

HISTORY (WORLD AFFAIRS SINCE 1919)

Paper 2158/01

Paper 1

General comments

As in previous examinations in this syllabus, there was marked variation of quality. A good proportion of the candidates presented work that went well into the Grade A category, but there was also a good proportion that presented work that could not be classified at all and which in some cases scored very low marks.

The work of the better candidates was characterised essentially by well held knowledge, supported by a good sense of understanding. This was conveyed in well structured, well angled and well supported answers that scored highly as a consequence. There was also orderly layout and development of the answers along the lines indicated by the set questions. The work of those candidates who could not be classified with a grade in this examination was at times incoherent, merely copying out phrases from the paper and linking them together with no purpose. Others who were weak did make a viable attempt at the set questions, but were held back by paucity of knowledge and/or weak understanding of it. Such candidates might therefore direct an answer in a reasonably purposeful way, but were unable to sustain it with strength of factual support or understanding. Candidates need to be assured that for success in this examination they must be prepared with well held knowledge of twentieth-century world history if they are to achieve the success they seek. Additionally, they must be willing to deploy that knowledge with good judgement in the light of question requirements.

It is noteworthy that there was a disappointingly restricted choice made by candidates in **Section B**, Western Europe. **Question 7** was popular, but there were very few attempts at any of the other four questions in the Section.

It is encouraging that most candidates present their work in accordance with the structure of each question, indicating any sub-letters for parts of questions and making clear where they are commencing the final part.

Comments on specific questions

There were very few attempts at **Questions 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31**. As indicated above, **Section B** attracted a restricted choice and **Sections E** and **F** remain less popular than the earlier sections.

Question 1

Most candidates were able to give a competent and informed response to (a), indicating in the better answers how the terms related to 'status and power'. In (b), Locarno was less well known and in a number of cases confused with the monetary aid that Germany secured in the 1920s. The last part often produced well rounded answers, covering a range of ways in which there was 'improvement'.

Question 2

Answers here were less well informed than in **Question 1**, though this question was also a popular one. There was frequent disregard of the dates 1919-25, with a tendency to develop the nature of Mussolini's regime in the 1920s and 1930s generally, rather than to focus on the increasing power he wielded in these earlier years. There was also rather disappointing analysis of the reasons for his success, many candidates either ignoring this part or recovering earlier ground, rather than looking at the roots of his support.

Question 3

The first part, on organisation and structure, was well known and competent accounts were not rare. Accounts of the League's work in the 1920s were sometimes both balanced and informed, but too often candidates merely wrote of its philanthropic work and ignored its intervention in particular trouble-spots. There was often too general an approach to the last part, with many candidates ignoring the specific features of the crises in Manchuria and Abyssinia that were fundamental to the League's decline by 1936.

Question 4

This was a less popular question than the previous three in this generally popular section. There were often competent accounts of 1939 and 1940, but there was less security on the events of 1941 which were needed for a well rounded answer to the first part; it was surprising that many candidates neglected the invasion of the Soviet Union. Answers to the last part were varied in quality, but it was encouraging to find a number that developed an analysis on a broad canvas, with a useful variety of references.

Question 5

Answers were stronger on the US intervention than on the earlier French intervention; indeed, many candidates completely ignored the involvement of France in Vietnam. Throughout, detail was not strong and hence marks sometimes did not rise high. Many indicated anti-war sentiment and protest as a salient reason in the last part, but did not develop the theme broadly enough, with specific references to Vietnam, as well as to events elsewhere.

Question 7

Part (c) was distinctly the best attempted of the three early parts, with well sustained references to both women and children. Part (a) secured good responses from some, but others wrote loosely of Nazi distaste for Christianity, while others confused Christianity with Judaism. Part (b) was the least well sustained. Though not very thoroughly supported on either side, the last part did attract some viably considered responses.

Question 12

Answers here were generally weak, many failing to detect the essential 'intervention' of Wilson and 'isolation' of his Republican successors, and hence failing also to sustain such approaches with adequate factual references. In the last part, a number did get at features of foreign policy that suggested isolation was not absolute, but they were the minority.

Question 13

Of all the questions in the paper, **Question 13** produced the most degree of confusing overlap in candidates' work between the two elements in the first part. Thus, material that properly belonged to the 'impact' was presented earlier as leading to the Crash. There was a particular lack of clarity on the first part. Later, a similar trend was often apparent, with candidates writing about the New Deal in practice, rather than its prospect in the context of the presidential election campaign.

Question 14

There were not many attempts at this question and the achievement was generally only modest. Most candidates recognised these two features in US history, but were unable to develop them with secure knowledge or to make a really helpful attempt at the last part.

Question 17

There was very wide variety of achievement in the answers to this question. Some clearly knew what (a) and (b) were and developed answers with authority, continuing in the same mode in the analytical last part. But there was much confusion on these issues, some candidates equating them to the economic initiatives of Stalin later.

Question 18

There was distinct strength and much knowledge given in answer to (b), but the rest of the question generally rather weak responses. There was widespread uncertainty in (a), in spite of this being a well known feature of Stalin's rule. Answers to (c) were better directed, with some helpful comment on the deleterious impact of the purges in this connection, balanced with the patriotism engendered by the war. Most answers in the last part produced a balance of approach, but disappointing substance in references.

Question 20

Khrushchev questions are often popular, but this one attracted only rather few takers. Nor was it well informed or developed in any of its parts, few availing themselves of the opportunity to extend the last part into the realm of foreign affairs.

Question 22

Though this also attracted only a minority of candidates, it was reasonably well sustained in many cases. Some candidates got to grips well with the issues at the end of the First World War (though weaker ones confused this with the end of the Second) and gave a modest tracing of events to the year 1945. It was surprising that the last part was less well attempted than the first, often being quite seriously under-developed.

Question 23

Again something of a minority question. Candidates were not well informed on domestic approaches, but some took the opportunity of the comparative breadth of the question to develop themes of foreign policy quite ably. There were some purposeful, though usually not well sustained, responses to the last part.

Question 27

There was usually an acceptable balance achieved within the years 1927-49 and information on them from a number of candidates was good; those who were less replete with accurate information were inclined, rather surprisingly, to omit sustained reference to the years 1945-49. The last part was often limited to the theme of peasant support, while opportunities of considering economic, strategic and diplomatic factors that underlay the success of the communists were missed.

Question 30

Part (b) and (c) were in almost all cases recognised and answers were sometimes well informed with detail on them. But Part (a) appeared not to be known by a number of candidates, who tended to anticipate in their responses the Hundred Flowers. There were usually purposeful responses to the last part, though the political context of the Cultural Revolution's initiation could have been better supported.