

HISTORY (WORLD AFFAIRS 1917-1991)

Paper 2158/01

Paper 1

General Comments

There were some very strong candidates this year. The work of such candidates was focused and precise, and was underlain by sound understanding of the subjects on which they answered questions. While there were a number of very weak scripts, in some of which candidates appeared not to recognise the subject matter of the questions at all, most of the remaining scripts attained more modest grades which, with closer observance of question requirements, might have achieved a better outcome.

It may be helpful to comment here on two features in this examination which contributed to weak achievement and which might have been improved by closer regard to what the questions were actually seeking. First, there is a tendency for some candidates to ignore the time frame in which questions are set, especially perhaps when there are a number of alternative time frames for the subject matter. Two examples are salutary here. **Question 6** was about the Cold War, but it was restricted to the two decades of the 1970s and 1980s: too many candidates neglected the time frame and wrote about the Cold War in earlier years, thereby in some instances sacrificing almost all their marks for that question. **Question 7** was about Hitler but it was restricted in (a) and (b) to the years 1929-38: too many candidates here (in a more popular question than **Question 6**) wrote about Hitler at some length before 1929, often virtually neglecting the years of 1929-32 for (a). Second, where questions are structured into specific parts prefaced by a letter, a number of candidates merge their material into one overall essay, with no indication of where the various parts, including the unlettered final part, commence. While it is often apparent in reading the essay where the various parts start, in a number of cases it is left unclear. Where a question is divided into parts, candidates should be mindful that the mark scheme allocates specific marks for each part and the parts should therefore emerge clearly from the candidate's writing.

On a practical matter, linked to the second point above, candidates should find it helpful to enter '(a)', '(b)' etc. into their answers and to indicate where the final, analytical parts of the answer begins by the omission of a line and suitable wording as the answer there commences. Such indication of where different parts start is of much help to the Examiner.

Comments on specific questions

There were very few attempts at **Questions 10, 11, 14(b), 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 31**.

Question 1

Many candidates who attempted this popular question were furnished with excellent information on the terms of the Paris peace treaties and used this to good effect; weaker candidates were unspecific in their military or territorial references and hence fared less well. Some answers were imbalanced by over-lengthy introductions. The final part attracted some good and thoughtful work on the part of quite a number of candidates, who explored the various defects of the treaties with good purpose, underlain by sound understanding.

Question 2

This was a distinctly less popular question and performance was mixed and not always well balanced. With reference to the point made in this respect in the General Comments above, a number neglected the time frame of 1934-39. Material tended to be more secure on (a), while many candidates in (b) neglected all but the Nazi-Soviet pact and in (c) presented only sparse material. Most had a reasonable attempt at the last part, with a number of excellent responses here, illustrating well the 'changing relationship'.

Question 3

Candidates were generally better informed on (a) and (c) than on (b). In (a) the military attacks were usually dealt with competently, but there was less than there might have been on Pétain and the political situation in France. In (c) there was sometimes need for a better context for the battle. It was surprising that the approach to (b) was often uncertain and at times muddled; Monte Cassino received only one mention in all the attempts at this question, while there was also uncertainty on the status of German and Italian forces. The last part received for the most part answers that were far too generalised, with specific observations and attempts at measurement being thin.

Question 4

This UNO question was more effectively attempted than similar UNO questions in some past papers. **Part (a)** was well answered by almost all candidates who attempted the question, most of whom secured near to, or the maximum for this part. There was less certainty on (b), though a number of candidates did give balanced accounts here, suitably balanced across the 40 plus years. Answers to the last part were often replete with practical references to specific work undertaken by UN agencies; there was a welcome absence here of the generality that this type of question can sometimes elicit.

Question 5

It was perhaps inevitable that (c) would attract more attention than the earlier parts and for many candidates it was this and the final part that evoked their best achievement in this question. **Part (a)** was the weakest attempted and more might have been expected on the distinguishing features of this particular occupation, while (b) was somewhat better informed.

Question 6

The problem of irrelevance of period in this question has been alluded to in the General Comments above; as a result of such faulty approach, marks were inevitably very low in some cases. Those who did focus correctly on the 1970s and 1980s often produced well-balanced and well-informed responses that took the Examiner effectively through a changing diplomatic scene, developed on a broad global canvas. There were also thoughtful responses to the last part, supported by practical references.

Question 7

Allusion has been made to this question also in the General Comments above; faulty time references made for imbalanced answers, though in this question the irrelevance had often less serious consequences than in **Question 6**. However, other defects were also apparent in answers. Material was often far too general, more so in (a) than in (b), with vague allusions to oratorical skill and the violence of supporters, to the neglect of more vital political points. Another tendency was for answers to drift into the realm of foreign affairs, a subject of marginal relevance in a question which contains three clear indications that it is internal affairs that are required here. Such candidates further confused the 'opposition' reference in the final part as foreign rather than internal opposition. In general, this popular question received disappointing responses.

Question 8

This more modestly popular question also received rather disappointing results, not here through lack of relevance or focus, but through lack of knowledge. Answers to (a) were thin and uncertain, with only a minority of candidates able to convey accurately the role of Matteotti and his murder. More disappointing were answers to (b), where most candidates clearly did not know what the corporate state was; some just omitted this part. **Part (c)** received the best answers of these parts, but only a minority saw the pacts in full Italian context. Answers to the last part were also weak, with few candidates able to specify the precise circumstances on 1943, sometimes anticipating 1945 or casting around in allusions to the general debility of the regime by this stage.

Question 9

While not a markedly popular question, there were more attempts than usual at this one focused on the Spanish Civil War. Many had good political material for (a) and good military references for (b). There were informed answers to the last part, with often an effective balancing up of elements, thereby responding to the 'to what extent' request.

Question 12

This was a very popular question in which most candidates recognised the subject matter and produced competent but not sharply developed responses. Most set the context suitably for (a) and most also developed issues concerning maritime engagements as a causal factor; only the better alluded to the Zimmermann telegram and its vital significance. In (b), Wilson's Fourteen Points and commitment to the League ideal were known, but could have had a firmer setting if their full significance was to be detected. There was plenty to go for in argument on the last part, and better candidates made for it, but a number blandly asserted that isolationism was re-established and remained.

Question 13

To an extent the start of this Question, as **part (a)** of **Question 4**, tended to open the flood gates of a narrative account. Many responses here were broad in scope and detailed in content, suggesting well held knowledge of New Deal legislation; less satisfactory responses tended to list items of legislation with little indication of their purpose, always a trap candidates should seek to avoid in handling a legislative or constitutional package such as this. There were good responses to the last part, suggestive of an understanding of the issues of concern in the 1930s in the USA.

Question 14 (a)

Most responses to this quite popular question were well focused on its various requirements, but somewhat deficient in adequate supportive material. In (i), for example, the rise to power of Castro was often given rather scant practical attention by contrast with the deficiencies of Batista. In (ii), most knew of the general trend of his policies, but were not furnished with sharp or well-balanced material. An exception was one Centre that provided sound material right up to 1991. Again in the last part, references could have been more sharply based, arising partly from (ii), and it was surprising that quite a few omitted here any reference to the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Question 15

This was not a very popular question, but such answers as there were produced a balanced survey of the two decades, with reasonable but not sharp focus on 'the struggle'. Surprising omissions in some answers were the Brown v. Topeka case and the later role of Black Power. Answers to the last part had direction, but lacked strength of support.

Question 17

The subject matter of this popular question was recognised by almost all candidates, but practical support could have been stronger in all areas. Only a few mistook October for February in (a), but there tended to be rather too much build-up, relevant though that was, to the events of October, to the neglect of what happened then. While Brest-Litovsk was certainly known, candidates tended to deal more effectively with its consequences than with what it practically provided for. Again, most (but not all) recognised what the New Economic Policy was, but might have developed its nature and significance rather more fully. The last part was possibly the least well attempted in this Question, with variable knowledge shown of the conflicting claims to the succession.

Question 18

Again there was good recognition and rather more effective support in this almost equally popular question in the section. Information was basically competent in (a) and (b) but could develop further on the nature of the policies and how they were enforced and practised. It was good that most candidates saw that (c) was wider than the purges, though in some cases the latter might have had fuller attention. Many balanced their material well in the last part, arguing that the planned economy yielded benefits, while the purges sapped at vital manpower.

Question 19

This was not a particularly popular question and while most answers to it had direction, they tended to lack firm enough support to convince of really good understanding. Possibly the least well supported part was (a), with sketchy references developed on a rather restricted background. In (b) the situations in general were understood, but the focus on the methods of overcoming opposition was less strong. There were a number of informed attempts at the last part, setting the satellite states in good context.

Question 26

This was the most popular question in **Section E**, but it did not attract a large number of responses. Answers showed good recognition of the subject matter, but were lacking in really sharp support at almost all points. There were some good responses to the last part, which effectively set South Africa in the global context of the 1980s. Almost all answers needed to go further in support.

Question 27

This was a popular question that required rather stronger support in all its various parts. **Part (a)** tended to be too narrowly seen, much concentration being given on the efforts to persuade Chiang Kai-shek to take the Japanese threat more seriously than the Communist one, while neglecting practical details of the military struggles over a period of fourteen years. While answers to (b) were good in comparing the two sides in the Civil War, they were often scant here of military detail. With regard to the comments made above under General Comments, in the last part some answers tended to go on beyond the 1950s, while the focus on 'consolidate' needed to be stronger and better supported in many cases.

Question 28

This was not a strongly popular question. Answers were competent in most cases, but needed rather firmer support fully to convince of understanding. Context in (a) tended to be narrow; the use of the nuclear weapons needed to be set against what preceded their use as well as what followed. Both (b) and (c) required firmer references to the circumstances in Japan, though direction of answers was usually helpful. More could have been made of the last part in most cases, with its very broad time frame.

Question 29

Most did recognise that the campaigns of the 1940s were very different in style to the earlier campaigns of Gandhi, but answers both on (a) and (b) could have been more precisely furnished with supportive references. Many of the candidates who provided answers to (c) and the last part, did so with excellent scope and information, which was well presented.

Question 30

This broadly based question on more recent Chinese history was popular and generally well attempted. **Parts (a), (b) and (c)** each received generally accurate and relevant material, with some faulty time-sequencing of information in (b) and rather thin support at times in (c). While answers to the last part could have been broader in scope, many did adduce useful and relevant points on Sino-Soviet relations over a quite lengthy period.