

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

HISTORY A

H505

For first teaching in 2015

Y221/01 Summer 2022 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper Y221/01 series overview

Y221 is one of twenty four units for the revised A Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests an extended period of History of about one hundred years through a short-answer essay and a traditional essay. The paper contains two questions, each having two parts, a short-answer essay and a traditional essay and candidates have to answer both parts of one question.

To do well on the short essay question (a), candidates need to consider the significance or importance both issues, factors, individuals or events mentioned in relation to the question. Having analysed or explained both they must reach a supported judgement as to which is the most important or significant.

To do well on the traditional essay candidates need to address the issue in the question, using detailed supporting knowledge. In order to reach the higher levels candidates will need to assess the issues they discuss and reach a supported judgement, at least in the conclusion.

| Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following: | Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gave equal consideration to the two issues in the short-answer essay • reached a developed and supported judgement as to which issue was more significant or important • linked their knowledge of the issues to the focus of the question • in answering the essay question, discussed at least two issues in depth • gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic • reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question • made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considered only one of the issues or discussed one in a superficial way • produced a judgement that was not supported and was therefore assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response • were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question • showed a poor understanding of the major issues relevant to the essay • were unable to support their response with relevant or accurate material • did not focus on the precise wording of the question • made unsupported comments about issues which were no more than assertions. |

Question 1 (a)

- 1 (a) Which of the following posed the greater threat to the stability of the Weimar Republic in the period from 1919 to 1923?
- (i) Communist revolts
 - (ii) The Kapp Putsch

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This was a reasonably popular question with most candidates able to write in some detail about both the Spartakist revolts and the Kapp Putsch. However a significant number of candidates wrote quite generally about both factors, ignoring the threat to the stability of the Weimar Republic and just describing the revolts.

Most were able to discuss the Spartakist revolt and its ultimate failure but fewer candidates were able to discuss the roles of Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Better responses were able to discuss a range of Communist revolts including Red Bavaria, the Ruhr uprising and the Hamburg uprising. When dealing with Communist risings candidates were able to point out that these were well supported and had revolutionary intent. Most candidates were able to demonstrate how they failed due to the opposition of the Freikorps.

In dealing with the Kapp Putsch good responses pointed out how these revolts were perhaps more threatening as the government was forced to flee from Berlin. There was good knowledge of those involved including Ludendorff, Kapp and Luttwitz. Most were able to point out the involvement of the Freikorps and the fact that this revolt was only crushed by a general strike. The best responses linked this to the Munich Putsch of 1923 and pointed out that this may have influenced the later revolt.

Exemplar 1 shows a good Level 5 response dealing with the threat of various Communist revolts.

Misconception



Several candidates saw the Spartakist revolt as a right wing uprising.

Exemplar 1

| | | |
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| 1 | a) | <p>Communist revolts did pose a significant threat to the stability of the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1923, particularly due to the popularity of the communist KPD party as an extremist party. Much of this popularity drew from the successes of the 1917 Russian revolution, and even the 1918 Kiel mutiny established communist developments in multiple parts of Germany. This is significant to the threat they posed because the increasing number of communist action that was inspired by post war developments caused a great threat to Weimar. The most notable examples of threat are the 1919 January Spartacist uprising, as well as the March 1920 Ruhr uprising. Both uprisings caused such great threat that Ebert could not dissolve the Freikorps as he wished, and instead had to utilize not only the Freikorps, but the German army and police to settle the uprisings. Such uprisings caused many to be inspired to join the 'Red Front', which increased the threat to Weimar stability as opposition was manifested clearly.</p> |
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Question 1 (b)*

- (b)* 'The religious policies of the Nazi Dictatorship were a failure in the period from 1933 to 1939.'
How far do you agree? [20]

This proved to be a tricky question for some. Weaker responses tried to compare religious policy failures to the success of other policies - notably economic and social and so didn't focus on the demands of the question.

Better responses looked at a range of religious policies - examining Nazi attitudes and policies towards the Catholic and Protestant Churches, Jewish religious policy as well as the attempt to create the German Faith Movement.

The best responses focused on the period in question and did not stray beyond 1939. Strong responses looked at successes as well as failures and discussed the Concordat, the removal of religion from the curriculum in schools, the persecution of the Jewish community and the appointment of Muller as Reich Bishop. Failures elicited a range of responses, including material from beyond the period in question.

Question 2 (a)

- 2 (a) Which of the following was of greater importance in the establishment of the Nazi Dictatorship in the period from 1933 to 1939?
- (i) Censorship and propaganda
 - (ii) The SS

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii).

[10]

This was a more popular question overall. As with 1(a) there was much description of the factors without comparing the importance. The best responses had an in depth knowledge of both factors and were able to link the two together to demonstrate how they helped in the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship. Candidates who did well on this question were able to show how important propaganda and censorship were to the Nazi regime and were able to discuss its organisation, aims and give specific examples. Censorship was sometimes ignored, although many candidates pointed to the book-burning ceremonies effectively.

Some candidates ignored the dates in the question and concentrated on the period to 1934 only, although they were still able to write in some detail about this period.

Understanding of the SS was shown in many responses. Good responses understood the connections between the SS and its other divisions. Surprisingly few linked Himmler to the SS whereas most could link Goebbels to propaganda. The best responses considered both factors and linked them to the establishment of the regime across the whole period.

Exemplar 2 demonstrates a response where the candidate has compared and linked the importance of both factors with good contextual knowledge and was marked in Level 6.

Exemplar 2

| | | |
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| 2 | a | <p>The use of censorship and propaganda played a crucial role in the establishment of the Nazi Dictatorship in the period from 1933 to 1939, successfully establishing the Hitler 'myth'. Upon the accession of the Nazis to power in 1933, Goebbels was appointed the Minister for Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, with with the aim of creating a 'Nazified' society in all areas of life. Broadcasting was used to pump out state propaganda, and was successful as the number of radios increased from being owned by 25% of people in 1933 to 70% in 1939. This highlights the increased range of the propaganda and its success in reaching much of the population. Films, literature, art and culture were also altered to become state propaganda, with Nazi ideas and ideals on race, their superiority and the 'god-like' Hitler pushed through. Hitler was presented as the saviour to Germany's problems and a 'superman' type figure, which was crucial in solidifying solidifying his power and creating the Hitler myth (in practice he was lazy and inactive in the party). This sense of unity and oneness was further created by his 'Heil Hitler' salute, which established the German people as being very much in awe of Hitler. Censorship of newspapers, as seen with the Editor's Law in 1933 was effective in removing any Communist or Socialist ideologies from the news, whilst the burning of the books by Jewish Authors in 1933 was a significant show ^{display} of unity in support of their racial policies. Despite the fact that the the censorship</p> |
|---|---|---|

and propaganda played a key role in creating the Hitler myth, ultimately, many people became bored of the Nazi ideals, losing interest in the news, arts, culture and music, so it failed in its creation of a 'Nazified' society.

The SS was of far greater importance than censorship and propaganda in the establishment of the Nazi Dictatorship in the period from 1933 to 1939, establishing a sense of fear and terror which limited resistance, whilst also playing a key role for the Night of the Long Knives. The Night of the Long Knives, on the 30th June 1934 was arguably the most important moment in the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship, removing opposition in the form of the SA's political opponents and the left wing of the Nazis. The SS killed hundreds of opponents, including Ernst Röhm, Strasser and Schickel. This removed the threat of the SA, established that the Nazis could legally eliminate anyone who threatened them, and, most importantly led to the army swearing a personal oath of loyalty to Hitler, removing the threat of a coup. This highlights why the SS was of far greater importance. Furthermore, the SS ran the concentration camps and were Hitler's personal bodyguards, creating a sense of fear and terror amongst the German population, along with the Gestapo. The SS running the concentration camps such as Dachau (1933) provided free labour for the German

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| | | economy which stimulated it and aided the rapid recovery from the Depression, further stabilising the Nazi Dictatorship. |
| | | Ultimately, although censorship and propaganda was crucial in creating the Hitler myth, it failed in the establishment of Nazi ideals in all aspects of society as many were disinterested in the constant pump of state propaganda. Ultimately Fundamentally, the SS were of far greater importance in the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship from 1933 to 1945, in the light of the Long knives and their creation of fear and terror, and their running of the concentration camps. |

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* 'Opposition and resistance in Germany in the period from 1939 to 1945 were a complete failure.' How far do you agree? [20]

This response elicited a range of responses with some candidates wanting to write generally about opposition from outside the scope of the question, while other weaker responses wrote about the war as foreign opposition being successful which was not what the question was focused on. Better responses considered opposition thematically examining a range of factors including youth opposition, opposition from the elite, religious opposition as well as worker opposition. The varying degrees of success for each of these was counteracted by the effectiveness of the regime in stifling resistance as well as loyalty to the regime in the face of Allied attacks. Candidates tended to know the youth groups quite well and the White Rose group, Edelweiss Pirates and Swing Youth were all noted in many essays, although in some essays references were sometimes cursory and without any specific details. Better responses wrote more specifically about the work of the Edelweiss Pirates in Cologne for example, or the activities of Hans and Sophie Scholl in Munich. Religious opposition was again reasonably well known, although candidates strayed into the period before 1939 at times. Opposition from the Kreisau Circle and the July Bomb plot of 1944 were also included in many responses as examples.

Fewer candidates were able to write about worker opposition with much detail. In examining the effectiveness of the regime in stifling opposition, most candidates were able to look at the alternative argument, although only the best responses examined the loyalty to the regime in the face of Allied bombing and invasion as effective lines of argument.

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