



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2012**

**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

I am pleased to report a much improved outcome for HIS1N this series, especially when compared to January 2012. The mean score for the paper has risen by around 4 per cent since last summer and the A and E boundaries are set to follow a similar pattern. There could well be a number of reasons for this, but on the whole the paper appears to have been well received by many students, with very few missing a question or scoring in the Level 1 boundaries.

However, there are still some concerns that some students are simply not fully prepared for the exam, even after a year of studying AS. In particular, the number of inaccuracies and lack of detail seen in answers is a continued concern. Another issue also seems to be the technique some students are using to answer the essay questions; some spend an extensive amount of time prioritising factors (The first most important reason... The second most important reason) which is simply not required in the 24 mark answers. Here students are expected to reach a judgement on whether or not a *particular* factor was important, or indeed measure the success of the regime – not provide a ranked list of reasons for something occurring. The number of students taking this approach is steadily increasing and seriously hindering their chances of achieving beyond half marks for the essay questions.

Overall students answered two out of three questions in all available combinations. The most popular question was that on the USSR, closely followed by Nazi Germany, with considerably fewer students 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 and again Question 3 having the lowest mean score. The full range of levels and marks were used across all six sub-questions. Statistically, 01 was by the most effectively answered ‘explain’ question. 02 was the most effectively answered essay; 06 was the least effectively answered, for reasons which are listed below.

### Question 1

**01** This question was well-received by students who were clearly aware of a range of reasons why the cult of Stalin existed in the Soviet Union. There was good use of terminology such as the ‘psychological need for a leader’ and the context of the Tsar and Cult of Lenin. There were often good examples of the types of propaganda used (renaming cities, Pravda etc...) and reference to the fact that although there is evidence Stalin did not like the cult, its existence suggests he had a hand in encouraging it.

Although on average the outcomes for this question were higher than last summer, less than a fifth of students achieved Level 4; 5 per cent down on last summer. The issue here lay with students not explicitly linking the reasons to one another, or providing a justified reason for one being more important than the other.

**02** This was by far the most accessible question on the paper. Students are obviously well aware of the details of the power struggle and the factors that led to Stalin’s victory. Over 40 per cent of students were able to achieve a Level 4 thanks to providing a range of mistakes made by Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev and Bukharin, balanced by the strengths of Stalin in his role of General Secretary and his ability to build up a power base whilst the

others simply saw him as the 'Grey Blur'. The level of detail in many answers was impressive, good specifics like the events surrounding Lenin's funeral and the competing ideologies of the students meant a significant number of answers achieved high in Level 4.

There were some inaccuracies in answers, such as some misunderstanding of who formed the left and right and who originally prevented the publishing of Lenin testament, but on the whole these were often small mistakes. One key issue for students came in the descriptive approach to the power struggle, going into the chronological 'story' of how events transpired. This approach led many into the bottom of Level 3 for the amount of detail they could offer with little analysis. At the top end of answers there was very little sustained judgement, suggesting in the introduction what the answer is and then maintaining this through to the conclusion, as such less than 5 percent of students were able to get into Level 5.

### **Question 2**

- 03** Students are clearly aware of the wider circumstances surrounding Mussolini's rise to power, in particular the weaknesses of Liberal Italy, but the mean mark for this question was actually slightly down on last summer's paper, for a number of reasons. Many were able to provide a whole host of issues facing Italy after the First World War (debt, unemployment, rise of socialism etc...), but many unfortunately did not link this to why Mussolini was to become Prime Minister – for instance when talking about the Biennio Rosso and strike action, it was key to also include the violent response of the fascists which caught the eye of the upper classes and the King. Consequently many students felt they had provided 3 reasons when it was often 2 as the problems faced combined with Mussolini's response simply became a single reason. This explains why over 50 percent of students failed to get into Level 3 (lack of range).

There was also some confusion over the events surrounding the March on Rome and the role of the King in appointing Mussolini. Many used the march itself as a reason for the 'seizure' of power, when it was the threat of this march that pushed the hand of the King. There was also a key issue in chronology with many students who appeared confused between the rise to, and consolidation of, power; a number of answers used the murder of Matteotti and Aventine Secession as reasons for Mussolini's appointment as PM.

- 04** Although the mean mark for this question far outstrips that of Summer 2011, the small number of students opting to answer this question does make the statistics less reliable than for Questions 1 and 3. Those who did attempt this essay were clearly aware of what the Cult of Il Duce involved, and how propaganda attempted to show Mussolini as a multi-faceted leader – one who could ride horses, work in the fields, study literature and worked hard for the nation with the light on in his office all night. However, there was a tendency by many to simply describe the cult, without assessing its link to the support of the fascists.

Students were also able to provide balance in two different forms; firstly by providing other reasons for support such as foreign policy successes and secondly by stating that the cult was unsuccessful so could not be the reason for support - although some drifted from the question here by describing in detail the role of the King and the Pope in Italy. For many there was an over-reliance on the early years of Fascism, and many answers only used examples from the rise to power, such as the combating of socialism, to balance responses. These students appeared to have little awareness of what happened in Italy beyond 1926, and as such their 'range' was limited, preventing marks beyond the bottom of Level 4.

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**Question 3**

- 05** This 'explain' question was statistically the least successful on the paper, but fairly on par with 03 for quite similar reasons. There was a clear awareness of the key ideological reasons for the intolerance of diversity in Nazi Germany (concepts of pure blood, nationalism and *Volksgemeinschaft*) but answers were regularly let down by some key inaccuracies and repetition. Many students stated that the Nazis were intolerant of religion when the Jews were classed as a 'race' and then went on to use racial intolerance as another reason – as with 03, more than half of the responses were stuck in Level 2 and below for a lack of range.

There was also a tendency to become quite descriptive of *how* the Nazis were intolerant of diversity, going into detail regarding *Kristallnacht*, the final solution and treatment of Asocials which was predominantly not relevant for this question. Despite this a whole host of reasons were highlighted by the stronger students, including a past history of intolerance under Bismarck, the influence of Hitler's personal beliefs and the nature of dictatorship.

- 06** This final question was the least successful, 6 percent below the mean mark for the paper and seeing less than a fifth of students achieve Level 4. Again, there are a number of reasons why this occurred, the most concerning of which being a clear misunderstanding of the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft* by a number of students. A significant number of answers proclaimed that the Nazis had failed to create their 'national community' because they had excluded so many people, despite the whole ideological concept being that the community was only meant to include those of 'pure' blood.

The other issues predominantly came with a lack of range. Many were only able to discuss race, focusing wholly on the successes and failures in dealing with the Jews. Some also focused purely on the very specific ideas of community, like *Winterhilfswerk* – on an ideological paper with a key reference to the intolerance of diversity, answers had to contain racial/control aspects. The better answers were able to achieve range by including these and other issues such as youth groups, education, women, policing and the concept of imposing such ideals at a local level. The strongest answers were also able to make reference to wider ideology, such as successfully acquiring Lebensraum to expand the community of 'Germans' in the Anschluss.

Some students also failed to provide balance, something not seen as much in 02 and 04, only providing the successes or adversely stating that the *Volksgemeinschaft* utterly failed without considering the opposing view. These students were unable to score higher than top Level 3 (16 marks) despite the quality of some of these answers.

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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