



**General Certificate of Education
January 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS1N

Report on the Examination

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available from: aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2012 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Copyright

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools and colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools and colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

Unit HIS1N

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

General Comments

Firstly I would like to say that there is great concern about the outcomes of HIS1N at this current time. The mean scores are dropping and the quality of answers being seen by students is not comparable to those sitting other unit 1 topics. There could be a number of reasons for this, and as such it is difficult to speculate about what is causing this unit to have such low grade boundaries at both A and E. It would appear that a number of students are simply not prepared for the exam; the number of inaccuracies and lack of detail seen in answers is a major concern and is something not seen on such a large scale in other unit 1 responses. One issue could be a misunderstanding of the 'breadth' element of this unit and a lack of detail being given on each area in preparation for the exam. Question 1 was by far the most popular of the three topics, but it contained the least effective responses at 01, with many students answering a question they clearly knew very little about.

The entries for this series were split between those sitting the exam for the first time and those who were re-sitting the module, although the percentage re-sitting is smaller than last January. Students answered two out of three questions in all available combinations. The most popular question was that on the USSR, followed by Nazi Germany, with more students than normal attempting the question on Fascist Italy. As such the most popular combination was USSR-Nazi Germany. Average achievement across the questions was fairly even, with Question 1 only slightly out-performing the others (despite 01 achieving the lowest mean score). The full range of levels were used across all six sub-questions, only question 06 saw no students score full marks. Statistically, question 05 was by the most effectively answered 'explain' question. Question 02 was the most effectively answered essay; Question 01 was the least effectively answered, for reasons which are listed below.

Questions 01, 03 and 05 ask students 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), students 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. 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 As stated, this was the least effectively answered question on the paper. This was mainly due to the fact that a large number of students had no understanding of the specific policy of 'Socialism in One Country'. Over 12% of students achieved no higher than Level 1 (1-2 marks). These students often claimed that Stalin was following Lenin's policy or did this to gain support from Zinoviev and Kamenev, when all three Bolsheviks actually believed in Worldwide Revolution. Other inaccuracies also included statements

that Stalin wanted Socialism in Russia as he thought Communism wouldn't work, or that he needed to protect the country from Nazi invasion.

Despite this many students were aware of the fact that this policy was part of the wider power struggle and was supported in opposition to Trotsky and Worldwide Revolution. Those students who were aware of the specifics gave good explanations of Russia's backwardness and Stalin's desire to focus on improving the nation, and how this appealed to nationalists within the country. Strong students were also aware of how socialist/communist revolutions had failed in other European countries and that Stalin was being pragmatic in not pursuing Worldwide Revolution. Those who were able to give three explained reasons and could link them through themes such as the wider power struggle were awarded Level 4

- 02** There was general understanding of what constitutes a 'totalitarian' state, with many students able to address the 'six key features' and identify how Stalin had achieved these by 1941. The detail of successes was extensive, ranging from the crushing of opposition, through the use of terror and the NKVD, the control of economy through collectivisation and the Five Year Plans and mass communication through 'Social Realism'. However some inaccuracy was present; many stated that Stalin had banned religion. The strongest students also explained the confirmation of the One Party State through the 1936 Constitution and the existence of 'Stalinism' as the official ideology.

Unfortunately, the issue with this question came when trying to provide balance. Whilst students were aware of some failures to control the USSR (for instance the 1937 census demonstrating how the people were still religious and that Stalin had to allow private plots to control the peasants), many students offered problems that were not failures to be 'totalitarian'. Stating that the first Five Year Plan was ended early and that Stalin did not follow communism did not mean that he had a lack of control. Many students also stated that the USSR was not a totalitarian state as Stalin faced opposition from the likes of Ryutin and Kirov, despite the fact that they had already explained how this opposition had been removed. As such, very few students achieved Level 4 and fewer than one in 20 gained 19 or more marks for this answer.

Despite this, the strongest students were able to offer some excellent examples of failure, such as the fact that the purges spiralled out of control, and that some would question how far Stalin was in control of the terror as time went on. These answers were justly awarded with high Level 4 if they accompanied a range of successes.

Question 2

- 03** Although the statistics suggest that this question was more effectively answered than 01, students on the whole struggled to explain **why** Fascist Italy was intolerant of diversity. Many offered long descriptions of the types of intolerance, such as teachers wearing uniforms, youth groups and political arrests. Much of this was irrelevant to the question and gave no reason as to why the intolerance existed. Also a number of answers stated that as part of the Lateran Treaty Mussolini banned other religions to win over the Catholics, claiming that the treaty was an example of intolerance when it was ultimately a compromise. Some students spent a lot of time providing failures of intolerance, something not required in this answer. As a consequence, only 25% were able to offer a range of reasons and achieve 7 or more marks.

Those who did address the question gave a number of valid reasons for the intolerance, such as the need for subordination to the state to achieve totalitarianism, the common goal of war and discipline, the opposition to socialism/communism and the later influence

of Hitler in racial intolerance. Those who could give a range of reasons and link them through themes such as the intolerance was inherent in the ideology, achieved Level 4.

- 04** Many students were clearly aware of what was involved in Mussolini's rise to power, and provided good detail on factors such as the weaknesses of Liberal Italy and Mussolini's promise to fix these problems. Students also understood that the King had a vital role to play in appointing Mussolini as Prime Minister, although there were often inaccuracies in relation to the King (claims he was a massive supporter of Fascism), the Duke of Aosta (claims that he was communist) and the role of the March on Rome (claims that the Fascists stormed the city). Those who were aware of the role of socialism gave some very good examples, including the Biennio Rosso, the rising membership of Trade Unions and the popularity of the PSI. Some of these students also clearly explained how Mussolini tried to counteract this rise, stating how fascists had fought against the strike in Milan and burnt down the offices of Avanti, demonstrating how they were able to combat this communist threat.

Unfortunately, as with 02, the main problem came with providing detailed balance. Whilst most were aware of the range of factors involved in the rise of Mussolini, very few could give specifics on the fear of communism, offering very generalised comments such as 'people were worried it would spread from Russia'. Some also failed to link the problems with socialism/communism with Mussolini's actions, and therefore his rise to power. As such only a minority of students achieved Level 4 for this question.

There were also some glaring inaccuracies in the answers to this question. Many explained how 'popular' Mussolini was by the time he became Prime Minister, despite having just 35 seats in parliament, or stated that the Acerbo Law and Aventine Succession had helped him to get into government, when these events came after his appointment.

Question 3

- 05** Many students were aware of a range of reasons why Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, offering points such as the Nazi party being the largest in the Reichstag and Hitler's promises to fix the economic crisis, versus the weakness of previous chancellors. Good students were able to explain how that even though Hindenburg very much disliked the 'Austrian Lance Corporal', circumstances pushed his hand. Again, answers that could provide a range of reasons like this and then link them through points such as the popularity of the Nazi Party, were duly awarded Level 4.

However, despite the apparent accessibility of a question on Hitler's rise to power, the mean score for these responses was almost identical to 03 and only half of the students could offer at least two clear reasons. There are a number of reasons for this; very few seemed aware of the final stages of Hitler's appointment in the 'Backstairs intrigue' or were very confused about these events. Many were unaware of the existence of Von Schleicher, and inaccuracies included; Hindenburg appointed Muller using Article 48, Von Papen called Hitler the 'lesser of two evils', the KPD were the second largest party, Hindenburg liked Hitler's policies and that there was simply 'no one else left' to appoint by 1933.

- 06** The Nazi consolidation of power is a widely taught topic, and explicitly listed in the specification. Stronger students were well aware of the significance of terror in events like the Night of the Long Knives which ensured the loyalty of the army, and the use of the Reichstag Fire to introduce an Emergency Decree. These students were also aware that terror was certainly not the only method used, and gave balance through examples like

the Enabling Act, the death of Hindenburg and propaganda, although there was less specific information here; for example few were able to link the propaganda directly to the elections in March 1933 and the 'cover-up' of the Night of the Long Knives. Again, this weak balance meant that very few students achieved 17 marks or more.

Despite the fact that this should be a well known topic, this was the least effectively answered essay question for a variety of reasons. Many students were unable to stick to the dates in the question giving examples of propaganda that came long after August 1934, or examples of terror like Kristallnacht and the Holocaust that not only did not fit the dates, but also were not at all relevant to the concept of consolidating power. As such, on in 5 students were awarded only Level 1 for providing almost wholly irrelevant information. There were also a wide range of inaccuracies in answers; the Enabling Act being passed without the Reichstag and automatically giving Hitler a One Party State/the roll of Fuhrer and the Reichstag Fire helping Hitler become Chancellor, are but a few examples of this.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

UMS conversion calculator: www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion