



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

History 1041

Unit HIS1J

Report on the Examination

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Unit HIS1J

Unit 1J: The Development of Germany, 1871–1925

General Comments

As usual for this unit, the vast majority of students answered Question 1 on Bismarck. Again, responses to part 01 achieved the highest average mark out of the 12 mark questions. The difference in quality of response between questions 2 and 3 was less marked this year than in previous years. Part 04 still returned the lowest mark on average for the 24 mark questions but this was not significantly below the average for 02 or 06. There were still some students who were clearly struggling for time towards the end of their final response; however, there did not seem to be as many in this position as in previous years.

Question 1

- 01** This question was generally well answered with students able to provide a reasonable range of reasons for Bismarck's alliance with the National Liberals. Stronger answers linked the reasons together, often focusing on the shared priority of both Bismarck and the Liberals for consolidation of the new Reich. Weaker responses tended to lack range, for example, placing too much emphasis on the *Kulturkampf* without considering other reasons or the wider context. A lot of students recognised the importance of the number of seats the National Liberals held in the Reichstag, although many erroneously stated that they had a majority rather than being the largest single party.
- 02** Most students seemed comfortable with the main details relevant to this question, such as the Anti-Socialist laws and the State Welfare policies. Greater range was demonstrated by some students who also included the political developments of the later 1880s, including the 1887 election and events leading to Bismarck's resignation.

Students in Level 3 tended to rely rather too heavily on the factual details of Bismarck's campaign against socialism without addressing the issue of how successful he was in sufficient depth. Such assessment was a feature of Level 4 and 5 answers which achieved a more developed and precise focus on the question.

Rather like last year, many answers lacked precision in providing specific details of the number of seats won by the SPD in the years 1878–1890. Weaker answers, in Level 2, also lacked range and depth of detail in general.

Question 2

- 03** Most students who answered this question were comfortable with explaining the differences between Bismarck and Caprivi, particularly in the light of Wilhelm II's desire for more personal rule. In addition, most students were aware that Caprivi had a set of policies in his 'New Course' which were aimed at dealing more constructively with the rising influence of the SPD. However, quite a few students went on to describe the New Course, and even assess Caprivi's success, which led to their answers losing focus on the question.

Weaker students clearly wanted to answer a question about Bismarck's resignation rather than Caprivi's appointment and, whilst relevant in part, these answers tended to lack the

focus necessary for Levels 3 or 4. Stronger responses tended to include points about Caprivi's background – his lack of political experience and his military career – which increased his appeal to Wilhelm II. At Level 4, the strongest answers provided some links/overview to the analysis, most commonly focusing on the Kaiser's personality and priorities in 1890.

- 04** This was the question which, on average, students found the most challenging on the paper. There were some sophisticated responses but equally there were many students who struggled to demonstrate an effective understanding of the question.

Weaker students often tried to turn this into an answer about the personal rule of the Kaiser. There was some relevance in the content of these answers but the analysis was not sufficiently focused on the question to move out of Level 2. These weaker responses tended to struggle to define who the right-wing elites in Germany were in this period.

Level 3 responses tended to show a better understanding of the question but often lacked range and depth of supporting detail. Most of these Level 3 responses were more comfortable in arguing that the elites were successful in maintaining their dominance through influencing policies such as *Weltpolitik*, however, they were less effective in identifying ways in which their dominance may have been limited. In particular, many students did not really explore the rise of the SPD in the Reichstag and the difficulties that this caused the government.

The more effective responses were confident in the range of relevant content for this question. These students were capable of identifying who the right-wing elites were and of achieving a balanced assessment focused how effectively they were able to maintain their dominance.

Question 3

- 05** Most students were competent in explaining the actions of the *Freikorps* in suppressing the revolt leading to the murders of Liebknecht and Luxemburg. A number of students did little to extend the context of their explanation beyond this point and, therefore, there were quite a few responses restricted to Level 2.

Stronger students were able to expand on the context of Germany in 1919, especially the fear of communism and a general desire for stability. Better responses also developed the explanation to include the importance of the Ebert-Groener Pact in securing the support of the Army and *Freikorps* for the new government.

Answers which progressed to Level 4, often drew the link between the strength of the forces which the government could call on compared to the relative paucity of support and firepower available to the Spartacists.

- 06** Most students understood the focus of this question. Responses did vary, however, in the range and depth of detail and explanation. Responses limited to Level 2 or the bottom of Level 3 tended to treat this question as a more general one about the relative success of the Weimar Republic rather than achieving a more precise focus on 'gaining support'. Weaker responses also tended to be limited in the range of content they covered. For example, some were dominated by the Treaty of Versailles and the political violence of 1919–1920.

Responses achieving mid-Level 3 and above covered a fuller range of factors across the period 1919–1925. Most stronger students were able to contrast the early problems of the Weimar Republic in gaining support with the greater stability, and therefore support, which

came after 1923 with the work of Stresemann and Schacht. A feature of several very good responses was an understanding that even apparent displays of support, such as the Army and *Freikorps* in 1919, were not actually due to any genuine support for the new democracy but were rather alliances of convenience created to deal with a common enemy that soon broke down.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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