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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

HISTORY (WORLD AFFAIRS SINCE 1919)

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 2158/01

Paper 1

General comments

Candidates spread their work broadly between all sections of the Paper, though with rather few attempts at the African questions in **Section E**. The quality of work submitted varied sharply. At some Centres candidates achieved levels of distinct excellence, providing five answers that were balanced in approach, focused in relevance and both well and accurately substantiated in factual material. However, at other Centres too many candidates failed to harmonise with the purpose of the examination and their answers (often fewer than the required five) held only slight links with the questions attempted and contained factual material that was weak, irrelevant or inaccurate; in some instances the standard of English verged on the incoherent. Inevitably, between these levels of excellence and weakness there were candidates who achieved work of adequacy which, with somewhat sharper approach and better support, held potential for improved achievement. Nevertheless, the dominant impression left by the examination was of this sharp variation of quality.

Few candidates neglected to answer, as required, at least one question from **Section A**. In some instances, however, the one answer here was apparently a struggle and was poorly done; clearly, preference lay in other sections. All candidates need to be aware that an answer is required from **Section A** and should take that requirement into account in their preparation for the examination. There were, in general, few rubric offences, though a number failed to complete five answers and a number attempted more than that.

One area in which some candidates disadvantaged themselves was in an inaccurate reading and interpretation of the set question. It is a vital preliminary for each candidate to read with the greatest care all the words in a question which is chosen for an answer, noting the particular historical scope of the question and the dates which are contained in it. Too often, a loose interpretation of the question's terms led to impaired relevance in the answer and sometimes, to no relevance at all.

Finally, candidates should be alert - as indeed in this examination the best were - to the need to deploy with purpose, adequate and precise factual knowledge. Some answers of potential promise and sensible structure were marred by factual references that were generalised, imprecise or insubstantial. History is an interpretation of the past built on the facts of the past. In this examination at GCE O Level, candidates are expected to be furnished with precise historical facts. Too many had loose generality only. However, in this connection, one further word of warning may be helpful. Factual material, however extensive, will in itself not provide a sound answer. The factual material must be appropriately balanced and angled to the requirements of the question. In acquiring factual material, candidates will be best assisted by getting to essential matters of historical concern rather than to peripheral ones. For example, answers to the quite popular **Questions 7 and 8** were too often impaired by inclusion of irrelevant and extensive background on the early life of Mussolini and Hitler, whereas it was their policies which were required in the questions. Similarly in **Question 14**, extensive background on Roosevelt was not required; what was needed was a sharp focus on the question's terms, in that instance defined in four specific areas. While candidates should not be discouraged from learning about the earlier lives of salient twentieth-century figures, they should seek to get such material in due perspective to the later and more significant impact they had in the affairs of their country and of the world; it is that which is the essential concern.

Comments on specific questions**Section A***General Problems***Question 1**

Some candidates provided excellent answers to this question, showing sound grasp of the two treaties and some precise references in the concluding analysis. But too many other candidates neglected the specifically named treaties in favour of a totally irrelevant account of the Treaty of Versailles. Some weaker answers to the last part were held back by a clear failure to understand what the term 'self-determination' actually meant.

Question 2

Candidates who were knowledgeable about the structural detail of the UNO were able often to do very well here, in a question which gave them good scope. There were often also thoughtful observations on the last part. But candidates do also need to be aware that though the earlier League of Nations bore some structural resemblance to the United Nations Organisation, it was different in many salient respects and an answer on the League usually fitted ill into a question on the UNO.

Question 3

This attracted rather fewer candidates and of those - with some exceptions - only a poor level of achievement was reached, with often only sketchy material presented. Answers sometimes went further than Munich, though not very ably. In the last part there was a tendency not to focus on reasons for lack of success but rather on reasons for adoption.

Question 4

This was a generally well attempted question, answers being furnished in most cases with useful and relevant material. Part (c) was sometimes permitted to go on into the Blitz of 1940-41 and to neglect the dates. There were some well rounded assessments in the last part.

Question 5

Most candidates kept within the boundaries of 1945-53 in the first part, though the quality of factual support varied greatly. The best were often particularly incisive on the ebb and flow of progress in the Korean War itself, while others appeared confused about which side held which part of the peninsula. Those who had produced well focused answers on the war earlier were usually able to give thoughtfully focused answers to the final analysis required, but again candidates weak on knowledge had little to build on here.

Question 6

Part (a) was almost inevitably better done than part (b). However, in part (a) the particular impetus of the Berlin Blockade was often missed, surprising in view of an oblique reference to it in the last part of the question. In part (b), it was to be expected that material would be less substantial than in part (a), but less excusable was uncertainty on the Warsaw Pact's date, circumstances of origin and composition. Those who had a firm knowledge of Germany in the context of Cold War developments in the late 1940s, were able to provide purposeful responses to the last part.

Section B*Western Europe***Question 7**

The major problem that a number of candidates had in this popular question was the achievement of an adequate definition of 'social and economic' policies and that certainly did not involve all that Mussolini did. While there were some grey areas (such as the Lateran Pacts and aspects of control) where the Examiner took a sympathetic view, such features as Mussolini's pre-1922 rise to power and foreign affairs later were not part of the answer. Moreover, references to social and economic policies, where relevant, were often poor in scope and detail, and the attempted evaluation at the end was often either missed or very poorly measured.

Question 8

There were even more serious problems of irrelevance in this equally popular question. Two mistaken approaches abounded. One was to neglect the time reference to the 1930s and to write on Hitler's earlier rise to power (and sometimes also his early life). The other was failure to detect which were 'policies designed to gain popular support' and instead to give a blanket survey of Hitler's approach to various issues both in the 1920s and the 1930s. Candidates need to provide an answer structured to and focused on the requirements of the question. Altogether answers to this question - with very few exceptions - were extremely disappointing.

Question 9

There were few answers to this question and such as there were achieved only a poor standard, with failure often to focus either on the period or areas requested.

Questions 10 and 11

These were distinctly unpopular questions, and in the handful of answers they elicited, there was a serious lack of real knowledge of the subject matter.

Section C

The Americas

Question 12

This was essentially a question on Woodrow Wilson, yet it was not seen as such by many candidates. Too often it developed into surveys of the Versailles terms or the League structure and activity. While both of these would form part of a well rounded answer, they were not the whole answer. Nor was a survey of the Fourteen Points, though that might form a more specifically relevant part of an answer. The question was broadly stanced between the concerns of Europe and the concerns of the USA, yet it was only a minority of candidates who detected this scope and developed it with purpose and support.

Question 13

Answers here were generally much more successful. Descriptions were often wide ranging and well focused on the 1920s, providing in the first part sometimes both extensive instances and fundamental trends that supported them. Most were able in the last part to detect the issue of over-production as the main culprit, though this part was usually less well developed than the first. Inevitably, there were answers which were superficial in the first part and wayward in the second, but they were the minority.

Question 14

This also received quite well supported answers in all parts, with knowledge of part **(a)** somewhat less certain and detailed than of parts **(b)** and **(c)**. There were useful assessments by many in the last part, in which pertinent reference was made to other items of New Deal legislation in forming the assessment. Too many candidates felt a background survey to the New Deal was needed at the start; whereas a few words on this might form a helpful introduction, the best advice to follow in questions such as this - questions which divide into specific lettered parts - is to get directly into the requirements of the question as set.

Questions 15 and 16

There were few attempts at these two questions and knowledge in those that were done was generally poor.

Section D

USSR and Eastern Europe

Question 17

Accounts of the Civil War were often balanced and focused on salient features in both sides, though less authoritative in detail of strategy and personnel. In the last part, most candidates were able to focus on hostility to communism and its potential spread, but failed to develop other reasons for Allied support of the Whites. It was unfortunate that a number of candidates failed throughout their answer here, adequately to distinguish between Reds and Whites, and often to confuse them.

Question 18

This question was concerned with 'terror', subsuming under that term Stalinist purges, show trials, police activity, imprisonment, execution and other aspects of Stalin's totalitarian control in the years 1928-40. It was not concerned with collectivised agriculture or the planned industrial economy, except in so far as these initiatives also involved aspects of terror to fulfil them. Yet many candidates - probably the majority - wrote about agriculture and industry to the virtual neglect of the salient feature contained in the question. This question proved to be both popular and in large measure, answered with very serious irrelevance.

Question 19

Of the three lettered parts, part (a) was usually the best attempted, often eliciting answers of good scope. Part (b) also got satisfactory responses, yet answers to part (c) too often failed to detect the declining quality of the relationship in the light of changed attitudes towards the West. The answer to the last part lay essentially in Soviet politics of the mid-1950s, which appeared not to be well known.

Question 20

This attracted only rather few answers and those lacked strength. The twin policies of Gorbachev needed more secure definition and explanation. Candidates also needed to be more aware that at least three decades had passed from the death of Stalin to the access to power of Gorbachev. Many candidates wrote of Gorbachev as if he were Stalin's virtual successor, rectifying by his policies the ills of the Stalinist era, rather than the post-Stalinist Soviet society and economy.

Question 21

This received very few attempts, and those offered were generally poor and uncertain.

Section E

Africa and the Middle East

Question 22

This was the most popular question in this generally unpopular section. Answers to the first part were often reasonably though not sharply informed, with too many candidates seeking to sketch in far-off background, or develop too much on First World War background. In the last part, while Arab-Israeli tension and violence against the British were given some attention, rather fewer developed the role of the UNO, to which the mandatory power was responsible.

Questions 23, 24 and 25

There were extremely few attempts at these questions and those seen seriously lacked strength.

Question 26

This received rather more attempts, but was not well supported in factual material. The last part required closer attention than it usually received.

Section F

Asia

Question 27

This was a popular question and most candidates produced a reasonably balanced survey of Chinese history, 1921-35, in the first part, at times given in impressive detail; the focus on 'relations' was not always sharply held. The last part also received basically accurate responses, with better candidates able to justify the CCP - KMT tension by useful references to the approaches of each.

Question 28

Answers here were rather few. They tended to betray only a sketchy concept of Gandhi's career or of the reasons for the success of his salient policy.

Question 29

A minority of candidates attempted this question and generally did so with considerable authority, answers being well focused and well supported in all four areas.

Question 30

Again, a minority choice, but less well attempted, with basic material only in both parts and a failure to support answers with adequate scope or precision.

Question 31

This was a rather more popular question than the preceding three. It was unfortunately interpreted by some weaker candidates as a question on Russia (part **(b)** providing the excuse for diversion). But most attempts focused competently on each of the four areas, while also betraying some uncertainty in factual detail.

Conclusion

In general it might be said that with the exception of some distinctly successful answers to **Questions 27 and 29**, **Sections E and F** betrayed knowledge less well held than in the other sections of the Paper.