was thin. The most effective answers concentrated on the 'too little, too late' element of the last part of the question. Some answers would have been improved by more secure and detailed knowledge of the concessions which were made in the 1980s.

Question 26

Most candidates gave full accounts of the part played by each leader, although references sometimes overlapped. Concentration tended to be given more to the struggles of the interwar years (and the post-war Civil War) than to developments since 1949. The reforms alluded to in the second part of the question were sometimes not considered with sufficient balance and precision, the Great Leap Forward tending to dominate over the important, but seemingly little known, agricultural reforms.

Question 29

Useful knowledge was displayed on each of the options in the first part and each option received equal coverage. Similarly the last part was well analysed, with broad references both to the sub-continent and to Westminster in discussion of the reasons for the withdrawal.

There were too few attempts at **Questions 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30** to make general comment appropriate.

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