Examiners' Report

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Pearson Edexcel GCE
in History (6HI01) Paper D

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Q1. Despite their complicated nature, many candidates were able to make sense of the events which followed the fall of the Qing rulers in 1911-12. The strongest answers examined those policies of the Qing which were already undermining effective central government before 1911, as well as the subsequent role of Yuan, the behaviour of the various warlords and the manipulation of China by foreign governments. Candidates taking a thematic route usually produced clearer arguments than those who tried to explain every twist and turn of the chronology.

Q2. This was far less popular with a significant proportion of candidates structuring their answers by assessing Mao's strengths and contrasting them with Chiang's weaknesses. This approach could work well, provided wider factors, notably the Japanese invasion, were not ignored.

Q3. This question revealed some alarming misconceptions about the chronology of the period, with many answers moving swiftly over the specified period of 1949 -57, instead focusing on the second FYP and the reform of agriculture after 1958. Relatively few candidates focused on the designated period in sufficient depth to do themselves justice.

Q4. This question was tackled by far fewer candidates, most of whom agreed with the proposition that Mao's leadership was never really threatened. Most candidates were able to discuss the purpose of the Cultural Revolution in eradicating threats from within. While the potential challenges of Liu and Deng featured prominently, other possible rivals like Lin Biao or Peng received less attention. Some candidates erroneously put the Hundred Flowers campaign of 1957 in this period, and most concentrated their attention on the1960s, rather than taking it right through to Mao's death.

Q5. Most candidates attempting Q5 found plenty of reasons for the survival of Tsarist rule. Those who chose the chronological route ran the risk of getting bogged down in the details of particular events, a problem which others opting for a thematic approach were able to avoid. Tsarist policies, in terms of both effective repression and timely concessions were frequently cited, as were the contributions of Witte and Stolypin (regrettably interchangeable for some) and the loyalty of the armed forces in 1905. For many, the army's availability to suppress opposition was taken for granted, with few pointing out that until defeat was conceded to the Japanese, the army was occupied elsewhere, only returning to crush the recalcitrant workers in December 1905.

Q6. Candidate completing this question were able to examine many aspects of Lenin's contribution to Bolshevik survival after the October/November Revolution, frequently comparing his input with that of Trotsky, while observing the weaknesses of the opposing forces. Many answers concentrated excessively on the Civil War period, thereby underestimating the importance of dropping War Communism in favour of NEP before it was too late. A minority devoted unnecessary time to examining events before October 1917, which was not helpful.

Q7. Although candidates are well prepared for questions on the power struggle, some limited the effectiveness of their answers by compartmentalising the various factors too much. The best answers were often those which showed detailed knowledge of how Stalin used patronage to his advantage, arguing that it was a combination of this and his manipulative ability that enabled him to pick off his rivals.

Q8. In general, candidates addressed Q8 more successfully than the broadly similar question on China (Q3), perhaps because they found the chronology more straightforward. Most candidates were able to examine some successes as well as the most glaring failures, and the role that agriculture played in underpinning the FYPs was widely understood. Better answers also considered the political benefits which Stalin took from finally imposing his authority on the countryside.

Q9. This question produced many excellent answers, and the weaker candidates were also able to examine some aspects of the Second World War's contribution to the improved status of AAs in the period, as well as the wider factors associated with the presidents, pressure groups and the Supreme Court. Better answers linked the wartime developments to the post war policies of Truman, rather than treating them as separate factors.

Q10. This question elicited some interesting responses, not only on the impact on the CRM of militancy, but also on the positive sides of the new approach in terms of social welfare. Other factors which limited the CRM's effectiveness, such as the growing problems in Vietnam and King's setbacks in the north, tended to receive less attention.

Q11. Most candidates were aware that US aims changed during the course of the Korean War and many argued that the outcome presented a mixed picture. Chinese aims tended to be seen in a less nuanced light, but nevertheless did receive some attention. Combining selected knowledge of the military events with the wider picture of the participants' aims was a challenge.

Q12. Candidates who could distinguish between the policies of Johnson and Nixon were inevitably better placed to answer Q 12 effectively. Those who paid attention to the difficulty of achieving
"complete victory", rather than merely explaining why the Americans had so many problems, also wrote more relevant answers. Some weaker candidates interpreted the question as an invitation to explain why the USA failed to win the war – this had some relevance, but was not quite what was being asked.

Q13. Reagan's economic policies were well known to many, and the long term problems he left behind were frequently commented upon. However, the question was asking about the extent to which he tackled economic problems, so it made sense to identify what these problems were and base an answer around this.

Q14. Comparatively few candidates tackled Q14 but of those that did, many were able at least to identify groups whose rights came under scrutiny, and extend their scope beyond African Americans. Only the strongest candidates were able to show that the picture was mixed and that tolerance was a shifting mentality depending on a variety of factors.