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## FOREWORD

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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)

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## GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 2158/01

Paper 1

### General comments

As there were only approximately one hundred candidates in this syllabus for the May/June examination 2004, any general comments are restricted in their utility. As in the November examination, for which the candidature is much larger, there was a wide spread of question choice, though again with **Section E** less well subscribed than others.

As also in November, the quality of the work varied considerably, though there was less evidence of excellent and moderate scripts and rather more evidence of poor ones. The best scripts presented material that was focused on the angle of the question and usefully supported by broad ranging and precisely rendered factual material. The poorer ones were either far too brief, with thin material and loose question focus or (though this was less frequent), of moderate length but with highly generalised or inaccurate material and a rather blurred focus on the questions. For good achievement in this examination, candidates need to be furnished with well understood factual material and need to present it strictly according to the angle and requirements of the questions set.

There were very few attempts at **Questions 5, 11, 15, 22, 23, and 25.**

### Comments on specific questions

#### **Section A**

##### *General problems*

#### **Question 1**

In this quite popular question many candidates dealt effectively with the challenges confronting the League in Manchuria and Abyssinia and distinguished between its responses in both areas. Only a minority, however, showed any knowledge of the Hoare-Laval plan.

#### **Question 2**

Only a minority of those who attempted this equally popular question were able to keep the direction of their answer focused on the 'party' and developed it instead generally on German history, too often taking the first part into irrelevance beyond 1932. In the second part there was often a failure to define sharply the particular post-1930 factors which led to increased support.

#### **Question 3**

This was also a popular choice in the section. Most presented a competent overview of strategies in 1939-40, but there was a tendency for supporting material to be weak and for the focus on 'German armed forces' to become blurred. Definitions of blitzkrieg in the second part often required better coherence and development.

#### **Question 4**

This was a less popular choice. Knowledge was often quite well held by those who attempted it, though some blurred the Yalta/Potsdam distinction. There was a tendency in the last part to over-emphasise the impact of Truman's succession, to the neglect of other factors weakening the cooperation during the time between the two conferences.

**Question 6**

While this was a popular choice, no adequate answer was seen to it. The first part was blandly attempted, with much of the material common to the whole of the twentieth century, or even earlier, and no candidate showed competence in defining specific post-1945 changes in any adequately sustained way. There were sometimes some thoughtful - though not always well developed points, made in the second part. Candidates ought not to attempt questions of this type unless they are furnished with adequately precise material to sustain an answer.

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

There were essentially two problems in the presentation of Mussolini's career in this popular question. An initially directed focus on his career tended often to drift from 1919 to a narrative of Italian history, while in other answers the early life of Mussolini was emphasised too heavily and at the expense of the more vital years just before 1922. Some answers went into irrelevance on the first part beyond 1922. The second part was usually quite well done, emphasis being given either to the initial ideas or to the post-1922 expression of fascism in Italy.

**Question 8**

Few gave a well rounded answer to this quite popular question. The last part was often the best attempted, with fair range and some depth on German initial dislike of Weimar. In the three earlier sections there was distinct paucity of knowledge on the Spartacists (some candidates just omitted **(a)** altogether) and while the effects of hyperinflation were often quite graphically put, its roots in the Ruhr occupation were less adequately described.

**Question 9**

This question did not attract many candidates and was generally rather poorly done by reason (usually) of lack of positive detail of the campaigns in Western Europe and (sometimes) by failure to deal with Western Europe in the time scale given. There were few developed answers to the last part. This question received less satisfactory answers than those to the comparable **Question 3**.

**Question 10**

Of the few attempts at this question, there was virtually no knowledge displayed of Spain after 1939. Civil War accounts were of mixed quality, but some betrayed fundamental uncertainty on that also.

**Section C***The Americas***Question 12**

This was the most popular question in **Section C**, and also the least well attempted in the section. There was widespread ignoring of the dates given in the first part and alluded to again in the second; much irrelevant post-1933 material was offered. Pursuit of isolationism by the USA often ended with references to the Versailles settlement and the League of Nations, while in the second part most candidates neglected the quite numerous instances of abandonment of isolationism by the USA during the Republican period.

**Question 13**

Relevance was less of a problem in the first part of this generally popular question. Most candidates gave an account of pre-Crash affluence as helpful background, the events of October 1929 and their impact. This last aspect - in some respects the most vital for the question's demands - did not receive sharp enough or full enough references. Attention to Hoover was more limited and some neglected that part altogether, while of those who did attempt it only a minority got beyond his basic pursuit of laissez-faire policies.

#### **Question 14**

Among the candidates attempting this equally popular question, some gave excellent accounts of Roosevelt's New Deal programme, broadly presented and with sharply observant points on the nature of the legislation. The second part was somewhat less successfully attempted and often got rather bland comment, though a number did look critically at the factual record of the New Deal and assessed its achievements in a usefully critical spirit.

#### **Question 16**

This question was not particularly popular and was generally very poorly done. In **(a)**, the Brown v Topeka case and the precise nature of what happened at Little Rock were not known. Part **(b)** was somewhat better done, but the nature and purpose of the bus boycott needed sharper attention. In **(c)**, the details of the Act were not known and it tended to be confused with the Voting Rights Act of the following year. Black Power as a concept was rarely adequately grasped in the last part. Altogether, it was one of the most disappointingly attempted questions in the whole paper.

#### **Section D**

##### *USSR and Eastern Europe*

#### **Question 17**

This was the most popular question in the section. Few candidates had difficulty in answering each of the three parts and scarcely any answer neglected to note that **(b)** was a reversal of **(a)**. But the degree of supporting material was very varied, with some candidates presenting sharply relevant points throughout and others more of a generalised survey.

#### **Question 18**

This was the second most popular question in the section. It revealed generally competent knowledge of the purges in **(a)** and in the last part, with some well informed candidates producing here answers of broad scope and useful depth. Parts **(b)** and **(c)** were less successfully attempted, with knowledge often too highly generalised in **(b)** (though some generality is acceptable in such a topic) and failing to focus on the concept of 'personality cult' in **(c)**.

#### **Question 19**

This was not a particularly popular question and of the four 'war' questions (**Questions 3, 9, 19 and 29**), it was the least frequently attempted. Part **(b)** was usually recognised, though supporting material was thin. Most candidates failed to recognise either **(a)** or **(c)**, sometimes confusing the latter for the Warsaw Pact. Attempts at the last part were weak.

#### **Questions 20 and 21**

Neither of these were popular questions and answers to them suggested very poorly held knowledge on Khrushchev's domestic policies and on the collapse of the Soviet Union. No candidate had sufficient knowledge to produce a competent answer to either question.

#### **Section E**

##### *Africa and the Middle East*

#### **Question 24**

There were a few attempts at this question. Most answers recognised the situation in the late 1970s, but were not furnished with sufficient information in either part to make a fully viable attempt at the question.

**Question 26**

Though also a minority question, it attracted more candidates than did any other question in **Section E**. Those who attempted it had at least a fair and at times a sound knowledge and understanding of what happened in the former Belgian Congo in the years 1960-65, and were able to make a purposeful if not a fully well developed attempt at the last part.

**Section F**

*Asia*

Though a more popular section than the preceding one, questions here were not attempted by many of the candidates; in general terms, all questions tended to receive about the same number of attempts.

**Question 27**

Knowledge was not firm enough and in most cases not disciplined enough in any area of this question. There was both poor structure to the answers and a failure to pinpoint precisely what each part signified.

**Question 28**

Parts (a) and (b) were somewhat better attempted than (c), where knowledge on the Act was distinctly weak. In the last part many developed an answer that described rather than explained Gandhi's approaches.

**Question 29**

Knowledge of the battle of Midway was very sketchy, if indeed in some cases it could be detected at all. Knowledge thereafter - at least until Hiroshima - was virtually non-existent.

**Question 30**

Answers got little further than bland comment on US aid and technological expertise. No rounded, supported or adequately developed answers were seen.

**Question 31**

While answers were somewhat better informed than answers to the previous questions in the section, acceptably precise and developed knowledge on the Cultural Revolution and its causes was lacking in all answers seen.