



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS20

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – January series

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Unit HIS20

Unit 20: The Impact of Chairman Mao: China, 1946–1976

General Comments

This paper appeared to have worked well, with most candidates finding the sources and the questions accessible. There was a good range of responses to all questions and a pleasing number of candidates were able to reach the higher levels.

Question 1

- (a) Candidates were asked to compare two views in the sources about the Cultural Revolution. The majority of candidates were able to correctly identify the basic difference between Source B, which portrayed the Cultural Revolution as an attempt to establish the personality cult of Mao Zedong, and Source A, which focussed on the destructive activities of the Red Guards and the attempt to remove the 'Four Olds'. Many candidates were also able to identify similarities between the sources and to offer at least some contextual information and were therefore able to achieve at least a Level 3 mark. For Level 4 candidates needed to explicitly address the question of 'how far' the sources differed and to offer a balanced conclusion. The number of students who were prepared to do this was higher than in previous examinations on this alternative.
- (b) Candidates were required to use all three sources and their own knowledge to assess how successfully the Cultural Revolution achieved Mao's aim of changing Chinese culture. Candidates who ignored the sources and answered the question solely from their own knowledge penalised themselves. All three sources could be used in answering this question. Source A referred to Mao 'fulfilling his long term aim of erasing China's past from the minds of his subjects'; Source B detailed how the Red Guards promoted the personality cult of Mao, whilst Source C contained a number of examples of how the 'drive against the 'Four Olds' has had a sweeping effect' and offered the view that 'a new China with ways quite different from the old is in existence'. Many candidates were able to use the sources and their own knowledge to develop the argument that the Cultural Revolution had, by 1976, changed Chinese culture. References to the activities of Mao's wife Jiang Qing were particularly relevant here. Candidates who noted the reference in Source C that 'much of the old China is too deep-rooted to remove' were able to develop an effective counter-argument that the Cultural Revolution was not entirely successful in erasing the past and that many Chinese merely paid lip-service to the outward manifestations of the new culture. Answers of this type invariably reached the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Question 2

- (a) This question asked about the reasons why labour camps were established in China in the early 1950s. The majority of candidates were able to offer some explanation for the establishment of the *lao gai* (penal labour camps) during the period 1949–1953 when the CPC was consolidating its power in China through repression. There were some very effective answers to this question in which candidates were able to identify a range of factors and many made clear and relevant links between the Chinese *lao gai* and the

Soviet *gulags*. There were, however, a significant number of candidates who confused labour camps with collective farms or with communes. These answers had only limited relevance to the question. Those candidates who offered a range of factors and who made links between them, or showed judgment through differentiation, reached level 4 in the mark scheme and achieved high marks on this question.

- (b) This question required candidates to assess the extent to which the Communist Revolution in China had brought complete equality for Chinese women by 1953. Candidates could and did draw a range of evidence to show that the position of women in Chinese society did improve after 1949. Of particular relevance here was the New Marriage Law of 1950, the increase in political rights for women and the increase in educational opportunities. Some knowledge of the situation of Chinese women before 1949 was needed to answer this question and candidates generally were able to make effective comparisons between the pre-1949 and post-1949 periods. More balanced answers, which were likely to achieve higher marks, were those in which candidates emphasised that attitudes towards women, especially in rural areas, were slow to change and that women had still not achieved complete equality by 1953. There were also some weaker answers in which candidates displayed only general knowledge of the changes made by the Communists and/or made assertions about the lack of change pre-1949 and the pace of change thereafter.

Question 3

- (a) This question asked candidates to explain why Mao launched an anti-rightist campaign in 1957. The majority of candidates who answered this question were able to correctly place the anti-rightist campaign in the context of Mao's earlier Hundred Flowers campaign and the flood of criticism of the Communist Party from intellectuals which this provoked. This question offered candidates the scope to develop a range of factors which lay behind the anti-rightist campaign and to show awareness of the debate between historians over Mao's motives. Whilst awareness of, or reference to, this debate was not essential even at the highest levels, there were nonetheless many candidates who used this material to very good effect in their answers. Indeed, this question elicited a pleasing number of very high level responses.
- (b) This question asked candidates to assess the impact of the failure of the Great Leap Forward on Mao's authority. There were a range of responses to this question but there were also a significant number of very high level responses. Candidates were able to draw upon a range of evidence to show that Mao's authority did suffer a setback after the failure of the GLF; his relinquishing of the post of Head of State, his self-criticism at the 7000 Cadre conference in 1962 and his defensive battle in the years 1961–1965 against the 'capitalist-roaders' within the Party leadership. Many candidates displayed an impressive knowledge of the political developments of these years and were able to produce balanced answers in which they argued that Mao still retained considerable influence and authority as Chairman of the Party with control over ideology, and through his alliances with the PLA and the Shanghai Radicals. There were some very effective answers which argued that even though Mao still retained prestige and authority he nevertheless behaved as if he had lost control, adopting an increasingly oppositionist stance towards the state bureaucracy and economic planners and withdrawing from Beijing.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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