



## **General Certificate of Education**

# **History 1041**

## *Specification*

### **Unit HIS20**

# **Report on the Examination**

## *2010 examination – June series*

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# Unit HIS20

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

### General Comments

The vast majority of candidates displayed very good knowledge of the subject and a developed understanding of the, in many cases quite difficult, concepts and issues they have encountered through their study of Chinese history. Candidates also, in comparison with earlier series of this examination, showed improved examination technique. The majority of answers showed a genuine attempt to address the analytical demands of the questions and there were relatively few responses which were driven entirely by narrative.

### Question 1

- 01** This question asked candidates to compare *views* from two sources about the reasons why the Communists won the Chinese Civil War in the years 1946 to 1949. Although some candidates only compared factual details in the two sources, the vast majority were able to select opposing views and make a clear comparison. There were also a number of similarities in the views put forward in the two sources – both, for example, refer to the importance of morale amongst the troops in the opposing armies – and those who identified both differences and similarities achieved marks at least in Level 3. The better candidates were able to identify similarities and differences and place these in their specific historical context. For Level 4 candidates needed to address the question ‘how far’ the views in Source B differed from those in Source A. A well-argued conclusion can often be the difference between a Level 3 and a Level 4 mark.
- 02** This question required candidates to use all three sources and their own knowledge to assess the extent to which the Communists had changed the lives of the peasants by 1949. Although Source C, with its reference to the Draft Agrarian Law, was most useful in this respect, there was material in all three sources which candidates could use in response to this question. Candidates who ignored the sources and answered the question solely from their own knowledge penalised themselves, since such responses are limited by the mark scheme to a maximum top of Level 2 mark. Similarly, candidates who used the sources but added nothing in terms of contextual knowledge also penalised themselves. It was pleasing to note that only a minority of candidates answered the question in these ways. The majority displayed good knowledge of the Communists’ land reform policies and were able to produce balanced answers in which they showed understanding of the limited extent to which the Communists could implement land reform across the whole of China before 1949.

### Question 2

- 03** There were some very good answers to this question. Many candidates were able to identify a range of reasons why the Communists supported the emancipation of women, ranging from the ideological (belief in equality) through the political (need to win support in a period of consolidation of power) to the economic (need to bring women into the workforce). Some candidates offered little more than a description of the Communists’ reforms but the vast majority adopted an analytical approach and were able to identify two or three main factors. Those achieving the highest marks were able to show some linkage

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between the various factors, perhaps in terms of prioritisation or in terms of how political and economic priorities were guided by ideological beliefs.

- 04** Most candidates who attempted this question had a very good knowledge of the means by which the Communist regime consolidated its power in the years 1949 to 1953. The main focus of this question, about improvements in social welfare, was correctly identified by the majority of candidates. There were some very well-developed and balanced answers, backed by impressively detailed knowledge about health campaigns and educational reforms. Many candidates widened the scope of their answers to include material about land reform, the new Marriage Law and the various repressive campaigns launched by the new Communist regime. Where this material was made relevant, and in many cases this was done very effectively, credit was given. There were, however, a number of candidates who confined their efforts to descriptions of Communist policies during this period with little or no reference to how these policies impacted on social welfare.

### **Question 3**

- 05** The keen interest of students in the Cultural Revolution was clearly reflected in the number of well-informed answers to this question. The majority of candidates were able to recognise the significance of the date 'from 1968' in the question and were able to offer a range of factors which led Mao to send millions of young Chinese people to the countryside. Although a minority of candidates were unable to distinguish between the Red Guards and the Red Army, most were able to explain the rustication of Chinese students as a response to the chaos and violence of the Cultural Revolution and Mao's need to regain control over the political situation. Those candidates who linked this decision to Mao's ideological predilection for learning through labour and struggle produced the most effective answers.
- 06** The quotation in the question invited challenge and most candidates were able to offer an effective counter-argument, showing themselves to be well-versed in the intricacies of Chinese politics in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. Balanced arguments put forward the view that, although Mao had removed the so-called 'capitalist-roaders' from the Communist Party leadership by 1969, there was in fact an even more intense power struggle developing by 1969 than there had been before the start of the Cultural Revolution. Most candidates were able to identify the various factions in the Chinese Communist Party which emerged from the Cultural Revolution and to show that the issue of the succession to Mao had not been settled. Although the question did not demand knowledge of events beyond 1969, candidates were nevertheless free to use this knowledge as a way of demonstrating that the power struggle was becoming more intense, and the majority did this to good effect.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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