



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2011**

History B 4045

**40451 International Relations: Conflict and
Peace in the 20th Century**

Report on the Examination

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40451 International Relations: Conflict and Peace in the 20th Century

Introduction

As last year, it was obvious that centres and their candidates had adapted well to the challenges of the new modular specification. The topics chosen for the questions appeared to be welcomed by the candidates much better than those chosen in January and the performance as a whole was improved on both the previous examinations. The change in Assessment Objectives with a greater concentration on knowledge and its use on the written papers caused some problems for weaker students, but most were able to achieve positively in at least one topic area. There were very few rubric infringements: when they occurred this was normally weaker candidates attempting more than three topics.

AQA is aware that the 'describe' question is the first answer that many students will complete, so these answers are marked generously. It is treated as the equivalent of the old 'three mark' comprehension question, though of course the students have to have correct facts in their answers. The secret in answering this question is not to write a lot, but to select the main features of the theme of the question. Answers which developed two points or included three accurate ideas based on their own knowledge were awarded full marks.

The introduction of the Controlled Assessment with its concentration on source analysis and evaluation was expected to improve the response of students to source questions on the examination paper. As usual there were some answers which both evaluated the source using the provenance and analysed it using knowledge, but the norm was simply to test the opinion given in the source with knowledge. Few candidates thought about the target audience and the intended effect of the source upon the said audience. It was impossible to judge whether students who had completed the Controlled Assessment before they took this paper were at an advantage, but clearly this is a relevant issue for centres.

Examiners felt that answers to the extended writing questions are improving and that fewer answers contained pointless introductions which repeat the question. Candidates are attempting to explain and assess the named bullet points in the context of the question and more are writing conclusions, though often these simply repeat the argument they have outlined instead of attempting to reach a judgement based on the evidence presented in their answer. The best candidates displayed a high level of knowledge which they used with skill and discrimination and applied it to the question.

Questions

The most popular topics (in topics) were 3, 2, 4, 1, 5 and 6. The comparative questions in each option performed very similarly. In the describe questions, there was very little to choose between the performance of candidates, though the best overall answers were in response to 10, and the ones that produced the weakest average responses were 01 and 07. The best overall responses to the source based questions were to 05, the weakest to 17 and in the essay questions the strongest overall responses were to 15 and the weakest 09.

Topic 1

01: There were some good descriptive answers to this question which outlined the part played by Serbia, Russia and Germany in the Bosnian Crisis. Some relied too much on the introduction to the question and considered that the Crisis involved only Turkey and

Austria-Hungary while a significant minority inevitably wrote about the events in Sarajevo in 1914 making no links with 1908.

- 02** Answers to this question were often too general with expressions such as 'Weltpolitik' and 'a place in the sun' being used but with no explanation of why this supported or opposed the Kaiser's assertion in the source. Equally it is insufficient to describe his aims as 'aggressive' without giving examples of what was considered to be aggressive by Britain such as his policy in Morocco or the building of a German Navy and explaining how this affected his relationship with Britain. Answers which recognised that the target audience of this statement was the British public and that the Kaiser was trying to convince them that he was friendly to win their approval, obtained the highest level for source evaluation. Some very good answers were able to place the statement into the context of 1908, the height of the naval rivalry between the two countries.
- 03** Both of these topics were well known to most candidates, in fact perhaps too well known: too many answers had long descriptions of both, particularly the Schlieffen Plan and why it failed, instead of explaining and assessing their contribution to the outbreak of war. The best assessments normally blamed the alliances for the outbreak of war by explaining how they reacted after the assassination in 1914, contrasting this with the Schlieffen Plan which extended the war to the West by ensuring the entry of Britain to uphold the Treaty of London. Several of these intelligently assessed the likelihood of Britain joining the war as a member of the Entente if Germany had not invaded through Belgium and explained the possible danger to Britain's security of a strong European country occupying Belgium.

Topic 2

- 04** A common error in this question was to concentrate on Wilson's aims with respect to Germany rather than the Fourteen Points. To qualify for full marks answers had to include three of Wilson's Fourteen Points or alternatively they could have developed one and named another. It was expected that candidates would concentrate on the more well known of the points such as the League of Nations, self-determination, no secret treaties and disarmament and these did prove to be the most common responses, but even the less well known were quoted by some candidates such as the right of Serbia to have access to the sea. Those candidates who relied on their knowledge of the Treaty of Versailles often obtained full marks by developing the League of Nations and referring to the return of Alsace and Lorraine to France
- 05** Most candidates found it easy to agree or disagree with this either by examining the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and concluding that Germany was destroyed by giving details of the loss of land, reparations settlement etc., or by examining the aims of the 'Big Three' and concluding that Clemenceau did want the destruction of Germany but Lloyd George and Wilson did not for a variety of reasons. Some very good answers recognised the subtle demeanour differences in the cartoon and combined this with detailed knowledge of the aims of the 'Big Three' or the Treaty. Good answers on the provenance were less common though several made comments that as a German cartoon it was blaming Clemenceau and the French for the Treaty as indicated by the use of the guillotine and Clemenceau being ready to operate it.
- 06** Most answers were well informed about the absence of the USA and its effect on the League, though too many wrote in general terms about its loss of strength instead of relating it to specific outcomes such as the inability of Britain and France to assert their authority as they had been weakened by the war or the pointlessness of economic

sanctions on Japan over Manchuria without the involvement of the USA. Knowledge of the Abyssinian Crisis was normally sound but there were too many long introductions describing Mussolini's aims and the invasion itself. Weaker answers tended to concentrate on Abyssinia as a weakness of the League, ignoring the actions of Britain and France. Many recognised the significance of the Hoare-Laval Pact – those who explained its effect on the failure of the League instead of simply stating 'it undermined the League' were well rewarded. Others reached the top level by analysing and assessing the attitude of Britain and France to the sanctions imposed by the League and the reasons why commodities such as coal were omitted and the Suez Canal was not closed explaining how this led to the failure of the League.

Topic 3

- 07** These two agreements are part of the content of the new specification and as such should have been covered by centres and students. They are both included because they are examples of Hitler's methods in foreign policy and the Naval Treaty is symptomatic of Britain's attitude to Hitler's rearmament and the Treaty of Versailles. As stated earlier, all the describe questions are marked generously, but, in view of the limited nature of this question, it was marked extremely generously! Full marks could be obtained by students who displayed knowledge of three accurate details covering both agreements. In addition, any observation such as the agreements meant that Hitler had accepted Poland's borders or that Britain had broken the Treaty of Versailles, were also deemed worthy of credit. The naval treaty was better known than the agreement with Poland and many answers quoted accurate statistics from the treaty.
- 08** A sizeable minority of candidates appeared to find this question difficult and it was misinterpreted by some who explained why Hitler re-militarised the Rhineland instead of why Britain did not oppose it. Answers contained much irrelevant information about the risk that Hitler took and long descriptions of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, presumably thinking that Chamberlain was Prime Minister in 1936. Most answers accepted that this was the main reason and explained why, concentrating on the deficiencies of the Treaty of Versailles, though many clearly thought that Hitler 'invaded' the Rhineland. Better answers linked the Rhineland to Abyssinia, Britain's lack of readiness for war and the support that Hitler had in Britain as a defence against communism. There were also many good answers which used knowledge to contextualise the quotation and thus develop the provenance by explaining how Lothian was trying to justify or excuse Britain's policy over the Rhineland.
- 09** Both these topics were well known, especially Hitler's aims, but some answers were content to describe his aims and did not relate them to the causes of the Second World War; it was almost as if candidates assumed that by narrating the events in the correct sequence they were explaining and assessing and needed to do no more. Similarly with appeasement there were good descriptions of the Sudetenland Crisis and Munich which were followed by general statements that it failed and led to war. Other answers on appeasement included the Rhineland in spite of the dates given in questions 08 and 09, and were often far too general with no examples of how it operated. The best answers linked Hitler's desire for lebensraum with his takeover of Czechoslovakia and invasion of Poland and appeasement with the encouragement it gave Hitler supporting it with accurate knowledge and some candidates often cleverly commented on how it help to cause the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Several answers linked the two topics together arguing that appeasement was the product of Hitler's aims making it relatively straightforward to make a judgement based on factual knowledge and obtain full marks.

Topic 4

- 10** This was very straightforward and normally answers achieved full marks by reference to the division of Germany and Berlin into four zones, together with comment on war crimes and reparations. The commonest omission was to restrict the answer to the division of Germany into East and West and omit France from the occupying powers.
- 11** Some candidates were clearly confused between North and South Korea in spite of the help given in the question. Knowledge of this event appears to be very strong in some Centres but weak in others. The most common failing was a narrative of the war which virtually ignored the question, or an explanation of general reasons such as the domino effect and containment but not specifically related to Korea. Better candidates were able to mould their knowledge to the demands of the question and were also able to evaluate the provenance in the context of the Soviet Union in the Cold War.
- 12** There were some good explanations of both bullet points in answers to this question, but the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan were normally better known than Soviet expansion. Weaker answers tended to concentrate on general points which lacked explanation such as 'it increased tension'. To qualify for the higher levels, answers must contain evidence to illustrate the point that is being made by the candidate. Answers which reached assessment usually linked Soviet expansion to Stalin's betrayal of the agreement made at Potsdam and how this angered the western leaders, while the other bullet point was normally assessed in the terms of Stalin's response to them and how they led to the Berlin Blockade. Judgements were again made by those who linked the two bullet points together arguing that one led to the other and supporting their argument with evidence.

Topic 5

- 13** There were some good responses to this question, but some candidates wrote far too much on the Prague Spring instead of concentrating on the Soviet reaction. The weakest confused this with 1956 in Hungary, substituting Nagy with Dubcek. The naming of Brezhnev in the question succeeded in giving a guide to candidates and there were far more relevant comments and explanations of the Brezhnev Doctrine than in previous questions on this topic.
- 14** The focus of this particular question was not simply on Sputnik 1, but on the importance of the launching of the satellite in both the arms race and the space race. Candidates were given credit for commenting on the progress of the arms race either before or after 1957 or on the space race after 1957 to support their analysis of the meaning of the source. In this way it was expected that answers would comment on the respective balance of power between the superpowers and how or if it was changed by Sputnik 1. In terms of factual knowledge responses to this question were weaker than the other source questions because too often they ignored the arms race and made general comments on the space race leading to the first man on the moon. Some good answers took a different interpretation of the question and argued that 'power' was not necessarily measured in terms of the arms or space race but by economic strength and used their knowledge of this to conclude that the USA was still ahead. Ironically evaluation of provenance was strong in this question, candidates showing a good understanding of the Cold War and the role of propaganda in it.

- 15** These two topics, especially the Cuban Missile Crisis, were well known by candidates which inevitably led to long narratives of the crises instead of explanation and assessment. On the whole these were outnumbered by some excellent answers which assessed the role of U2 in the ending of peaceful co-existence and went beyond the Paris Summit to look at further deterioration in relations by using the Berlin Wall as an example. Descriptions of the Cuban Crisis often included long accounts of the 'Bay of Pigs' and made general unexplained comments such as 'the world came near to nuclear war.' For the higher levels it was necessary to analyse the events and assess how close to nuclear war the crisis came. The most common judgement was that the U2 heightened tensions while Cuba eventually diminished them, though at the time it appeared to be the greater threat, using the hot line and events after Cuba to support this view.

Topic 6

- 16** There were some good detailed answers to this question with candidates being slightly better informed on glasnost than perestroika. There was some confusion between the two, but most candidates were able to score full marks.
- 17** Some answers to this question concentrated on the trials and tribulations of living in a divided Germany after 1961 and on why the Wall had been built in 1961; these candidates appeared to be unaware of events in East Germany and Berlin in the late 1980s. Better answers analysed the effect of Gorbachev's policies, in particular the rejection of the Brezhnev Doctrine, and commented on the role of Honecker and the demonstrations in East Germany in 1989. Provenance proved to be more difficult to evaluate: candidates were unable to link the motives of the western photographer to the question. Those who did normally focussed on the different perspective of West and East to the event.
- 18** Answers to this question were on the whole disappointing. There were some good detailed answers on Reagan's policies and their effect on the Soviet economy but comments on Solidarity were normally restricted to its early years and tended to end after the imprisonment of Lech Walesa. This meant that the threat of Solidarity to the USSR was seen only in terms of providing a gap in the 'buffer zone' or as an encouragement to other Eastern Bloc countries to protest. Solidarity's revival in the late 1980s and how it benefited from Gorbachev's changes were ignored by many.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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