



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS1K**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2010 examination – June series*

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# Unit HIS1K

## Unit 1K: Russia and Germany, 1871–1914

### General Comments

This should have been a straightforward examination with coverage across the specification. Some candidates dealt with the question demands very effectively, deploying relevant material in order to tackle the question demands. Those who performed less well generally did so because of a failure to address the specific question demands, in particular those relating to the period of time covered. Questions 01 and 02, dealing with the rise of the SPD in Germany proved to be the most popular and, especially in the case of 01 the most effectively answered. However there was a reasonably equal spread of answers across the range of questions.

### Question 1

**01** Answers to this question were generally effective and showed a solid understanding of the concept of Socialism and its position in Germany at this time. There was also a good knowledge of Bismarck's social and political position. Candidates gaining high marks for this question showed a good grasp of the background issues affecting Bismarck's attitude towards Socialism, for example his genuine fear of Socialist ideals because of his Junker background and the violence of events surrounding the Paris Commune only a few years before, and were able to link this to events impacting specifically on Bismarck in 1878. These candidates referred to the recent unification of the German Socialist Groups, Bismarck's need for a new political alignment in the Reichstag and the somewhat spurious attempt to use the assassination attempts against the Kaiser as a reason for repression.

Candidates who did less well in responding to this question tended to stick with the general idea that as an aristocrat Bismarck was anti-Socialist; many became very confused about the actual size of the SPD within Germany at that time, giving the amount of Reichstag seats from much later as a reason for the campaign and claiming that in 1878 the SPD were already a threat to Bismarck in the Reichstag. Some candidates who gained very few marks simply described the anti-Socialist campaign, which failed to meet the question demands.

**02** Most candidates displayed a fairly good knowledge of this time period in Germany, although this sometimes resulted in rather formulaic answers dealing with the efforts of each chancellor in turn. The best answers made a real effort to provide a balanced assessment of the successes and failures of successive German governments to deal with the rise of the SPD. These answers discussed the various attempts to stem the growth of the SPD and commented on the continued rise of the party. The best responses also made a positive assessment of the engagement of the SPD with democratic politics and commented that averting revolutionary outbreaks was a sign of government success. A common failing which kept many reasonably analytical answers at Level 3 was the failure to deal with the time period after Bismarck in any detail and in many cases to not deal with it at all. Lower level answers provided descriptive and often inaccurate material around the issue and a few candidates failed to provide any relevant material.

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**Question 2**

- 03** This question required both a general understanding of Alexander's desire to strengthen autocracy and specific knowledge on why Russification as a distinctive policy was followed. Many candidates were able to explain that Alexander wished to bolster his authority and many referred to the assassination of his father as a motive. The better candidates made it very clear that they understood what the policy was and why it was favoured by the Tsar for both personal and political reason. The influence of Pobedonostev was mentioned as was the diversity of population within the empire. Some students also referred to the Polish revolts of the 1860s. Candidates who failed to do well were very vague on what Russification actually was usually muddling it with Alexander's other attempts to strengthen his position. Other weak candidates described the policy.
- 04** Some of the responses to this question were disappointing largely because of a failure to engage with the question for two specific reasons. Firstly a large number of candidates became very confused as to which time period they were dealing with. Many referred to the impact of the 1905 revolution and the work of Stolypin, devoting a lot of attention to the tsar's attempts to deal with the Dumas. Whatever credit could be given for general insight was applied but the material used made it extremely difficult to reward these students. Other candidates seemed to have prepared work on opposition to Alexander's regime and described opposition in great detail, again it was difficult to reward these candidates. Candidates who performed well on this question provided a wide range of material showing Alexander's attempts to strengthen autocracy. They were able to assess the relative success of each of these policies and at the higher levels to provide a balanced picture. Some references to events later than the time period in the question were given credit if they attempted to give a long term evaluation of Alexander's success.

**Question 3**

- 05** Both this and the following question illustrate the problems faced by candidates who failed to focus on the question time period. Quite a few candidates also focused on the question from the French point of view, which had some validity, but should have been focused primarily on the effect that France's position had on Russian decisions. A large number of candidates focused on the Congress of Berlin, which was given some credit but was really too long term for such responses to be highly rewarded. Quite a few candidates also referred to the Russo-Japanese war as a factor, which was of course completely incorrect. Candidates who gained high marks for this question referred specifically to the situation by 1894 as well as the long-term factors. The failure of the Dreikaiserbund was relevant as was the decision taken by Germany not to renew the Reinsurance Treaty. Improved relations with France over the course of the 1890s and economic incentives were also valid points. A few candidates were able to link and prioritise both long and short term reasons.
- 06** Responses to this question were largely undermined by candidates using material referring to the 1870s and 1880s. A significant number of candidates based their answers on the damage done to the relationship between Germany and Russia by events such as the Congress of Berlin and the Bulgarian Crisis. Some candidates were convinced that the Dreikaiserbund was still in force in 1914. Candidates who did include material from the relevant time period were also sometimes very sketchy and confused. Candidates with material relevant to the relationship between Germany and Russia in the years 1894 to 1914 were rewarded although many found it very difficult to trace the impact of the alliance, referring to the development of the Schlieffen Plan and the Moroccan Crises as completely unrelated other factors. Candidates who were highly rewarded had an accurate understanding of the relationship between Germany and Russia in this time period. They were able to evaluate the impact of the alliance on that relationship and also

to present a balanced assessment of the impact of other factors such as the situation in the Balkans and Germany's alliance with Austria-Hungary.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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