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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

A number of Centres presented candidates well equipped to tackle the demands of the examination; candidates who wrote answers that were focused, informed and purposeful, secured the top grades. There were perhaps rather more candidates this November than last November who were in the middle range, who produced competent work, but work lacking sharpness in both approach and content. However, there was still a substantial number of candidates whose work was very weak and who fell below Grade E. Answers here were characterised by brevity, insecurity and irrelevance; they were often poorly presented. Candidates need to be assured that to receive one of the grades A-E they must enter the examination well furnished with historical material and well practised in the skills needed to use that material to maximum effect in the answers to their chosen questions. No candidate is likely to secure a grade in the examination without serious preparation for it.

In the report on particular questions which follows, indication is given of the problem of irrelevance, a feature that led to impaired results for a number of candidates. It is vital that candidates read the wording of the question with great care, noting in particular the dates with which it is concerned and the angle of the question on the subject. Blanket answers, triggered by a few salient words in the question, are likely to lead to disaster. There was, sadly, much wasted effort on the part of some candidates who failed to appreciate what the demands of questions actually were.

There were very few attempts at **Questions 5, 15, 22, 25, 26** and **31**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

General problems

Question 1

Of the rather few candidates who attempted this question, there was often competent but not comprehensive understanding shown of the treaties of Sèvres and Lausanne, though some candidates, irrelevantly, wrote about the Treaty of Versailles. The second part was generally poorly done, few appreciating the specific reasons for Arab dissatisfaction with these treaties and concentrating instead on general dissatisfaction.

Question 2

This proved a popular question but unfortunately one that illustrates more effectively than almost any other the problem of irrelevance. This was usually in one of two forms. There was a tendency to write about Hitler's rise to power and domestic issues. There was also a tendency to ignore the dates and bring in the 1938 Anschluss, Czechoslovakia and Poland. In the second part, too many candidates asserted that the Versailles settlement had been totally destroyed by 1936, rather than giving a more measured judgement of its gradual erosion by that year.

Question 3

Some candidates wrote at too great length on the struggles of the French against the Vietminh, a matter which was background material only to this particular question. In considering the years 1964-73, the approach was often a blanket narrative rather than a focused description of US methods. The second part was usually rather better attempted, with attention given to events both in Vietnam and in the United States.

Question 4

This was a popular question and the most successfully attempted one in **Section A**. Accounts of the Cuban crisis were often well balanced from 1959 to October 1962, though not always with sharp enough focus on the practical play of high level diplomacy in October 1962 itself. Measurement was often quite well made in the second part, though it was only a minority who gave a fully competent width of view on the more relaxed circumstances of the 1960s, and linked these to the profound dangers of the events of October 1962.

Question 6

As ever, this type of question proves popular. But many who attempted it were not adequately enough equipped with precise knowledge to sustain either part of the question and their answers scored poorly. Others made more viable approaches, but there was a tendency in the first part to consider causes rather than the effects that were requested and in the second part, to consider what was being done to check the development rather than why the action was comparatively slight.

Section B

Western Europe

Question 7

While **(b)** was usually recognised and received often usefully informed and well rounded answers, the other three parts were usually poorly done. Few recognised in **(a)** that the occupation was not undertaken by Mussolini, while in **(c)** the 'Front' was equated with military endeavour rather than diplomatic alignment, and loosely muddled with the Axis and Abyssinia. The last part was better attempted by some candidates; while a degree of ideological alignment was purposefully suggested, few really got to grips with the alignment rooted in Germany's favourable response to Italy's Abyssinian ambitions.

Question 8

This was not a particularly popular question. A number completely missed the 'naval' angle of the question and wrote in general terms of the war. Those who were relevant in their focus, were often deficient in knowledge, which was particularly sparse in all parts of answers to this question.

Question 9

There continues to be muddle on the part of too many candidates between 'blockade' and 'wall', and some candidates were not helped here by either the useful juxtaposition or the dating. There also appears to be doubt about what the strategies were intended to achieve, many muddling both this and the objectives. Even the time scale confused some candidates, who asserted that the wall was removed rather than erected in 1961. The last part failed to receive answers that were adequately focused on Berlin and instead attracted general accounts of the nature of the Cold War. What was essentially a straightforward question too often received answers that were far too muddled.

Question 10

Only a minority attempted this question. Those who did so had a competent overall view of de Gaulle, but failed to develop their answers with sufficient support. The last part was weakly done.

Question 11

This question was only marginally more popular than **Question 10**. As with answers to that question, there was distinct room for a sharper approach and fuller support, but answers were marginally more effective and had reasonable balance, though with poor sustenance in the last part.

Section C

The Americas

Question 12

There were a number of well balanced and well rounded answers to this question in both its parts, showing well held knowledge of Prohibition as such and of the reasons for its introduction. However, a minority of candidates mistook the theme of the question totally and wrote generally about economic and social issues in the 1920s and 1930s. The term 'Prohibition' applied to the United States in this period is one which candidates are expected to recognise.

Question 13

Here also there were a number of competent and balanced analyses of the reasons for opposition to the New Deal, often well rooted in the practicalities of the impact of the programme. But there was a distinct minority who did not observe that it was 'opposition' to the New Deal which was the focus of the question and who wrote instead on what the New Deal provided for. Most candidates produced useful material on the last part, where possibility for irrelevance (as evidenced earlier) was distinctly slight.

Question 14

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan clearly dominate here and most candidates alluded with varying degrees of security to them. Only rather few dealt with other aspects of Truman's foreign policy, such as the closing stages of the Second World War earlier and the formation of NATO later. The second part was not very convincingly attempted in most cases, with inadequate scrutiny to events in UNO, in the USA and in Korea.

Question 16

Only a minority attempted this question. They often had a basically accurate overview, but just not enough material to sustain a competent answer in any area. The second part was especially weakly done.

Section D

USSR and Eastern Europe

Question 17

This was poorly attempted by the few candidates who took it on. Most were heavily reliant on the wording of the question itself, often getting little further than the two events named and showing very poor understanding of the former. Answers to the second part were limited.

Question 18

There was often a competent overview given in answers to this question, but there was a lack of supportive detail. More was often needed on the fundamental nature of the planned economy as well as on the particular foci of the various plans of the 1930s. While collectivisation of agriculture formed a part of the planned economy, some developed this to an extent that produced imbalance in the answer.

Question 19

Here also it was only a minority of candidates who furnished adequate support in their answers, though most produced a competent overview of the major campaigns. More detail on such features as the siege of Leningrad and of the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk as well as of the general nature of the campaigns in Russia would have been welcome.

Question 20

(a) was rather more effectively tackled than (b), where the generally equivocal relationship was not grasped by many candidates; in (a) there often needed to be firmer information on the Rising. The last part was in some respects the best attempted, with focus given to both circumstances in Eastern Europe as well as the international diplomatic scene.

Question 21

This was a minority choice and suggested only rather sketchy understanding of Glasnost and Perestroika, with little exemplification in the later 1980s in the USSR. Nothing very positive emerged in answers to the last part.

Section E

Africa and the Middle East

Question 23

This was a fairly popular question in which many candidates showed good overall understanding of the relationships between the named countries, usually though not always within the given time scale. But too often the angle was not from that of Egypt, as the question required. In the second part, there was often an unwillingness to place the Suez War in a broadly constructed international context.

Question 24

A minority choice and, with the exception of (a), suggestive of poorly held knowledge of the subject.

Section F

Asia

Question 27

A popular question which often showed good grasp of events in the 1930s in this connection, developed with better support on (a) than on (b). However, it was the last part that was the best attempted, with often quite usefully wide-ranging material given to explain Japan's aggression towards China.

Question 28

In this somewhat comparable question, detailed support was rather less forthcoming and the dates were not well observed, a number of candidates going back well before 1936 in their answers to the first part. A number of candidates betrayed uncertainty on the course and features of the civil war of 1945-49 in both parts, though some candidates had no such difficulty here.

Question 29

Date observance was very poor in the answers to this question. Many candidates failed to note that the question began in 1945 and Gandhi's campaigns before the war could be treated as background only. In fact, coverage of 1945-47 was very poor indeed and surprisingly so when these years are of so much significance in the achievement of independence. Answers to the second part were basically well orientated, but lacked supportive detail.

Question 30

The subject appeared not to be known in enough detail, descriptions being thinly based in the first part and explanations similarly in the second.