



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS2M

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – January series

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Unit HIS2M

Unit 2M: Life in Nazi Germany, 1933–1945

Comments from the Chief Examiner: Unit 2

In this examination session some issues generic to all the Unit 2 papers were noted:

- In the compulsory source question, 1(b), some candidates failed to use both the sources and their own knowledge in responding to the question. Candidates must be reminded that unless they refer to the sources, by explicit comment on detail or views, paraphrasing or direct quotation (or if they use the sources only and show no additional knowledge), their mark will be limited to a maximum of the top of Level 2.
- Although there were fewer problems of timing than in Unit 1, some candidates clearly spent considerably longer than 15 minutes on the (a) questions and 30 minutes on the (b) questions, and consequently failed to complete their final answer. They should be reminded that even a couple of focused paragraphs could enable them to reach a Level 2 mark, whereas a string of notes would be unlikely to show skills above Level 1.
- It was clear from some scripts that candidates were not familiar with the complete content requirements for their alternative. Candidates must be reminded that they need to revise all of the content of these 'depth' units, particularly since this paper features one compulsory question which can be drawn from any part of the specification content, as can the remaining two questions, from which they have to choose one.

Report from the Principal Examiner

General Comments

There were few candidates for the first examination and therefore the following comments should be viewed with some reservation. The paper used the full timescale and undoubtedly this had an effect on choice for some candidates. There is always a concern in entering candidates after only one term's teaching: in terms of preparation, many of the candidates lacked real depth and balance to their answers. This was particularly true of Questions 1(b), 2(b) and 3(b). Time management overall seemed quite good but some candidates wrote too much on the (a) part of the question and then struggled to produce a decent length essay. There were several Grade A and B scripts and these were succinct, well-supported by evidence and persuasive. However, too many candidates seemed to rely on a repetition of two or three points and their answers were narrow and unconvincing. In these cases balance was either missing or candidates chose to give both sides but then were unable to offer any summative comments.

Question 1

- (a) It was slightly disappointing to note that some candidates struggled with Question 1(a), which required candidates to show their skills of comparison using two sources. Very few candidates got much further than simply paraphrasing Sources A and B and only one or two actually explained 'how far' they differed. Most candidates found the language of the sources accessible and at times were able to bring in own knowledge to support their comparison. Own knowledge needs to be used appropriately in this question and it

should not mean that candidates simply write everything they know about the period. They needed to link it to the 'reactions to Nazi rule of those living in Germany in 1934.' Good candidates were aware of the provenance of the two sources and were able to use this to enhance their answers. They were also able to show the similarities between the sources. This is important as the question is asking 'how far' and candidates should not simply look for differences. Clearly there are major differences but similarities might include recognition of the climate of change in Germany, reference to the S.A. plot and both are passing comment and offering judgement on Hitler's short period in time. There were some inaccuracies. A few candidates thought that Shirer was a woman and some thought that Shirer and his colleague were 'resisting' the S.S. or S.A. by ducking into stores when in fact they were simply avoiding trouble. A few candidates confused the S.S. 'marching up and down the street' with a Nazi parade.

- (b) There were some decent answers to this question. Good candidates avoided generalisation and their answers examined the 'non-legal' methods used by the Nazis in the years 1933 and 1934 and balanced these against the use of force. Weaker answers tended to simply focus on the activities of the S.A. or S.S. and their role in intimidating the public at the time of elections. It was surprising that many answers did not mention the repercussions of the Reichstag Fire, the Enabling Law, the Decree for the Protection of People and the State, and other quasi-legal methods, and the Nazi need for financial support from commerce and industry. Where candidates demonstrated that this 'legal revolution' complemented Nazi intimidation and perhaps were part of the same mindset, the answers were highly rewarded. Most candidates used the three sources which was encouraging but at times their answers were based solely on selecting phrases from the sources to support their answer, instead of linking them to their line of argument. A few candidates were also able to examine the support which the Nazis received willingly from sections of the German people and their answers were much more balanced.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were often able to suggest that the reason why Hitler replaced the trade unions by the German Labour Front was his need for control over all-things German but then were unable to offer many other reasons. Good answers suggested some of the following:
- that Hitler's motives were in line with his aims for a totalitarian regime
 - the trade unions had traditional links to socialism and Catholicism
 - German organised labour had previously shown industrial muscle towards Nazism and might be a major threat to the future stability of the Nazi state
 - strict regulation of the workforce and their practices and conditions was important if the Nazis were to destroy individual values and build their new society.

Candidates need to offer at least three reasons why Hitler replaced the trade unions and, to achieve a good level, they must show some linkage between them. Some candidates tended to drift from the focus of the question by simply talking about organisations such as Strength through Joy and Beauty through Labour. These organisations were not the reason why trade unions were banned; they were created as a result of what happened.

- (b) The majority of candidates attempting this question only referred to workers in their answer and therefore their responses were unbalanced. The main criticism was that most answers were either generalised and repetitive or quite direct but lacking in any real range or depth. Too many answers tended to be rather descriptive, with a few explicit comments bolted on as a conclusion. Answers rarely had sufficient and/or well selected evidence to develop an argument; few showed a good understanding of historical interpretation. The best answers covered both worker and peasant and quickly

highlighted that there is a debate over the well-being of the German people in this period. Some used statistics to support or challenge the premise of the question. One or two Level 4 and 5 answers were most effective by assessing what 'improvement' actually meant and these answers took a wider perspective than just a simple economic one. Candidates were able to show that, just because some workers appeared to tolerate the Nazi regime and were doing better economically, this did not necessarily mean their lives were better off. Too many answers tended to give an uncritical support to the premise of the question and assumed that it was only the arrival of the Nazis which caused any improvement. It was assumed by some that organisations such as Strength through Joy were completely successful. Good answers differentiated between worker and peasant and some of the understanding regarding Nazi attitudes towards the peasants was quite pleasing to read.

Question 3

- (a) Overall fewer candidates chose Question 3 and it was apparent from some answers that specific knowledge was lacking. Too many answers talked about military issues, with little or no reference to the impact of the invasion *within* Germany. Some answers consisted of simple generalisations – the standard response, 'German people faced problems', was all too prevalent. Good answers showed an awareness that going to war in 1939 had been met with some reservation. Therefore, by 1942, a war on two fronts and the grim news coming out of Stalingrad, meant that the German public were under strain and under no illusion.

Candidates needed to show some of the following:

- the decision to invade in 1941 was a huge gamble and this affected the German public physically, economically and psychologically
 - many Germans were unconvinced of war, even when it appeared to be going well
 - invasion meant serious personal hardship
 - daily lives were influenced even more by the Nazi Party and the S.S.
 - when the Blitzkrieg failed the knock on effect was enormous – greater need for munitions workers, mass production, labour shortages etc
 - any Russian success, especially at Stalingrad, badly affected public morale
 - there was an increase in propaganda but did it work by 1942?
- (b) There were some decent attempts at this question but often the supporting evidence was rather thin. Some candidates took 'later stages of the war' to mean from 1939 to 1945 and their answers were too slanted towards the opening of the war. Good answers did offer an overview and the best pointed out that, while the Nazi Party had lost support by 1945, Hitler had not. Some even produced surveys conducted after the war to show how Hitler still retained a reasonable level of support, despite defeat. They claimed that, as there was no revolution in Germany in 1945, there must have been a fair amount of support for Hitler. Most candidates chose to look at the years 1943 to 1945 and there was a common view that once Stalingrad was over, support for the war and implicitly also Hitler waned. They described how a form of passive support had taken place. Others took the Kershaw view that Hitler's regime was not a narrowly based tyranny and that in fact partial consensus in all reaches of society was extensive. They further stated that many in Germany had been prepared to place their trust in a self-professed political saviour and all the previous successes in the war had been brought about not only with mass acclaim but also with a high level of support from almost all non Nazi elite groups. Most essays showed that there was a general feeling that it was Germany's fault, the public realised they could not win and that a great deal of blame could be laid at the feet of the military.

Some suggested that there developed a lack of faith in the leadership, Party or propaganda and even the Führer, their last hope, was now subject to criticism. There were some good examples of increasing resistance, such as the refusal to offer the Nazi salute. Resistance was noted and many used the examples of the Scholls, dissolute youth groups and the Bomb Plot of 1944 to highlight growing disillusion and the need to remove Hitler. What was missing overall was a coherent essay based on balance and supported by a good range of material. Few essays were able to sustain an argument over more than three quarters of a page.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.