



**General Certificate of Education
January 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS1N

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS1N

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

General Comments

The entries for this series were split between those sitting the exam for the first time and a considerably number who were re-sitting the module. Candidates answered two out of three questions in all available combinations. The most popular question was that on the USSR, followed by Nazi Germany, with a much smaller number of candidates attempting the question Fascist Italy. As such the most popular combination was USSR-Nazi Germany. Question 1 was the most effectively answered question, and statistically Question 2 performed better than Question 3, although the much smaller percentage of students answering Question 2 makes it difficult to compare the responses. The full range of levels were used across all six sub-questions, only question 04 saw no candidates score full marks. Statistically question 01 was by far the most effectively answered 'explain' question. Question 02 was the most effectively answered essay, although this was only marginally better than 04. Questions 05 and 06 were the least effectively answered by a considerable amount according to the average percentages, for reasons which are listed below.

Questions 01, 03 and 05 ask candidates to explain an event or issue, and their responses need to cover a range of reasons 'why'. Three reasons, supported by evidence, will secure Level 3 (7-9 marks). To achieve Level 4 (10-12 marks), candidates must offer links between the factors, for example, identification of short and long-term factors, prioritising with an explanation, or appreciation of the inter-relationship of the factors. Candidates need to provide reasons for explaining a specific event or issue, rather than commenting generally on the context, for example the wider power struggle in Question 01.

Questions 02, 04 and 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, though this balance is not expected to be 50-50. Level 5 (22-24) answers will also demonstrate judgement.

Question 1

01 All candidates were aware of Stalin's position as General Secretary and most students were able to explain how this helped him to acquire a powerbase thanks to his various roles in appointing and dismissing members of the Bolshevik party. Wide-ranging explanation of this power base and its role in the power struggle were able to access Level 3 and beyond. The strongest answers recognised how Stalin was able to do this discretely, being referred to as the 'grey blur' and 'comrade card index', these responses easily achieved Level 4. The weaker answers began to discuss the wider power struggle and Stalin's alliances with Zinoviev, Kamanev and Bukharin which were not a direct result of Stalin's position as General Secretary. These responses were awarded Level 2 for a limited range of factors.

- 02** Candidates were well aware of the Cult of Personality, and most understood that Stalin was not solely responsible for its existence. A number of responses made reference to the Russian need for a leader, linking to Lenin and the Tsars. Those with a wider contextual understanding were able to link the removal of religion to the development of the cult. Candidates were also able to discuss a range of ways in which Stalin was personally responsible, ranging from his use of the Lenin Legacy to the terror which ensured he faced little opposition to his power. This range and balance ensured answers received Level 4 and above – almost a quarter of the candidates achieved at least 17 marks here.

Another route towards balance used by a number of candidates was to suggest Stalin was not responsible for his cult as he disliked it and that it was ‘un-Marxist’ – such answers made reference to comments from his daughter Svetlana, and his letters which criticised the cult, although some acknowledged that with his immense power, surely he would have stopped the cult if he did not want it.

Lower level answers tended to focus on the use of the cult rather than its causes, commenting on its benefits without linking this to Stalin’s responsibility for its existence. Those responses which remained in Level 2 gave general comments about Stalin’s paranoia and descriptions of propaganda, or held apparent misconceptions about the psychological need of the Russian people, claiming Stalin was responsible for this need.

Question 2

- 03** A number of the candidates who did attempt this question were aware of Corporatism as the ‘Third Way’ between socialism and capitalism, with credit given to those who could fully explain why an alternative was needed to these systems – developed and linked responses received Level 4. The strongest answers were able to see that after 1926 Mussolini had political control and now sought to expand Fascist control over other systems within Italy. A significant number of answers were not aware of what Corporatism actually was, and often confused this with wider Fascist ideology as opposed to seeing it as a distinct economic system – a considerable number of responses were awarded no more than Level 1.
- 04** This question was statistically comparable to 02, with explicit understanding coming from those who were aware that the appeal of the ‘Third Way’ was as an alternative to the threat of socialism and the weaknesses of the previous capitalist system, such as the post-war debt. Answers in Level 4 and above were able to contrast this with other aspects of ideology, such as wider appeal of anti-communism (making reference to events like the Biennio Rosso and Milan strikes) and the desire to restore Italy to its former glory of the Roman Empire in comparison to the failures of Liberal Italy. However, some responses strayed from the focus of ideology and often discussed policies/actions in length rather than simply using this to qualify the appeal of Fascism.

As in 03 a significant number of candidates did not understand Corporatism, and most Level 3 answers were far better at giving the counter-argument whilst skirting around the economic system. The weakest answers gave general descriptions about the rise of Fascism and/or the weaknesses of Liberal Italy. Very few answers commented on the failures of Corporatism which was another valid way to provide balance, candidates could have suggested that a system which did not work as intended therefore cannot have been the most important factor in appeal.

Question 3

- 05** This was the least effectively answered question, predominantly due to the fact that candidates did not stick to the specific dates in the question. Those who fully understood what was needed were able to explain and link factors such as the Reichstag Fire, the Enabling Act and the Concordat in removing political opposition. Some candidates were able to also refer to the removal of the Trade Unions. Three explained factors and either a link or prioritisation of the factors achieved Level 4. The weaker answers came when students included factors that came after July 1933, including the Night of the Long Knives and the death of Hindenburg. Some candidates also gave long descriptions of the rise of Hitler which again was not relevant to this question. These answers failed to get out of Level 1 if they did not also include some relevant material – almost half of candidates failed to score more than 4 on this question.
- 06** Candidates who were able to acknowledge the meaning of ‘totalitarianism’ and the concept of total control scored highly here. A range of factors including the creation of a one party state, the removal of internal opposition, control over the media and the spread of ideology throughout society and education were offered in answers which achieved Level 4. These answers were also able to suggest elements of limited control, such as alternative youth groups and the apparent freedom of big business in the economy. The most conceptually aware were able to provide a judgement that, although successful on the whole by 1939, on a local level it was difficult to monitor adherence to Nazi ideology.

However, a significantly large number of candidates appeared to not understand the concept of totalitarianism, and tended to focus on the intolerance to diversity, with little reference to wider factors. These answers struggled to get beyond Level 2, or low Level 3 - almost half of all responses received 12 marks or below.

Also, many responses provided balance which did not show a lack of control, and were merely problems within the intolerance of diversity. For example, the removal of anti-Semitic propaganda during the 1936 Berlin Olympics was offered as a clear example of the failure of totalitarianism. Some attempted to show the continued existence of Jews and other minorities in Germany as a weakness of totalitarianism, but this came as an undeveloped statistic rather than a link to ideological failure. As such very few responses were able to achieve Level 4.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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