

HISTORY

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Paper 8697/01

Modern European History 1789 - 1939

General comments

The overall standard of the scripts was satisfactory although there was some variation between the standards of individual Centres. Most candidates answered the required four questions and used their time effectively. The most able candidates wrote answers that were very relevant, well organised and appropriate in their factual references.

The most important discriminating factor was success in answering **Question 1**, the Source-based question on The Origins of the First World War, 1870 - 1914, and it is appropriate to comment below on answers to this question at greater length. This question is not more difficult than traditional essays but it requires different skills in the use of primary evidence. The exercise is particularly interesting because it brings candidates closer to the way in which historians work. These historians are very reliant on primary evidence.

The essay answers were given high marks when they were analytical and explanatory rather than narrative or descriptive. They paid attention to the key instructions in the questions. For example, **Question 1** asked 'Why...?', which required a series of reasons. **Question 3** asked 'How similar...?', which involves comparison. **Question 5** and **Question 8** asked 'How far...?'. This sort of question invites candidates to discuss a claim and then compare its importance with other aspects of the topic. Credit was given for brief introductions but candidates should avoid giving unnecessarily lengthy backgrounds.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The topic in the question was the Sarajevo Crisis, 1914 and there were five sources. The best answers considered each of the sources individually but also tried to group them to show how far they either agreed or disagreed that 'Serbia was responsible for the Sarajevo crisis of 1914'.

Source A would seem to confirm this because the Serbian secret society, of which the assassin Princip was probably a member, was violently anti-Austrian. However, candidates were given credit when they pointed out that Source does not necessarily imply that all Serbians shared these opinions or that the Serbian government was involved. Source B was a direct accusation by the Austro-Hungarian government that the Serbian government was sponsoring terrorism and was responsible for the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. However, the extract was not objective and was not in itself proof that the Serbian government was responsible but it does reveal clearly the hostility between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. Source D also pointed to Serbian guilt, as the court statement of a man accused of the murder of the Archduke. However, credit was given when candidates pointed out that Cabrinovic was anxious to exonerate the Serbian government from blame and he pleaded that he had high motives. Some answers would have been improved if they had considered how reliable are statements by the accused, especially when faced by the death penalty. They seldom provide confessions but usually they try to exonerate themselves.

Source B was a defence of the Serbian government but may be as unreliable as Source C; it was unlikely that Serbia would accept responsibility for the assassination. However, its reliability is supported by the fact that the Serbs were willing to accept neutral arbitration and supported a full investigation of those who were responsible. Some candidates were given high credit when they examined the provenance of Source E. They pointed out that one would normally expect von Bulow to defend Austria-Hungary because it was Germany's ally during the war. The fact that he acquitted the Serbian government of responsibility is

therefore very significant. Although memoirs are often unreliable because they are used to justify the actions and motives of their writers, this Source should be given a lot of weight.

The best answers then considered how far they would modify the statement about Serbian responsibility in the question. They were comparative and used the sources effectively to support their arguments. Less successful answers often surveyed, or paraphrased, the Sources in sequence ('Source A says that... Source B states that...') and provided a short statement in an introduction or conclusion that either agreed or disagreed with the quotation in the question. A few very weak answers did not use the correct approach to answering this question because they almost ignored the Sources and contained general essay-type accounts of Sarajevo and the causes of the First World War. The sources were used for occasional illustration. High marks can only be given when candidates show that they have tried to interpret and incorporate the sources in an argument.

Question 2

The key issue was the reasons why Louis XIV failed to satisfy the demands of the French revolutionaries from 1789 to 1793. The highest marks were given to answers that focused on the specified period; some weak essays provided only background to 1789 to explain the causes of the Revolution. This was relevant but it was insufficient to explain developments from 1789 to 1793. Credit was given to the answers that considered the aims and policies of the King, as well as his personal weakness. It was also relevant to examine the growing radicalism in France with the rise in republicanism and fears of counter-revolution.

Question 3

There were some good comparisons that deserved high marks but the weaker answers only included general statements about the development of industrialisation; these lacked specific references to two of Britain, France and Germany. On the other hand, there were some thoughtful assessments that explained why industrialisation took place at different times in these countries.

Question 4

The key issue was whether Bismarck acted more in the interests of Prussia or of German nationalism from 1862 to 1871. The answers showed that candidates were usually knowledgeable about the events. The general standard of the factual accuracy was sound. But some candidates relied on narratives and did not consider the significance of events or Bismarck's aims. The better answers considered whether his aims changed to embrace wider German interests from 1866. Credit was given when the constitution of the new Empire in 1871 was analysed; this showed how Bismarck ensured that Prussia would take a leading role in the new state.

Question 5

The key issue was the extent to which European countries benefited from imperialism. The causes of imperialism could be made relevant when candidates examined how far the hopes of European countries were satisfied but accounts of the causes of imperialism alone could not deserve high marks. Another quality of the best answers was that they provided some examples. Some very effective essays pointed out the problems that followed imperial expansion; European countries found that the results were not entirely beneficial. For example, political and military rivalries developed. The colonies were not always economically profitable.

Question 6

The specified period in this question on Nicholas II's regime in Russia was from 1905 to 1914. It was possible to discuss the First World War and the 1917 Revolutions as a postscript to put 1914 in context but the question did not require this and long discussions of the period after 1914 were not relevant. The highest marks were awarded to essays that considered both the strengths and weakness of the regime. For example, there seemed to be political stability because radical and revolutionary groups were controlled. The economy was improving. However, the weaknesses included a government that was hostile to political reforms, ineffectual institutions such as the Duma, an inefficient administration and widespread unrest among the lower orders in towns and countryside.

Question 7

The key issue was Stalin's success in achieving his aims. Most candidates could deal adequately with Stalin's economic aims and policies and many were able to see some of the economic failures, as well as the successes. The characteristic of the best essays was usually their ability to deal with other issues, such as Stalin's political control through the use of the party, propaganda and the purges.

Question 8

This question covered different topics in the syllabus and focused on the reasons for political change. It suggested that the most important reason was the impact of war but candidates could offer other explanations of political change because the question asked 'How far'. The variety in the answers was interesting. Some focused on the period from the French Revolution to about 1870; others concentrated on the period from about 1860 to 1939. Good essays avoided narratives of the wars but concentrated on their importance and consequences. For example, the First World War caused upheavals in Russia and Germany that caused the downfall of their monarchies; it also had effects in the democracies. A few candidates preferred to accentuate other explanations, such as violent revolution.

Paper 8697/02

S.E. Asia: From Colonies to Nations 1870 - 1980
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General comments

Most candidates were able to answer four questions. There was therefore little evidence that the time allotted was insufficient. The quality of response was very varied and as a consequence marks ran through the whole range.

Although the period begins in 1870, many candidates, when on familiar ground, such as in **Questions 4 and 5**, wasted time and effort by including material from earlier periods.

In answering the essay questions in **Section B**, candidates are asked to support their answers with 'examples drawn from at least three countries'. Not all candidates were able to fulfil this condition.

In **Section B** better answers were able to make a general statement and then to illustrate it by citing evidence from differing societies. However, many candidates used the more mechanical technique of moving stage by stage from one country to another without providing any conceptual umbrella.

The syllabus requires candidates to 'show a depth of historical understanding and evidence of reading' but answers seemed often to be based purely on O Level material.

In the Source-based question in **Section A**, the syllabus asks candidates to test a particular assertion against the Sources and their own background knowledge. Very few candidates actually followed this requirement but answered the question without deploying any background knowledge at all.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This Source-based question turned on Singapore's separation from Malaysia and asked candidates to consider how far this was caused by UNMO's policies. All candidates were required to answer this question and the resulting answers covered a wide spectrum. What was most evident was that many candidates either had no background knowledge or were uncertain whether this could legitimately have been deployed in their answers.

In consequence, many candidates failed to set the Sources in context and to use their own historical knowledge to evaluate the documentary evidence given in the Sources. Too many candidates wrote answers using the Sources at face value.

Furthermore, in general, candidates seemed unwilling to test the Sources even in the most elementary way e.g. by discussing the possible significance of the Malaysian background of the historian cited in Source A or of the likely impartiality of the account in *The Times* in Source E.

More insight perhaps was needed to identify the use of racial stereotyping in Source C and its assertion that while the Chinese are only interested in making money, (and therefore there was no need to offer them a role in certain fields such as administration), on the other hand the Malays 'given time and wise planning can do many things'. To gain marks in the highest bands, candidates are required 'by interpreting/evaluating the Sources in context to find evidence to challenge and support the hypothesis' and the highest mark is reserved for those who can analyse why one of the two positions is preferred. Very few candidates reached this level. Of those who did, one candidate, writing on Source D, observed that the speaker was hinting that PAP was a 'more capable political party' as unlike others such as the MCA it wanted 'to put into practice its political ideals'. Again, on Source E the same candidate was able to evaluate the significance of the federal elections of 1964 as a turning point by citing the promise made previously by Mr. Lee that he would not contest them.

Question 2

This was not widely attempted but of the few who wrote answers some produced very good work. The time span of the question allowed candidates not only to illustrate how the colonial political experience varied from one imperial power to another but also to consider the tentative steps each made towards involving the indigenous populations in decision-making. One candidate tackled this by setting out her store in a striking first paragraph by reference to 'a patchwork of the use of direct and indirect rule in the Dutch East Indies, Malaya and Indo-China' followed by other headings such as 'another form of diversification was the growth of plural societies'. With these and others as a framework, this candidate then went on in the body of the essay to examine each in detail.

Question 3

A very popular question which asked for an examination of the impact on the subsistence economies of Southeast Asia of entry into the world market and gave an opportunity to candidates to consider how these economies weathered the Depression of the 30s. One very good answer began by pointing out that 'the colonial powers brought with them their own economic structures - hence the introduction of capitalism and market economy in Southeast Asia' and then analysed the consequent replacement of barter trade by paper money and the effect of such a change on traditional peasant economies.

Question 4

Not widely attempted. What was called for was an examination of the varied economic roles, say, of the Chinese, ranging from coolie to banker, from tin miner to entrepreneur in Malaya and Singapore and a comparison with their role in Indonesia or Thailand. Weaker answers ranged from a description, colony by colony, of the economic importance of the Chinese in the Malayan tin industry, and the Indians in Malaya's rubber industry or as moneylenders in Burma. Such answers could not score very high marks. However, better candidates seized the opportunity to organise their material more imaginatively and first analysed the economic contribution of each race to a range of Southeast Asia states and then went on to group the social effects of migration under such paragraph heads as 'the emergence of a plural society' or education.

Question 5

This question was most often answered by the weaker candidates. What was required was an analysis of the various factors which hindered the development of effective nationalist movements in the period. Such an analysis would necessarily have to include a range of factors: the watchful eye of the ruling power, repressive, as in Indo-China or Indonesia; the level of economic development; the extent of educational provision for the indigenous population; the role of the local elites; the fragmentation of nationalist groups; the influence of religion. Candidates often contented themselves with listing nationalist organisations, particularly in Indonesia, without attempting to relate their material to the question.

Question 6

This proved to be the most popular question on the paper and the response of candidates varied very widely from those who were familiar with Indonesia's wartime history (and often little else) to those who could call on material ranging from Burma to Vietnam and the Philippines. Again, some candidates were content to offer no more than a narrative at ground level without attempting to relate this to the question.

Such candidates were unable to consider how far Japanese policy differed in Indonesia where nationalism was already a reality with leaders waiting in gaol, to Malaya where effective nationalism hardly existed at all. One high mark-scoring candidate began by asserting that 'the Japanese had destroyed the myth of Western supremacy' and then went on to examine 'the taste of independence' which the Japanese gave to Southeast Asian countries citing amongst others the independence given to the Philippines. This essay, while considering all the local involvement and training that the Japanese provided, then trenchantly argued that a potent factor in fomenting nationalist movements, fiercely anti-Japanese, was 'the harsh treatment and suffering' inflicted by the occupying forces. Throughout Southeast Asia, this candidate argues, anti-Japanese resistance movements gathered strength, even in the Philippines, where 'they did not see Japan as a liberator but the Japanese occupation as an interference to their independence' as foreshadowed in the 'Tydings-McDuffie Act'.

Question 7

This question called for a survey of those Southeast Asian states which have been markedly successful in dealing with their ethnic minorities, some by making special provision. A comparison could be made between such states and others like Burma or Thailand where there were significant difficulties in accommodating ethnic minorities within their borders. Again, there was scope for a discussion of the problems in Indonesia experienced by the Christian minority in East Timor or the extreme force used against the Chinese. There were very few answers to this question. All were very weak.

Question 8

This question allowed candidates to consider the varied threats to democracy from several different standpoints and in different states: the role of the army in Burma and Thailand, 'Guided Democracy' in Indonesia: the dangers implicit in the dominance of a single party in government over a prolonged period of time.

There were no answers to this question.

Paper 8697/03

International History 1945 – 1991

General comments

This was the second examination of this particular syllabus. The number of candidates was about the same as for the June examination, although all were from different Centres, with one exception. There is some evidence that candidates for this examination paper found it more of a challenge. It is possible to identify two elements of the examination which might help explain this point.

The first, more specific factor was **Question 5**, on one aspect of the crisis of communism, namely the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Although Examiners were as generous as they could be, the broad interpretation of the question preferred by most candidates limited the marks that they could be awarded.

The second, more general factor concerns the compulsory source-based question. This time, it was on a less central aspect of the work of the United Nations. The origins of the Korean War, the topic on the June paper, was a subject about which most candidates had some knowledge and understanding. The developing role of the UN with regard to human rights was much less familiar. It seems a reasonable proposition that they therefore felt less confident in answering the question. Centres might like to reassure candidates that very specific knowledge of the subject is not essential to success in answering the source-based question. While candidates' own knowledge is given as one of the ways in which sources can be evaluated, that knowledge does not always have to be topic-specific. They always have other ways of evaluating sources, as indicated in the report on **Question 1**. The syllabus specification for **Question 1** inevitably means that some questions will be set on topics on which there are few accessible sources. Candidates should not panic if they are faced with a set of sources on a less familiar topic. The question always asks 'how far do the (given) sources support the hypothesis?'. Candidates can reach the highest bands if they evaluate the sources effectively using only the information on the examination paper, although they must have the evaluative skills to do so. That message needs to be said loud and clear.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The report on the June examination identified three broad levels of attainment with regard to the use of sources in answering the question: no direct use of sources (level 1 in the mark scheme); sources taken at face value (levels 2 – 3); sources evaluated (levels 4 – 6). The June percentages in each category were 10%, 30% and 60%. The equivalent figures for this examination were 7%, 69% and 24%. A much greater proportion of candidates took the information in the sources at face value. They explained and no more. The higher level skill is to evaluate the sources, to question their content, to decide how much weight to give to the arguments of each before making a reasoned answer to the question.

So, if doing well requires evaluative skills, what exactly does evaluation involve? Many candidates seem to think that it means asserting that Source X is biased and therefore not to be trusted. This is assertion, not evaluation. All sources are biased in some way or other. It is not even enough to say that Source X is, for example, a speech by a politician and therefore not to be trusted because politicians never tell the truth in public. Evaluation based solely on provenance (who the author is and when he made his speech or wrote his letter) will not suffice. Although provenance of an extract might be part of evaluation, it must be linked with the content in some way or other. Principal Examiners have identified four ways in which candidates can evaluate sources, as follows:

- By testing the reliability of what a source says against their own knowledge of the topic.

Thus, in this question, the accuracy of the claims made in Source C (Kofi Annan's statement) about the positive contribution to human rights made by developing countries could be evaluated against the human rights record of such countries

- By testing the reliability of what a source says against what another source says.

In this examination, claims made by Source B that the UN Commission on Human Rights has 'turned a blind eye to gross human rights violations' is called into question by Source C, which argues that the Commission is both well aware of such violations and is trying to do something to stop such violations in the future.

- By analysing the language and content of the source to indicate its bias.

The content of Source E is not wholly consistent. It argues that the UN record on human rights has been very poor, especially in the twenty years to 1967, before going on to say that in that time it 'achieved' international agreement on two international human rights covenants in 1966. To reach such an agreement, especially in the era of the Cold War (use of outside knowledge), was no mean achievement.

The language of Source A is perhaps too exaggerated, claiming more for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights than is warranted. Has it really coloured **all** subsequent thoughts on human rights? By claiming so much, does not the author of Source A weaken her case, especially when you consider the practice of human rights since 1945?

- By analysing the language and argument of the source in relation to the author's purpose or audience.

The obvious example in this examination was Source C, Kofi Annan's speech to the UN Human Rights Commission. The speech can be seen as fawning, praising the Commission and developing countries to unreasonable excess. Alternatively, it can be seen as brave in that it actually mentions past failings of the UN and, by implication, the Human Rights Commission. Delegates would not be too pleased to receive public criticism.

Candidates are not expected to use all approaches for all sources; there is simply not enough time for them to do so. However, checking the content of each source, either internally or against other sources or their own knowledge, will enable candidates to develop a reasoned analysis in relation to the hypothesis put forward in the question. Once they do question their sources, they will reach levels 4 or 5 and even level 6. In doing so, they will have acquired skills of evaluation that will serve them well long after the examination is over.

One final point about the technique of answering **Question 1** is worth making. General introductions are a waste of time; candidates should evaluate the sources from the first sentence. On the other hand, summative conclusions are extremely important. Here, candidates should pull together their analyses of the separate sources, evaluating one against the other and all against the hypothesis before reaching a conclusion, which answers the question directly. For Level 6 marks, this answer will take one of two forms. It might modify the hypothesis to provide a statement that the sources will more properly support. It might show why the evidence of the sources in support of (or against) the hypothesis is to be preferred. Only in the conclusion will the question be answered in a direct and reasoned manner. This is why candidates should be advised to spend some time composing their conclusion.

Question 2

This was generally well answered. Candidates' knowledge of the topic was accurate and often detailed, their understanding of relevant arguments sound. Many candidates based their answer on the traditional, revisionist and post-revisionist theses. The danger with using such an approach is that candidates simply describe the three theories rather than analyse and evaluate them. Most candidates avoided this pitfall, producing a relevant and reasoned argument as they did so.

Question 3

Most answers to this popular question concentrated exclusively on the period since 1960, describing examples which supported the quotation, such as Vietnam and Afghanistan. Better candidates identified Cold War disputes which might disprove the hypothesis. These could be taken from the period before 1960, the obvious example being the Korean War. Post-1960 exceptions are harder to find; Berlin remained a problem in the early 1960s and Czechoslovakia in 1968 were relevant examples. The installations of new intermediate nuclear missiles on either side of the Iron Curtain in the early 1980s was also an important aspect of the Cold War.

The very best answers considered how a Cold War is fought; propaganda and electronic surveillance are as much weapons of a cold war as are bombs and missiles. Also the 'Third World' might need defining. Does it include the Middle East and thus the Arab-Israeli conflict, in which the Cold War superpowers were very closely involved? Very few took their analysis this far.

Question 4

Those candidates who attempted this question did so because they had a sound knowledge and understanding of the topic. They usually dismissed the assertion made by the question before providing a full list of relevant factors. These reasons were usually undifferentiated, which meant that the conclusion was not as convincing as it should have been. To reach the higher mark bands, candidates needed to do more than describe a list of points, however relevant they might be. They should also evaluate them, placing them in some kind of order of importance.

Question 5

This popular question was often misinterpreted. The intention had been to require candidates to evaluate the events and developments in the USSR in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The reality was that few did so. Based on their perception that the USSR has only one leader at any one time, most decided that 'Communist leaders' required them to consider the history of the USSR since the 1940s. Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev all received full treatment. By comparison, Gorbachev, who should have been central to the answer, was given only cursory attention. Few candidates even mentioned the events of 1991, when they should have been at the heart of their answers. The decision was taken to give such an answer a maximum of band 5 marks.

This long-term approach to the question made it almost impossible to develop any sound answer to the question. All leaders before Gorbachev did everything they could to maintain and strengthen the USSR. So did Gorbachev. However, some of his colleagues were not so committed. Yeltsin is the obvious leader who comes to mind in this respect. He fell out with Gorbachev in 1987, leaving the party leadership in that year (while remaining a government minister) and the Communist Party three years later. The rivalry between the two men is a key factor in explaining the collapse of the USSR in December 1991. By then, the CPSU leadership was deeply divided, as shown by the attempted coup in August of that year. These and other relevant developments, such as the rise of nationalist groups, should have been the focus of answers to the question. Some candidates did provide this more specific analysis. However, they were very much in the minority.

Question 6

A fair number of candidates attempted this question. Most had a reasonable knowledge of the nuclear arms race, which they used to provide a rather disjointed narrative of relevant events. No candidate really provided the analytical answer that was needed to reach the higher marks bands. This required a more structured approach, and one which identified, described and evaluated each of the possible causes of the accelerating arms race before making a final assessment as to which was the most significant.

Question 7

The few candidates who chose this question knew little about IMF and GATT, let alone their impact on international economic development. Their essays usually made no more than a few general points about the two groupings at best.

Question 8

This question was slightly more popular than **Question 7** and much better answered. Most essays showed a detailed knowledge of the Non-Aligned Movement and some understanding of its aims and achievements. Most preferred to describe the history of the Non-Aligned Movement rather than assess its achievements, which inevitably restricted the marks they could receive.

Paper 8697/04

History of Tropical Africa 1855 - 1914

No report available.

Paper 8697/05

History of the USA c.1840 - 1968

No report available.