



**General Certificate of Education
June 2011**

History 1041

Unit HIS2M

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS2M

Unit 2M: Life in Nazi Germany, 1933–1945

General Comments

This paper proved to be very accessible to most candidates. The optional questions were almost equally popular, with the slight majority leaning towards Question 2. The format of the paper is now becoming relatively well-understood and teachers seem, in the main, to have succeeded in guiding candidates to appropriate ways of approaching the questions. Examples of 'rubric infringements' were, therefore, few and far between.

Question 1

- 01** In many respects, I could repeat my comments from my last report. Too many candidates still paraphrase too much or discuss each source independently and, almost as an afterthought, bolt on a comparative comment. Understanding of the significance of provenance also remains relatively weak, with many candidates making too many black and white – and often unhelpful – judgements about 'reliability' or 'bias'. Many candidates recognised that Hoegner in Source B, as a political opponent of the Nazis, would be a critical witness, but comments on Ebermeyer, the author of Source A, were much more speculative with candidates too eager to paint him as a victim of indoctrination or a convinced Nazi. The context of Source A was also poorly understood – many candidates seemed not to have ever heard of the 'Day of Potsdam'. More candidates need to get to grips with the requirement to make a judgement on 'how far' and are too content with basic summative statements such as the sources are 'very different' or 'very similar'. Good Level 4 answers require greater attention not only to the degree of difference but to the shades of difference between the sources.
- 02** This question attracted some very good answers with many candidates showing a broad range of learning and good understanding in trying to balance the role of legality against that of other factors, and in particular that of terror. The best answers showed excellent recognition of Hitler's shrewd awareness that to be seen to act within the law was all-important, not only because events in Munich in 1923 had shown him the limitations of 'Putschist' politics or that radical change brought about through legislation was unchallengeable in a legal sense, but also because the rule of law was so ingrained within educated German society, as clearly evidenced in Source C. Encouragingly, many good candidates already are showing synoptic strengths, effectively analysing the inter-relationship of factors.

Some candidates integrate the sources very well into their responses and very few now do not refer to the sources at all. Weaker candidates, however, persist in thinking that they can get away with an answer that relies on basic source evaluation or, at worst, simple paraphrase. Without own knowledge candidates really cannot get into Level 3. Some candidates still seem uncertain about how often they should refer to the sources. It is difficult to give a rule of thumb but certainly no candidate can reach higher Level 4 or Level 5 without making effective use of all three sources and examiners give weight, within Levels, to the degree with which a source is understood and how well it is used to support argument.

Question 2

- 03** This question was well done and again it was encouraging to see candidates ‘thinking on their feet’ and avoiding simple description. Many were confident in their understanding, identifying a range of motivations behind the introduction of Strength through Joy, such as control and supervision or as a propaganda tool for purposes of indoctrination. Others made very good links to the broader goal of creating a true ‘national community’ and to economic goals requiring increased productivity. As with 05, perhaps greater work needs to be done with candidates to help them focus on the Level 4 requirement to discuss the inter-relationship of factors.
- 04** Though candidates are not expected to study detailed economic policy, they are expected to know the broad economic aims of the Nazis, particularly in relation to employment policy, the drive for self-sufficiency and the promise to bring about an ‘economic miracle’, and how these impacted on different social groups. Responses to this question, indeed, showed that many candidates had been effectively introduced to the debate over the material well being of these two groups and were able to develop their analysis to consider how the broader relationship of workers and peasants towards the Nazis changed over time. Many candidates were able to marshal a great deal of evidence to support their evaluation of the extent to which workers’ and peasants’ lives improved under the Nazis in this period. A few candidates were limited because their responses were unbalanced in that they wrote about workers or peasants but not both, or only touched on one group.

Question 3

- 05** This question proved to be, perhaps, the most challenging on the paper. Many students had quite a broad factual knowledge about the Nazis and the German churches but struggled to explain the relationship between the churches and the Nazi regime in its early months in office. Indeed, some candidates misinterpreted the question and answered it from the perspective of the Nazis; some also underachieved because they did not stay within the timescale of the question and simply resorted to a narrative account stretching throughout the 1930s. A general issue, which also manifested itself in Question 06, is that a substantial minority of candidates either forget to differentiate clearly between the Catholic and Protestant churches or, perhaps more worryingly, were simply unaware of the differences between the churches.
- 06** Some candidates were exceptionally well-prepared for this question and scored very highly. The best differentiated clearly between attempts to control the Catholic and Protestant churches and were able to reach well balanced judgements through a good understanding of change over time. In some ways this question, by covering the full time scale of the specification, allowed the best candidates to produce some really sophisticated answers. This suggests that Centres which do not draw a rigid line in 1939 in examining the Nazi co-ordination of German society do allow candidates to develop a broader overview of life in Germany in the Third Reich.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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