

# HISTORY (WORLD AFFAIRS 1917-1991)

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Paper 2158/12

Paper 1

## General comments

There were very few attempts at **Questions 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 30.**

Much of the work presented by the candidates in this examination was of a high standard. The majority of the candidates had clearly engaged well with salient historical themes in the period 1917-91 and were able to deploy their knowledge and understanding with good purpose to the questions they selected. There was also good balance evinced in much of the work, thus further assisting the presentation of answers.

There were scripts in which these qualities were less effectively displayed. In some cases there was evidence of less secure knowledge and material lacking relevance. Some candidates appeared not to have read the dates in the question with sufficient care. This was noticeable in some of the more popular questions. Thus, for example, in **Question 2** the focus in the last part of the years 1939-45 was neglected, often in favour of the 1930s. **Question 5**, in almost all cases, excluded the 1980s in favour of the immediate post-war period. Some candidates missed in **Question 6** the specific focus in the last part on just two years, 1933 and 1934, while in **Question 7** there was mainly general coverage of the Mussolini years rather than the ones specified. In **Question 16** attention was often given mainly to the February rather than the October Revolution.

It was encouraging to see in many of the better scripts a determined attempt to employ a balanced level of analysis, as required by the question, in the last part.

## **Question 1**

This attracted a number of distinctly good answers from well informed candidates concerned to deploy their information with purpose. Details of the boundary changes to Germany were often complete and well known in **(a)**, though some neglected the focus on 'borders'; material in **(b)** was less secure and in most cases the German possessions in Asia were less well known. The approach of most candidates to the last part was to agree Germany's treatment was unfair and to support that argument with reference to the Fourteen Points and specific treaty details, whilst balancing the argument with reference to Germany's treatment of Russia at Brest-Litovsk.

## **Question 2**

Answers in **(a)** and **(b)** were usually well argued and balanced with sensible attention to the dates given in the question in each case. Appropriate context was provided in **(a)**, together with competent supportive material. There was a similar approach in **(b)**, Czechoslovakia securing more attention than Austria and the story taken through in most cases to the total conquest of the country in the spring of 1939. Knowledge on the last part was, however, less secure. Few focused effectively on the Second World War in connection with German-Italian relations and tended to look instead at the pre-war years.

## **Question 3**

This was a popular question and many candidates provided good answers. Most knew the functions of the four named UN organisations and many were able to describe their 'purpose and work' with detailed knowledge and references, though there was some confusion with League forerunners in some cases. The last part evinced generally good knowledge of UNO and the League and usefully drew the comparison between UNO structure and League weaknesses.

#### Question 4

Some candidates were unable to balance material well between the periods specified in this question. There were cases of over-long introductions that went back to the Japanese presence in the Second World War and which anticipated the last part. But most gave fair coverage of the French and the increasing US presence in the first part, replete with good descriptive detail of their involvement. The last part usually received competent argument. While the role of the Vietcong was well put, more could have been made in some cases of the role of events in the USA.

#### Question 6

While there were some well focused answers to this question, some answers lacked clear focus on the 'career' of Hitler and did not use the specific dates given in the question. Thus some started in the First World War rather than 1923 and at the end of the first part anticipated later events in the early 1930s, avoiding the clear cut-off point of 'January 1933'. The dates in the last part were quite specific: the two years of 1933 and 1934, packed with significance for the advance of Hitler's career. But there was a tendency to go further or to generalise, and responses would have been improved by relating to the vital steps of advance those two years held for the Nazi party and Hitler's career.

#### Question 7

In this question, the dates were the same for the first and last parts, but there was a tendency in the first part to go back before 1925, covering such ground as the rise to power of Mussolini and his early experience of power. The question was actually concerned with domestic affairs after he was well established. There were in practice good descriptions of domestic policies. The last part also received some fair analysis of the varying degrees of support in both provenance and time, though with reference again to the given dates, Matteotti was not relevant, except perhaps as modest background.

#### Question 11

There were some lively answers to this question on the USA in the 1920s. (a), (b) and (c) each attracted some quite detailed descriptions of their role in US society in these years. In (a) attention was very strongly focused on African Americans without always addressing other racial minorities and immigrants; in (b) the term was sometimes applied with a modern day significance rather than the USA of the 1920s; (c) sometimes evoked general references to affluence rather than monetary movement. The last part generally received well balanced responses seeking to illustrate the theme that affluence was not enjoyed by all.

#### Question 12

New Deal legislation appeared generally to be well known and reasonably well understood in answers to the first part, where it formed the bulk of the response. Not all candidates applied a consistent balance across the 1930s in the light of the quotation, some leaving out the earlier features of depression at the start of the question. But most produced balanced answers and generally dealt well with the quotation given. Hoover came in more prominently in the last part and there were often some well argued responses on the extent to which he has been unjustly criticised for his leadership of the country at that time.

#### Question 14

In almost all cases basic knowledge was shown of the three choices made. Some answers would have been improved by the use of greater detail. There was quite a contrast between the comparative lack of good supportive material in the three choices in this question and the abundance provided in **Question 11**.

#### Question 15

The first part gave an open invitation to write fully on Watergate. Some candidates' responses would have benefited from better knowledge of the years 1972-74. The last part was stronger on the party than on the president, but there were some usefully argued responses here.

#### Question 16

The Russian Revolution is a popular subject in this paper and this question provided for full coverage of it. In (a) it seemed to take most candidates some time before they engaged with the events of October, focusing more on a narrative of mid-1917 preceding it; in some instances it was incorrectly asserted that the Tsar was

unseated in October. The Civil War fared better, though further detail of who was involved and where, would have improved answers. In the last part most indicated strongly that foreign powers generally disliked communism, but responses could have explored other reasons for support, such as annoyance at the withdrawal from the war by the revolutionaries.

#### Question 17

This question elicited good descriptions of Stalin's domestic policies in the 1930s - five-year plans, collectivisation and purges - but was less informative on the 1920s when many of the steps in his rise to power were omitted. Candidates were better informed on his exercise of power than on his steps towards securing it. The last part generally was less focused on the 1930s. Stalin's links with West European powers in that decade were largely missed and there was no reference to his sponsoring of the Popular Front movement.

#### Question 18

Those who attempted this question generally showed what was essentially involved in the three military encounters, without proceeding to more detailed descriptions. In the last part knowledge of the events of the last two years was less extensive. Better deployment of this knowledge would have improved the quite well approached arguments that a number of candidates sought to develop here.

#### Question 20

Not a great many candidates attempted this question on Khrushchev and supportive detail in (a), (b) and (c) was less extensive. Generally it was (a) that was the more strongly attempted. While many in (b) focused on the virgin lands scheme, some saw it as a replacement for collectivisation rather than a complement to it. In (c) there was uncertainty of what was actually 'decentralised'. Many endeavoured to argue a case in the last part, but answers would have been improved by well supported evidence about Khrushchev's style of government.

#### Question 22

Answers generally were balanced over the two years and good on the Israeli involvement in events, but the full features of the Suez crisis were not in most cases as effectively developed. The last part received in most cases a fairly argued response that touched on the immediate participants and made some helpful references to the impact on USA and USSR policies.

#### Question 26

In this question, there was a tendency to avoid Mao's career in favour of a history of China in these years, in which inevitably the career of Mao played a prominent part; but it was not exactly what the question asked. There were nevertheless some informed answers and the years 1918-35 were generally adhered to. While there were a number of quite well argued and supported answers to the last part, the role of Japan in this connection needed expansion in some cases.

#### Question 28

This question had a particularly broad spread across more than four decades. Most candidates perceived that broadly the question divided into two parts in each of (a) and (b): the period under Mao (to the mid-1970s) and the period beyond that (to 1991). While the scope is therefore broad, it was not to be expected that candidates would have very detailed knowledge of these economic trends. Information on which the description were built was usually both accurate and balanced. A variety of approaches were argued in the last part.

#### Question 29

The years 1935-47 cover crucial years in the history of the sub-continent and most who attempted this question got to the essential features in the developing search for independence. While balance of time and area was generally well held, supportive detail was not so strongly developed. The last part opened up a variety of topics and most candidates were able to focus on the salient ones of Kashmir and Bangladesh, even if here also the references to events might have been more strongly made.

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