

HISTORY

Paper 2158/01

World Affairs Since 1919

General comments

Slightly more than one hundred candidates presented work in this examination. In general terms, the quality of the work was good and rather better than in recent examinations in the subject, both in June and November. Many answers were characterised by relevance to the terms of the questions as set, by completeness of approach to all parts of the questions and, in particular, by the marshalling of historical material with precision and accuracy, whether it be on the earlier narrative part of the questions, or on the later analytical part. Such candidates often helped themselves towards good achievement by virtue of the coherence of their answers and their willingness to follow through the various stages of the questions, so that it was apparent where one part ended and another part commenced. The use of the sub-letters, as used in the questions, should be used by the candidate in the answers.

Inevitably there were scripts of less satisfactory standard. These were characterised by both uncertainty of approach to the questions and by loose, generalised or at worst non-existent knowledge of the topic under consideration. Others diminished their chances by wasting time on irrelevance of period (in particular) and also at times of subject matter.

Comments on specific questions

While there was a wide spread of question attempts, there were very few attempts at **Questions 5, 16, 19, 24, 26, 30 and 31**. **Sections E and F** remain less popular than the earlier sections.

Question 1

This was a popular question and often well done. Part **(a)** presented few difficulties to candidates and many wrote with commendable knowledge, detail and completeness on Germany's treatment, though sometimes trespassing beyond Europe in doing so. Part **(b)** was less well attempted, with many candidates lacking information on the treaties of St Germain and Trianon and suggesting a faulty grasp of central European geography. The analytical last part was often attempted in rounded style, though with the emphasis more on Germany than Austria-Hungary.

Question 2

None of the three narrative parts presented any real difficulty to the candidates and answers were generally well informed. This was especially so in (a), though in (b) candidates were inclined to write with less precision and some omitted both Munich and the invasion in spring 1939; in (c) better candidates saw both the ideological incompatibility as well as the more immediate objectives in defeating Poland. The last part was often well argued, perceptive candidates indicating the balance between Nazi aggression and Western appeasement.

Question 3

While a less popular question, those who attempted it often wrote well on the period both before and during the Korean War, with good context given both in South-East Asia and in the tensions of the Cold War. While accounts of the war were often sound, there was a surprising tendency to ignore the role of the UNO in it. The last part, however, was only thinly attempted in almost all cases.

Question 4

The strength of most answers to this quite popular question lay in the recounting of the play of events leading to the crisis itself in October 1962. The earlier background period of the 1960s was less well charted and the increasing alienation from the USA and friendship with the USSR was not given the weight it deserved. Responses to the last part were surprisingly thin in what is a well covered area.

Question 6

There were rather few answers to this question, though those who attempted it often gave answers of commendable scope, identifying agencies by name and purpose. A number mistook the term 'specialised agencies' and instead wrote about the basic UNO structure. Lack of full commitment and financial troubles figured prominently in the last part, though few developed this part with security.

Question 7

The lettered sub-parts were rather variably attempted. Most in (a) indicated the Duce's need for Roman Catholic support and developed this into a competent account of the Lateran treaties, though surprisingly some did not get that far. In (b) there was a distinct tendency not to write about the Italian economy in the fascist period, but instead to outline economic troubles, often pre-existing ones; there are distinct features to fascist economic policy which should be known. Part (c) was often competently answered, better candidates getting further than Abyssinia. Answers to the last part were mixed. Some wrote with authority on Mussolini's range of methods, while other diverted to a small scale version of his rise to power.

Question 8

This was a popular question that was often quite well attempted. Some, however, found it difficult to get a good balance of the years 1919-33, with rather too much attention to early opposition of various kinds and too little to such features as the basic constitutional arrangements for Weimar and the play of practical politics in the mid-1920s. A number neglected to observe that the last part was concerned with the reasons for Hitler's securing of power and not his means of consolidating it; an analysis of his mode of appeal as well as practical circumstances was the essential bedrock of an answer here.

Question 9

There were rather few attempts at this question and answers were not generally well rounded on the areas and periods requested. There were surprising omissions in both; Monte Cassino and the Ardennes offensive were often missed. Answers to the last part suggested poor knowledge of air attacks in the closing stages of the war.

Question 10

There were a few unsuccessful attempts at this question. The choices were invariably Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher, though on neither prime minister was where adequate knowledge displayed. Both tended to be seen in loose terms as 'strong' characters, but little evidence adduced to show why.

Question 11

Just a few responses here also, though generally more successful than answers to **Question 10**. Some presented a competent and fairly balanced survey of the Fourth Republic. The importance of Algeria was less well emphasised than it deserved in the demise of one republic and the emergence of the other.

Question 12

The first three questions in **Section C** were the most popular, with **Question 13** being the one that elicited the best answers here. The disappointing feature of **Question 12** was the unwillingness of candidates to write about government policies, but instead to divert to aspects of social history in the USA of the 1920s. The last part was better attempted than the first, with most candidates balancing Hoover's weaknesses with Roosevelt's strengths in a viable early 1930s context.

Question 13

There were some informed accounts from many candidates of the legislation of the New Deal, but better among them put this into effective context by indicating its practical importance in the USA. The answers were short weight, going only for the more obvious such as banks, TVA and CCC. The last part was usually well done, with a range of criticisms offered; there was rather little mention of the leading opponents themselves and the views they in particular advanced.

Question 14

Like **Question 12**, this was more disappointing. Like the other question, it required a knowledge of policy, this time foreign, and it was not forthcoming. Often the last part on modification was loosely woven into the first, with no real distinction of approach indicated by the candidate. Answers often started with rejection of the League of Nations, but then petered out, with minimal reference to such features as trade and immigration.

Question 15

This was distinctly less popular than the previous three questions and generally not well attempted. There were some answers about these topics in general, without any reference to the civil rights focus of the question. Such salient issues as Montgomery, Brown v Topeka, and the 1964 Civil Rights Act made only rare appearances.

Question 17

This was not a particularly popular question. Some candidates answered with reasonable scope and knowledge on (a) and the last part, but the Russo-Polish War appeared not to be known.

Question 18

This was more popular and generally quite well attempted. Knowledge was often competent in (a), though candidates failed to get the full potential from the question by neglecting the underlying concept of the planned economy and its methods, in favour of a survey of individual plan objectives. Collectivisation accounts tended to be developed with little reference to the hardship and famine the policy engendered. The last part got very variable answers, with some willing to make a balanced assessment and producing at least some evidence in support of their assertions.

Question 20

There were only a few attempts at this question. Parts **(a)** and **(b)** were the more successfully attempted, with quite knowledgeable accounts written; there were also some sensibly directed attempts at the last part. The weak area was (c), which appeared to be much less well known.

Question 21

It was surprising there were not more attempts at this question, or attempts that were rather more successful. Gorbachev was viewed as a welcome innovation in Soviet approaches, but few were able to specify what he actually did in both domestic and foreign policies. Glasnost and Perestroika received only rare allusion and there was little practical knowledge shown of relations with other countries. Generality also surrounded the last part, on the collapse of 1991.

Question 22

Another less popular question. The circumstances and terms of the two treaties appeared to be little known, except generally. Part **(b)** elicited almost no knowledge at all and few seemed to know of the campaigns of Kemal that brought it about. To an extent, knowledge of Kemal was better in the last part, though even here it was put far too loosely.

Question 23

The question with its focus in two decades provided opportunity to develop Israel's foreign relations in the confines of two major wars, yet few responded to that width of approach and answers were confined to the wars of 1956 and 1967 and even here the degree of practical support and development was unimpressive. A number went back to 1948 and forward to 1973. The last part, where some of the events of 1948 might have got allusion, was poorly done.

Question 25

This was a popular question, very variably attempted. All knew something on each part, yet precision in treating the nature and scope of apartheid was usually absent; nor was opposition to it highlighted with precise references. In the last part, the play of events on the international field was side-lined for attention to internal events as the sole reason for apartheid's collapse.

Question 27

Of the three lettered parts, only (c) was answered with assurance and even there the detail and location was hazy at times. The May Fourth Movement appears not to be known and there were many erroneous responses to (a); the Northern Expedition fared only marginally more favourably. The last part was perhaps the more successful part of the question, with balanced and informed if not always sharply precise responses.

Question 28

The years 1919-41 were only rather generally covered, with minimal attention to the concept of nationalism and a lack of precision in charting the conquests. It was surprising that even the events of 1939-41, leading up to Pearl Harbour, were not well known. Answers to the last part were sometimes confined to the use of the atomic bomb, events from Midway being much less well known.

Question 29

Few kept well or in an informed manner to the years 1935-47. The 1935 Government of India Act was the clear starting point, but appeared not well known. Events of the 1940s were more secure, but there was again weakness on the immediate run-up to the independence and partition in 1947. The last part, leading to the emergence of Bangladesh (a point only a few got) was not well done.