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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCE History 6HI03 D

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Introduction

This was the first time that this specification has been examined, and judging by the queries raised by centres in the run up to the examination in June, there was considerable trepidation on their part. It is to be hoped that they will have been re-assured, first by their sighting of the questions and more importantly by the results they receive. No complaints about the paper were received and it is to be hoped that this indicates that candidates found it fair and accessible. Clearly the ability range of those entering was wide but the paper appears to have worked in the sense that the most able were stretched and the less talented were still able to attempt answers to both parts of the examination.

The new specification is a direct descendant of the old Unit 4, which has become part A of the new examination and old Unit 6, which has taken on a renewed life-form as part B of the new examination. There are, however, important differences, particularly between old Unit 6 and the new part B. As far as part A is concerned, the traditional essay, the major differences relate to the mark scheme. The essay is now marked out of 30 not 60 and the level 5 is broader so that essays which formerly would have attained high level 4 in old Unit 4, will now be awarded level 5 in the range 25-27. Part B like the old Unit 6, addresses AO1 and AO2 but it is important to realise that it is AO2 b not AO2 a. Candidates are not required to evaluate the sources in terms of provenance for the most part and are not invited to assess their reliability. All the extracts are from secondary sources and it is to be hoped that candidates will recognise the differing 'views' presented or emphasised and be able to set them in the wider context of the nominated controversy. A minority of candidates appeared to believe that they were required to assess the reliability in terms of the date when the extract was written or in terms of the title of the book, from which it was taken. In general this was a mistake and added little to the quality of the responses. Part B answers are given two marks, one out of 16 for AO1, both a and b, and one out of 24 for AO2b.

As expected, there were far more entrants for the German option than for the British and within the German option both controversy alternatives proved popular. On the British alternative, the second controversy attracted very few takers. On all four controversies, almost all candidates were able to appreciate some of the differences within the sets of extracts and in this sense all were accessible. However a clear area of differentiation was in appreciation of the nuances of meaning and emphasis and this is addressed in detail below. In each of the two alternatives, Part A questions addressed, two bullet points of the specification.

Question 1

Question 1 was the most popular of the essay questions and produced some excellent responses. Inevitably many saw it as an opportunity to offer a standardised answer on Hitler's rise to power. These were almost invariably unbalanced chronologically with too much on the 1920s and not enough on the crucial period between July 1932 and January 1933. Addressing the political intrigues and negotiations of December-January was essential. The question was not primarily about why the Nazi's were popular but the role of this popularity in securing Hitler the Chancellery in January 1933. Clearly candidates had to address the issue of popularity and it was always reassuring to come across opening paragraphs like the following that display a real grasp of relevant detail.

"It is indeed very hard to refute the fact that by 1933, 37% of the electorate had voted for the NSDAP and Hitler, his personal popularity showed when he came second to Hindenburg in the Presidential election with around 34% of the vote. To this extent, Hitler did have a strong mandate to assume the chancellorship in January 1933, however it should not be ignored that 83% of the electorate did not vote for Hitler and by January 1933 Hitler's support was in decline (32% of the vote). Although Hitler's popularity gave him a proverbial 'foot in the door', it was more than just his electoral mandate, in fact, some fundamental aspects of Germany and her, then, recent history contributed to his rise."

The candidate goes on to explain this political context and the discontents of key elements within the political elites and to stress the importance of the intrigues within the circle surrounding Hindenburg.

"It was the fact that Meissner, Oskar Hindenburg and Von Papen thought they could control and use him that facilitated his accession"

At every stage focus and analysis determined the deployment of precise and detailed knowledge. The response deservedly gained a level 5 with full marks.

Question 2

Question 2 was less popular and on the whole less well done. A number of candidates wrote only about anti-semitism in the pre-war years and thus struggled to get started. Others knew a lot about the 'chaotic' Nazi regime and thus laid the basis of a good answer but fell down on their knowledge of 1939-42 and the actual evolution of the 'Final Solution'. Here they were invited to demonstrate 'evolution' under the pressures of the exigencies of an expanding war, competing priorities, improvisations and jockeying individuals. Many answers were able to refer to the Wannsee Conference of January 1942 but they tended to assert its significance rather than be aware of the controversy surrounding its importance. The best answers did deal with the shifting initiatives and the crucial roles of Himmler and Heydrich and the impact of War in boosting the number of Jews under Nazi control and cutting off opportunities for such schemes as that associated with Madagascar. It was always impressive when a response could highlight precise developments such the drawing up of Generalplan Ost, presented to Himmler in June 1941 or Goebbels' victory in imposing the yellow star on September 1st 1941.

Question 3

Question 3 provided plenty of opportunity for candidates to debate the proposition and thus secure levels 4 or 5. A few simply assented to the proposition without modification and therefore gained level 3. As with all history questions it is the recognition that there is a debate to be had that forms the basis of a successful response. Clearly there was much to be said to support the proposition-defeat and retreats in Norway, France and Greece figured in answers although 1941 and the expedition to save Greece was forgotten by many candidates. Others also dealt with the war at sea and the growing menace of submarines inflicting horrifying losses on merchant shipping. On the other side of the ledger, the Battle of Britain was usually entered. The better answers also weighed in with the dramatic successes against Italy in 1940/41. The best answers produced nuanced judgements setting setbacks against triumphs as the following candidate did in dealing with Norway.

"Norway is traditionally viewed as a significant defeat for Britain, British forces had to retreat losing an important aircraft carrier in the retreat. In comparison far more boats of the German navy were destroyed and this now meant that the Germans did not have sufficient forces to launch a naval invasion of Britain"

Question 4

Question 4 was less popular and on the whole produced weaker answers. Social themes were more readily offered than economic and few candidates could get to grips with the meaning and implication of 'transform'. Most candidates focussed on the huge addition of women to the work force and the impact of rationing. Transform tended to be dealt with in the short term, which was perfectly acceptable but it was pleasing to read candidates who made a distinction between short and long term impact. Only a few were aware of the economic and technical implications of the war economy for Britain in the long term-the basis of computers laid at Bletchley Park, the jet engine and nuclear research plus the vast stimulus to electronics and chemicals.

Question 5

Question 5 on the German responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War produced many excellent responses. The following is the opening paragraph of a high class answer.

"The issue of responsibility for the outbreak of the first World War has long been controversial, with Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles blaming Germany entirely. Many historians, such as Fischer, who is referenced by Source 1, believe that the war was indeed a result of consistently expansionist German foreign policy, dating back to around 1897, which escalated from 1911 until the outbreak of war. A more traditional view, perhaps best advocated by Lloyd George's judgement that 'the nations slithered over the brink into the boiling cauldron of war' is that all belligerent powers were equally responsible, a view propagated by Source 3. By contrast sources 1 and 2 refer to continually expansionist traits in German foreign policy and seek to portray Germany as a main aggressor, and Source 1 in particular agrees that German support for a belligerent Austria amounted to German aggression in itself"

This does everything that can be hoped for in an introduction. All three sources are referred to, own knowledge demonstrated and a real grasp of the controversy demonstrated. Knowledge of the controversy other than in the presented sources can constitute AO2b. After seven sides of well argued debate using the sources and own knowledge the response achieved full marks. It is worth pointing out that AO1 involves not only recall of appropriate facts but the ratiocination requisite for structuring a response.

Question 6

Question 6 was possibly even more popular and also attracted some excellent answers. Most candidates appreciated the general outline of the controversy and could set the extracts into the debate. Most candidates could see the differences between the points of view of the three extracts but the best were able to show a nuanced understanding. Source 4 does not simply argue that Hitler was 'a non-interventionist dictator' but adds the crucial qualification 'as far as government administration was concerned.' The better candidates picked up on this and it was an excellent discriminator. Likewise with Source 5, the better candidates appreciated that it could be used to support the proposition since party officials 'used the will of the Fuhrer to advance their careers' but there was clearly an implication about the extent of the Fuhrer's power which might contradict it. Similarly Source 6, on the surface clashed with Source 4, but it could be reconciled with it.

(Section B continued) Ian Kershaw's view that Hitler was 'a non-interventionist dictator' is a view that has become popular amongst many historians in recent years. These historians are often referred to as 'structuralist' and tend to emphasise Hitler's indecisiveness and reluctance to make policy or become involved in government issues. They often promote the view of Hitler as a 'weak dictator' not in control of events but merely reacting to external events. This view also often implies that as a result, the government of Nazi Germany was highly inefficient and chaotic. However, on the other hand, other 'intentionalist' historians often prefer to view Hitler as the 'master' of the Third Reich, that everything was done for a reason, that if he was uninvolved it was intentional and he would take action when necessary. These opposing views of Hitler's dictatorship have therefore been the source of much debate and controversy amongst historians.

Firstly, Kershaw's statement in source 4 that Hitler was a 'non-interventionist dictator' is clearly promoting the view of a structuralist. Kershaw goes on to mention 'his sporadic

(Section B continued) directives' that tended to 'be unclear and conveyed verbally.' This statement can be linked to the concept of subordinates within the Nazi party simply working towards the will of the Führer, interpreting Hitler's word new, 'conveyed verbally.' It was therefore their responsibility to interpret this view and act on it, causing much competition between officials. This is a view supported by Joseph W. Bendersky in source 5. This source notes how 'the Third Reich was characterized by jealousy and bureaucratic empire-building; supporting Kershaw's view of Hitler as a 'non-interventionist dictator.' Bendersky goes on to directly reference the concept of 'working towards the will of the Führer,' emphasising the 'bureaucratic wars' and 'rival organisations' that existed. An example of these overlapping agencies caused by Hitler's inefficiency to define government roles is that of the office for the four year plan, created in 1936 and under the control of Göring, and the existing ministry of economics, controlled by Schacht. These two agencies typified Hitler's approach to government, creating two 'rival organisations, who, as Bendersky notes, seek to

(Section B continued) 'expand their power' therefore causing this 'jealousy and bureaucratic empire building' Bendersky in source 5 is therefore clearly promoting a similar view to Kershaw's ~~view~~ interpretation of Hitler as a 'non-interventionist dictator', with his inefficiency creating chaos and confusion. *

Further evidence to support both Kershaw and Bendersky's view can be found from an examination of Hitler's personal lifestyle. Richard J. Evans in source 6 makes reference to this idea, commenting on his 'Bohemian lifestyle'. It has been suggested by many historians that Hitler deliberately chose to stay away from Berlin for most of the year, instead preferring to occupy his secluded house in Bayreuth. It is claimed that Hitler would get up late in the day, going for lengthy walks, disliking having to deal with policy issues. It has been suggested that if he did deal with anything official it was often trivial, and as Kershaw mentions, and initiatives would simply be approved 'verbally'. This view of Hitler's personal lifestyle therefore clearly supports Kershaw. (*This is the view of Germany as a 'chaotic polycracy'.)

(Section B continued) and Bendersky's assumption of his 'non-interventionist' approach to government. Evans also mentions this concept, stating that Hitler's time would often be taken up by 'lengthy and exhausting tours around Germany' and that he took great interest in 'art and culture'. These facts would also add to the picture of a weak dictator who disliked taking decisive action over government policies.

However, whilst many do promote this view of Hitler's leadership, there is also a strong case to suggest that, as Evans suggests, Hitler was 'erratic rather than lazy'. Many international historians have highlighted a misunderstanding of Hitler's rule as weak and 'non-interventionist', instead claiming that if Hitler appeared not to be involved in an initiative then it was intentional, that his ability to remain above the day-to-day running of government demonstrated his strength as an omnipotent leader in complete control of the country. This view is often referred to as the 'Hitler myth' as it was strongly enhanced by Goebbels' powerful propaganda machine.

(Section B continued) Intentionalist historians would focus on the central role of Hitler, his personality, ideology and leadership. It can be viewed that all ideology of the Nazi state originated from this one figure, dictating the whole tone of the government. In particular, many point to the extent of antisemitism as being a direct result of Hitler's views. Evans promotes this view in source 6 by talking of Hitler as taking 'a leading role' in racial policy; 'pushing on or slowing down the implementation of antisemitic and other measures.' Evidence for Evans' ~~view~~ statement can be found through the boycott of Jewish shops and businesses in April 1933, as once Hitler believed this action was too radical he had the complete power to limit it to one day only. Therefore, as Evans suggests, Hitler's 'restyle' did not mean that he was lazy or inactive' as 'when the occasion demanded he could intervene powerfully and decisively.' ~~But~~ Although Evans does seem to echo Kershaw and Bender'sky's assumption of a weak dictator, talking of Hitler as 'wasting a great deal of time' on 'trivial

(Section B continued) matters', ~~the~~ Evans does ultimately come to the conclusion that Hitler was not a 'non-interventionist ~~was~~ dictator'; that he could take a 'leading role'; that 'he did not hesitate to give ~~by~~ a direct lead, even on matters of detail.' This view in source 6 is therefore clearly that of an intentionalist, focusing on Hitler as an all powerful dictator.

In addition to this, some also have maintained the view that although it is clear there was many 'rival organisations'; as Bendersky suggests, this does not automatically lead to Kershaw's view of Hitler as a 'non-interventionist dictator'. This is the concept that Hitler demonstrated a deliberate policy of 'divide and rule'; creating a 'darwinist jungle of competing agents' in order for the best competitor to emerge, producing the most efficient result. This view is therefore also, like Evans, supporting the view of Hitler as the opposite of weak, unable to control the chaotic government.

~~As Evans sugg~~ the idea of divide and rule also maintains that Hitler did take action

(Section B continued) when necessary, supporting Evans' assumption that 'when the occasion demanded, he could intervene powerfully and decisively.'

In conclusion therefore, the ~~idea~~ validity of Kershaw's claim of Hitler as a 'non-interventionist dictator' has been the source of much debate amongst historians. As the sources written by both Kershaw and Bendersky suggest, there is much evidence to suggest that Hitler was not fully in control, promoting the structuralist view of his leadership as weak. Many use ~~of~~ evidence of competing agencies and individual rivalries to prove that Hitler most certainly did not intervene in government matters. However, as much as this case has been argued, there are still many, such as Evans, who would oppose this view of Hitler, instead focusing on his central role, that he did take control and intervene when necessary, and that the 'bureaucratic wars' mentioned by Bendersky were simply a product of his

(Section B continued) deliberate policy of divide and rule, purposefully choosing to remain uninvolved until the final moments. It is this intentionalist view that may therefore appear the more logical approach. Maintaining Hitler's responsibility for the Nazi party's ruthlessness and terror.

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Examiner Comments

This response provides a good if not perfect introduction. Only one source is referenced but the central controversy is clearly laid out.

The conclusion to the same response is better, making reference to all three extracts and displaying a clear focus

Question 7

Question 7 was overwhelmingly the most popular amongst the entrants for this alternative. Many of the weaker candidates struggled with Source 7, failing to appreciate how critical it was of Chamberlain and how its assertions regarding defence expenditure clashed with Source 8. Nor did they pick up on the clear clash between the reference in 7 to 'hasty and ill-prepared' and the assertion in Source 9 that the Guarantee was not 'Grand Strategy by Panic'. Too many candidates simply paraphrased the sources and threw in some own knowledge about 1939, but this was often pretty thin. The best answers really did cross reference the three sources and supplement them with detailed information about the context of the Guarantee—the recent occupation of Prague and illustrated the massive rearmament drive dealt with in Peden, Source 8. Some appreciated the emphasis in Source 9 on Halifax and developed this to make a distinction between Chamberlain and his Foreign Secretary, crediting Halifax with a new spirit of confrontation. There were some good answers and the following introductory paragraph comes from a very solid level 4 response.

"The issuing of a guarantee to Poland in March 1939 has been the subject of heavy debate amongst many historians. Many historians state that the guarantee was simply an attempt to deter Hitler, a view which is expressed by Shen in Source 7. Conversely, others have argued such as Peden in Source 8, that the events surrounding the guarantee would in fact suggest that Britain, to some extent, was expectant and supporting of war. In contrast to both views, there is a popular argument that Chamberlain was in fact acting in a form of pragmatic response to Hitler, doing whatever was necessary and this is the view voiced in Source 9. I plan to examine the claims within each of the sources in conjunction with my own knowledge in an attempt to establish the government's true aims at this point."

This does address all three sources but would have been stronger with a leavening of own knowledge and the final sentence is somewhat superfluous

Question 8

Responses to this alternative were very rarely seen and of the few that were, most were not very impressive. There was tendency to paraphrase the three sources and hardly any picked up on the clear differences in popular expectation as interpreted by Sked and Cook on the one hand and Gardiner on the other, let alone were able to cope with the nuanced contribution to the debate of Source 12. Knowledge of the controversy was very limited. Hardly any candidates made reference to the expectations raised by the Beveridge Report.

Grade boundaries

| Grade | Max. Mark | A* | A | B | C | D | E |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Raw boundary mark | 70 | 56 | 50 | 44 | 38 | 32 | 27 |
| Uniform boundary mark | 120 | 108 | 96 | 84 | 72 | 60 | 48 |

'a*' is only used in conversion from raw to uniform marks. It is not a published unit grade.'

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