

HISTORY (WORLD AFFAIRS 1917-1991)

Paper 2158/01

Paper 1

Key messages

In order to achieve high marks in this paper it is necessary for candidates to demonstrate a firm grasp of the knowledge required by each question they attempt. It is also necessary to show how that knowledge is relevant to the precise demands of the question and not to include irrelevant material.

The most successful candidates also take careful note of the key terms of the question and pay attention to start and end dates and key instructions.

In answering the last part of questions the most effective responses also pay attention to the requirement to address the 'how far' or 'to what extent' element.

General comments

A considerable proportion of candidates demonstrated most impressive knowledge and understanding, presenting scripts that were both well informed and effectively focused on the demands of the questions. The highest achieving candidates also demonstrated an ability to relate their material to the analytical requirements of the questions. Most candidates who wrote plans for their answers kept them brief and purposeful. A small minority of well informed candidates continue to write over lengthy plans and this often results in them running out of time and failing to complete all the required responses. It is encouraging to note however that this tendency continues to decline.

In the most successful responses candidates supported and developed their points by detailed reference to their knowledge. Weaker responses were characterised by a lack of secure knowledge and a tendency towards generalised comment. There were some instances of confusion over names, events and times and candidates need to ensure that they can make accurate, factual comments to develop their responses. In a few cases responses were too brief. Although candidates might demonstrate an outline understanding of an issue they will not be able to gain high marks unless they spend some time explaining and developing their ideas.

To read and understand the nature of the question is the first stage in any successful response. There was evidence that some candidates had not done this carefully enough. For example, in **Question 3** events were required 'from 1936' yet many started in 1938; in **Question 4 (c)** the focus was on 'blockading' Cuba, but some spent too long recounting earlier events; in the last part of **Question 7** some wrote an account of Hitler's rule during the 1930s, yet the question requirement was more specific; in **Question 10** the focus on 'Western' Europe was often missed; in **Question 17(a)** there were general answers on the last tsar rather than responses specific to 1917. Candidates need to be alert to the pitfalls that exist through a faulty reading of the question.

Most candidates helpfully indicated where the last part of the question began in their answers, by leaving a line or providing suitable introductory words. This can be useful to the candidate as it reminds them of the focus of the question.

Comments on specific questions

Please note that there were too few responses to **Questions 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 24, 25, 28** and **31** to make general comment appropriate.

Question 1

There were many well informed responses to this question. Candidates responded to the request for 'background' as well as 'terms' by alluding to Genoa in **(a)**, to Sévres in **(b)** and to the earlier resolution of the Ruhr issue in **(c)**. In each example candidates were able to convey the terms of the treaties with accuracy and authority. Many answers to the last part of the question showed a positive attempt to address the 'to what

extent' element. There were clear references to the defensive precautions taken by France in the late 1920s in spite of the apparent thaw in relations with Germany.

Question 2

Both elements **(a)** and **(b)** were well known as important inter-war episodes and many candidates wrote a helpful introduction on the development of the crisis before the League of Nations became involved. Some candidates allowed their description of the crisis itself to take over the answer to the neglect of the League of Nations. Others usefully showed that the competing concerns of Western powers sapped any commitment they might have had to assisting the League in resolving the trouble. The most perceptive responses to the last part of the question observed that Corfu was not entirely promising for the League early on, while in the late 1930s it was the nature of the problems which overwhelmed the League's attempts to solve them. A number of candidates took the last part of the question as a truth that needed to be illustrated and therefore tended to write rather one-sided accounts.

Question 3

This diplomatic survey of the years 1936-39 was well tackled by many candidates, with a suitable emphasis on the circumstances surrounding Czechoslovakia in late 1938, and a clear focus on the reasons why war broke out in 1939 in the last part. Weaker responses sometimes demonstrated a tendency to neglect the remilitarisation of the Rhineland and the Anschluss and go directly to Munich. Others presented a slightly confused narrative of events in the autumn of 1938. In the last part of the question the majority of candidates were able to discuss the most important events concerning Czechoslovakia, Poland and the USSR. In a minority of cases the use of detail might have been more precise and the argument more clearly focused.

Question 4

There were many effective responses to this question. In part **(a)** it was encouraging to find that the classic error of confusing the blockade (1948-49) with the building of the Berlin Wall (1961) was very little in evidence. Part **(a)** was often informatively presented, with appropriate background material as well as narrative of events, all seen in a suitable Cold War context. Part **(b)** was usually well recognised also, though there was some confusion on the nature of the Warsaw Pact. In **(c)** excess pre-blockade material was evident in a few responses. The question did not require a full discussion of the Cuban Missile Crisis, simply the relevant 'blockading' feature and some wasted time on detail which wasn't required. It was encouraging to find candidates looking beyond Yalta and Potsdam for origins of the Cold War in the last part of the question and many who did this argued their case well.

Question 5

Answers to this question were generally well informed on both parts **(a)** and **(b)**. In **(a)** attention was mainly directed to the strategies of those involved, to the movements of the various fronts in the war and the involvement of those outside Korea; few trespassed outside the given dates of 1950-51. The same could not be said for **(b)**, where there were very variable beginnings, 1954 being a popular one. The dates had been chosen as illustrative of the fuller US commitment in Vietnam and that feature was often given graphic description, ending with the process of withdrawal in the early 1970s. In the last part many candidates considered a wide variety of motives which were not limited to the idea of the containment of communism. A number of candidates emphasised the role of US politics in this regard.

Question 7

There were many effective responses to this question. Pre-1918 material was usually not too extensive, while more perceptive candidates made 1918 itself the direct start of their answer. The best responses maintained balance thereafter. The pre-1929 period, while important, did not deserve so much attention as the years from then to August 1934 when the substantive work on securing power really came into play. The majority of candidates displayed a sound grasp of factual material although some responses might have been more precise. There was some confusion as to who the victims were in such episodes as the Reichstag Fire and the Night of the Long Knives. Given the timeframe of the last part of the question, attention needed to be given to Hitler's appeal and the general condition of the German people in his relentless progress towards power. The nature of his rule in the mid and late 1930s was not the subject matter of the question, yet a number concentrated on this to the neglect of 'the early 1930s' and gained limited credit as a result.

Question 8

In part (a) the most effective answers were well focused and specific. A small number of weaker responses provided generalised accounts of Italian problems and did not consider the left-wing dominance in 1919-20 from which fascism indirectly benefitted. A majority of candidates were confident in their knowledge of Fiume and the Lateran Pacts in parts (b) and (c). Some candidates looked more broadly at papal policies, tracing the move from hostility to the state to support for Mussolini and the events of 1929. The least well addressed aspect of the question was the concept of the Corporate State, which was fundamental to fascism, but known only by a minority. Some responses considered other economic policies, such as autarchy, which were subsidiary to the Corporate State.

Question 10

Many candidates demonstrated an excellent grasp of detail, with responses very well balanced across the quarter century covered by the question. Some took a more limited approach focused mainly on the 1940s and the Marshall Plan. A few were sidetracked into providing an account of the structure of the United Nations. Answers to the last part might have gone further than Anglo-French troubles over membership, although that theme was well presented in a number of responses.

Question 12

Some candidates dealt informatively with such issues as the sinking of the Lusitania, submarine warfare and the Zimmermann telegram, while others alluded loosely to the need for the USA to assist its 'allies' and that weaponry was required. The 14 Points had relevance to Wilson's role at Paris, but were not the only feature in his involvement there in 1919, nor was this a question on the 14 Points as such. Most answers to the last part asserted that isolationism was followed by virtue of the rejection of the League of Nations. Many candidates went little further than that, relatively few teasing out the instances that did show a limitation on its practice in the 1920s.

Question 13

In this popular question candidates who possessed good knowledge of the legislation of the period generally did well. There was less to write on (a) than on (b) and candidates seemed aware of this in their responses, while the mark scheme took account of the historic imbalance. Hoover was usually presented as locked into the Republican attitudes and approaches of the time, with useful comment from many on the legislation he initiated as well as his generally ineffective approach to social issues. Roosevelt was viewed more favourably and more broadly, with good detail on the nature and purpose of much of his legislation. Interesting contrasts emerged in the last part of the question.

Questions 14, 15 and 16

There were a few attempts at these questions and some brief comment might be helpful. In **Question 14(b)** attention was limited on Pinochet, while more was needed for both men on their domestic policies and the reasons for them being criticised. Answers to **Question 15** were often weak in all respects, with classic errors in (c) by looking at women's achievements earlier in the century and in (d) by looking (in all cases) at MLK and civil rights rather than Black Power. In **Question 16** only the most perceptive candidates recognised the limitation to 'domestic' history in the case of each president.

Question 17

The focus of this question was on 1917 and candidates needed to note this, especially in the case of part (a). Here answers often began at the start of Nicholas II's reign and Bloody Sunday made many appearances. While a modest sentence or two of background might have helped, the essence of the answer needed to be confined to 1917. The time sequence was less problematic in parts (b) and (c). Material on Kerensky was generally confidently used although Kornilov was not so well known. While a number of candidates moved on into the Civil War in the last part, most confined themselves to 1917. Many effective responses considered the securing of power in the light of Lenin's appeal and the dire circumstances of the time, set against a backdrop of a failing government.

Question 18

Many candidates warmed to the prospect of a biographical account, although a few neglected the starting date of 1928 and included too much background material. Most then considered Stalin's role in industry, agriculture

and purges, with helpful and broad ranging references to events in Russia. Foreign affairs were not specifically required but some candidates did introduce them and make relevant comments. In the last part it was encouraging to see a number who did not look solely at the terror of Stalin's rule but considered the role of his work for the economy and his stability in power as further features that assisted his control.

Question 19

It was the first three options that attracted most candidates in this question. Occasionally responses which did address part (e) became confused with the events of 1956. Answers to parts (a) and (c) were usually well informed and showed a good grasp of context. Responses to part (b) were notably weaker, often confusing both time and combatants and neglecting the fact that this aspect related to a 'siege'. On the other hand answers to the last part were often very well focused with material on allied assistance, domestic resources and Soviet determination used to good effect.

Question 22

Most candidates who attempted this question recognised the situation, but supporting material on the history of the British mandate of Palestine was often sketchy and insufficiently detailed. Some candidates weakened their responses by offering only generalised accounts of the creation of the state of Israel, the dramatic events surrounding this being somewhat neglected. The last part covered perhaps more familiar territory and was reasonably well addressed, although here too references might have been more carefully supported and developed.

Question 23

A similar approach was evident in this Middle East question also. Parts (a) and (b) were clearly known and there was little evidence of confusion. Some responses were certainly well informed and impressive in content, but too many were rather weakly sustained. There was evidence of uncertainty in some responses to part (c) and this was the least well done of the three. The analytical last part was often well approached with many demonstrating clear understanding of the reasons for the peace moves of the late 1970s, relating both to the Middle East and elsewhere.

Question 26

A few candidates commented on the monumental change in the last decade of the period which saw the removal of the apartheid system although detail on the nature of that system, which was relevant earlier in the question, was only weakly advanced. Answers to the last part were more effectively supported with detail and the majority of candidates were able to produce balanced and well supported answers.

Question 27

Most responses gave a balanced survey of the two decades in the question, with useful supporting details on movement, locations and leadership, often weaving in the weakness of the KMT's position and contrasting it with that of the CCP. In some responses material (and geography) could have been more secure and a number of candidates took too broad an approach to the question and failed to present a sufficiently informed discussion. In the last part, the contrasting strengths of each side were presented well by the majority of candidates, although in some cases the events and nature of the 1946-49 Civil War were not sufficiently developed to assist the answer.

Question 29

Parts (b) and (c) were more confidently handled than part (a) and a relatively small proportion of candidates demonstrated clear knowledge on the 'Speak Bitterness' campaign. A number of candidates confused it with (b); failing to see that rather than criticising the government itself, this campaign concerned criticism of the landlords and often led to their execution. There were some spirited attempts at the last part, with answers clearly focused on the aims of the new rulers and the troubles of post-Mao China.

Question 30

Part (a) was usually well answered and many candidates displayed good knowledge of Gandhi's campaigns. Most candidates also had little difficulty with (b) and, although less well known, there were some well informed answers on Bose in part (c). Few candidates had significant problems with the last part, balancing material usefully between policy directions in Britain and the increasing disorder in the sub-continent.