



General Certificate of Education

History 1041

Specification

Unit HIS1N

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June series

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Unit HIS1N

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

General Comments

This was the fourth exam series and the second summer series. The number of entries rose again compared to twelve months ago. Clearly most centres are skilled at preparing candidates for the paper and there was some outstanding work seen by individual candidates and in response to each of the six questions. At the same time it is worth reminding centres that this specification does require a very clear focus on the ideological basis of each of the three regimes and that understanding of ideology will be assessed in context. All of the questions had a focus on one or more of the key features of totalitarian ideology.

The pattern first identified in January 2009 was repeated again, with Question 1 on the USSR being the most popular question, followed by Question 3 on Nazi Germany. As in previous series, candidates performed best on Question 1 on the Soviet Union, then on Fascist Italy, with Nazi Germany being marginally the least effectively answered question. The best answered 12 mark question was Question 1 (01), followed closely by Question 2 (03) with Question 3 (05) scoring a mean of c1 mark less than Question 1 (01). Of the 24 mark questions, Question 3 (06) had a marginally higher mean than Question 2 (04), though Question 1 (02) had a mean of almost two marks higher. Whether candidates perform better on the questions on the USSR because this is the first part of the specification taught, or because the questions were more accessible (or indeed AS Level students find communism easier to understand than right wing totalitarian ideologies) is not clear.

Questions 1 (01), Question 2 (03) and Question 3 (05) 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 followed some policies that were consistent with Marxist theory, or in Question 2 (03) for arguing that Italian Fascism was not racist before the 1930s, though answers that offered three developed reasons and made this point to demonstrate the influence of Hitler often achieved Level 4 by demonstrating understanding of links.

Questions 1 (02), Question 2 (04) and Question 3 (06) 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.

Question 1

- 01** This was the most effectively answered of the three 'why' questions, despite offering the challenge of understanding Marxist theory and comparing it to the context of Stalin's policies in the 1920s. Most candidates were able to reach Level 2 by describing some policies that were adaptations from Marxism, for example, NEP, Socialism in One Country, the Cult of Lenin or even Stalin's actions in Georgia. Such an approach could be credited at the top of Level 2 where there was clear understanding of policies and ideology. Some candidates focused on the end of the 1920s and made reference to collectivisation and the introduction of the Five Year Plans, demonstrating implicit understanding at best given these policies were partly adopted to *end* the ideological compromises that had existed since 1921. Candidates at Level 3 and 4 were able to identify reasons and use examples of policies as evidence to support their evaluation. Such candidates were able to demonstrate that the adoption of collectivisation and the Five Year Plans *were* actually adaptations of Marxism by arguing that Stalin was inverting Marxism and allowing the political system to drive economic development.
- 02** Stalin's victory in the power struggle is a well-understood part of the specification, and generally a very popular part of any specification on which it features. Candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the different leadership candidates and were able to offer some examples to illustrate their arguments. Some candidates preferred to tackle the personalities and events rather than the issues. Where there was some understanding of Socialism in One Country, World Revolution, NEP and collectivisation/rapid industrialisation candidates were able to show balance for Level 4, but a noticeable minority of candidates simply dismissed the issues before offering prepared answers that had a Level 3 ceiling. Some candidates showed a lack of real understanding by arguing Stalin's policies were popular with the people, without really understanding the political context of the power struggle. Many candidates are rightly aware of the importance of Stalin's powers as General Secretary, but it would be nice to see some examples of who he promoted, or who he blackmailed, and how this aided his victory, rather than simple assertions that this was why he won.

Question 2

- 03** Most candidates were aware of the growing Nazi influence on Italian racial policy in the 1930s, though if reference is to be made to the international agreements then correct names and dates are a must – the Pact of Steel was variously described as being in 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1940, with one candidate identifying the correct date whilst referring to the Pact of Rome. The actions of the Fascist State in Africa have been referred to as a 'forgotten Holocaust', so it is gratifying to see that this important area of Fascist intolerance has been widely taught and is well-understood. The best candidates were able to relate the inherent racism of Fascism with the context, and explain how ideological developments including the Manifesto of Racist Scientists interacted with the changing foreign policy context, including alliance with Nazi Germany and the impact of impending war.
- 04** Cultural diversity is explicitly identified in the specification as an area for study. Although around 50% of candidates were awarded at least Level 3, a significant number of candidates were unclear what they were being asked to write about. Examiners applied the term 'culture' broadly and rewarded answers that considered religion, race, education, youth groups, leisure organisations, media and the position of women. Answers that gave examples of control and limitations were able to reach Level 4, though the best answers were able to link the Fascist drive to create a new Italian culture to policies to militarise education, gender etc. Weaker responses described examples of policy without

considering 'crushing diversity' and answers in Level 1 and Level 2 showed implicit understanding by describing political or economic policy.

Question 3

- 04** The question proved to be the most challenging on the paper. Candidates were asked to consider one of the key contradictions at the core of Nazi ideology, namely how it could be both Nationalist and Socialist. Candidates that explained why it was nationalist with an example, and then why it was socialist with an example, before bringing the two concepts together through a policy, typically *Volksgemeinschaft*, were well on their way to top Level 3/Level 4. Answers which considered one strand of ideology but ignored or were confused on the other were limited to Level 2, and this did limit the answers of a majority of candidates who lacked understanding of the socialist influence on National Socialism. The best answers were able to look at a range of personal, political, economic and ideological reasons for the nature of Nazism, considering the influence of the Strasser brothers as well as Hitler and Drexler, the roots of the party post-war, the importance of blood rather than class and the significance of *Volksgemeinschaft*.
- 06** Hitler's rise to power remains a favourite question with candidates and there were some excellent responses that considered the change in the electoral fortunes of the Nazi Party between 1930 and 1932 by considering the changing economic context following the agricultural depression and the Wall Street Crash, linked to the success of the Nazi Party in getting their message heard. The inability of Mueller, Bruening and von Papen to deal with the economic and political crisis, the reaction to the corresponding growth in support for the KPD and the protection the SA seemed to offer from the extremism of the left were all well understood. Hitler as an electoral asset was also a popular, though some of the comments on the impact of propaganda were rather generalised and/or were more suited to a question on the period post 1933. However, the success of candidates in covering this range of factors also partly explains why this question was not as successfully answered overall as Question 1 (02) on Stalin's rise to power. Candidates were free to consider a range of other factors, but they needed to consider the appeal of Nazi ideology as a separate factor, or consider how it linked to the other factors. Too many candidates glossed over the focus of the question and were therefore limited to a maximum of Level 3. In addition, many candidates did not read the question carefully and answered the question as if it was about why Hitler was appointed chancellor. The time scale of the question, and the focus on national elections meant that reference to long-term reasons (the weaknesses of Weimar from 1919), the failures of von Schleicher and the actual appointment of Hitler in January 1933 were not relevant. Answers at Level 4 and Level 5 were able to assess the appeal of Nazi ideology with reference to different groups and classes, linked to the changing economic and political situation, for example the importance of Blood and Soil and protection for German farmers won support from the Northern German Plain, where anti-Semitism was also popular because Jewish bankers were castigated for the foreclosure of (German) mortgages.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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