



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1N

Report on the Examination

2009 examination – June series

This Report on the Examination uses the [new numbering system](#)

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Unit HIS1N

Unit 1N: Totalitarian Ideology in Theory and Practice, c1848–c1941

General Comments

There were 1250 entries for the unit. Candidates had a free choice of two out of the three questions set. Question 1 on the USSR was the most popular of the three questions followed by Question 3 on Nazi Germany and Question 2 on Fascist Italy. Clearly candidates answered two of the three questions in all combinations, though the USSR/Nazi Germany was the most popular combination and Fascist Italy/Nazi Germany was the least popular. There were awards at all levels for each of the six sub-questions. Statistically Question 1(01) was answered most effectively of the first part questions by the candidature, followed by Question 3(05) and finally 2(03). A different pattern was seen when comparing the second part responses, where Question 2(04) was marginally the best answered by a short head from Question 1(02), with Question 3(06) being statistically the least well-answered of the second part questions. When considering performance at whole question level, the pattern commented on in January 2009 was repeated, with Question 1 on the USSR being most effectively answered, followed by Question 2 on Italy and Question 3 on Germany. Although the sample size was very small in January, this does at least suggest that there is some consistency in candidates performing better on the topics they complete first, which is logical and consistent with trends in AQA History from the legacy specifications. The least effectively answered question was 2(03) however, which suggests that some more careful consideration of the nature of the questions is required.

First part questions ask candidates to explain an event or issue, and responses need to cover a range of reasons 'why'. Three reasons, supported by evidence, will secure an award of Level 3 (7-9 marks). To achieve Level 4 (10-12 marks), candidates must offer links between the factors, for example, prioritising with an explanation, or appreciation of the inter-relationship of the factors. Candidates are not expected to evaluate the validity of the question; for example, there was no credit in Question 1(01) for arguing that Stalin did not promote his cult of personality, though responses that used this point to argue that three or more other developed factors were therefore more important than Stalin's actions were rewarded at Level 4 as this demonstrated prioritising and judgment.

Second part questions require an extended response. Answers with some understanding of the question but a lack of evidence, or narrative which demonstrates an implicit understanding of the question will only gain marks within the lower two levels (Level 1, 1-6 and Level 2, 7-11 marks). Answers with focus and evidence will reach Level 3 (12-16 marks), though they may not consider alternative factors and therefore lack balance. At Level 4 (17-21 marks) answers will have balance and depth of evidence. Level 5 (22-24) answers will also demonstrate judgment.

Many candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of ideology in the different contexts, but centres are reminded that the ideological context of this paper is one of its distinctive features and teaching should reflect this focus.

It is also worth making clear to centres what is meant by the requirement for candidates to demonstrate understanding of different historical interpretations. Candidates demonstrate this skill by showing understanding of alternative explanations or challenging the explanation

suggested in the question, in other words, by arguing in Question 2(04) that Fascist ideology was of limited importance in bringing Mussolini to power or in Question 3(06) by arguing that the marginalisation of German Jews was not consistently successful between 1933 and 1939. Describing different historian's viewpoints is a low level skill, as is citing a historian, rather than their evidence. An apposite quote from a historian as the final part of an argument which has already been supported by evidence is an appropriate conclusion to an answer, but is not essential to demonstrate understanding at the highest levels. It was noticeable that this was less a feature of the candidature as a whole than had been the case in January, but there were still candidates who believed a learnt list of what different historians have argued was what was required.

Question 1

- 01** As in January this sub-question was answered the most effectively of the six questions on the paper. Almost all were aware of the context of the development of the cult and related it to the worship of the tsars and to a lesser extent the deification of Lenin. Gratifyingly there were few responses that argued the Stalin forced people to worship him out of fear of the retribution of the NKVD, though better responses did relate the mass psychology of worship to the context of the terror and the uncertainty felt by the average Soviet citizen. Some answers rightly made reference to the need to 'thank' someone for the 'gifts' of the mid-1930s, though limited knowledge of the varied improvements in standards of living were present in those responses which argued that Stalin's cult developed in response to the need to praise someone for the success of collectivisation in the early 1930s; higher level responses related this point to the ending of bread rationing in 1935. At the lower levels candidates described the cult, with general reference to propaganda. At Level 4 candidates showed links by relating their answer to the paradox of the cult in the context of Marxist-Leninism as well as Stalin's negative view to argue that the people's desire was therefore the most important factor.
- 02** The reasons for the intolerance of diversity were generally well known, though the ability to consider them in terms of Stalin's desire for personal power compared to other ideological and contextual factors provided discrimination at Levels 3, 4 and 5. A minority of candidates struggled with the focus of the question, describing intolerance, or deploying relevant material on political opposition or religious diversity as part of an assessment of the extent of intolerance. Higher level responses were able to make reference to Stalin's ideological opposition to Ryutin, Kirov, Trotsky and Bukharin which drove his intolerance of diversity, balanced by reference to the economic context of developing an urban proletariat and applying Marxism to the countryside, and/or reference to Marxism's rejection of religion. Centres are reminded that assessment of opposition is in the context of the intolerance of diversity as opposed to more general and descriptive understanding of the Show Trials, purges and the Army tribunal.

Question 2

- 03** There were many strong responses to this question which were able to discuss Fascism's hatred of communism in the context of its nationalism, as opposed to communism's internationalism, Fascism's belief in the value of the individual, as opposed to the primacy of materialism, and Mussolini's personal vehement hatred of communism, coupled with his key role in the development of Fascist ideology. Weaker answers tended to ignore the need to focus on the anti-communism of Fascist ideology and discussed the reasons for anti-communism generally. Credit was given for responses which considered the opposition of the middle classes, big business, the Catholic Church, landowners or indeed the King, as Mack Smith has argued that Mussolini moved to where the money was when

he articulated the ideas of the PNF. Responses that only ran through each of these groups and then argued that Fascism was anti-communist to win their support, however, were not rewarded at the highest level as there was more to Fascist anti-communism than the pursuit of votes. The primacy of ideology on this alternative is critical.

- 04** Candidates were required to assess how important Fascist ideology was compared to other factors, for example, the weaknesses of Liberal Italy, the mistakes of leading figures, for example Facta and the King, as well as the role of Mussolini and the Blackshirts. Some responses wanted to cover the range of problems facing Fascist Italy but dealt with Fascist ideology in a cursory fashion and were awarded low Level 4 at best. Whilst candidates are entitled to dismiss the factor offered in a question, they are reminded that the factor must be analysed before it was dismissed. Level 4 responses recognised the broad appeal of Fascist ideology with reference to the Church, the middle classes, business and landowners; such responses often made more effective use of the context of anti-communism than in Question 2(a) with reference to the Fascist defence against left-wing militancy. The best responses recognised that however potent Fascist ideology was, the PNF only won 35 seats in 1921 and therefore other factors were at work in October 1922 that led to Mussolini's appointment as Prime Minister.

Question 3

- 05** The question required a clear understanding of why anti-Semitism became a core part of Nazi ideology. Lower level responses tended to discuss reasons why Germany was anti-Semitic generally, rather than focusing on Nazi ideology. The impact of the Wall Street Crash and the context of economic hardship may have intensified anti-Semitism in certain parts of Weimar Germany, but it was not responsible for the primacy of the ideas in Nazi beliefs as early as the 25 Point Programme of 1920. Reference to the November Criminals, Ebert and Scheidemann had value, but needed to be linked to the impact on Hitler's world view, rather than generally described as part of an explanation for German anti-Semitism. Some answers suggested Hitler's views may have been the result of his mother's death whilst under the care of a Jewish doctor, an analysis which has only limited credibility; better answers offered this reason but also explained why it was unconvincing. When this formed part of a broader analysis that offered several reasons, this was considered an example of judgement that demonstrated the linkage required at Level 4.
- 06** The question saw a polarity of responses. Many well-prepared candidates reached Levels 4 and 5 by evaluating the success of Nazi measures to marginalise the Jews. These responses frequently made reference to the limits to persecution as a result of Hitler's lack of power whilst Hindenburg, Schacht and other conservatives held high office. These answers often worked through to the conclusion that the death of Hindenburg and the fall of Schacht helped clear the way for a radicalisation of policy from 1938, offering the additional pressure created by the Anschluss and the intensification of persecution typified by Krystallnacht as evidence to support their analysis. Level 3 responses struggled to provide balance, covering the boycott of shops, the Civil Service Law, the Nuremberg Laws and Krystallnacht with at best passing reference to limitations. At the lower levels answers drifted outside the timeframe of the question and lacked clear understanding of marginalisation, suggesting that Jews were not marginalised because 5,000 survived the Holocaust in Berlin alone. There were also responses which suggested limited academic study of anti-Semitic policy, typified by moral judgements on anti-Semitism and descriptions of scenes out of *Schindler's List* and *The Piano*.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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