

History B (Modern World)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J417**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **J117**

OCR Report to Centres

January 2012

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education

History B (Modern World) (J417)

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Content	Page
A971/11–17 Aspects of International Relations, 1919–2005 with the Study in Depth	1
A972/21 British Depth Study, 1890–1918	11
A972/22 British Depth Study, 1939–1975	14
A981/01 Modern World History (Short Course)	17

A971/11–17 Aspects of International Relations, 1919–2005 with the Study in Depth

General Comments

Many candidates were able to demonstrate the varied skills required to answer the different types of questions producing good quality answers. These candidates showed a sound understanding of the demands of the evidence-based questions together with an ability to demonstrate understanding in the longer explanation and analysis questions. Some candidates, however, were unable to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding that Paper 1 demands and this resulted in an impoverished mark. This was particularly evident with the evidential skills but also on occasions with the explanation demands of some questions. Too often candidate answers failed to focus on the question as set. This often resulted in a more generalised approach as well as a tendency to increase the amount of description. Many candidates would benefit from a greater understanding of what constitutes explanation.

Candidates often lacked geographical knowledge relating particularly to Europe. This is particularly relevant to the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler in the later 1930s, and the Cold War period. Awareness of the relation to each other of different countries would aid understanding.

With the questions requiring the use of sources, candidates should always start with the source in terms of the requirements of the question before using contextual knowledge to give support to the answer.

There was evidence, in a small number of cases, that candidates mismanaged their time and failed to complete the paper in the allotted time, whilst others failed to read the 'Instructions to Candidates' carefully, producing more answers than required.

Core Content

Part 1: Aspects of International Relations, 1919–2005

Section A: the Inter-War Years, 1919–1939

Question 1(a)

Many candidates took time to study the cartoon as a whole before deciding on the message of the cartoonist (the main message). This approach offered the opportunity for internalisation of the cartoon against contextual knowledge and resulted in answers using the whole cartoon to give a message emphasising the optimistic outlook of the cartoon. This together with evidence from the cartoon of this optimistic outlook and contextual knowledge of how the League came about, resulted in answers gaining high marks. However, too often candidates rushed into answers which in effect were little more than a description of what can be seen, along the lines of, 'The League of Nations plane is going to bring disarmament and abolish war.' Too many answers still start by describing what can be seen rather than offering a supported interpretation. A small number missed the point completely as they considered the message to be that the 'League was going to fail'.

Question 1(b)

Three valid explanations allowed candidates to gain maximum credit in answering this question. The explanations had to relate the weaknesses of the League in relation to Manchuria. Those who took on board these demands often produced a creditable answer. However, all too often the answers contained vague generalities such as ‘the League had no army’, the ‘USA was not a member’ and the ‘League was slow acting’. This approach failed to progress beyond the first level of the mark scheme. Generally, detail about Manchuria was sketchy for many candidates, who found it difficult to explain the relevance of Lytton, the lack of imposition of sanctions and the position of Britain and France.

Question 2

In answering (a) many candidates were fully aware of what Lloyd George wanted to achieve at the Peace Conference. These points were made succinctly. Some found in making a point it allowed for development, which gained additional reward. On a limited number of occasions Lloyd George was confused with Wilson, whilst other candidates spent time writing about the ‘Big Three’. This approach often resulted in Lloyd George ‘wanting something in the middle’, an approach which has little value as it lacks specific detail.

In answering (b) a significant number of candidates ignored the question which asked for an explanation as to why the ‘Big Three’ failed to get everything they wanted. This required some linkage between the three leaders. Instead many answers concentrated on describing what each wanted, whilst other candidates wrote extensively on why each was not pleased with what they got.

There were some good responses to (c). Here candidates were able to explain why the three given aspects of the Treaty of Versailles caused dissatisfaction among the German people. Military restrictions were particularly well-explained. To a lesser extent the significance of reparations was explained in the context of the time. Weaker answers failed to show that, for example, war guilt and reparations were linked, or that war guilt related to causing war. A lack of understanding in relation to loss of territory was often significant. Many could make a list of what territory was lost; often erroneously including the Rhineland and Czechoslovakia, but there was limited understanding in terms of its significance as to why this would cause dissatisfaction.

Question 3

Some relevant, detailed responses were seen to (a) demonstrating a sound knowledge of Hitler’s actions. Too often though the date of 1935 was ignored, resulting in answers being over-long and partially irrelevant.

Answers to (b) produced much descriptive material about the events to the exclusion of explanation of their importance to Hitler. Where the latter was introduced two explanations gained maximum credit. There still, in the understanding of many candidates, remains the view that Germany had lost the Rhineland. In relation to the Saar, many had limited knowledge causing answers to be historically incorrect.

In answering (c), candidates were more often than not aware of the three factors given in the question and were able to describe detail surrounding them. Better answers examined the significance of each in terms of making war more likely. This approach resulted in numerous good answers particularly in relation to the second and third factors. Anschluss was less well explained. Some very high quality answers took the opportunity to analyse throughout the answer each factor’s contribution to war, and, by adopting this approach, introduced a challenge to the question hypothesis.

Section B: The Cold War, 1945–1975

Question 1(a)

Many answers to this question would have benefited from increased thought prior to writing the answer. Too often the message was considered to be along the lines of, ‘the Communists are attacking Vietnam (or the Vietnamese)’. This approach reflects a more descriptive rather than interpretive approach and is plainly an incorrect answer. It is important that candidates consider the attitude and point of view of the cartoonist as expressed through the cartoon. In this instance, ‘How does the cartoonist view Vietnamisation?’. This approach would surely have encouraged the thought that ‘Vietnamisation is in tatters’. Internalising this would have given message supported by contextual support.

Question 1(b)

Whilst many were aware of the American containment policy (or domino theory) and were able to explain this, there were disappointingly few references to the Gulf of Tonkin incident and its impact. Some were aware of issues relating to France and Vietnam and were able to use this appropriately. Other, weaker, answers totally ignored the dates in the question and wrote generally about American activities in Vietnam or about guerrilla warfare.

Question 2

Most answers to (a) made reference to the splitting of both Germany and Berlin into zones of occupation and identified correctly the countries to which these zones were allocated. The final mark was more elusive although reference was occasionally made to war criminals and reparations.

Answers to (b) were generally weak with candidates lacking awareness of Poland and its place within European history after 1919. This lack of knowledge affected the understanding as to why Poland was significant.

Candidates were aware for (c) of many of the issues relating to the factors given, but particularly in relation to the Berlin Blockade, failed to make the link to ‘increasing Cold War tensions’. Failure to make this connection results in very descriptive answers which only attracted limited marks.

Question 3

There were many strong answers to (a) showing the USA’s reaction to Castro taking over which commented on sugar, trade and the Bay of Pigs invasion. Others mistakenly thought that the Cuban Revolution was the Cuban Missile Crisis.

A majority of candidates produced good answers to (b) giving a number of explained reasons although when reading answers, examiners are not always convinced candidates are aware of the Cold War background to Khrushchev’s actions.

Those candidates who relied heavily on the story of the Crisis had more difficulty with its outcomes as asked for in (c). Whilst history is about the story of the past it is important that candidates are aware of reasons, actions and outcomes. In this instance candidates were more confident in dealing with the USA and the USSR rather than Cuba. Weaker answers resorted to describing events of the crisis, for which there was no credit.

Section C: A New World? 1948–2005

Question 1(a)

Many candidates took time to study the cartoon thus giving an opportunity to decide on the message the cartoonist wanted to give about events in Czechoslovakia in 1968. This enabled many to conclude that the cartoonist was critical of the USSR's actions and that the main message therefore must reflect that view. The main message gained support from both features of the cartoon and contextual knowledge. This approach gained high marks. Less strong, but supported, answers about 'Czechoslovakia wanting freedom' or that 'The USSR should not be opposed' achieved Level 3, being classed as a secondary message. Candidates at the lowest levels were stronger on description of the cartoon at the expense of interpretation.

Question 1(b)

Most candidates were aware of the Solidarity movement in Poland and described, often in detail, its setting up and the strikes in which it was involved. Its importance, in relation to fighting Communist control, was not always explained. Better answers went further, explaining how Solidarity did highlight the failings of Communism and how it had stimulated the people to threaten Communist governments both in Poland and the wider Eastern Bloc. The intention of peaceful revolutions could have been made more strongly.

Question 2

Most answers to (a) were good. Candidates showed a good grasp as to why people resorted to terrorism, citing mainly religious beliefs and the fight against injustice and inequality. Occasionally, answers became over-long, as candidates began to develop explanations. This is not required for an (a) question.

Answers to (b) varied in quality. Some were little more than a brief description of Arafat's life whereas others developed good explanation of Arafat's charismatic leadership, the importance of his overall control and organisational ability and the recognition of change in the later years. In (c) those candidates who identified the aims of each group at the outset had greater success with this question. Stating the criteria against which judgements of achievement were made was a much clearer approach. Those who were content to write about each of the three without this clarity produced answers that showed awareness of activities but failed in consideration of effectiveness.

Question 3

In (a) the majority of candidates were able to give at least one example of Saddam Hussein's human rights record. Some went further giving specific information as to which group within Iraq was targeted. Less strong, or even absent, was comment on the impact of sanctions on the way of life of Iraqi people.

Some very good explanations were seen in (b). The issue of weapons of mass destruction was generally well known by candidates although some did stray into issues outside the boundaries of the question.

Whilst human rights abuses by the multinational force were significantly better known than the other two factors given in the question, answers to (c) were generally weak as the explanation as to why the three factors were 'important' was not always addressed.

Depth Study – Germany, 1918–1945

Question 4(a)

Many candidates produced good direct answers which recognised the purpose of the poster and were able to provide appropriate contextual knowledge about the economic crisis in Germany to develop their responses. Less successful responses focused on the message rather than the purpose. The best answers provided sharp contextual knowledge relating to the elections in 1932. Candidates should be advised to avoid phrases such as ‘the poster shows’ as this approach often failed to lead to an identification of purpose.

Question 4(b)

There were a number of good responses which identified the message of the cartoon. Fewer candidates were able to develop their answers by explaining the intended constraints on Hitler’s power in early 1933. A significant number of candidates recognised that the cartoon was mocking Hitler but could only identify a secondary message. Much depended on their knowledge of the deals and compromises that brought Hitler into government.

Question 4(c)

There were many good answers explaining the ‘unsurprising’ aspects of this source showing an understanding of the events and aftermath of the Reichstag Fire. Most candidates knew about the manipulation of the events by Hitler and the Nazis. The best responses expressed some surprise at the speed with which the Nazis had apparently politicised the courts, allowing the courtroom to be used as an ‘election platform’.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to describe the main developments for (a) and achieve high marks on this question.

Whilst most candidates in (b) were able to explain the causes of hyperinflation, it proved difficult for some candidates to explain two or more discrete reasons why there was an economic crisis. The best responses attempted to distinguish between different aspects of the crisis in separate paragraphs, typically focusing firstly on the invasion and occupation of the Ruhr and its impact on industrial production and secondly on the impact of the government policy on the value of the currency and its impact on ordinary civilians.

A significant number of candidates in (c) were able to explain Weimar’s recovery in terms of economic policy successes, foreign policy successes and the wider issues of cultural developments leading to a more stable society. Those candidates who attempted to provide some balance generally focused on the precarious nature of the recovery based on US loans. Fewer candidates were able to comment on other underlying problems such as the plight of the farming community by the late 1920s or the rejection of avant garde culture by the broadly conservative majority.

Question 6

In (a) most candidates were aware of the main events of the ‘Night of the Long Knives’, although there were a number who were confused between the SA and SS, and a number of answers attempted to explain the reasons for the events rather than simply describing what happened. Part (b) was generally well answered, with candidates displaying a good understanding of the importance of the Goebbels’ role and his propaganda techniques both before and after the Nazis came to power.

Part (c) produced some interesting responses with the better candidates able to explain the efficacy of the coercive apparatus assembled by the regime, whilst providing some balance by explaining different examples of resistance. The less successful responses tended to offer some perfunctory comments about the Gestapo and concentration camps but were still able to pick up some marks.

Depth Study – Russia, 1905–1941

Question 4(a)

Many candidates were able to explain the purpose of the source in terms of the impact it was intended to have. Less successful responses tended to explain the message, typically commenting on the way it depicted the unjust nature of the tsarist regime.

Question 4(b)

There were many good answers to the question with most candidates understanding the popular impression of Rasputin's influence at court. The best responses were able to use contextual knowledge to explain why this impression took hold rather than simply describing who Rasputin was.

Question 4(c)

Most candidates responded well to this question, understanding the significance of the source content in the context of the First World War and the Tsar's assumption of Supreme Command. There were many well-balanced answers explaining lack of surprise because of the Tsarina's dependency on Rasputin, but also surprise that this dependency would go so far as her offering advice to the Tsar on military strategy purely on the basis on one of Rasputin's dreams.

Question 5

For (a) most candidates had a decent understanding of the main features of the Provisional Government. There were a number of candidates who drifted into a description of its policies rather than sticking to its nature and composition.

Part (b) elicited a range of successful responses which variously focused on its failure to address the needs/aspirations of the civilians and soldiers, specific failures such as the June Offensive, or the alternative programme offered by other revolutionary groups or institutions such as the Petrograd Soviet.

In (c) few candidates were able to fully explain the importance of Lenin to the seizure of power and tended to assert his leadership skills and the popularity of his slogans without relating this to the growth of Bolshevik support in the soviets and the eventual majority which gave them the opportunity to attempt a seizure of power. The significance of the Petrograd Soviet, the impact of the Kornilov Revolt on Bolshevik popularity, and Lenin's insistence on an armed uprising in October could have been better explained. Other factors such as the weakness of the Provisional Government by the autumn of 1917 and the importance of Trotsky in organising the seizure of power were more successfully explained.

Question 6

Most candidates understood the main features of Collectivisation for part (a). Better answers included references to its ideological goal of establishing socialism in the Countryside by ending NEP.

In (b) better responses explained Stalin's determination to modernise the USSR and provide it with the means to defend itself in a hostile capitalist world. The best responses were able to place this in the ideological context of Socialism in One Country.

For (c) candidates displayed an ability to balance well-versed explanations of Stalin's oppression with recognition that there were positive features of the regime, typically for women's opportunities and in terms of education and literacy. Less successful responses simply made assertions about the harshness of the regime in terms of working conditions and labour camps.

Depth Study: The USA, 1919–1941

Question 4(a)

Many candidates were able to give the secondary message of the cartoon, with most focusing on the idea that people lost money or the idea that stocks and shares could go down in value. Excellent contextual knowledge was displayed here, especially of speculation and buying on the margin. Few candidates recognised the main message of the cartoon – the risk factor faced by the average man. There were a significant number of candidates who began their answers by describing the cartoon at great length; this approach often resulted in candidates forgetting to address the actual question and state the message.

Question 4(b)

Candidates expressed surprise at Hoover's actions against the Bonus Marchers, focusing upon the hardship experienced during the Depression by war veterans who had loyally served their country and were just asking for help in a time of great need. This was also linked to the actions of the President during a presidential election year. Candidates explained how such actions were surprising as they would clearly affect Hoover's chance of re-election. Very few candidates explained lack of surprise. Those who did focused on the difficulties faced by the government at the time and their belief that the Bonus Marchers were linked with communism. Some candidates said they were surprised by the source but did not explain why. They just wrote out parts of the source. There were also a number of candidates who wrote in very general terms about the use of violence, without relating it specifically to the Bonus Marchers. It was apparent that a number of candidates did not know who the Bonus Marchers were.

Question 4(c)

A number of candidates stated the purpose of the cartoon as being an election campaign poster to persuade people to vote for Roosevelt. This was explained in detail by relating the smilette to Hoover's poor performance in dealing with the Depression. This was then linked specifically to the fact that 1932 was the year of a presidential election. Many candidates who did not actually recognise the purpose of the cartoon nonetheless did give a clearly stated message about Hoover's failings and supported this with reference to the cartoon and/or contextual knowledge. However, a considerable number of candidates took the cartoon at face value, and seemed to genuinely believe that the smilette was manufactured in America by either the Democrats or the Republicans as a means of generating jobs and money to rescue America from the Depression.

Question 5

Many candidates demonstrated excellent contextual knowledge in (a), detailing the amount of money made, the numbers going to the cinema, the introduction of talkies, and giving the names of film stars such as Charlie Chaplin, Gloria Swanson, Rudolph Valentino and Clara Bow. There were, however, too many generalised comments about the cinema booming and flappers having the time to visit the cinema.

In (b) some candidates were able to identify reasons for the Red Scare, such as the fear of communism and the fear of immigrants with strong political beliefs. Very few were able to explain these reasons and focused instead on the effects of the Red Scare. A substantial number of candidates were unaware of the actual details of the Red Scare with many stating it was all about over-production and boom and bust.

There were a number of clearly written answers to (c), with candidates focusing upon the greater independence and freedom of choice experienced by women, why this happened and how it was manifested in their everyday lives. The unchanging role of rural women was also explained clearly, with reference to the influence of the church on the lives of women. Overall, answers to this question were not developed well. Many candidates described the changes in the lives of women by focusing solely on the lives of flappers and their fashion styles and social lives. Lack of change was identified by stating that many women still had traditional roles and that black women lived in poverty.

Question 6

Most candidates were able to give at least two points relating to their chosen alphabet agency when answering (a). Most wrote about the TVA, the PWA, the AAA or the CCC. Some candidates wrote at length but did not identify their chosen agency as instructed, thus gaining only one mark.

Candidates deployed their contextual knowledge effectively in answering (b). Explanations focused upon the Republican beliefs of laissez-faire and rugged individualism, increased taxes and the perceived waste of money. Weaker answers were characterised by lack of detail and their descriptive nature. Some candidates wrote generally about opposition to the New Deal, rather than the opposition of the Republicans.

Answers to (c) focused on the benefits of the New Deal for the unemployed and farmers. Candidates explained the role of various alphabet agencies in providing jobs and gave details about the type of jobs. Explanation of the limitations of the New Deal centred upon Roosevelt's fear he would lose support in the southern states if he introduced anti-lynching laws, and also the temporary nature of jobs provided by the New Deal. Overall the limitations of the New Deal were less well explained than the benefits. There were many generalised answers to this question. Candidates stated that the New Deal gave jobs and improved social welfare but did not benefit black Americans, some farmers or women. These points were not developed into explanations.

Depth Study: Causes and Events of the First World War, 1890–1918

Question 4(a)

A slightly different approach to the wording of a message question appeared not to have any effect on candidates' answers. It was encouraging to note that many were able to fix the context quite securely. This helped with understanding the poses of the characters in the cartoon and the point of view presented by the cartoonist. This gave the minimum of a secondary message along the lines of 'Britain and France are in a relationship' but it was the inter-relationship between all three that was important for the main message. Many answers highlighted this.

Question 4(b)

Too many rushed into this without giving full consideration to the issue of 'am I surprised by what the Kaiser is saying at that particular time?' This resulted in many taking the interview at face-value, particularly in relation to the idea of Britain and Germany on the same side. Better answers considered what was being said in a British newspaper and why, with the best including what was happening in the Pacific. It is always helpful to candidates if they consider purpose, motive and provenance in relation to this type of question, if the higher levels are to be achieved.

Question 4(c)

A significant number of answers gave the main message of this source along the lines of ‘attempts are being made to control the Balkans’ or ‘the Balkans is going to trigger war’ supporting this with either material from the source or contextual knowledge. This approach achieved 4 marks out of 7. Surprisingly, only a very small number of candidates went on to answer the question – why was the cartoon published? Some answers showed a sound knowledge of the period but forget to use the cartoon thus limiting the marks available to a very low level.

Question 5

Generally sound knowledge of the Schlieffen Plan was displayed in answer to (a). Some candidates however showed weakness in the order that events were supposed to happen resulting in the German forces facing the Russians first.

Almost every candidate could describe in great detail the events surrounding the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand for (b) but were much less confident with ‘why’. The best answers went back to 1908–9 to introduce the basis of their explanation.

The quality of answers to (c) varied considerably. The better answers developed explanations to show how Germany could be blamed whilst countering these arguments with issues such as the relationship between Austria and Serbia and the actions of Russia, Britain and France.

Question 6

Some excellent descriptions of ‘no man’s land’ were seen in answer to (a).

However, many candidates were less secure in relation to why trench warfare developed in (b) with many ignoring ‘the early years of the war’, and linking their answer to the development of tanks. The best answers showed in the context of the Marne that trenches were a form of protection because of the stalemate that had developed.

Almost all were aware of America’s entry into the war but beyond this were less secure in offering an understanding of how they contributed to Germany’s defeat. This resulted in a variety of approaches and not necessarily on land. Much better were the other explained reasons used to challenge the question hypothesis which included the failure of the Ludendorff Offensive and the success of the British blockade. Here the better answers were full in their explanation.

Depth Study: The USA, 1945–1975: Land of Freedom?

Question 4(a)

There were many answers which gave a clear interpretation of what the cartoonist wanted to give as his message. These were usually well-supported by the use of detail from the cartoon. Much weaker was the attempted support by the use of contextual knowledge which was often just a general comment about the struggle for civil rights. Weaker answers were more descriptive, often starting with ‘I can see...’ which can encourage a more limiting approach.

Question 4(b)

Many answers showed awareness that Malcolm X favoured a more violent approach and linked this to the idea of ‘not surprised’, although some did not support this point with relevant contextual knowledge. What was not really questioned was ‘Why Martin Luther King would be saying this at that time?’ This lack of consideration of purpose resulted in many one-sided responses.

Question 4(c)

A significant number of answers gave an acceptable message, often supported by detail from the photograph. Only a small number of answers then went further, as required by the question, to give consideration to the reason for it being published. This purpose, supported by context, is reflected the highest level of the mark scheme. Weaker answers were more descriptive of what the photograph showed.

Question 5

There were many good answers to (a) showing good knowledge of the activities of the FBI and Hoover in the early 1950s.

In (b) most were aware of the HUAC but answers lacked the depth of knowledge required to turn description into explanation. Those who moved into the higher levels produced sound explanations as to why HUAC was set up. Some went away from the question, writing about some of the Committee's activities.

Candidates were often well-versed in the period of McCarthy and often produced explanations to support both sides of the question hypothesis-placing their answer in the higher levels. Weaker answers were more aware of who might not support McCarthy rather than who might support his activities.

Question 6

Some good responses were seen to part (a), showing knowledge of segregation, violence and the existence of racial issues in, for example, the armed forces.

Only a small number of candidates were able to display the knowledge and understanding of the Act required for (b) with many producing general narratives.

The vast majority of candidates when answering (c) were aware of the two events and could tell 'a good story'. Fewer were able to demonstrate the necessary technique required to move from narrative to explanation as to relative importance. Those who moved their answers forward linked Little Rock to the President's actions and the Bus Boycott to the Supreme Court. Very few wrote in such a way as to challenge or support the question hypothesis.

A972/21 British Depth Study, 1890–1918

General Comments

The overall impression of the work of candidates from this session was that while they were well prepared in terms of their knowledge of the period, they were much less ready to tackle the intellectual challenge which the questions in this paper presented. Earlier reports on the January session have highlighted the significant number of candidates who appeared to lack the maturity to think about and engage with sources in the ways which the questions in this paper require. The same phenomenon was observed in this session, perhaps exacerbated by the fact that some questions crossed over topics such as poverty and women's suffrage, and also because some candidates had clearly been drilled to answer particular questions in particular ways. When the sources or the questions did not appear as expected, such candidates were often completely unable to adapt and usually fell back on recounting their own knowledge of the period. This knowledge was often detailed and impressive, but teachers need to emphasise to candidates that a general exposition about the issue raised in a source is very unlikely to gain them credit when a question asks specifically for comments about how useful or reliable (etc) a particular source was.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

It was clear that many candidates had been told to expect the first question to be a question asking the message of a source. It is reasonable to prepare candidates to respond to particular question types, but weaker candidates in particular seem to be thrown when they are faced with the unexpected. Centres may therefore want to consider carefully how far they give the impression that particular questions will appear in particular sequences. It is clear that many candidates were discomfited by an expectation of a message question which proved to be unfounded. As a result, a significant number of candidates attempted to answer the question as a message question anyway, usually therefore only at most achieving Level 2.

In fact, many candidates failed to progress beyond Level 2. At the risk of stating the obvious, questions about usefulness require candidates to go further than simply stating that the source is useful because it has information in it, or that it is not useful because the information in it cannot be trusted. These answers stay at Level 2, for example:

The source is useful because it tells us that a woman could be a teacher but not vote.

When thinking about such questions candidates might find it helpful to consider why this specific source would be useful. If a historian was looking for information on this topic, or any other, then a textbook is clearly the most useful source. However, a source like Source A provides a unique insight into the views and approaches of the suffrage movement. Candidates who recognised this rapidly moved up the levels. A substantial number did make this point and so scored at Level 3, for example:

The source is useful because it shows us the views of suffrage campaigners. They thought it was unfair that a woman could be a teacher but not be able to vote.

Candidates should be encouraged to study the difference between the two examples above. The Level 2 example is simply saying the content of the source is useful, providing information (but this information could easily be accessed from a textbook). The Level 3 example realises that the source is useful because it gives the historian an insight into what suffrage campaigners themselves were thinking and saying.

Question 2

Most candidates got to grips with this question and were not troubled by having to use two sources which were perhaps a little longer than usually seen in this paper. Once again, the damaging effect of drilling weaker candidates to take a tick box approach was apparent in some answers. For example, many candidates effectively distracted themselves from the relatively simple core purpose of each source (achieving the vote) by attempting to compare the tone of each source, which was considerably more difficult and also less valid from a historical point of view. The lack of maturity of some candidates showed itself in answers which were frustratingly undeveloped such as 'both sources want the same thing' or 'they both want votes'. Without further explanation, such answers could not be given Level 5 or Alternative Level 5. Despite this, a substantial number of candidates did score well on this question. They usually recognised that the message of each source was different and explained this, in the process often referring to the core purpose of the vote and so reaching Level 6, and gaining 7 marks.

Question 3

Once again, this question proved how important it is for candidates to work on their written style and communication skills in history, as well as simply knowing the content of the period. It was expected that a large number of candidates would reach Level 4 by picking extracts from the source (such as women being described as equal to men) and arguing that these extracts were true or false by comparing them with their own knowledge. It was also hoped that they would see the obvious potential for using Source A to support what Hardie was saying or Sources B or C to suggest he was wrong. Such approaches would have resulted in candidates gaining 5–6 marks at Level 4. While many candidates did achieve this level, far too many simply tried to assert that the source as a whole was reliable or unreliable. It was often very unclear exactly which parts of the source candidates were suggesting were or were not reliable. In many cases they appeared to be indicating that they did not trust Keir Hardie, but they used the term 'the source' instead. Examiners were quite surprised to see a reliability question cause so much confusion and it suggests that candidates would benefit from spending time breaking down the thinking processes required to tackle such questions. The amount of contextual knowledge required for Level 4 was not extensive, as long as the knowledge was being harnessed to support a response which actually answered the question. As has been stated many times, it is this aspect of the historical process which needs more time and development, not the acquisition of a massively detailed knowledge of every event and development.

Question 4

On the whole this question was answered well. Some candidates struggled with the extensive text in the source, but the majority were able to pick out negative terms such as 'sly suffragette' and realise that the source was hostile to women's suffrage. Most were able to go further still and correctly explain that the purpose of the source was to turn public opinion against the women's suffrage movement. A significant number of candidates made use of the context of 1908 very effectively, pointing to specific events such as the rushing of Parliament or more general activities such as disrupting political meetings. However, once again some weaker candidates argued that this source was published because those events were taking place but went no further, thus limiting themselves to Level 2.

Question 5

This question caused problems for many candidates. Once again, it was expected that many candidates would reach Level 3 by spotting inconsistencies within the source or Level 4 by simply comparing statements from within the source to their own knowledge. There were also very clear opportunities to reach Level 5 by contrasting the attitude towards women of MacDonald in Source F with the views of Keir Hardie in Source D. A small number of candidates did this and scored 6 or 7 marks. All too often, however, answers simply asserted

surprise and failed to explain the elements in the source which candidates found surprising. The 'surprise' questions are included because they are intended to make candidates think and to escape the straitjacket of formulaic approaches to questions. Centres might find it helpful to encourage candidates to think through their answers to such questions by imagining that these questions begin 'Given that you have a good working knowledge of this period, are you surprised by?'. Surprise questions are primarily tests of candidates' ability to explain a source in a given context. Thus in Question 5 the candidates were really being asked to explain whether they felt it was surprising that Ramsay MacDonald was saying these things about women at this time, given that the Labour Party by 1914 was closely allied to the NUWSS.

Question 6

Most candidates are familiar with the approaches which lead to high scores on this question and generally they did not disappoint. The question was a little more challenging than some previous questions in that the sources which disagreed with the statement were not all making the same point and several sources could be interpreted as supporting or opposing the statement depending on selection and perspective. This did not seem to trouble most candidates. However, one noticeable factor was the comparatively large number of candidates who reached only Level 2 because they only produced a one sided argument. It seems likely that this was a result of inexperienced candidates who were unfamiliar with the structure and requirements of this type of question. The same reason might also explain the relatively large number of candidates who simply referred to sources without explaining how they supported the statement (eg 'Source B supports the statement because of what the women say') or who outlined the content of the source and failed to explain how the source supported the statement (eg 'In Source B the women are asking for better pay and conditions'). Without an explanation which links the statement to the source, such answers will only receive Level 1 marks.

A972/22 British Depth Study, 1939–1975

General Comments

The overall impression of the work of candidates from this session was that while they were well prepared in terms of their knowledge of the period they were less ready to tackle the intellectual challenge which the questions in this paper presented. Earlier reports on the January session have highlighted the significant number of candidates who appeared to lack the maturity to think about and engage with sources in the ways which the questions in this paper require. The same was observed in this session. A particular stumbling block was the construction of answers which explained and developed points being made. In many cases there was a gratifying number of attempts by candidates to genuinely think about the source material presented to them. However, they often hindered their own chances by making valid points which were unsupported by the source. Typical examples of this were in Question 2, where candidates often said they were surprised ‘by the source’ but failed to specify what it was in the source that surprised them. Similarly, many candidates showed an intelligent insight into the lives of women in the workplace in Question 5, and many answers effectively extracted information from the source, but at the same time many candidates failed to answer the question fully and explain why the source might be useful to a historian.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

Most candidates were awarded L4, either by successfully communicating the message of the poster (*the source is encouraging women to return to work*, L4) or by stating the partial purpose of the source (*the source was produced to get women back into work*, Alt L4). A significant number of candidates were limited to achieving L3 because whilst they understood the context of the poster (ie *the source was produced because there was a labour shortage at the time and the government needed workers*) they failed to explain the message or purpose of the source. There were also many candidates who misunderstood the context of the poster and believed that the poster had been produced by the government in order to make women more equal to men (either L2 or lower L4, depending on whether they had stated the message of the source). This kind of response tended to give rise to much irrelevant knowledge about the Equal Pay Act, the Women’s Liberation Movement and the Divorce Reform/Abortion Acts. Very few candidates were able to assemble the components of a Level 5 answer by stating the purpose clearly and explaining how this was achieved and why it needed to be achieved.

Question 2

Most candidates fared well on this question, although a significant number still answer ‘surprise’ questions by not referring in any way to surprise or some variation of the word. Most candidates did achieve the lower end of L5 by offering an explanation that the school’s segregation and offering of subjects according to gender was unsurprising given society’s expectations/norms in relation to women at the time. A pleasing number of weaker answers were still able to reach L4 by pointing out the source’s internal contradictions, eg ‘school of the future’ vs stereotypical gender roles. Other candidates successfully explained their surprise at the apparent early date of source, checking it against their understanding of the 10/65 document and the Labour government of the 1960s. However, whilst some responses made good use of this knowledge, others simply presented facts about the change from the tripartite to comprehensive system without actually addressing the question. Some candidates also limited themselves to L1 by simply asserting that they knew the content of the source was correct, eg *I am not surprised by the source because I know that boys and girls were taught different things*. It was frustrating to

see a number of candidates address the purpose and provenance of the source – ie that it was designed to sell the new comprehensive schools to people and generate support for them – but to not then state whether or not they found this surprising, and drift into assertions about whether the source was reliable.

Question 3

Overall, candidates struggled with this question. It was anticipated that there would be many Level 4 answers which simply contrasted the content of the two sources and used the contrast to argue that C did or did not prove D wrong. Such answers were given Level 4, and 5 marks, but they were surprisingly rare. Whilst the inclusion of extended provenance on the source paper did seem to point candidates in the right direction, too many were still limited to Alt L2 because they did not fully evaluate the sources. Too many answers argued, for example, that C was unreliable because it was a pro-Conservative newspaper in an election year. Since candidates were given that information they could not be rewarded at Level 5 unless they explained more fully how such information pointed to the purpose of the article and also pointed to the ways in which the text of the article indicated reasons for not trusting the source, such as the extreme language. It was rare to see an effective evaluation of Source D, with most candidates restricting their comments to *'it's an obituary so it will only say good things'* or similar. However, a small number of enterprising candidates used contextual knowledge to support Source D and then argue that C was unreliable in its criticisms of D. However, only a very small number achieved 7 marks by explaining this fully and supporting their evaluation with reference to the content of the source or language used in the extract. Hardly any candidates achieved L6, as their attempted evaluations of D stopped well short of a full appraisal of its reliability, including examples from the source of praising/over the top language. Some candidates did successfully use their contextual knowledge either to disprove C or to support D, but in many cases candidates simply asserted that one or the other was true because they 'knew', for example, that the Divorce Reform Act was passed in 1969 (which proves nothing) rather than making any comment about its impact (which would have supported Source D's claims about such measures helping women).

Question 4

Most candidates recognised the message of the cartoonist and thus achieved L5 or L6, with few misinterpreting it as an anti-contraception source or similar, although a small number did see the main message as being that women have no rights against their husbands. The main limiting factor for some candidates here, however, was an inability to get across that they understood the cartoonist had a point to make to society/women as a whole; they seemed to see the cartoon as a real scene, and write as though the cartoonist was commenting on this particular situation/woman/couple. This placed their responses in L3. Other responses suggested that the cartoon was merely a source of information, a reflection of events happening at the time, rather than an opinion about those events designed to shape people's thinking and actions. A final point for reflection and practice is expression. Many candidates expressed their answers along the lines of 'the message of the cartoon is that not taking the pill is worse than taking it'. Examiners are able to credit such answers, but if candidates had taken a little more time to frame their thoughts, they could just have easily said that 'the cartoonist believes the pill is a good thing'.

Question 5

This was a fairly well answered question, with most candidates achieving at least L3, and a pleasing number reaching L4 through their inferences about what the source revealed about the workings of the Equal Pay Act. The essence of utility questions is that candidates use the source to move beyond content which can simply be accepted and to show how sources can illustrate less tangible features of the past such as attitudes, beliefs or prejudices. Many candidates reached L5 by explaining how the source exposed particular attitudes of men

towards women (fewer explained how the source revealed the attitudes of feminist groups). However, even in the stronger responses, there were still far too many undeveloped comments relating to provenance which did not advance candidates' marks. There were very few Level 6 responses, where the source is shown to be useful *because of its bias*. In weaker candidates, the Second Alternative L2 was awarded fairly often, where candidates would successfully make an inference from the source, yet neglect to answer the question by commenting on the source's utility.

Question 6

Most candidates seemed very well prepared for this question and achieved Level 3 relatively straightforwardly. For very weak answers, most of the marks were achieved on this final question. There were few successful evaluations and thus a mark above 10 was quite rare. Many candidates attempted to evaluate the sources, but in most cases this was restricted to undeveloped comments relating to provenance. Where candidates did have relevant contextual knowledge, they did not often understand how to deploy it successfully in order to evaluate the sources. It was interesting to note that few candidates were able to use Source C successfully to support or contradict the statement.

A981/01 Modern World History (Short Course)

General Comments

A number of candidates showed confidence in attempting to evaluate the sources as directed by the questions. However, many candidates were more confident in describing, rather than evaluating, and this approach limited the marks achieved.

Where evaluation moved beyond the superficial, their answers showed that candidates were aware of the demands of the question, although those answers were often still limited by a lack of contextual knowledge.

This absence of knowledge was also reflected in answers to Question 2 and Question 3 which were generally far too brief, lacking detail. Where specific historical points were made they often lacked explanation, a requisite of the higher levels.

Time appeared to be used well with few candidates failing to finish. Rubric errors were minimal and, where they occurred, tended to involve candidates trying to answer all the Question Ones.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: The inter-War Years

Too few candidates answered the questions based on this section of the Specification to make it possible to make meaningful comments. Should any Centre wish to read comments on Questions 1(a), 1(c), 2 and 3 they should consult the Report for A971/11.

Section B: The Cold War, 1945–1975

Question 1(a)

Those candidates who realised that the poster was not advertising a real film often managed to get to a main message which indicated that the cartoonist was critical of President Johnson. A number of these candidates went further to give reasons from the cartoon as to why they had come to this conclusion. Too often the poster was considered to be positive about Johnson or to be advertising a film or to be an American military recruitment poster. In these instances limited marks were gained by any description of what could be seen. Too often candidates were ready to offer knowledge relating to the Vietnam War which invariably linked to guerrilla warfare. Very few answers reached purpose – the target of the question. Those that did were able to make some link to high costs, either in monetary or human terms.

Question 1(b)

Answers were generally based on surface features or the provenance of the sources. Such as, 'Source B is useful as it shows children were affected' or that 'Source C is useful as it was written by a soldier who had been there'. There was little attempt to consider purpose, tone or language to gain access to the higher levels. A small number of candidates did attempt to make use of contextual knowledge to help them come to a judgement.

Question 1(c)

Too often 'Vietnamisation' was not known about, with candidates commenting that it was the Vietcong or another name for Vietnam or the takeover by the North. Often where Vietnamisation was known about, the cartoon became irrelevant, with answers concentrating on context to the exclusion of message. Where candidates studied the cartoon, linking 'Vietnamisation' to Johnson's policy for withdrawal, a main message often emerged along the lines of 'the American policy of Vietnamisation is in ruins'. In these instances support for the main message from the cartoon followed, although contextual detail support was often limited.

Question 1(d)

Many answers ignored the dates given in the question resulting in a general account as to why the US was involved in Vietnam. To 'combat Communism' was the most common reason offered, with the idea of the 'domino' theory being added in some answers. Where valid reasons were given they were often lacking in enough explanation to show sufficient understanding within the context of the period.

Questions 2 and 3

Comments on these questions can be read in the Report for A971/11.

Section C: A New World? 1948–2005

Question 1(a)

Most candidates in answering this question were content to point out differences between the two sources and explain this by using the provenance rather than by considering why, or why not, there was an element of surprise with Source B. Better responses attempted to justify by using provenance, whilst a small number brought purpose into the equation. To gain the highest level required candidates to use contextual knowledge which helped to explain a lack of surprise with the content in Source B.

Question 1(b)

Candidates' answers tended to offer a secondary message rather than the main message of the source. Thus 'the USSR has crushed Czechoslovakia' was common rather than reference to the USSR's excessive or unnecessary violence. Too often it was an answer which described the cartoon. Contextual knowledge was limited.

Question 1(c)

Answers tended to concentrate on the critical aspect of the cartoon with many responses suggesting in some way that the USSR was imposing its authority on Poland and then using aspects of the cartoon to support this main message. The identification, and support, of purpose was rarely seen.

Question 1(d)

Most candidates were aware of Solidarity and were able to describe aspects of its operation in Poland but its important contribution in the demise of Soviet control of Eastern European states was only known by a small number.

Questions 2 and 3

Comments on these questions can be read within the Report for A971/11.

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