

HISTORY

<p>Paper 9389/11 Document Question</p>
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Key Messages

- To achieve the best results, candidates must read the sources with great care. It is advisable to read them at least twice, the first time for general meaning, the second for more specific points. They can add notes to the extracts on the examination paper to help them do so.
- For the part **(a)** question, candidates need to identify **both** similarities **and** differences between the two sources. Again, making notes on the question paper should help to highlight points of similarity and difference. In terms of the actual written answer, it is essential to quote brief extracts from the two sources to provide evidence of similarities and differences.
- For the part **(b)** question, candidates have three main tasks: firstly, to decide which source(s) support the hypothesis and which challenge it; secondly, to evaluate the sources to decide on their reliability; thirdly, to write a conclusion which uses the evaluated sources to answer the question.
- To achieve the highest levels in both **(a)** and **(b)**, some source evaluation is essential. Two points need to be made here. Firstly, all sources are unreliable to some degree or other. They all have their own point of view. Secondly, source evaluation is determined by specific evidence. It is not enough to say that a source is reliable because it is a primary source. Evidence should be drawn from the topic being studied, perhaps from contextual knowledge, perhaps from comparing the content of one source with that of the others.

General Comments

- The number of candidates taking this examination was much greater than in the summer of 2014. The overall standard of the entry was higher than a year before. Candidates' answers were more focused. This is a credit to both candidates and their teachers. Teachers have used various training opportunities as well as past question papers now available to provide their candidates with much useful guidance and practice. As a result, candidates have a much better idea of what is expected of them.
- Rubric infringements were rare. Some misread the part **(b)** question as requiring a study of Sources A and D only. The vast majority, however, were aware that they had to consider all four sources when answering the second part of the question.
- The single biggest improvement which candidates could make is to avoid simply describing what the sources say or depict. This trait is especially common when it comes to cartoons. The main features of the cartoon of Lincoln in **Section B** were explained at great length. Doing so takes valuable time which could be much better used by **(a)** saying which side of the argument the source supports and **(b)** how reliable the source might be. The message must be: analyse and evaluate rather than describe and explain.
- Finally, there are some specific points to be made about basic knowledge which candidates need to have when studying each of the three topics which this paper contains.
 - **Liberalism and Nationalism in Italy and Germany, 1848–1871**

Candidates need to know the political geography of both regions, i.e. the main states and key cities of both Italy and Germany and where they are located. They also need to know the main features of liberalism and nationalism and how they differ. Finally, they need some idea of the broad distinctions between left and right: the left wishes for great change in the name of equality and/or liberty, the right opposes change in the name of the existing social and political order.

○ **The Origins of the Civil War, 1846–1861**

Candidates need to know the political geography of the USA at the time, i.e. states and territories and how they divided North and South. They also need to know the main features of the US system of government, i.e. federal with certain powers belonging to the states and separation of powers at the federal level. Finally, they need to know which region key politicians are from and which political party they belong to.

○ **The Search for International Peace and Security, 1919–1945**

Candidates need to know the broad distinctions between left and right and how various political beliefs fitted onto that left-right spectrum: from left to right, communism, socialism, liberalism, conservatism, fascism. They also need to know the difference between totalitarian dictatorship and liberal democracy and which states were dictatorships, which democracies.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A, European Option: The 1848 Revolutions in Germany

Question 1(a)

To what extent do Sources A and B agree on what the aims of the reformers in Germany should be?

Most candidates were able to identify similarities and differences. Both sources identify liberal demands such as freedom of the press. They also state the need to save money spent on armed forces. Source B, however, focuses more on nationalist aims, wanting an elected national assembly without delay. Source A has a nationalist aspect to it but it is more implicit. The Diet which Source A criticises is the German Diet set up in 1815. The liberals are critical of the failure of the 1815 parliament, which implies they want some national unity as well.

Many candidates fail to distinguish between liberalism and nationalism. In studying the revolutions of 1848–49, whether in Germany or Italy, it is vital that they can do so. Though interrelated, the two concepts are different. In addition, some saw the Declaration of Heidelberg as being drafted by government officials rather than elected representatives, despite a statement in the first sentence of Source B that the 51 men were from state assemblies and thus representatives, not officials. This mistaken deduction by some candidates was linked with the Declaration being made after the news of the revolution in Paris. Thus candidates argued Source B was a government source drawn up as a result of fear of what the French effect might be. This interpretation was the exact opposite of reality. The Declaration of Heidelberg was drawn up by liberals enthused by the French Revolution, not alarmed by it.

Question 1(b)

‘Nationalism was the principal cause of the revolutions in Germany in 1848.’ How far do Sources A to D support this view?

When it came to analysis, identifying whether the sources were for or against the hypothesis, this was usually well answered. Source C is the strongest support for the assertion, Source D the strongest against. Sources A and B could be interpreted either way, depending on which part of the sources were used as evidence. When it came to evaluating the sources, making a judgement as to their reliability, some candidates made some valid points, usually based on the provenance of Sources C and D. Source C, a nationalist source, comes from a prince who ruled a small part of Germany. If the German nation did unite, his rule would be swept away. So if he argues for nationalism, German national feeling must be strong. Source C is reliable evidence of the strength of nationalism. Many saw Source D as evidence of national feeling. They argued that an aristocrat expressing sympathy for workers shows a degree of unity. The sympathy, however, is across classes in Silesia rather than across peoples in Germany. Source D argues that the causes of the revolutions were economic rather than political, i.e. national. This social solidarity is also a bit of a surprise. Candidates then need to make some kind of judgement as to which of these sources is more convincing. If they have time, the other sources need some evaluation as well.

Section B, American Option: The Republican Party in 1860.

Question 2(a)

Compare and contrast Sources A and D as evidence about the process of drawing up the Republican Party's national platform at its 1860 convention.

Most, but not all candidates, knew what a party platform was; in some parts of the world it would be called a party manifesto, a statement of proposed policies to win votes in a forthcoming election. Most were able to identify both similarities and differences, the roles of John A Kasson and Horace Greeley being the obvious focus for relevant answers. Whether the process led to a positive outcome for the Republican Party was also judged to be relevant, Source A seeing it as a great success, Source D being less positive. The need to read sources with great care is shown by the false contrast that was sometimes made between the 'untiring' efforts mentioned in Source A and the 'exhausted' efforts mentioned in Source B. The person whose efforts were untiring was John Kasson, while the exhausted men of Source B were the three who left John Kasson to complete the work. The two terms, opposite in meaning, in fact show a key similarity between the two sources.

Question 2(b)

'The Republican Party in 1860 was deeply divided.' How far do Sources A to D support this view?

Sources A and C provided the strongest evidence on either side of the argument, as most candidates understood. Source A was from Greeley, obviously partisan, as shown by provenance and cross-referencing to Source C. Source C was from a New York newspaper which was a competitor with Greeley's *Tribune*. Some candidates did make this point in their evaluation, using it to argue that Source C, the main support for the hypothesis, was not very reliable. This kind of evaluation is exactly what is needed to ensure answers are awarded higher level marks. Many also argued that the cartoon in Source B was evidence of deep divisions, mainly because both Lincoln and Greeley use the word 'split'. However, the cartoon can be interpreted as showing the opposite. The platform is being carried by two very contrasting individuals but they are united in that task. Greeley is optimistic. Though Lincoln says that the platform is 'the hardest stick I ever straddled', at least the platform gives him some support. And the title of the cartoon, 'The Rail Candidate', makes no mention of divisions or splits. The cartoon's message is ambiguous. The cartoonist has made effective use of Lincoln's early working life in the West, an aspect which, if anything, was an electoral asset in 1860. The cartoon can be evaluated by comparing Greeley's position in the cartoon with his position as described by the other three sources. Greeley is a newspaper editor (Source B) and a leading Republican (Sources A and D) with ambitions of high office (Source C). His statement in the cartoon, imagined by the artist, is far from reliable.

On the matter of sources, it is important to note that the cartoon was most unlikely to have been published in a newspaper. The print technology of the time did not allow pages of print to be combined with photographs or drawings. There were publications which did consist mainly of drawings but they were usually called *Illustrated News* of some kind to highlight the contrast with print-based newspapers. Drawings had to be reproduced as lithographs, which were printed in relatively small numbers and often available to buy rather than be viewed by masses of newspaper readers. They were meant to be a commentary on events which entertained and illuminated rather than shocked or indoctrinated. Anything too provocative might upset viewers and prospective purchasers. Source B illustrates the situation of Lincoln and the Republican Party in 1860 in an entertaining and effective way. It shows how difficult it was for the Party to be united but that it did remain united. It is probably the least partisan of the four sources.

Section C, International Option: Germany and The League of Nations

Question 3(a)

Compare and contrast the views expressed about the League of Nations by Hitler in Source A and Stresemann in Source D.

While candidates were able to identify the differences of views, they often struggled to identify similarities. They were able to contrast Hitler's hostility towards the League with Stresemann's acceptance of the organisation. The sources were similar because their authors accepted the existence of the League, which is significant given that the League was a new and controversial body. The two authors were German nationalists and right-wing politicians, though Source A came from the extreme right, Source D from the

moderate right. As some candidates mentioned, both sources also refer to God, though they differ completely in how God relates to the League and international relations.

Question 3(b)

How far do Sources A to D support the view that it was not in Germany's interests to join the League of Nations?

Candidates often read the hypothesis as reading 'Germany was not interested in joining the League of Nations', which was further interpreted as 'the German people were not interested in joining'. This enabled them to argue that both Sources B and C supported the hypothesis. 'German interests' are not the same as 'Germany – or the German people – was not interested in joining the League'. In fact, Sources B and C do challenge the hypothesis. Source B actually refers to the 'interests of ... Germany', which it argues would be best served by Germany joining the League. Source C argues that Germany needs to join the League, which must mean accepting the Treaty of Versailles. Both sources were written in the year after the hyper-inflation of 1923, which illustrated the harm done to German interests by its opposition to the post-war settlement. Hitler, in Source A, makes no explicit comment about Germany joining the League. However, the extract is taken from a speech he made in early 1923, the year of the Beer Hall Putsch and just three years after the League's formation. From this and from contextual knowledge, it can be deduced that Hitler would support the assertion: Germany, as a powerful state, should not be bound by the League. Source D was perhaps the easiest source to evaluate. Stresemann is the German Foreign Secretary making a speech to mark, to justify Germany joining the League. He is bound to say that doing so was in Germany's interests. He would give only one side of the argument. In helping to decide whether joining the League was in Germany's interests, Source D is far from reliable.

HISTORY

Paper 9389/12
Document Question

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- Rubric infringements were rare. Some misread the part **(b)** question as requiring a study of Sources A and D only. The vast majority, however, were aware that they had to consider all four sources when answering the second question.
- The single biggest improvement which candidates could make is to avoid simply describing what the sources say or depict. This trait is especially common when it comes to cartoons. The main features of the cartoon entitled Southern Chivalry in **Section B** were described, often at great length. Doing so takes valuable time which could be much better used by **(a)** saying which side of the argument the source supports and **(b)** how reliable the source might be. The message must be: analyse and evaluate rather than describe and explain.
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Comments on Specific Questions

Section A, European Option: Problems facing Italian nationalism

Question 1(a)

To what extent do Sources A and B agree about the principal problems facing those who wished for a united Italy?

Source A is written by an Italian diplomat to a foreign head of state, Source B by an unidentified French writer to himself. The author is the Romantic writer Stendhal. A journal is a daily record, and could be either a diary or a newspaper, could be either private or public. In this case, Stendhal wrote a daily diary of his travels across Italy which he published the following year. Candidates were able to identify similarities between the two: the disunity of Italian states, the power of Austria and the reactionary rule of the Papacy. As for differences, candidates found these harder to identify. The Piedmontese diplomat sees the presence of foreign powers and the temporal power of the Papacy as the main obstacles while the French writer focuses more on the divisions between the states of Italy. A diplomat writing to a foreign power is likely to focus on the power politics of the situation while the writer, concentrating more on the weaknesses and foibles of rulers of Italy, is likely to emphasise their disunities rather than the more remote international dimension.

Question 1(b)

‘The main obstacle to Italian unification was Austria.’ How far do Sources A to D support this view?

The question asks whether Austria was the **main** obstacle to unification, a vital point which most candidates overlooked. They focused on considering whether Austria was **an** obstacle, which changed the balance of their analysis quite radically. This second approach enabled candidates to place Sources A and B in the ‘Yes’ column. Sources C and D were always in the ‘No’ column, whichever question was considered. In fact, the intended question was harder to answer in that none of the four sources clearly put Austria as the main obstacle. Though Source A mentions the threat of Austria, it does so in terms of Piedmont, not Italy – and in 1818 Piedmont was far from wishing to lead Italian unification. Source A talks about Italy being left alone with all foreigners being excluded. Austria is one such foreign power but so could be France, on the evidence of the Napoleonic era, or Russia, given the Holy Alliance of 1815. This is where contextual knowledge should have been used to evaluate arguments as well as sources.

After 1815, Austria dominated the states of Italy, either through its presence in Lombardy and Venetia, the richest of Italian states, or through its dominance over the smaller city states of central Italy. It crushed the rather half-hearted attempts at revolution in 1820 and 1830–31. Three of the four sources can be evaluated as self-serving and thus too partial, namely Sources A, C and D. Only Source B, a private source, even if later published and even though very subjective, does not have a particular cause or interest which the author is trying to advance.

Section B, American Option: The Caning of Senator Sumner in 1856

Question 2(a)

Compare and contrast the responses of the states of South Carolina and Massachusetts in Sources C and D to news of the caning of Senator Sumner in May 1856.

The caning of Senator Sumner in the US Congress by Representative Brooks was a well known, even infamous, event among the many which preceded the civil war. The brutal beating of a leading politician by another politician in the chamber of the US Senate was a shocking illustration of the growing division between North and South. The differences between the two sources were clear: Source C welcomed the news while Source D was very anxious about the extreme reaction to the news from ‘fanatical’ abolitionists. Source C is from an extremist Southern source, Source D a moderate Northern source. Source C argues that the South is united, including even slaves, while Source D shows Massachusetts as being divided. The similarity is that both see the caning of Sumner as a significant event likely to provoke civil war: Abolitionists, who in Source D are ‘stirring up the community to a dreadful outcome’, presumably civil war, are to be chastised according to Source C. The caning of Sumner has very quickly worsened North-South relations. Most candidates made some of these points. Some were able to use their contextual knowledge, for example, of the ‘Sharps rifle, fanatical brood’, to evaluate the two sources, to show that at least Source B was not exaggerating the impact of the caning of Sumner.

Question 2(b)

How far do Sources A to D support the view that the caning of Senator Sumner was a disaster for the South?

It is important for candidates to understand that, in the mid-nineteenth century, cartoons were most unlikely to have been published in newspapers. The print technology of the time did not allow pages of print to be combined with photographs or drawings. There were publications which did consist mainly of drawings but they were usually called *Illustrated News* of some kind to highlight the contrast with print-based newspapers. Drawings had to be reproduced as lithographs, which were printed in relatively small numbers and often available to buy rather than be viewed by masses of newspaper readers. They were usually meant to be a commentary on events which entertained and illuminated rather than shocked or indoctrinated. Anything too provocative might upset viewers and prospective purchasers.

Source A, however, is unusually provocative. It shows the unequal contest between Brooks and Sumner, between hickory stick and quill pen. The caption of the cartoon, making an ironic reference to the chivalry with which the South identified strongly, was clearly a criticism of the South. The background figures, none trying to stop the beating, some actually smiling, reinforce the cartoon’s main message. They, presumably, are US Senators and democrats. Almost all candidates were able to explain that Source A clearly supports the hypothesis. The reference to Southern chivalry is picked up by Source B, which further supports the hypothesis. Source C evidently takes the opposite position. Source D, however, is more ambivalent. Its main argument is to see the response of Northern extremists to the caning as a potential disaster for the USA as it shows that the USA can expect ‘the deluge of civil war’. Source D’s more moderate line is the only one of the four which does not take a position based on its region and state. Its first paragraph, though melodramatic, is an accurate warning of the Civil War which arrives five years later. By making such arguments, candidates could evaluate the sources, and the strongest responses did this. Others just explained what the sources said, rather than placing a value on their arguments.

Section C, International Option: The League of Nations and the Spanish Civil War

Question 3(a)

Compare and contrast the views expressed by the Foreign Secretaries of Spain (Source A) and Britain (Source C) regarding the effectiveness of the non-intervention policy adopted by the League of Nations during the Spanish Civil War.

Source C, taken from the minutes of a meeting, was in fact two sources in one. Few candidates noticed that the question asked them to consider only the second part of Source C which was the statement by the Foreign Secretary. Too many, however, took the directions as requiring them to consider both parts of Source C. Some concentrated on identifying the irrelevant views of the Trades Union Congress in Source C which left them insufficient time to consider the crucially relevant views of Mr. Eden, the British Foreign

Secretary. Giving insufficient time to compare the required sources inevitably limited the marks which could be awarded.

Question 3(b)

'In adopting a policy of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War, the League of Nations failed to honour its Covenant commitments.' How far do Sources A to C support this view?

If part (a) was challenging, part (b) was much more straightforward. On the subject of the Covenant commitments of the League of Nations, Sources B and C were a great help. Source B explained that the Covenant, while empowering the League to intervene in disputes between nation states, said nothing about a conflict within a state such as Spain. The intervention of other states in a civil war, whether providing men, machines or money, also was not covered by the Covenant. Source C mentioned the presence in Spain of Italian troops, which meant soldiers, not volunteers. Contextual knowledge of international relations in the 1930s can be expected to include the bombing of Guernica by German planes. The choice of sources gave plenty of opportunities for source evaluation. Most candidates were able to analyse and evaluate sources without any great difficulty, even if they often forgot the last part of the quotation and just considered whether the League of Nations failed in its response to the Spanish Civil War.

HISTORY

<p>Paper 9389/13 Document Question</p>
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- The single biggest improvement which candidates could make is to avoid simply describing what the sources say or depict. Too often, candidates take half a side or more just paraphrasing the content of the sources – though usually they spend longer on Source A than on the others. The message must be: analyse and evaluate rather than describe and explain.
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Comments on Specific Questions

Section A, European Option: The failure of the 1848 Revolutions in Germany

Question 1(a)

To what extent do Sources C and D agree on the reasons for the failure of the Frankfurt Parliament?

Source C is a statement by 66 National Assembly representatives who, as indicated by the final section of the source, were critical of the assembly. The 66 were moderate liberals who withdrew from the National Assembly, leaving it to be dominated by more radical liberals. They were critical of that radical group and also of German monarchs. Source D, from Karl Marx, focuses his criticism on the leadership of the Frankfurt Parliament including, presumably, the 66 who had walked out. The monarchs do not get a mention. Thus there are some clear differences and similarities, which most candidates who attempted the question were able to explain and illustrate well.

Question 1(b)

‘The revolutions of 1848 in Germany failed because of the weakness of the liberals.’ How far do Sources A to D support this view?

Though none of the four sources specifically mentions liberals, candidates were able to identify which source(s) supported the hypothesis, which is encouraging. It shows that candidates can use their contextual understanding to analyse unfamiliar sources. Source D is most obviously in favour of the hypothesis, supported by some self-incriminating evidence from Source C, leaving Sources A and B as hard to analyse in relation to the hypothesis. Source A states the determined opposition of the leading German monarch to any revolution. ‘A written sheet of paper’ is a reference to a codified constitution, which was a leading liberal demand. Source A shows the king resisting the liberals, which shows they were not strong enough. Source B mentions neither revolutions nor liberals. However, it asserts that the German economy is growing. If revolutions often occur because of economic hardship, then the economic prosperity which Source B states is occurring in 1848 means that people are better off and thus less likely to revolt. Source C, from unacknowledged liberals, blames the retreat of revolution that was well under way by mid-1849 on the strength of German monarchies and the radicalism of National Assembly representatives.

To reach higher levels, candidates then need to evaluate at least one source for reliability. Source D, from Karl Marx, is perhaps the most interesting. With its references to feudalism and capitalism, it is full of emotional accusations against the National Assembly and generalised assertions with no supporting evidence. Contextual knowledge would suggest that ‘two-thirds (sic) of the armies of the smaller nations’ (by which Marx means states) would be no match for the army of Prussia led by the author of Source A. Source D is most unreliable.

Section B, American Option: Lincoln and Disunion, 1861

Question 2(a)

Compare and contrast Sources A and B on the likelihood of secession leading to war.

Most candidates were able to identify the differences between the two sources: Source A asserts 'there need be no bloodshed or violence' following secession while Source B argues that 'there can be no result except a collision'. Identifying similarities proved slightly more problematic. The most obvious one is that both sources give a similar account of Lincoln's plans: to treat secession as an insignificant matter. Source A states 'I ... consider that the Union is unbroken' while Source B agrees that 'the President ... intends to treat those (seceding) states as though they were still members of the Union'. Had candidates then given some brief, if specific, evaluation of either of the sources, they would have achieved one of the higher levels.

Question 2(b)

How far do Sources A to D support the view that President Lincoln's inaugural address was bound to lead to war?

Candidates were able to place the four sources in two camps, for and against the assertion. Sources B and D supported the view, Sources A and C challenged it. They usually provided relevant quotes from each source to support their analysis, as is required to reach Level 3 of the generic mark bands of the mark scheme. To reach Levels 4 and 5, source evaluation was essential. Contextual knowledge could have been used to do so but rarely was. The sources come from the same month and followed the secession of some Southern states a few months earlier. The future of the USA was at stake as never before. Emotions were running high, as shown by Source D. In the circumstances, Source C is a most surprising statement. It comes from Lincoln's great rival for a Senate seat in 1858, Senator Douglas. He might be expected to criticise Lincoln. In fact, he does the opposite – and in public, which is likely to provoke criticism from his own side. This makes Source C's analysis both useful and reliable. Sources B and D, by contrast, are much less so as they are partisan accounts aimed to increase support for the Southern cause. Source A is also reliable, despite it being a public speech, as Lincoln makes a speech aimed at both sections, North and South.

Section C, International Option: The League of Nations and Abyssinia

Question 3(a)

Compare and contrast the views expressed by Benito Mussolini (Source A) and Haile Selassie (Source C) regarding the League of Nations' response to Italy's invasion of Abyssinia.

Candidates with relevant contextual knowledge of the Abyssinian crisis of the mid-1930s had few difficulties in identifying similarities and differences between the two sources. They used both the provenance and content of Sources A and C to make several valid points of difference. Finding similarities proved harder. Perhaps the clearest is that both leaders are critical of the League of Nations. As both sources are public and emotional, aimed to sway the feelings of listeners, the validity of their arguments is initially suspect. Contextual knowledge provides more support for Source C, however. The war between Italy and Abyssinia had been underway for several months by the time Haile Selassie made his speech. Source C is more reliable than Source A.

Question 3(b)

'The League of Nations did nothing against Italy's invasion of Abyssinia.' How far do Sources A to D support this view?

Again, sound contextual knowledge helped strengthen answers to this question. Candidates with that knowledge could make the point that the League imposed some sanctions on Italy, thus supporting Source B. Thus they could argue that Source B challenged the hypothesis. Candidates also knew that stronger, more effective sanctions were not imposed by the League, which enabled them to distinguish between 'the League of Nations did nothing' and 'the League of Nations did nothing effective'. Even Mussolini in Source A accepted that the League would do something. Source C makes no mention of measures taken by the League but clearly supports the hypothesis, as does Source D. This latter source refers explicitly to Italy's invasion of Abyssinia and implicitly to Italian and German actions in Spain. Most candidates found the sources to be accessible and the question straightforward, though often source analysis was more successful than source evaluation.

HISTORY

Paper 9389/21
Outline Study

Key Messages

- In **Part (a) questions**, candidates should focus on the key issue of causation, analysing a wide range of factors to show how they inter-reacted and reaching a judgement regarding their relative significance.
- In **Part (b) questions**, candidates should address the question rather than the topic, maintain a balanced approach and ensure that arguments are appropriately supported.

General Comments

In line with the requirements of the examination, most candidates attempted two complete questions from one section of the paper. There is a fundamental difference in focus between part **(a)** and part **(b)** questions. Many candidates clearly appreciated this and attempted the two part **(a)** questions consecutively, followed by the two part **(b)** questions (or vice-versa). There was considerable variation in the quality of scripts. Most candidates were able to demonstrate sound factual knowledge in at least some of their answers, but many were unable to sustain consistent quality across all four of their responses. Chronological confusion was a marked characteristic of many responses. It was not uncommon for candidates to produce satisfactory or better responses to one part of a question, yet weak (and, in some cases, no) answers to the other part. Centres should consider whether this was the result of poor question selection or symptomatic of a wider problem relating to the range and depth of knowledge to which candidates have access.

Part (a) Questions – candidates should be aware that these questions are about causation. Effective answers require detailed knowledge and understanding of the reasons why a specific event occurred or why someone adopted a particular course of action. Invariably, causation can only be adequately explained by an appreciation of the combined effect of a number of factors, both long and short-term. The most effective responses were clearly focused on the key issue of causation and contained analysis of a wide range of factors, demonstrating how they inter-acted and developing judgements regarding their relative significance. Most candidates were able to identify and explain some relevant causal factors, but tended to drift into narrative/descriptive accounts of *how* something occurred rather than *why*. The weakest responses were characterised by mono-causal explanations, a tendency to drift into irrelevancy and factual inaccuracy and/or confused chronology; they were over-reliant on vague and generalised assertions lacking appropriate factual support.

Part (b) Questions – candidates should be aware that historical issues can be interpreted in many different and, often, contradictory ways. For an interpretation to be valid, it must be based on a thorough analysis of appropriate and accurate factual material, and must show due consideration of alternative viewpoints. These questions require candidates to develop such interpretations, to make reasoned judgements and to justify their arguments in a clear, consistent and sustained manner. The most impressive responses were based on the development of consistent and balanced arguments, explicitly focused on the requirements of the specific question, leading to reasoned and fully-supported conclusions. The majority of responses fell into one of three categories – narrative/descriptive accounts of the topic with only implicit reference to the actual question; unbalanced arguments based on consideration of only one interpretation of the issue; relevant arguments based on factual support which was limited in range and depth. The weakest responses were often the result of confusion over the requirements of the question; they were characterised by factual inaccuracy and/or chronological confusion, assertions based on inadequate factual support or a tendency to drift into irrelevance (often by drifting outside of timeframes given in the question).

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: European Option: Modern Europe, 1789–1917

1 France, 1789–1804

(a) *Why did France go to war in 1792?*

Candidates needed to identify and explain an appropriate range of causal factors to fully answer this question. Many responses did not explore this full range and focused on a single cause, that France went to war because it feared invasion by other European countries. A significantly large number of candidates interpreted the word ‘war’ as meaning ‘civil war’, and confined their answers to generalised information regarding the causes of the French Revolution. In general, this question was not well answered.

(b) *How successfully did Napoleon govern France between 1799 and 1804?*

Candidates generally possessed sound knowledge of Napoleon’s policies, although many found it difficult to confine their answers to the period between 1799 and 1804. The most effective responses were clearly focused on the key issue of how successfully Napoleon governed France, with balanced assessment leading to the development of well constructed arguments. The majority of responses tended to describe issues such as the Code and the Concordat, focus on the actual question being confined to conclusions, often in the form of unexplained assertions. The weakest responses were assertive throughout and were the result of inadequate factual knowledge.

2 The Industrial Revolution, c.1800–1850

(a) *Account for the rise of the middle classes in this period.*

There was enormous variation in the quality of responses to this question. The most impressive were based on a clear understanding of who the middle classes were and how/why they developed as a result of industrialisation. Many responses, while identifying some relevant factors, tended to lack range and explanatory depth. Candidates needed to accurately interpret the phrase ‘middle classes’ in its European context. This did not seem to be fully understood, leading to significant irrelevance or unfocused generalisations about the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

(b) *To what extent were changes in agriculture the main cause of industrialisation? Refer to any **two** countries in your answer.*

The best responses were characterised by a genuine attempt to identify the key causes of the Industrial Revolution and evaluate the relative significance of developments in agriculture. Weaker answers described agricultural changes in general terms without factual detail and, in many cases, no attempt to explain how and why these changes impacted on subsequent industrialisation. Confused chronology led a sizeable minority of candidates to argue that industrialisation, with its requirement for a larger population, was responsible for changes in agriculture.

3 The Origins of World War I, c.1900–1914

(a) *Why was the Triple Alliance formed?*

Many candidates were able to identify a number of factors to explain Germany’s motives for forming the Triple Alliance. There was less understanding of the reasons why Austria-Hungary and Italy were prepared to join the Alliance. A large number of responses drifted beyond the confines of the question, explaining how the formation of the Triple Alliance caused alarm elsewhere in Europe, leading to the subsequent formation of the Triple Entente and the outbreak of World War I. Candidates needed to be aware of which countries were members of the Triple Alliance. Less successful answers were often not secure in this knowledge.

(b) *'Russia should take the blame for the outbreak of World War I.'* How far do you agree?

The most impressive responses were characterised by a genuine attempt to develop fully-focused and balanced arguments, which evaluated Russia's culpability in the light of other factors which led to the outbreak of World War I. The majority of responses lacked such analytical depth and tended to drift into generalised narrative accounts of the causes of World War I, the extent to which Russia should take the blame being either ignored or considered only in conclusions. While it was widely acknowledged that Russia was the first country to mobilise, the reasons for this were rarely provided with contextual explanation beyond the basic point that Russia felt a certain obligation to support Serbia.

4 The Russian Revolution, 1905–1917

(a) *Why did the Tsar survive the 1905 Revolution in Russia?*

Effective responses were characterised by the identification and explanation of several key factors, such as maintaining support from the army, which enabled the Tsar to survive the 1905 Revolution. Less successful responses simply described the events of 'Bloody Sunday', in varying levels of detail and accuracy, so that focus on the actual question was, at best, implicit only. Candidates can improve by directing their knowledge to address the specific focus of the question.

(b) *'Lenin's leadership was the main reason for Bolshevik success in October 1917.'* How far do you agree?

Most candidates were able to provide appropriate evidence to demonstrate the key role which Lenin's leadership played in the Bolshevik success of October 1917. On the basis of this, the majority of responses agreed with the statement and did not consider any alternative interpretations. More effective responses were characterised by greater balance, the significance of other factors (such as weaknesses of the Provisional Government and the contribution of Trotsky) being weighed against the charismatic leadership provided by Lenin. The weakest responses were the result of limited factual knowledge and/or chronological confusion.

Section B: American Option: The History of the USA, 1840–1941

5 The Expansion of US Power from the 1840s to the 1930s

(a) *Why did the USA develop close relations with Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century?*

The most impressive responses were characterised by clear understanding of the USA's economic and political motives for seeking close relations with Japan in the late nineteenth century. The vast majority of responses tended to focus on *how* this relationship emerged rather than *why*. Many candidates, for example, wrote (often in considerable detail) about the aggressive actions of Commander Perry, without explaining what he was aiming to achieve. Irrelevant material was a feature of many weaker responses, which focused on relations between the USA and Japan in a much later period; accounts of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor were not uncommon.

(b) *How far did the USA uphold the Versailles Settlement in the 1920s?*

There were a number of impressive responses to this question. These were characterised by balanced assessment of American foreign policy during the 1920s, well supported by the selection of appropriate factual evidence. For example, the USA's rejection of the Versailles Treaty and failure to join the League of Nations was balanced against its involvement in the Dawes and Young Plans. In general, however, responses lacked focus and relevant content on the 1920s. Most candidates concentrated on the key role which President Wilson played at the Paris Peace Conference, followed by details of the debate which led to the USA's refusal to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. This led to the unbalanced assertion that, since the USA had opted for isolationism, it did nothing to uphold the Treaty.

6 Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877

- (a) *Why did President Lincoln introduce a naval blockade of Southern ports at the start of the Civil War?*

Virtually all candidates were able to identify some relevant factors, though there was considerable variation in terms of range and explanatory depth. For example, some candidates simply stated that Lincoln's aim was to win the war, but did not explain how a naval blockade of southern ports would help to achieve this. Similarly, many argued that the blockade was designed to prevent the southern states from trading, but did not explain the economic and political significance of cotton exports to Britain and other parts of Europe. The most effective responses were characterised by detailed understanding of Lincoln's motives in context.

- (b) *How far did President Johnson continue the Reconstruction policies of President Lincoln?*

The most impressive responses were based on focused, balanced and well supported assessment of the extent to which Johnson retained the underlying aims of Lincoln's Reconstruction policies. While most candidates possessed relatively sound knowledge regarding Lincoln's plans, there was generally less understanding of Johnson's role. As a result, the majority of responses relied too heavily on generalised assertions, frequently based on confusion over the respective roles of President and Congress.

7 The Gilded Age and the Progressive Era from the 1870s to the 1920s

- (a) *Account for the 'Red Scare' in the USA in 1919–20.*

Good responses were based on clear understanding of a variety of reasons why many Americans became increasingly concerned about the threat posed by the perceived spread of communist views. Some candidates described the impact of the 'Red Scare' rather than the reasons why it occurred. Many weak responses were characterised by confused and inaccurate interpretation of the phrase 'Red Scare', resulting in significant irrelevance. A sizeable minority of candidates, while appreciating that the question was related to the issue of communism, did not focus on the given timeframe and wrote about Cold War rivalries following World War II.

- (b) *How far did the working class benefit from industrialisation in the late nineteenth century?*

Most candidates were able to describe some of the negative effects which industrialisation had on the working class, but this was often based on generalisations without specific factual support. Appreciating the need to create a sense of balance, many candidates tried to identify positive effects, but this frequently involved reference to developments which took place in a later period. Some candidates focused on the impact of industrialisation on America in general, rather than specifically on how it affected the working class. In general, responses suffered from an over-reliance on vague and generalised assertions.

8 The Great Crash, the Great Depression and the New Deal, 1929–1941

- (a) *Why did President Hoover struggle to deal with the impact of the Great Crash?*

Many candidates were able to identify, explain and provide appropriate factual support for a wide range of reasons to explain Hoover's apparent lack of action when confronted by the initial impact of the Great Crash. Less successful responses lacked such range, focusing almost exclusively on the traditional government policy of 'laissez faire', explained in varying levels of depth. Weaker responses concentrated on what Hoover actually did or did not do and the impact of his actions/inactions with only implicit relevance to the question.

- (b) *In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt was described as 'a cautious politician'. How far did Roosevelt's domestic policies in the 1930s support this view?*

There were a number of impressive responses to this question, characterised by the development of fully-focused, well supported and balanced arguments based on detailed assessment of Roosevelt's domestic policies. Many candidates, while able to draw on much the same factual knowledge and understanding, found it difficult to maintain balance, most concluding that his New Deal strategies, so different from previous government policies, suggested that he was anything but cautious. The majority of responses tended to describe Roosevelt's policies with only limited or implicit reference to the precise requirements of the question. Weaker responses were characterised by generalised and unsupported assertions.

Section C: International Option: International Relations, 1871–1945

9 International Relations, 1871–1918

(a) *Why did war break out between Japan and Russia in 1904?*

There was a very common tendency to describe the war itself, and specifically the reasons why Japan was victorious in it, rather than addressing the key issue of why it occurred. In many cases, explicit relevance to the actual question was confined to generalised statements regarding rivalry over Chinese territory. The most impressive responses were based on clearly expressed knowledge and understanding of longer-term background tensions between Japan and Russia, together with explicit focus on why these led to the outbreak of war in 1904.

(b) *'The rival alliances and ententes developed by the Great Powers of Europe were the main cause of World War I.' How far do you agree?*

The most effective responses were characterised by focused analysis of the tensions created by the existence of two rival sets of alliances and the ways in which these inter-acted with other factors in the build up to the outbreak of World War I. A common conclusion was that the alliance system was itself the product of rivalries created by other circumstances and, therefore, not the main cause of the war. The majority of candidates adopted a more narrative approach which lacked such focused analytical depth. In most cases this involved a description of how the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente were formed, with limited explanation of how their existence led to the outbreak of a major war, followed by unconnected coverage of other causal factors such as the arms race and rivalries in the Balkans. Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to generalise about the causes of World War I rather than focus on the specific nature of the question.

10 International Relations, 1919–1933

(a) *Why did the 'successor states' face problems during the 1920s?*

Responses to this question tended to fall into three main categories. The most impressive were based on clear understanding of what the problems facing the 'successor states' were and why they occurred, together with specific examples to support the points being made. The majority tended to be rather more generalised, reference being made to relevant issues, such as ethnicity and economic problems, without specific examples to provide adequate factual support. The weakest responses, resulted from lack of understanding of the term 'successor states'; this invariably led to significant irrelevance.

(b) *'The USA remained actively involved in international affairs throughout the 1920s.' How far do you agree?*

There were a number of high-quality responses to this question. These were characterised by fully-focused and balanced assessment of appropriately selected factual evidence (such as American involvement in the Washington Naval Conference, yet absence from negotiations at both Genoa and Locarno), enabling the development of clear and well constructed arguments. The majority of responses, while lacking such analytical depth, contained sufficiently detailed and accurate factual information to maintain at least implicit relevance to the question. The weakest responses contained little of relevance to the 1920s. These tended to focus on the USA's involvement in the Paris peace talks and the American political debate over whether or not to ratify the settlement and join the League of Nations. This generally led to the assertion that, since the USA had opted for isolationism, it took no part in international affairs in the 1920s.

11 International Relations, 1933–1939

(a) *Why did the German occupation of the Rhineland in March 1936 meet no resistance?*

Most candidates were aware that Hitler himself was unsure of what reaction the occupation of the Rhineland would provoke, and that he had issued orders for a strategic withdrawal in the event of armed resistance. The most impressive responses were characterised by detailed analysis of a range of factors to explain why such resistance never materialised. The majority of responses, while identifying similar reasons why the occupation went unopposed, tended to lack explanatory depth. For example, it was widely acknowledged that the League of Nations was too weak and ineffective to intervene; in order to demonstrate full understanding, it was necessary to explain why this was the case.

(b) *To what extent did Mussolini pursue a consistent foreign policy in the period from 1922 to 1939?*

Most candidates were able to provide a focused response to this question. The most common argument was that Mussolini did not follow a consistent foreign policy since, after a period when he adopted a diplomatic approach, he became far more aggressive after 1934. In order to create greater balance, some candidates developed their argument further by showing how, while his methods may have changed, his underlying aims remained consistent throughout. The quality of responses varied enormously depending on the depth and accuracy of the factual evidence used to support these arguments. Candidates should avoid making vague and unsupported assertions.

12 China and Japan, 1919–1945

(a) *Why did the Japanese economy experience difficulties in the period from 1919 to 1931?*

The best essays were based on a clear understanding of why the Japanese economy suffered as a result of the ending of the boom which it had experienced during World War I. Less successful responses were restricted to an outline of how Japan was adversely affected by the Wall Street Crash and the subsequent world-wide depression; as a result, there was a marked tendency to drift outside the timeframe established in the question, dealing with issues which relate to the post-1931 period.

(b) *How successful was the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?*

The most effective responses were based on an appreciation that it was essential from the outset to establish what the Japanese aimed to achieve by their attack on Pearl Harbor, thereby establishing criteria by which to evaluate how successful it proved to be. Most concluded that the attack did cause significant damage to American power, pride and prestige, yet failed in its primary objective to weaken the American Pacific fleet sufficiently to prevent it from hindering Japanese expansionist plans. The majority of candidates adopted a more narrative approach, describing the attack itself with only limited, and largely implicit, reference to the requirements of the actual question. The weakest responses were characterised by assertions based on limited and, in some cases, inaccurate factual support.

HISTORY

Paper 9389/22
Outline Study

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In line with the requirements of the examination, most candidates attempted two complete questions from one section of the paper. There is a fundamental difference in focus between part **(a)** and part **(b)** questions. Many candidates clearly appreciated this and attempted the two part **(a)** questions consecutively, followed by the two part **(b)** questions (or vice-versa). There was considerable variation in the quality of scripts. Most candidates were able to demonstrate sound factual knowledge in at least some of their answers, but many were unable to sustain consistent quality across all four of their responses. Chronological confusion was a marked characteristic of many responses. It was not uncommon for candidates to produce satisfactory or better responses to one part of a question, yet weak (and, in some cases, no) answers to the other part. Centres should consider whether this was the result of poor question selection or symptomatic of a wider problem relating to the range and depth of knowledge to which candidates have access.

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Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: European Option: Modern Europe, 1789–1917

1 France, 1789–1804

(a) *Account for the fall of Robespierre and the Jacobins.*

The majority of responses focused on what Robespierre and the Jacobins actually did while in power, followed by the unexplained/unsupported assertion that this is why they fell. In many cases, factual content was restricted to coverage of the 'reign of terror'. More effective responses were based on a wider range of factors, together with clear understanding of how they combined to lead to the eventual collapse of the Jacobin regime. The weakest responses were characterised by factual inaccuracy and chronological confusion.

(b) *To what extent was Louis XVI responsible for his own downfall?*

There were some excellent responses, characterised by well supported assessment of Louis XVI's own weaknesses and errors, balanced against factors over which he had little control and could not realistically be held responsible for. The majority of responses tended to lack such balance, generally focusing on Louis' own culpability; while appropriate evidence was often used to support this view, there was little attempt to consider a counter-argument. While the most impressive responses analysed the effectiveness of Louis' kingship throughout his reign, the majority tended to focus on events after 1789, by which time, it could be argued, his downfall had already taken place. It was clear that many candidates had interpreted 'downfall' as meaning 'execution', thereby narrowing the range of evidence which might be used to develop a convincing argument.

2 The Industrial Revolution, c.1800–1850

(a) *Why did the development of steam power speed up the Industrial Revolution?*

The most impressive responses were characterised by clear and well supported explanation of a wide range of ways in which steam power was exploited, and the ways in which this encouraged further and more rapid industrialisation. Less successful responses tended to lack such range and depth. For example, many candidates stated that steam engines were used to power factory machinery, but gave no examples as factual evidence and did not examine the impact in terms of urbanisation, increased output, etc. Similarly, the use of steam engines in coal mines was widely mentioned, but the significance of this was rarely explained. A significantly large number of responses suffered as a result of a very narrow interpretation of steam power, referring solely to its uses in railways and steamships.

(b) *Assess the effects of the Industrial Revolution on the working class. Refer to any **two** countries in your answer.*

Most candidates were able to outline some aspects of the Industrial Revolution which had a negative impact on the working class, but this was largely confined to generalisations regarding long working hours, overcrowded housing, poor sanitation and disease. Relatively few responses provided appropriate examples or factual evidence to substantiate these points. Attempts to identify ways in which the working class benefitted from industrialisation were often assertive or referred to progress which occurred long after 1850. Factual inaccuracy was a common feature of weaker responses. For example, many candidates argued that the working class in Britain gained political rights as a result of the 1832 Reform Act. A significantly large number of candidates wrote about the effects of the Industrial Revolution in general rather than focusing on the working class. Very few candidates satisfied the requirement in the question to 'refer to any two countries'.

3 The Origins of World War I, c.1900–1914

(a) *Why did Britain form the Triple Entente with France and Russia by 1907?*

While there were some excellent responses to this question, many tended to lack range and depth. It was widely understood that Britain, France and Russia shared a common fear of the growing power of Germany, especially after its adoption of a more aggressive foreign policy under Kaiser Wilhelm. Generally, however, candidates were unable to identify other reasons for the series of agreements which, by 1907, culminated in the Triple Entente. As a result, responses tended to lose focus on the key issue of why the Triple Entente

was formed. For example, many candidates simply outlined the terms of the various agreements, while others discussed how surprising it was that Britain should form alliances with two countries with which they had faced a series of on-going disputes. In both cases, the accurate factual detail was not used explicitly to address the actual question.

(b) *To what extent was the arms race the most important cause of World War I?*

The most effective responses were characterised by fully-focused and balanced assessments of how the arms race conspired with other factors, such as rivalry in the Balkans, leading to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Most candidates adopted a more narrative approach, an outline of the arms race followed by a general survey of the other causes of World War I. While such responses were based on accurate, and often very detailed, factual content, explicit focus on the question tended to be confined to conclusions and was frequently assertive or lacking explanatory depth. Many responses suffered as a result of a very narrow interpretation of the phrase 'arms race', usually confined to an outline of the naval race between Britain and Germany. The weakest responses did not address the question and listed the causes of World War I with varying levels of factual and chronological accuracy.

4 The Russian Revolution, 1905–1917

(a) *Why did the Tsar abdicate in 1917?*

There were many high-quality, analytical responses to this question. These were based on very clear understanding of the situation confronting the Tsar in 1917 and, in particular, how and why it was more serious than previous threats to his authority, such as in 1905. The most common conclusion was that the Tsar's position became untenable when he lost the support of those who had enabled him to maintain power, in particular the army. The majority of responses, while containing much the same factual information, lacked analytical depth, tending to describe events rather than evaluating their relative significance. Weaker responses were largely focused on generalised long-term factors, with limited reference to 1917. Chronological weaknesses were evident in several responses, many candidates arguing that the Tsar abdicated in the immediate aftermath of 'Bloody Sunday', while others suggested that he had no alternative but to abdicate as a result of the Bolshevik seizure of power.

(b) *To what extent were the reforms of Witte and Stolypin successful?*

Most candidates were able to display good, often very detailed, knowledge of the reforms carried out by Witte and Stolypin. The most impressive responses were fully focused on the extent to which these reforms could be described as successful; this was usually achieved by outlining the aims of the two statesmen, and using these as 'success criteria' in order to evaluate the impact of their reforms. The majority of responses tended to adopt a more narrative approach in which the reforms were described with only limited, and often assertive, reference to how successful they proved to be (usually confined to conclusions). Candidates are reminded that it is essential to address the question rather than writing generally about the topic.

Section B: American Option: The History of the USA, 1840–1941

5 The Expansion of US Power from the 1840s to the 1930s

(a) *Why was the concept of Manifest Destiny so influential in nineteenth-century America?*

There were relatively few responses to this question, most of which focused on an interpretation of the phrase 'Manifest Destiny' rather than an analysis of the ways in which it helped to influence the USA's expansion during the nineteenth century.

(b) *'The expansion of US naval power was the most important factor shaping the USA's relations with Europe in the years from 1901 to 1922.' How far do you agree?*

There were relatively few responses to this question. While most candidates were able to outline how and why the USA's naval power expanded during the period, fewer focused on the ways in which this impacted on America's relations with other countries, particularly those in Europe. The majority of responses lacked balance; unable to identify any factors to challenge the statement in the question, they simply concluded by agreeing with it.

6 Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877

(a) *Why did Southern states introduce 'black codes' in 1865–66?*

Virtually all candidates were able to explain what the 'black codes' were and the impact they had on former slaves. In general, there was only limited focus on the key issue of why the codes were introduced, often restricted to the unexplained assertion that they were a response to the abolition of slavery by the Thirteenth Amendment. The most impressive responses were characterised by contextual understanding of Lincoln's Reconstruction policies and Johnson's desire to allow the defeated Confederate states greater autonomy.

(b) *'Life was harsh for everyone in the South during the Civil War.' How far do you agree?*

Most candidates were able to describe the social and economic hardships which afflicted the South during the Civil War as a result of the naval blockade: falling standards of living, high inflation, etc. In some responses, there was a genuine attempt to differentiate the impact of these hardships on different sectors of Southern society, but, in most cases, this relied on unsupported generalisations and assertions. The vast majority of candidates found it difficult to identify anything which might challenge the statement in the question.

7 The Gilded Age and the Progressive Era from the 1870s to the 1920s

(a) *Why did the USA maintain a high tariff policy in the 1870s and 1880s?*

Relatively few candidates addressed this question. There was general understanding of the USA's desire to protect its own industries from foreign competition, and some candidates were able to explain the vital importance of this at times of economic depression, such as in 1873. Other factors, such as the Federal Government's need for revenue at a time when there was no income tax, were less well known; as a result, some responses lacked range.

(b) *How radical were the political and constitutional reforms of the Progressive Era?*

Relatively few candidates attempted this question. Most were able to describe the various reforms, often in considerable detail, but focus on the extent to which these reforms should be seen as 'radical' was often implicit at best. While there were some fully-focused and balanced arguments, weaker responses addressed the topic rather than the question.

8 The Great Crash, the Great Depression and the New Deal, 1929–1941

(a) *Why did the Roosevelt Presidency begin with '100 days of action'?*

Most candidates were able to describe the rapid and radical legislation which characterised the '100 days of action', often in considerable detail. In many cases, responses were based on a narrative approach in which explanation of Roosevelt's motives was confined to his desire to address the problems caused by the Great Depression. The most effective responses were more explicitly focused on the requirements of the question, identifying a range of social, economic and political factors which encouraged/enabled Roosevelt to take such decisive action.

(b) *'Roosevelt's electoral success was based more on personality than policy.' How far do you agree?*

There were a number of very impressive responses to this question. These were characterised by balanced assessment of appropriate evidence relating to Roosevelt's success across three peacetime elections, leading to the development of well supported and fully-focused arguments. The majority of responses tended to be rather more narrative in style, so that focus on the precise requirements of the question remained implicit at best. Based on a very limited interpretation of the question, a significantly large number of candidates confined their answers to the reasons why Roosevelt was successful in the presidential election against Hoover.

Section C: International Option: International Relations, 1871–1945

9 International Relations, 1871–1918

(a) *Why did Britain end its policy of 'splendid isolation' after 1900?*

The majority of responses tended to focus almost exclusively on Britain's fears relating to the growing power of Germany, demonstrating how this led to alliances with France and Russia, countries which shared that fear. The most effective responses were based on a wider range of factors, such as the growing threats to Britain's overseas possessions and how the Boer Wars had both exposed serious military weaknesses and antagonised most of Europe. As a result, Britain's first move away from isolation, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, was fully explained. There were relatively few weak responses, most of which were based on the assumption that Britain ended its policy of 'splendid isolation' when it entered World War I.

(b) *To what extent was Germany responsible for the outbreak of World War I?*

Virtually all candidates were able to make a case to demonstrate that Germany should be held responsible for the outbreak of World War I, although the supporting evidence varied considerably in terms of depth and chronological accuracy. A common assertion in many weaker responses was that the inclusion in the Treaty of Versailles of the War Guilt Clause clearly 'proves' that Germany was responsible. The most effective responses were characterised by a balanced assessment of German culpability, enabling the development of well supported and fully-focused arguments. Candidates should avoid writing generic essays on the causes of World War I, and ensure they direct their knowledge to the requirements of the specific question asked.

10 International Relations, 1919–1933

(a) *Why, in 1919, did the USA, Britain and France disagree about how best to treat the defeated Germany?*

In general, responses were based on sound factual knowledge. Most candidates were able to provide detailed and accurate descriptions of the positions adopted at the Paris peace talks by Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau respectively. This clearly demonstrated *how* they disagreed regarding what terms to impose on Germany following its defeat in World War I. The most effective responses were characterised by in-depth analysis of the reasons *why* they held such different views. There were relatively few weak responses and these invariably resulted from lack of focus on the specific question; for example, some candidates outlined the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and its subsequent impact on Germany.

(b) *To what extent did relations between France and Germany improve in the period from 1919 to 1933?*

There were some exceptional responses to this question. These were based on fully-focused analysis of how and why Franco-German relations fluctuated during the period, well supported by detailed and accurate factual information, facilitating the development of balanced and well constructed arguments. The majority of candidates adopted a more narrative approach, describing various issues, such as the occupation of the Ruhr, the Dawes Plan and the Locarno Treaties, with only implicit focus on the precise requirements of the question. The weakest responses tended to be over-reliant on unsupported assertions or suffered as a result of confused chronology. A small number of candidates, for example, suggested that the occupation of the Ruhr resulted from French dissatisfaction with the Dawes Plan.

11 International Relations, 1933–1939

(a) *Why were the Republicans defeated in the Spanish Civil War?*

Most candidates were able to identify a number of relevant factors, although there was considerable variation in terms of explanatory depth. For example, while some candidates simply stated that there was disunity within the Republican ranks, others were able to provide detailed explanations of why this was the case and the impact that it had during the Civil War. Similarly, while some responses noted that the Republicans lacked the kind of effective foreign assistance which Franco received from Italy and Germany, others were able to explain the reasons for, and the impact of, the League of Nations' non-interference policy. Weaker responses were based on assertions lacking in accurate factual support, or were limited to outlining only one causal factor, usually the advantage which Franco gained from assistance rendered by Hitler and Mussolini.

(b) *How far had Mussolini met his foreign policy aims by 1939?*

The majority of candidates appreciated that it was essential from the outset to explain what Mussolini's foreign policy aims actually were since this would provide criteria by which to evaluate how successfully they had been achieved by 1939. The most effective responses remained fully-focused throughout, deploying accurate factual information to develop balanced and consistent arguments. Having established Mussolini's aims, there was a tendency to drift into narrative accounts of his actions during the period, only returning to the key issue in the conclusion. While the factual content of such responses was generally both accurate and detailed, there was insufficient focus on the requirements of the question. Factual inaccuracy and chronological confusion were the main features of weaker responses. For example, many candidates used the Fiume and Corfu incidents as evidence of Mussolini's more aggressive foreign policy after 1934.

12 **China and Japan, 1919–1945**

(a) *Why did the May the Fourth Movement occur?*

There were relatively few responses to this question. Most candidates adopted a narrative approach, describing *how* the May the Fourth Movement developed with only limited, and often implicit-only, focus on the key issue of *why*.

(b) *'The Kuomintang's failure to establish effective government throughout China during the 1930s was caused by poor leadership.' How far do you agree?*

There were relatively few responses to this question. The majority tended to focus on the reasons why the KMT lacked widespread support in the 1930s, in particular its favouring of the wealthier classes, its failure to address issues relating to socio/economic reform and the growing popularity of the CCP. Explicit attempts to link these factors with the key issue of 'poor leadership' were rare.

HISTORY

Paper 9389/23
Outline Study

Key Messages

- In **Part (a) questions**, candidates should focus on the key issue of causation, analysing a wide range of factors to show how they inter-reacted and reaching a judgement regarding their relative significance.
- In **Part (b) questions**, candidates should address the question rather than the topic, maintain a balanced approach and ensure that arguments are appropriately supported.

General Comments

In line with the requirements of the examination, most candidates attempted two complete questions from one section of the paper. There is a fundamental difference in focus between part **(a)** and part **(b)** questions. Many candidates clearly appreciated this and attempted the two part **(a)** questions consecutively, followed by the two part **(b)** questions (or vice-versa). There was considerable variation in the quality of scripts. Most candidates were able to demonstrate sound factual knowledge in at least some of their answers, but many were unable to sustain consistent quality across all four of their responses. Chronological confusion was a marked characteristic of many responses. It was not uncommon for candidates to produce satisfactory or better responses to one part of a question, yet weak (and, in some cases, no) answers to the other part. Centres should consider whether this was the result of poor question selection or symptomatic of a wider problem relating to the range and depth of knowledge to which candidates have access.

Part (a) Questions – candidates should be aware that these questions are about causation. Effective answers require detailed knowledge and understanding of the reasons why a specific event occurred or why someone adopted a particular course of action. Invariably, causation can only be adequately explained by an appreciation of the combined effect of a number of factors, both long and short-term. The most effective responses were clearly focused on the key issue of causation and contained analysis of a wide range of factors, demonstrating how they inter-acted and developing judgements regarding their relative significance. Most candidates were able to identify and explain some relevant causal factors, but tended to drift into narrative/descriptive accounts of *how* something occurred rather than *why*. The weakest responses were characterised by mono-causal explanations, a tendency to drift into irrelevancy and factual inaccuracy and/or confused chronology; they were over-reliant on vague and generalised assertions lacking appropriate factual support.

Part (b) Questions – candidates should be aware that historical issues can be interpreted in many different and, often, contradictory ways. For an interpretation to be valid, it must be based on a thorough analysis of appropriate and accurate factual material, and must show due consideration of alternative viewpoints. These questions require candidates to develop such interpretations, to make reasoned judgements and to justify their arguments in a clear, consistent and sustained manner. The most impressive responses were based on the development of consistent and balanced arguments, explicitly focused on the requirements of the specific question, leading to reasoned and fully-supported conclusions. The majority of responses fell into one of three categories – narrative/descriptive accounts of the topic with only implicit reference to the actual question; unbalanced arguments based on consideration of only one interpretation of the issue; relevant arguments based on factual support which was limited in range and depth. The weakest responses were often the result of confusion over the requirements of the question; they were characterised by factual inaccuracy and/or chronological confusion, assertions based on inadequate factual support or a tendency to drift into irrelevance (often by drifting outside of timeframes given in the question).

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: European Option: Modern Europe, 1789–1917

1 France, 1789–1804

(a) *Why did Louis XVI attempt to flee from France in 1791?*

The most effective responses were characterised by in-depth explanation and analysis of a wide range of factors which led to Louis XVI's failed attempt to leave France in 1791. The majority of candidates adopted a more narrative approach, describing the revolution itself and the king's removal from power; as a result, focus on Louis' reasons for attempting to flee from France in 1791 became largely implicit only. Weaker responses tended to describe the 'flight to Varennes' and the implications/outcome of it, rather than addressing the key issue of why it occurred.

(b) *'Political instability in France between 1789 and 1795 was caused by economic problems.' How far do you agree with this view?*

The most impressive responses were fully focused on the reasons why France experienced political instability between 1789 and 1795, and the extent to which economic problems were the main issue. Balanced assessment of appropriately selected evidence enabled the development of well constructed and convincing arguments. The majority of candidates wrote more generally about the French Revolution, so that reference to the precise requirements of the question was implicit at best. A common feature of many responses was a tendency to drift outside the established timeframe.

2 The Industrial Revolution, c.1800–1850

(a) *Why did the Industrial Revolution cause urbanisation?*

Relatively few candidates addressed this question. Most were able to identify a range of appropriate factors, the quality of responses varying according to the explanatory and analytical depth provided. Some responses did contain appropriate assertions but did not support them with factual evidence.

(b) *To what extent can mechanisation be seen as the main cause of the Industrial Revolution? Refer to any **two** countries in your answer.*

Relatively few candidates addressed this question. Many were able to provide appropriate evidence to show the significance of mechanisation, balanced against other factors, as a catalyst for industrial development. Most responses were characterised by a more generalised/narrative approach, the causes of the Industrial Revolution outlined with only implicit reference to the relative significance of mechanisation. Candidates should remember to ensure they refer to two countries in their responses. Many responses were focussed only on Britain.

3 The Origins of World War I, c.1900–1914

(a) *Why was there a crisis over Morocco in 1905–06?*

While there were some good responses to this question, the majority of candidates tended to describe the crisis and/or discuss its impact rather than explain the factors which led to it. Confusion between the 1905–06 crisis and subsequent incidents relating to Morocco was common. Many weaker responses were based on the inaccurate assumption that the crisis over Morocco was the result of rivalry in the Balkans. Others did not contain sufficient specific knowledge and understanding to address the question effectively.

(b) *'Britain must take responsibility for the outbreak of World War I.' How far do you agree with this view of the causes of World War I?*

There were a number of high-quality responses to this question. These were characterised by well developed arguments, based on clear assessment of Britain's responsibility for the outbreak of World War I, balanced against a wide range of other factors. The majority of candidates adopted a more narrative approach in which the causes of World War I were described with limited, and often implicit-only, reference to Britain's possible culpability. In weaker responses, the notion that Britain should be held responsible was simply dismissed, without explanation, in the introduction. Candidates should focus their knowledge to address the specific question asked, rather than writing generic essays on the causes of World War I.

4 The Russian Revolution, 1905–1917

(a) *Why were the Bolsheviks successful in October 1917?*

Most candidates were able to identify a range of relevant factors. The most effective responses were characterised by analytical depth, demonstrating how the varying causal factors were inter-connected and making supported judgements regarding their relative significance. The weakest responses were the result of chronological confusion; some candidates, for example, wrote about the weaknesses of the Tsar and the reasons why he was overthrown.

(b) *'The Tsar was secure on his throne in 1914.' How far do you agree?*

There were a number of impressive responses to this question. These were based on clear understanding of the factors which had enabled the Tsar to survive the 1905 Revolution, the nationalistic fervour which swept through Russia at the outset of World War I and the social, political and economic tensions which continued to threaten the Tsar's autocratic rule. Balanced assessment of appropriately selected evidence facilitated the development of fully-focused arguments. The majority of responses, while containing much the same factual information, tended to be more narrative in style and did not achieve a relevant judgement. Weaker responses were confined to narrative accounts of events in 1905 or 1917 and, as a result, did not address the key issue of the Tsar's position in 1914 other than by assertion; for example, it was commonly argued that the Tsar was clearly not secure on his throne in 1914 because he had faced revolution in 1905 or because he was forced to abdicate in 1917.

Section B: American Option: The History of the USA, 1840–1941

5 The Expansion of US Power from the 1840s to the 1930s

(a) *Why was the war with Mexico in 1846–48 important to the expansion of the USA in North America?*

Most candidates were able to provide accurate details of the territories gained by the USA as a result of its defeat of Mexico (although there did tend to be some confusion relating to the position of Texas). The most effective responses went beyond this rather narrative approach to explain the longer-term significance of these territorial gains at a time when the concept of Manifest Destiny was growing in popularity. The discovery of gold in California, for example, was commonly perceived as a key factor in encouraging westward migration.

(b) *How serious a threat to the USA was the rise of Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?*

There were a number of impressive responses to this question. These were based on clear understanding of what the USA was seeking to achieve by its involvement in the Western Pacific, and the ways in which its relations with Japan helped or hindered these ambitions. This approach facilitated the development of fully-focused and balanced arguments. The majority of responses tended to be more narrative in style, describing various incidents which impacted on relations between the two countries without examining the extent to which Japan should be seen as a threat to American foreign policy aims in the period.

6 Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877

(a) *Why in March 1864 did President Lincoln appoint Grant as head of the Union army?*

Candidates generally found it difficult to remain focused on the requirements of the question. Most responses, therefore, tended to concentrate on Lincoln's aims at the outset of the Civil War, followed by vague assertions such as that he trusted Grant to carry out his wishes. The most effective responses were characterised by clear understanding of Grant's early military successes (such as gaining control of Vicksburg) at a time when Unionist forces generally had failed to gain any significant military advantage over the South.

(b) *How far were civil liberties in the North sacrificed to the need to win the Civil War?*

This question was generally well answered, most candidates being able to identify sufficient appropriate factual information to ensure a sense of balance. The most effective responses came from candidates who appreciated that, having established balance, it was necessary to make a judgement and develop a

convincing argument regarding the extent to which civil liberties in the North were sacrificed during the Civil War.

7 The Gilded Age and the Progressive Era from the 1870s to the 1920s

(a) *Why were anti-trust laws introduced from the 1890s?*

Relatively few candidates attempted this question. The majority of responses relied on rather generalised statements regarding growing opposition to cartels/monopolies. More effective responses were characterised by the deployment of specific examples to create greater range and depth.

(b) *'The impact of the "robber barons", such as Carnegie and Rockefeller, was beneficial to the United States.' How far do you agree?*

Relatively few candidates attempted this question. Most adopted a narrative approach, describing who the 'robber barons' were and what they did, generally concluding with the generalised and unbalanced assertion that they benefitted no-one but themselves. More impressive responses were more fully focused on the impact of their actions, and were able to generate greater balance by showing the positive impact which they had on the wider American economy.

8 The Great Crash, the Great Depression and the New Deal, 1929–1941

(a) *Why did the Great Depression last so long?*

The best responses resulted from appreciation of the need to explain why the depression continued despite Roosevelt's New Deal legislation. Less successful responses focused on a very limited timeframe, largely asserting that the depression lasted so long as a result of Hoover's failure to deal with it effectively. There seemed to be a general assumption that, while Hoover had failed, Roosevelt succeeded in ending the Great Depression.

(b) *How far do you agree that President Hoover's response to the Great Crash was wholly inadequate?*

Given the way in which most candidates had interpreted part (a), it is not surprising that many of the same points were repeated in responses to this question. The majority of candidates adopted a narrative approach, outlining what Hoover did and (more specifically) did not do in response to the Great Crash; this invariably led to the conclusion that, since he failed to end the depression, Hoover's response was 'wholly inadequate'. The most impressive responses were based on a more balanced assessment of the evidence, showing greater understanding of the problems which Hoover faced and the reasons behind his decisions.

Section C: International Option: International Relations, 1871–1945

9 International Relations, 1871–1918

(a) *Why did Bismarck establish a system of alliances?*

This question was generally well answered. While some candidates tended to simply describe the terms of the various alliances or drift into largely irrelevant evaluation of their subsequent impact, the majority remained fully-focused on the key issue of why Bismarck felt it expedient to establish them. They were able to identify and explain a range of appropriate factors. There were relatively few weak responses; these were invariably the result of inadequate or inaccurate factual knowledge.

(b) *How far was President Theodore Roosevelt responsible for the USA's move towards a more imperialistic foreign policy?*

Most candidates were able to display sound knowledge of the reasons why the USA moved away from strict isolationism and adopted a more expansionist foreign policy during this period. The significance of an economic downturn in 1893 and the outcome of war against Spain in 1898, for example, were widely understood. There was less understanding of the role which Theodore Roosevelt played in this process, frequently restricted to his involvement in the Panama Canal. As a result, responses often lacked focus on the precise requirements of the question. The most impressive responses were characterised by clear understanding of the significance of Roosevelt's actions (such as the Platt Amendment and the Roosevelt Corollary), which enabled the development of more balanced and explicitly relevant arguments.

10 International Relations, 1919–1933

(a) *Why did the French seek a harsh peace settlement with Germany?*

Many candidates were able to produce high-quality responses, characterised by clear and well supported explanations of the French desire for both revenge and future security. The majority of responses, while making the same basic points, tended to lack explanatory and analytical depth. A large number of candidates compared and contrasted Clemenceau's hard-line attitude at the Paris peace talks with the more lenient views of Wilson and Lloyd George's desire to punish Germany while, at the same time, allowing it to recover economically because of its vital trading links with Britain. While clearly of relevance, this approach often led candidates to drift too far from the specific requirements of the question.

(b) *'Woodrow Wilson was the architect of the Paris Peace Settlement.' How far do you agree?*

The most impressive responses were based on clear assessment of what Wilson was aiming to achieve at the Paris peace talks and the extent to which the treaties which emerged reflected his intentions. This enabled the development of fully-focused and balanced arguments, the most common conclusion being that Wilson's idealistic aims were largely undermined by the more forceful demands of France and Britain, together with the rapidly changing circumstances in Eastern Europe. Weaker responses, while containing much the same factual information, tended to be more narrative/descriptive in approach with insufficient focus on the specific requirements of the question.

11 International Relations, 1933–1939

(a) *Why did Mussolini order the invasion of Abyssinia in 1935?*

Virtually all candidates were able to identify valid reasons for Mussolini's decision to invade Abyssinia in 1935, most arguing that it was a reflection of his general foreign policy aim to make Italy 'great, feared and respected'. The most impressive responses were based on detailed contextual understanding, explaining why Mussolini now felt able to deviate from the more diplomatic approach which he had previously adopted and how he needed a propaganda boost to overcome increasing opposition in an Italy struggling with major economic problems. The majority of responses, while lacking such analytical depth, remained fully focused on the requirements of the question. There were very few weak responses; in most cases, these were based on descriptions of the invasion and explanations of why Italy was successful.

(b) *To what extent was Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War caused by the disunity of his enemies?*

Most candidates were able to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the various factors which led to the victory of Franco's Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War. The majority of responses followed a similar pattern, in which a narrative account of the various reasons for Franco's success was followed by a concluding paragraph in which some attempt was made to reflect on the relative significance of Republican disunity. In many cases, this involved assertions which were not really supported by the preceding evidence. The most effective responses were fully focused on the requirements of the actual question throughout, enabling the development of clear, sustained and balanced arguments.

12 China and Japan, 1919–1945

(a) *Why was the Northern Expedition successful?*

Most candidates were able to display detailed knowledge of the Northern Expedition, although there was a marked tendency to describe its progress and outcome rather than focus on the reasons for its success. The most effective responses were characterised by the identification and analysis of a range of factors to explain why Chiang Kai-shek's KMT forces were able to gain control over China by 1928.

(b) *To what extent were Japan's economic problems responsible for the country becoming a military dictatorship in the 1930s?*

Many essays demonstrated a limited understanding of the economic problems which had confronted Japan since the end of World War I, with most candidates relying on generalised assertions regarding the impact of the crisis after 1929. The ways in which these economic problems impacted on Japan's attempts to maintain a democratic form of government were rarely understood. As a result, the majority of responses lacked

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range, depth and balance, largely assuming that Japan's descent into military dictatorship was entirely due to the power of the army, as evidenced by events in Manchuria. The weakest responses were the result of confusion over the requirements of the question, a significantly large number of candidates writing at length about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

HISTORY

<p>Paper 9389/31 Interpretations Question</p>

Key Messages

The question asks what candidates can learn about the historian's interpretation from the extract. Answers should therefore consist of two aspects: the identification of the historian's central argument, and an explanation, using the extract, of how the argument was identified.

Knowledge, both of the context and of the historiography of the topic, is important in that it helps candidates to understand the extract. It is not, however, important in its own right, and unfocused writing based on knowledge, rather than on what is in the extract, should be avoided.

The question does not seek a lengthy answer, but it does require a focused one. Candidates would be well advised to spend time on carefully reading the extract and identifying the most important aspects of the argument before they start to write. Being able to synthesise what the extract contains, rather than rushing into a paragraph by paragraph, or even line by line, discussion of what the historian has written, is vital to demonstrating full understanding.

General Comments

The general quality of the answers was impressive. The extracts gave few problems of comprehension at face value, though whether the particular nuances of an historian's argument were detected was a central part of what the paper was assessing, and naturally some candidates showed more sophisticated understanding than others. The level of knowledge of the topics was also good, but use of this knowledge to make sense of what the extract was saying was sometimes replaced by unfocused description of events.

Although most candidates were able to identify aspects of the historian's interpretation, a much smaller number were able to demonstrate sound or complete understanding by consistently focusing on the extract and using relevant material from the extract to explain their conclusions. There was a tendency for answers to stray into summaries of the historiography of the topic, or of events. Where the extract was used, candidates would often adopt an approach of commenting on each paragraph in turn, frequently reaching entirely contradictory conclusions from them about the historian's interpretation. It was relatively rare to read an answer that showed unambiguous understanding that the main message or central interpretation contained within the extract could only be derived from the extract as a whole, rather than from elements within it. Thus, on the Cold War, for example, a paragraph or even a sentence might be termed traditional, only for the next paragraph to be regarded as revisionist. On the Holocaust, an intentionalist paragraph would be followed by a structuralist sentence, and so on. The best answers were capable of synthesising apparently contradictory elements into an overarching interpretation.

For the Cold War and Holocaust topics, the historiography has developed within broad schools that can be labelled in a form of shorthand summarising the historians' ideas and approaches (traditional, revisionist, post-revisionist, intentionalist, structuralist, synthesis, etc.). It was apparent that identifying an interpretation by applying a label to it was often a trap for candidates. For the approach to work, candidates had to understand what the labels meant, and this was by no means universally the case. Then the label had to be relevant to the extract, which again was not always an entirely straightforward matter. If an inappropriate label was used, immediate doubt was cast on the candidate's level of understanding of the extract. It should be stressed that there is no requirement to use such labels. Using the extract to identify and explain the interpretation within it is sufficient, though of course a label appropriately used can be an effective way of showing understanding.

Some candidates attempted to evaluate the extract, and comment on its reliability. The question does not demand this, and attempts to do it were not merely unnecessary, but usually counter-productive. Candidates will almost certainly have no valid grounds for accusing individual historians of bias, incomplete research,

looking for evidence to support pre-determined arguments, or other crimes against good historical method. This tended to happen when candidates thought they had identified the author of an extract, but even when an extract is taken from a highly controversial work, such as Goldhagen on 'Hitler's Willing Executioners', the focus of this paper is on *what* the historian is saying and not on whether the historian is *correct* to say it. Candidates are not expected to identify who the author of an extract is, and this year's examination suggested that, where candidates thought they had, it did them more harm than good as it distracted them from writing about extract and on to writing about the historian.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: The Causes and Impact of British Imperialism, c. 1850–1939

The central argument of the historian is that imperialism had economic causes, and that fundamental to this was the problem of over-production that could not be absorbed by home markets. The best answers recognised these aspects of the interpretation, and illustrated them using material from the extract. More usual were answers that recognised some of the overall interpretation, whilst missing other aspects of it, though still offering valid support from the extract. Some answers recognised the author as Hobson, though labelling the extract (e.g. a 'Hobson-Lenin' interpretation) was neither expected nor required. Some candidates commented on the approach – that it as an economic analysis of imperialism – without actually identifying this as an aspect of the interpretation. With adequate support from the extract, this received credit, but not as much as answers focused on the interpretation itself. Similar in quality were answers looking at sub-messages (i.e. points of interpretation, but not those central to the historian's overall view), for example that European nations were looking for trading opportunities around the world. The weakest answers fell into two broad categories. First, those that repeated or paraphrased points in the extract without engaging with the historian's interpretation, and second, those that wrote about Imperialism with no reference to the extract.

Section B: The Holocaust

The central argument of the historian who wrote this extract is that while Hitler's subordinates took the practical steps to initiate the Holocaust in Poland during the Second World War, it was Hitler who was ultimately responsible by setting the tone that made these actions possible. The best responses recognised both these aspects of the interpretation, and illustrated them using material from the extract. More usual were answers that recognised some of the overall interpretation, whilst missing other elements of it, but nonetheless offering appropriate support from the extract. A characteristic of many answers was an attempt to label the interpretation, generally as intentionalist (possible to explain in relation to Hitler setting the tone) or functionalist (in the way that circumstances permitted the Holocaust to develop). Either of these labels on its own would clearly not cover the whole interpretation, and would therefore limit the scope of the answer. The best answers were able to see the extract as a synthesis interpretation, and show how they reached this conclusion. However, it is important to note that it was not necessary to use any label at all to achieve the higher mark bands; recognising and supporting the interpretation is enough. Some candidates made comments about the historian's approach, for example that this was a 'from above' view of the Holocaust, concentrating on the actions of the Nazi leadership, but without linking this to the interpretation. Adequately supported such answers would receive credit, but at a lower level than those engaging with the main aspects of the interpretation itself. Similar in quality were answers looking at sub-messages (i.e. points of interpretation, but not those central to the historian's overall view – for example, that the Nazis were prepared to amend policies that met with vigorous opposition). The weakest answers fell into two broad categories. First, those that repeated or paraphrased points in the extract without engaging with the historian's interpretation, and second, those that wrote about the Holocaust with no reference to the extract.

Section C: The Origins and Development of the Cold War, 1941–50

The central argument of the historian who wrote the extract is that prospects for post-war unity between the former allies were destroyed by the determined expansionism of the Soviet Union, despite the well-intentioned attempts of the Western powers to continue co-operation. The best candidates recognised both these elements of the interpretation, and were able to illustrate them using material from the extract. More usual were answers that recognised some aspects of the overall interpretation, whilst missing others, but nonetheless offered appropriate support from the extract. Almost all answers used labels to identify the nature of the interpretation, but what was crucial was how the extract was used to explain these labels. In truth, the extract was so obviously 'traditional' that almost every answer recognised it, at least in part. However, many candidates did not adequately support this assertion. Using appropriate quotes from the extract to demonstrate the traditionalism was essential, yet many answers struggled to do this, either writing generalised paraphrase, or quoting elements of the extract which did not show traditional features, or writing

about context rather than focusing on the extract. Some candidates insisted that the extract was post-revisionist, usually qualifying this by adding that it also had traditionalist features. The post-revisionist argument rested on reading the second paragraph of the extract in isolation, and noting that it seemed to suggest that there was mutual suspicion and misunderstanding between the USSR and the West. A much better reading of this paragraph would, however, have been to see it as not inconsistent with the overall traditionalist interpretation of the historian, not least because the best answers always keep in site the extract *as a whole*, rather than attempting to answer on the basis of *aspects* of it. Those arguing post-revisionism almost all misinterpreted the first sentence of the third paragraph – ‘*The American and British governments admitted that the Soviet determination to prevent hostile elements in the countries near its frontiers was not without reason.*’ This and the rest of the paragraph served to exonerate the Western powers from any blame, making them seem understanding of the Soviets, and was therefore a central element of the traditional interpretation, yet was often seen as just the opposite, making them appear guilty for conceding that the Soviet Union was right to fear them. Arguing that the extract was both post-revisionist and traditional rested on the fallacy of seeing the extract as comprising two interpretations, rather than seeking to integrate its aspects into a single interpretation. The weakest answers fell into two broad categories. First those that repeated or paraphrased points in the extract without engaging with the historian’s interpretation, and second those that wrote about the Cold War with no reference to the extract.

HISTORY

<p>Paper 9389/32 Interpretations Question</p>

Key Messages

The question asks what candidates can learn about the historian's interpretation from the extract. Answers should therefore consist of two aspects: the identification of the historian's central argument, and an explanation, using the extract, of how the argument was identified.

Knowledge, both of the context and of the historiography of the topic, is important in that it helps candidates to understand the extract. It is not, however, important in its own right, and unfocused writing based on knowledge, rather than on what is in the extract, should be avoided.

The question does not seek a lengthy answer, but it does require a focused one. Candidates would be well advised to spend time on carefully reading the extract and identifying the most important aspects of the argument before they start to write. Being able to synthesise what the extract contains, rather than rushing into a paragraph by paragraph, or even line by line, discussion of what the historian has written, is vital to demonstrating full understanding.

General Comments

The general quality of the answers was impressive. The extracts gave few problems of comprehension at face value, though whether the particular nuances of an historian's argument were detected was a central part of what the paper was assessing, and naturally some candidates showed more sophisticated understanding than others. The level of knowledge of the topics was also good, but use of this knowledge to make sense of what the extract was saying was sometimes replaced by unfocused description of events.

Although most candidates were able to identify aspects of the historian's interpretation, a much smaller number were able to demonstrate sound or complete understanding by consistently focusing on the extract and using relevant material from the extract to explain their conclusions. There was a tendency for answers to stray into summaries of the historiography of the topic, or of events. Where the extract was used, candidates would often adopt an approach of commenting on each paragraph in turn, frequently reaching entirely contradictory conclusions from them about the historian's interpretation. It was relatively rare to read an answer that showed unambiguous understanding that the main message or central interpretation contained within the extract could only be derived from the extract as a whole, rather than from elements within it. Thus, on the Cold War, for example, a paragraph or even a sentence might be termed traditional, only for the next paragraph to be regarded as revisionist. On the Holocaust, an intentionalist paragraph would be followed by a structuralist sentence, and so on. The best answers were capable of synthesising apparently contradictory elements into an overarching interpretation.

For the Cold War and Holocaust topics, the historiography has developed within broad schools that can be labelled in a form of shorthand summarising the historians' ideas and approaches (traditional, revisionist, post-revisionist, intentionalist, structuralist, synthesis, etc.). It was apparent that identifying an interpretation by applying a label to it was often a trap for candidates. For the approach to work, candidates had to understand what the labels meant, and this was by no means universally the case. Then the label had to be relevant to the extract, which again was not always an entirely straightforward matter. If an inappropriate label was used, immediate doubt was cast on the candidate's level of understanding of the extract. It should be stressed that there is no requirement to use such labels. Using the extract to identify and explain the interpretation within it is sufficient, though of course a label appropriately used can be an effective way of showing understanding.

Some candidates attempted to evaluate the extract, and comment on its reliability. The question does not demand this, and attempts to do it were not merely unnecessary, but usually counter-productive. Candidates will almost certainly have no valid grounds for accusing individual historians of bias, incomplete research,

looking for evidence to support pre-determined arguments, or other crimes against good historical method. This tended to happen when candidates thought they had identified the author of an extract, but even when an extract is taken from a highly controversial work, such as Goldhagen on 'Hitler's Willing Executioners', the focus of this paper is on *what* the historian is saying and not on whether the historian is *correct* to say it. It is worth adding here that candidates are not expected to identify who the author of an extract is, and this year's examination suggested that where candidates thought they had, it did them more harm than good as it distracted them from the extract and on to writing about the historian.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: The Causes and Impact of British Imperialism, c. 1850–1939

The central argument of the historian who wrote the extract is that there was an essential continuity in imperial policy through the nineteenth century, which was a preference for informal over formal Empire, but that policy makers would take whatever steps required to maintain paramountcy. The best candidates recognised these elements of the interpretation, and were able to illustrate them using material from the extract. More usual were answers that recognised some of these central elements, whilst missing others, but nonetheless offered appropriate support from the extract. Some candidates were able to make valid comments about the historian's approach, for example, the concentration on the metropole, rather than the periphery, but without linking this to the interpretation. Adequately supported, such answers would receive credit, but at a lower level. Similar in quality were answers that looked at valid sub-messages (i.e. points of interpretation, but not those central to the historian's overall view – for example, that the historian viewed imperial expansion into tropical Africa as less important than the successful exploitation of Empire elsewhere). The weakest answers fell into two broad categories. First those that repeated or paraphrased points in the extract without engaging with the historian's interpretation, and second those that wrote about imperialism with no reference to the extract.

Section B: The Holocaust

The central argument of the historian who wrote the extract is that the German people shared an eliminationist anti-semitism, which could lead to the Holocaust once a party which shared this belief was elected to power. The best candidates recognised these elements, and were able to illustrate them using material from the extract. More usual were answers that recognised some of these central elements, whilst missing others, but nonetheless offered appropriate support from the extract. A characteristic of many answers was an attempt to label the interpretation, generally as intentionalist (possible to explain in relation to what it said about the Nazis, but not obviously so) or functionalist (not so). Other answers discussed anti-semitism at length, but with no real focus on the 'eliminationist' aspect of the interpretation. Some candidates were able to make valid comments about the historian's approach, for example, that this was essentially a 'from below' view on the Holocaust, but without linking this to the interpretation. Adequately supported, such answers would receive credit, but at a lower level than those engaging with the interpretation itself. Similar in quality were answers that looked at valid sub-messages (i.e. points of interpretation, but not those central to the historian's overall view – for example, that the Nazis were prepared to amend policies that met with vigorous opposition). The weakest answers fell into two broad categories. First those that repeated or paraphrased points in the extract without engaging with the historian's interpretation, and second those that wrote about the Holocaust with no reference to the extract.

Section C: The Origins and Development of the Cold War, 1941–50

The central argument of the historian who wrote the extract is that, whilst both sides share the blame for the mutual suspicion that characterised relations after the Second World War, the fundamental reason why this escalated so rapidly into Cold War was the nature of the Soviet state, and particularly its ideology. Almost all answers used labels to identify the nature of the interpretation, but what was crucial was how the extract was used to explain these labels. Allocating elements of blame to both sides is certainly 'post-revisionist', but the best answers had to go beyond this to integrate within the overall interpretation the shift within the extract to allocating greater blame to the Soviet Union. Much more usual was to identify and support the obviously 'post-revisionist' nature of much of the extract, but to see the comments on Soviet ideology as simply more evidence of a *sharing* of blame – in other words, missing the important shift in the interpretation. There were also answers maintaining that the answer had two interpretations: that it started post-revisionist, then shifted to traditionalist (in that it shifts to blaming Stalin/the Soviet Union). These candidates had the raw material to identify the overall interpretation, but by seeing the extract as comprising two interpretations, they were unable to integrate the essential elements into a single interpretation. In truth, the extract was so obviously 'post-revisionist' that almost every answer recognised it. However, many candidates did not adequately

support this assertion. Using appropriate quotes from the extract to demonstrate the post-revisionism was essential, yet many answers struggled to do this, either writing generalised paraphrase, or quoting elements of the extract which did not show post-revisionism, or writing about context rather than focusing on the extract. The weakest answers fell into two broad categories. First those that repeated or paraphrased points in the extract without engaging with the historian's interpretation, and second those that wrote about the Cold War with no reference to the extract.

HISTORY

Paper 9389/33
Interpretations Question

Key Messages

The question asks what candidates can learn about the historian's interpretation from the extract. Answers should therefore consist of two aspects: the identification of the historian's central argument, and an explanation, using the extract, of how the argument was identified.

Knowledge, both of the context and of the historiography of the topic, is important in that it helps candidates to understand the extract. It is not, however, important in its own right, and unfocused writing based on knowledge, rather than on what is in the extract, should be avoided.

The question does not seek a lengthy answer, but it does require a focused one. Candidates would be well advised to spend time on carefully reading the extract and identifying the most important aspects of the argument before they start to write. Being able to synthesise what the extract contains, rather than rushing into a paragraph by paragraph, or even line by line, discussion of what the historian has written, is vital to demonstrating full understanding.

General Comments

The general quality of the answers was impressive. The extracts gave few problems of comprehension at face value, though whether the particular nuances of an historian's argument were detected was a central part of what the paper was assessing, and naturally some candidates showed more sophisticated understanding than others. The level of knowledge of the topics was also good, but use of this knowledge to make sense of what the extract was saying was sometimes replaced by unfocused description of events.

Although most candidates were able to identify aspects of the historian's interpretation, a much smaller number were able to demonstrate sound or complete understanding by consistently focusing on the extract and using relevant material from the extract to explain their conclusions. There was a tendency for answers to stray into summaries of the historiography of the topic, or of events. Where the extract was used, candidates would often adopt an approach of commenting on each paragraph in turn, frequently reaching entirely contradictory conclusions from them about the historian's interpretation. It was relatively rare to read an answer that showed unambiguous understanding that the main message or central interpretation contained within the extract could only be derived from the extract as a whole, rather than from elements within it. Thus, on the Cold War, for example, a paragraph or even a sentence might be termed traditional, only for the next paragraph to be regarded as revisionist. On the Holocaust, an intentionalist paragraph would be followed by a structuralist sentence, and so on. The best answers were capable of synthesising apparently contradictory elements into an overarching interpretation.

For the Cold War and Holocaust topics, the historiography has developed within broad schools that can be labelled in a form of shorthand summarising the historians' ideas and approaches (traditional, revisionist, post-revisionist, intentionalist, structuralist, synthesis etc.). It was apparent that identifying an interpretation by applying a label to it was often a trap for candidates. For the approach to work, candidates had to understand what the labels meant, and this was by no means universally the case. Then the label had to be relevant to the extract, which again was not always an entirely straightforward matter. If an inappropriate label was used, immediate doubt was cast on the candidate's level of understanding of the extract. It should be stressed that there is no requirement to use such labels. Using the extract to identify and explain the interpretation within it is sufficient, though of course a label appropriately used can be an effective way of showing understanding.

Some candidates attempted to evaluate the extract, and comment on its reliability. The question does not demand this, and attempts to do it were not merely unnecessary, but usually counter-productive. Candidates will almost certainly have no valid grounds for accusing individual historians of bias, incomplete research,

looking for evidence to support pre-determined arguments, or other crimes against good historical method. This tended to happen when candidates thought they had identified the author of an extract, but even when an extract is taken from a highly controversial work, such as Goldhagen on 'Hitler's Willing Executioners', the focus of this paper is on *what* the historian is saying and not on whether the historian is *correct* to say it. It is worth adding here that candidates are not expected to identify who the author of an extract is, and this year's examination suggested that where candidates thought they had, it did them more harm than good as it distracted them from the extract and on to writing about the historian.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A: The Causes and Impact of British Imperialism, c. 1850–1939

The central argument of the historian who wrote the extract is that, on balance, the impact of British imperialism on India was beneficial, and that the problem with India's development was too little imperial intervention rather than too much. The idea of a balance between good and bad effects was important, as the extract clearly was not simply arguing that the impact was good. The best candidates recognised all these elements of the interpretation, and were able to illustrate them using material from the extract. More usual were answers that recognised some of these central elements, whilst missing others, but nonetheless offered appropriate support from the extract. Some candidates were able to make valid comments about the historian's approach, for example the concentration on the economic aspects, but without linking this to the interpretation. Adequately supported, such answers would receive credit, but at a lower level. Similar in quality were answers that looked at valid sub-messages (i.e. points of interpretation, but not those central to the historian's overall view – for example, that the impact on India was unambiguously beneficial). The weakest answers fell into two broad categories. First those that repeated or paraphrased points in the extract without engaging with the historian's interpretation, and second those that wrote about imperialism with no reference to the extract.

Section B: The Holocaust

The central argument of the historian who wrote the extract is that many of those who did the killing in the Holocaust were 'ordinary men', not motivated particularly by ideology, willing but not wishing to kill, who found themselves in situations brought about by war in which they were able to kill. The best candidates recognised these elements, and were able to illustrate them using material from the extract. More usual were answers that recognised some of these central elements, whilst missing others, but nonetheless offered appropriate support from the extract. A characteristic of many answers was an attempt to label the interpretation, as intentionalist, functionalist or as a 'synthesis'. As the extract was about perpetrators, and not directly about the causation of the Holocaust, these labels were not helpful, and sometimes led candidates to make conclusions that the extract could not sustain. Some candidates were able to make valid comments about the historian's approach, for example, that this was essentially a 'from below' view on the Holocaust, but without linking this to the interpretation. Adequately supported, such answers would receive credit, but at a lower level than those engaging with the interpretation itself. Similar in quality were answers that looked at valid sub-messages (i.e. points of interpretation, but not those central to the historian's overall view – for example, that there was no significant difference between the behaviour of the German and non-German members of the battalion). The weakest answers fell into two broad categories. First those that repeated or paraphrased points in the extract without engaging with the historian's interpretation, and second those that wrote about the Holocaust with no reference to the extract.

Section C: The Origins and Development of the Cold War, 1941–50

The central argument of the historian who wrote the extract is that the root cause for the breakdown of the wartime alliance was Stalin's insistence on equating security with grabbing territory, and that the Western powers can be absolved from responsibility because they were prepared to concede Stalin's demands. Almost all answers used labels to identify the nature of the interpretation, but what was crucial was how the extract was used to explain these labels. Allocating blame to Stalin can be 'orthodox/traditional', or (post)post-revisionist', but the best answers had to go beyond this to integrate within the overall interpretation the idea that it was Stalin's security concerns that made all the difference, and that the historian also sought to demonstrate the reasonable behaviour of the West. Most answers, though by no means all, detected elements of the extract blaming Stalin, but many undermined this analysis by attempting to read into the extract other aspects that simply were not there, notably the idea that the Cold War was caused by mutual incomprehension. As always, using appropriate quotes from the extract to demonstrate the interpretation was essential, yet many answers struggled to do this, either writing generalised paraphrase, or quoting aspects of the extract that did not illustrate Stalin's responsibility, or writing about context rather than focusing on the extract. The weakest answers fell into two broad categories. First those that repeated or

paraphrased points in the extract without engaging with the historian's interpretation, and second those that wrote about the Cold War with no reference to the extract.

HISTORY

Paper 9389/41
Depth Study

General Comments

On the whole, candidates responded well to the format of this new syllabus and liked the greater degree of certainty within the topics. There was often a great willingness to discuss, challenge and argue and the quality of analysis could be very high. Vital for success was demonstrating good understanding of the question, really reflecting on it with care, and conveying a focussed and balanced argument which was well supported by relevant and accurate detail.

Most candidates responded well to the need for 'depth', ensuring that their knowledge was utilised in support of valid points and not seen as an end in itself. Candidates who achieved the highest marks possible demonstrated sustained judgement and showed a really impressive level of knowledge and understanding, while at the same time having the crucial consistent analytical focus. In many cases these candidates started their essays with a very clear answer to the question posed and made it clear why they had come to that response in the early stages of the essay.

Many candidates began their responses with a generalised 'background' start, leading to a balanced approach, followed by a conclusion which attempted to pull it all together. While some succeeded in successfully utilising this approach, a characteristic in weaker answers was that the conclusion did not match the evidence given earlier in the essay. Where candidates struggled with time management, this was reflected in a reduction of analytical content. Some candidates demonstrated a really impressive command of the detail, but could have improved by giving closer attention to the question set. Conversely, there were also some very impressive essays with outstanding analysis but with very limited detail present to back up the valid points made. The most successful responses were balanced arguments supported by evidence.

There were some cases of rubric errors where candidates answered questions from two different sections. The one seen most often came from centres where the candidates had obviously been taught Depth Study 3 – International History – and were tempted by Question 8 on Depth Study 2 – the History of the USA. Only the higher of the two marks could be awarded. Candidates should be reminded of the rubric requirements of the paper to avoid writing essays which cannot be credited to their overall outcome.

Comments on Specific Questions

Depth Study 1: Europe of the Dictators, 1918–1941

Very few candidates did Depth Study 1, so commenting on this proved difficult and the very limited numbers should be borne in mind.

1 Discuss the view that Trotsky was more important than Lenin to Bolshevik victory in the Civil War in Russia.

The most successful answers kept a focus on the Civil War and not get too immersed in the Trotsky v Lenin role in success of the Revolution of 1917. This clearly would have been the preferred question in some cases. The best responses reflected carefully on Trotsky's 'military' contribution and compared it with Lenin's more 'strategic' overview as well as his critical decision making over issues like War Communism. While other factors, such as White incompetence may have played a part in the outcome, weaker responses had tendency to focus too much on this and not on the precise roles of Lenin and Trotsky.

2 'The appeal of fascism was the main reason for Mussolini becoming Prime Minister in 1922.' How far do you agree?

There were some competent responses here. While some answers could be a little vague on exactly what Mussolini and his Fascists stood for (not unreasonably), there was a good grasp of the many factors that led to his attainment of power in 1922. Depth was often very good with lots of details about the various governments and the nature and extent of economic problems. The best answers kept a clear focus on the question, arguing which was the 'main' reason and why. Some candidates provided very impressive narratives of events between 1919 and 1922, but as they did not address the question set, credit could not be given.

3 'Totalitarian rule was a means to an end for Stalin, and not an end in itself.' How far do you agree?

The better responses made it clear that they knew what totalitarian rule was with a very sound definition. It is always best to start with a definition which suits the context in this sort of essay. There were some excellent debates on whether Stalin was just out for absolute power or whether he wanted absolute power in order to bring about a communist society in Russia. Some argued that it was a strong Russia, capable of standing up to Nazism, that was his main aim, and quite good cases were made for that. There was often a good knowledge of the historiography of this much debated issue. Those that avoided too much of a focus on the reasons for the Purges (not quite what the question was asking) or got too involved in the details of the purges also did well. It was good to see real depth in many cases showing the lengths that Stalin went to control the minds of the Russian people.

4 'Weimar politicians must bear the greatest responsibility for Hitler becoming Chancellor in 1933.' Discuss this view.

This was perhaps the most popular of the four questions in the section. The best answers kept the focus firmly on the 1929–33 period rather than the immediate post-First World War period and the legacy of Versailles. There were some excellent arguments made in favour of the hypothesis with detailed analysis of the role that Brüning, Schleicher, Hindenburg and others played in Hitler's attainment of power. Some candidates argued forcefully that the 'early' Weimar politicians were important in giving ammunition to the 'stab in the back' school of thought, but did not dwell on that for too long. Some very good arguments were made for the way in which Weimar mismanaged the impact of the Depression as well. The best really kept their focus on the 'greatest' aspect of the question and delivered a clear judgement on it.

Depth Study 2: The History of the USA, 1945–1990

5 Assess the reasons why the 1950s were a period of economic growth.

The best responses kept a focus very much on the 'assess' part of the question and avoided the tendency to just list reasons. There was an acceptance that the boom prompted by the war continued and that the government played a major role in it with, for example, the continuing growth in defence spending. The majority of candidates tended to list reasons and not really reflect on what might have been the most important factor/s and why. Few detailed statistics were provided in support of arguments and there were many generalisations about the rise of a consumer culture and the growth of automobile sales. Some candidates provided an interesting debate as to whether the government was the dominant influence in the growth of the economy, or whether it was a mix of the market and population growth. Weaker responses contained few 'assessments' and debates and were limited to a lot of lists of and generalised points.

6 'By the late 1970s the American people were less united than they had been in the late 1960s.' How far do you agree?

The best responses were very well structured, considering what might, or might not, be a 'united' or 'disunited' nation at any one time, and then comparing the two periods given in the question. Candidates provided responses covering events and themes such as race and Vietnam, where there might be disunity or otherwise, and the best came to a balanced conclusion. Weaker responses provided a list of events in the 60s and 70s and did not provide an answer to the question. The divisions of the 60s seemed to be better grasped than those of the 70s – and coverage of the 70s tended to be a list of policy failures of the Presidents of the period.

7 How successful was Reaganomics?

This was the most popular question and usually the best answered response from this section of the paper. There was usually good understanding of what Reaganomics was. Some candidates did argue that it did not merit being called anything that ended with 'onomics' but was a confused jumble of policies designed to get Regan into office and keep him there. Some narrated the theory and little else, but more often answers were focussed in terms of outcomes, both good and bad. The outstanding ones really reflected on what the criteria for 'success' might be in this context. Those with serious investments in the arms industry might view it from a very different perspective from certain racial minorities. There was also the interesting argument that it should be seen as a success as it played a key role in ending the Cold War, while at the same time giving the Federal Reserve a nervous breakdown over the first trillion dollar deficit. Candidates improve their responses by making reference to factual or statistical examples.

8 How far was President Truman personally responsible for the USA's hard-line policy towards the USSR in the period 1945–50?

The best answers began with a clear viewpoint, usually arguing that it was primarily Truman, rather than the Kennans and the Achesons, and developed the argument while at the same time reflecting on how much other factors affected the decision-making process. Excellent responses also considered the 'hard-line' element of the question as opposed to just the 'policy' aspect. The majority of responses provided a narrative of events concerning US foreign policy between 1945 and 1950, but did not come to a conclusion. There were also instances of candidates writing about events in the 1950s, which were outside of the timeframe given.

Depth Study 3: International History, 1945–1991

Very few candidates did Depth Study 3, so this needs to be borne in mind when reading the comments below.

9 To what extent did relations between the USA and the USSR improve in the period from 1953 to 1961?

While examining the background to 1953 was warranted in response to this question, there was a strong tendency to start with a survey of events going back to at least 1945 and this could take over much of the essay. The best responses looked at the situation existing between the two countries at the beginning and end of the Eisenhower/Dulles era, the Korean War through to the Bay of Pigs and came to a decision based on it. There were some interesting comments on the possible contrast between the publicly stated views of the two 'sides' and those privately held by elites and leaders. Whilst there was usually a good command of the relevant details, candidates could improve their answers by giving more focus on the key element of the question – the 'extent'.

10 'Détente did little to stabilise international relations during the 1970s.' How far do you agree?

There were very few responses to this question. Candidates demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of what détente involved and the way in which it had been reached, but linking it with international relations generally proved to be very challenging. There were some good arguments which suggested that détente was a superficial process which did little to heal the breach between Capitalism and Communism (as the not unexpected arrival of the Second Cold War showed), but they tended not to reflect what impact it might have on 'stability'.

11 How successful was Mao Zedong in dealing with China's domestic problems?

The best answers clearly identified what the domestic problems were and then reflected on what 'success' might entail in this context. Once the identification had been made of the major problems and some criteria laid down for judging their 'success', then it proved to be a very straightforward essay. Some argued, quite successfully, that given his inheritance just the survival of China in one piece was a success. It was important to keep the focus on 'domestic' problems and time could be wasted on dealing with international affairs. Less successful responses were limited to a list of the work of Mao (often including a lot of foreign policy) and come to a belated conclusion that it was/was not, without giving any reasons for the conclusion. Many candidates provided good detailed

knowledge, but did not provide sufficient analysis. As is so often the case, it was the careful, reflective and clearly well planned start that was the hallmark of a good response.

12 'In the Gulf War (1990–91), the USA acted entirely out of self-interest.' How far do you agree?

There were very few responses to this question. The better responses looked at the background and build up to the Gulf War and the role that the US had played in it. It was important to reflect on what 'self-interest' might mean in this context. Some argued that it was all about oil and status, others suggesting that the political need to support Israel or allies such as Saudi Arabia was a key factor. Other responses suggested that there was an altruistic desire to try and bring peace and stability in the Middle East. It was good to see a range of quite balanced and reflective comments on US motivation. There was a case to be made that self-interest was bound to play a part, but that there were more important factors as well. It is worth stressing that strong arguments are not inappropriate in this sort of A Level essay, but points need to be backed up with relevant detail and that a degree of balance, or at least a clear awareness of alternative viewpoints, is expected.

HISTORY

Paper 9389/42
Depth Study

General Comments.

On the whole, candidates responded well to the format of this new syllabus and liked the greater degree of certainty within the topics. There was often a great willingness to discuss, challenge and argue and the quality of analysis could be very high. Vital for success was demonstrating good understanding of the question, really reflecting on it with care, and conveying a focussed and balanced argument which was well supported by relevant and accurate detail.

Most candidates responded well to the need for 'depth', ensuring that their knowledge was utilised in support of valid points and not seen as an end in itself. Candidates who achieved the highest marks possible demonstrated sustained judgement and showed a really impressive level of knowledge and understanding, while at the same time having the crucial consistent analytical focus. In many cases these candidates started their essays with a very clear answer to the question posed and made it clear why they had come to that response in the early stages of the essay.

Many candidates began their responses with a generalised 'background' start, leading to a balanced approach, followed by a conclusion which attempted to pull it all together. While some succeeded in successfully utilising this approach, a characteristic in weaker answers was that the conclusion did not match the evidence given earlier in the essay. Where candidates struggled with time management, this was reflected in a reduction of analytical content. Some candidates demonstrated a really impressive command of the detail, but could have improved by giving closer attention to the question set. Conversely, there were also some very impressive essays with outstanding analysis but with very limited detail present to back up the valid points made. The most successful responses were balanced arguments supported by evidence.

There were some cases of rubric errors where candidates answered questions from two different sections. The one seen most often came from centres where the candidates had obviously been taught Depth Study 3 – International History – and were tempted by Question 8 on Depth Study 2 – the History of the USA. Only the higher of the two marks could be awarded. Candidates should be reminded of the rubric requirements of the paper to avoid writing essays which cannot be credited to their overall outcome.

Comments on Specific Questions

Depth Study 1: Europe of the Dictators, 1918–1941

1 To what extent had Lenin created a totalitarian state in Russia by 1924?

This was a popular question. The best responses usually started with a clear picture of what a totalitarian state was and then compared the state of Russia in 1924 with that definition. Some candidates compared Russia with Germany or Italy and in many cases this took the focus of the essay away from the question set. Good responses kept the focus very firmly on 'extent' and avoided vague comments. Some candidates spent time considering whether Lenin actually intended to create a totalitarian state and mentioned the idea of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' but never quite succeeded in linking that with the rest of the answer.

2 Evaluate the reasons for the failure of democracy in Italy by 1922.

Successful essays remained really focused on the 'evaluate' part of the question. Many responses had ample depth on the events of 1918–22 in Italy, but were more than narrative than evaluative. Some good responses placed a lot of emphasis on the post-war background; others put more on the war itself, while some argued that the key reasons lay with government incompetence and the attitude of the elites in the post-war years. Many candidates demonstrated impressive knowledge but it was not often well utilised. There seemed to be uncertainty in what was expected when asked to 'evaluate', which is to weigh up the relative importance of evidence and come to a supported judgement.

3 To what extent does Stalin's use of his position as General Secretary of the Communist Party explain his rise to power by 1928?

There was a good level of depth displayed in most responses. The best responses started with a very positive answer and made it very clear to what 'extent' the position played a role and then developed the essay on from there. There were a good number of descriptions of the various factors which lay behind Stalin's attainment of power, Lenin's legacy, the ideological splits within the Politburo, Trotsky's failings and so on, as well as how Stalin built up support for himself utilising his role as General Secretary and Commissar for Nationalities. Some responses were a little vague on precisely how the General Secretary's role might have helped Stalin's rise to power. There were some good descriptions followed by limited conclusions in many cases. A number of candidates wrote in depth about the 1930s. Candidates should be reminded of the need to keep their answers focused on the time-span given in the question.

4 To what extent does popular support for Nazism explain Hitler's rise to power?

Successful answers were focussed very much on the 1929 to 1933 period with only limited reference to the years preceding or following. The best responses kept focus very firmly on the 'extent' part of the question, and essays which started with a firm judgement and then went on to effectively sustain it with relevant supporting detail scored highly. There were some excellent comments on how support from key groups such as industrialists and some of the press 'barons' was vital in certain ways, while at the same time commenting on the way the Nazis appealed to certain sections of society and how that linked in to the rise to power. Popular support was compared and contrasted with many other factors such as the role of the Weimar politicians and the impact of the Depression to good effect. Less successful responses strayed into the post-1933 period with a focus on how Hitler consolidated power, while others wrote at length on the implications of the First World War on Germany and issues like the hyperinflation and the invasion of the Ruhr.

Depth Study 2: The History of the USA, 1945–1990

5 How accurate is it to describe US society in the 1950s as 'calm and stable'?

Success here was very dependent on reflecting on what might be considered relevant to the 'calm and stable' aspects of the question. Those responses which kept the focus very much on social issues (and they can be quite broadly interpreted) did well. However, there were a significant number of responses that thought that the focus should be on foreign policy which was of very limited relevance. There were some good responses which contrasted the way in which economic growth led to prosperity for many and the growth of suburbia with the Cold War background ensuring a degree of national unity. This was usually contrasted with the impact of McCarthyism and the growing Civil Rights issues in the South. Some weaker responses went into a huge amount of detail on the growth of the teenage culture, but did not link this evidence to the question set.

6 How great was the impact of the oil crises of the 1970s on the USA?

There was a tendency to focus on the causes rather than the consequences of the two crises and some responses only covered the first one in the early 70s after the Yom Kippur War. The best responses really reflected on the 'great' part of the question and considered whether the two had profound and lasting effects on American society and its economy and foreign policy. Some argued that its impact was largely short term; others felt there were long term economic results. While there were some excellent arguments supported with some very impressive statistics, there was a reluctance to evaluate how 'great' the impact actually was.

7 How far did the Reagan Presidency help to improve the position of ethnic minorities during the 1980s?

Very few candidates attempted this question. Responses tended to focus more on the impact of Reaganomics rather than social policy, and argued that all Americans benefitted in many ways during the Reagan years. Candidates could have improved their answers by greater knowledge of Regan's Southern strategy or changes in issues like affirmative action.

8 'The Helsinki Accords were a defeat for the USA in the Cold War in Europe.' How far do you agree?

The best answers considered what a 'defeat' might mean in this context and retained a focus firmly on the Cold War in 'Europe'. There was often a tendency to display knowledge of events in the Far East and Africa, which could not be credited. There were some excellent responses which looked at the Accords in perspective, as part of a sound process of détente and possibly leading ultimately to the collapse of the 'evil' empire, while other good responses went for a more structured approach, looking at a case for and against. Weaker responses considered that it was a defeat, but did not make a clear judgement on how far.

Depth Study 3: International History, 1945–1991

9 'Confused and inconsistent'. How accurate is this assessment of Khrushchev's foreign policy?

This was a particularly popular question which produced some excellent answers. In most cases, the best responses dealt separately with the 'confused' and 'inconsistent' aspects of the question and developed quite separate answers for each. Dealing with both aspects together could produce confusion. Some candidates spent too long on the Stalinist background, while others moved right into the 1970s, way beyond Khrushchev's tenure of power. Candidates should be reminded to stay focused on the question set. Some candidates argued with great success that Khrushchev's mixture of pragmatism and realism was consistent and it was only confusing to his opponents, others took a totally different view providing a good case for just the opposite. Both views were well argued.

10 To what extent was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan responsible for the onset of the 'Second Cold War'?

This was popular question which was often very well answered. There were a number of very competent responses which looked at the invasion, and other examples of what might be deemed as Soviet responsibility, for the revival of the War and then balanced the argument by looking at the role of Carter and Reagan, both in America and elsewhere. Less successful responses gave a very limited response to the 'extent' part of the question, and many did not provide an evaluative judgement, concluding 'it was responsible to some extent...' The best responses tended to start with a very positive answer which dealt firmly with the 'extent' part of the question and then went on to develop the response in depth.

11 How successful was Deng Xiaoping in addressing the problems which faced China?

Many candidates demonstrated a good level of knowledge about Deng and his tenure of power. Excellent responses often started by considering very carefully what the problems were when he came into power, and reflecting on their seriousness. They then kept the focus very firmly on success of his approach to dealing with the problems he inherited. Many candidates argued very successfully that, given the potential those problems had for damaging China, even minimising them rather than solving them was a major success story. There were a significant number of responses which did not address the 'problems' part of the question and focussed on his modernisation programme. Candidates could have improved their answers by keeping a more sustained focus on the question.

12 How far was Nasser responsible for the outbreak of the Suez War of 1956?

This question produced some very detailed and balanced responses. The best really tackled the 'how far' aspect from the start and gave a very clear answer, with supporting reasons, of how far Nasser was, or was not, responsible. The consensus was that Nasser should take the bulk of the blame, but there were also many very good answers which placed it firmly in the hands of the British/French/Israelis. There were some very detailed responses which laid out ample evidence to support both sides' responsibility. Weaker responses did not always develop the evidence towards a conclusion.

HISTORY

Paper 9389/43
Depth Study

General Comments.

On the whole, candidates responded well to the format of this new syllabus and liked the greater degree of certainty within the topics. There was often a great willingness to discuss, challenge and argue and the quality of analysis could be very high. Vital for success was demonstrating good understanding of the question, really reflecting on it with care, and conveying a focussed and balanced argument which was well supported by relevant and accurate detail.

Most candidates responded well to the need for 'depth', ensuring that their knowledge was utilised in support of valid points and not seen as an end in itself. Candidates who achieved the highest marks possible demonstrated sustained judgement and showed a really impressive level of knowledge and understanding, while at the same time having the crucial consistent analytical focus. In many cases these candidates started their essays with a very clear answer to the question posed and made it clear why they had come to that response in the early stages of the essay.

Many candidates began their responses with a generalised 'background' start, leading to a balanced approach, followed by a conclusion which attempted to pull it all together. While some succeeded in successfully utilising this approach, a characteristic in weaker answers was that the conclusion did not match the evidence given earlier in the essay. Where candidates struggled with time management, this was reflected in a reduction of analytical content. Some candidates demonstrated a really impressive command of the detail, but could have improved by giving closer attention to the question set. Conversely, there were also some very impressive essays with outstanding analysis but with very limited detail present to back up the valid points made. The most successful responses were balanced arguments supported by evidence.

There were some cases of rubric errors where candidates answered questions from two different sections. The one seen most often came from centres where the candidates had obviously been taught Depth Study 3 – International History – and were tempted by Question 8 on Depth Study 2 – the History of the USA. Only the higher of the two marks could be awarded. Candidates should be reminded of the rubric requirements of the paper to avoid writing essays which cannot be credited to their overall outcome.

Comments on Specific Questions

Depth Study 1: Europe of the Dictators, 1918–1941

1 'Lenin failed to solve Russia's economic problems.' How far do you agree?

The best responses invariably started with a determined attempt to identify exactly what Russia's economic problems were, reflect on which were profound and which easily soluble, and then make out a case for and against his failing to provide a solution. Some argued that, given the appalling legacy of the war, Tsarism and the implications of Brest Litovsk, actual survival was a real success. There was a great deal of knowledge displayed about War Communism, the reasoning behind the NEP and comments on the failings of a command economy. Successful answers kept knowledge focussed on the question and came to a judgement. Weaker responses provided a large amount of knowledge but often did not use it effectively.

2 'Clever propaganda was the reason why Mussolini stayed in power for so long.' Discuss this view.

Successful responses usually opened with a firm answer to the issue as to whether it was clever propaganda, or other factors, that explained his tenure of power. One or two did consider the 'so'

long aspect of the question, usually to great effect. While many candidates knew that Mussolini made use of propaganda, few could really comment on how 'clever' it was, and tended to list some of the mediums utilised. Some argued that it was more a mix of a lack of opposition, the important support of elites such as the Church and his repressive methods that kept him in power rather than just skilful marketing. There were some clever arguments that suggested that, given the absence of any real achievement, it had to be clever propaganda that kept him there.

3 'Collectivisation was a disastrous policy for the USSR.' How far do you agree?

There were a large number of good responses to this question, with many candidates writing focussed essays. There was often a great deal of statistical knowledge which was well utilised to support the points made. The best answers kept the focus firmly on the 'for the USSR' aspect of the question with some excellent analysis of the short and long-term implications of the policy. Some candidates looked at the implications of collectivisation outside of 'European' Russia, in areas such as Kazakhstan, which gave a different perspective to their answers.

4 'Hitler's social policies were inconsistent and incoherent.' How far do you agree?

This was a very popular question which was generally well done. The best essays kept a clear focus on Hitler's 'social' policy and resisted the temptation to write in detail about Hitler's foreign policy or use of terror. Also important was treating the 'inconsistent' and 'incoherent' aspects separately. Many candidates argued that while it was often inconsistent, as his policy toward women showed, there was a broad coherence to it. Dealing with the two words together often produced a very muddled analysis. Weaker responses tended to contain material which was not relevant to the question, such as describing the growth of anti-Semitism.

Depth Study 2: The History of the USA, 1945–1990

5 How far was the Federal Government responsible for economic prosperity in the 1950s?

This was a popular and well answered question. There were some very good debates which looked at the role of the Federal Government in some depth. There was a tendency to assume that Government was not necessarily a force for good and market forces were bound to play a more important role in bringing about prosperity. The best responses kept the focus very firmly on the 'how far' aspect of the question. Weaker responses often listed evidence and did not come to a supported conclusion. Many candidates demonstrated a good level of detail on 'other factors' such as the role of the private sector, the development of TV, and consumer spending generally. There was less secure knowledge about exactly what the Federal Government did in areas like deficit spending and tariffs. Less successful responses contained a lot of detail which was more relevant to the 1940s rather than the 1950s.

6 How accurate is it to describe the Stonewall Riots of June 1969 as a 'watershed' in US history?

There were very few responses to this question. There was confusion as to what exactly a 'watershed' was and most answers tended to deal with the Civil Rights movement generally.

7 'Reagan's re-election in 1984 was a triumph for the man rather than his policies.' How far do you agree?

The best responses kept focus on the reasons for Reagan's electoral victory, with some perceptive comments on whether it was more a Democratic defeat with Mondale not being seen as a serious candidate. Economic factors certainly played a part with inflation going down and the job market looking more positive in 1984. The best answers started with a clear picture of 'how far' the victory was down to the man himself. Most candidates commented effectively on Reagan's communication skills and his ability to detach himself from the party he nominally headed, while at the same time getting over his 'States rights' message with its appeal to the South and the Right. Weaker responses were often lists of reasons with quite limited conclusions. Many candidates wrote in detail about Reaganomics, and did not address 'the man' part of the question in enough depth.

8 How far did President Eisenhower depart from the Cold War policies of President Truman?

The most successful responses spent a fairly limited amount of time on clearly identifying Truman's Cold War policies, and then spent the majority of their time and effort reflecting on the extent to which Eisenhower did, or did not, follow in his footsteps. There were a variety of differing views, all viable ones, in the responses, some arguing that he followed in principle, but not always in the final policy. Others argued that, given the examples of Korea, Hungary and Egypt, he adopted a very different approach to the Cold War. While there was a good level of knowledge shown about the work of both Presidents, less successful responses focus very much on Truman and Eisenhower could very often appear as an afterthought.

Depth Study 3: International History, 1945–1991

9 To what extent was the globalisation of the Cold War in the period from 1950 to 1975 caused by the USA's misinterpretation of Soviet motives?

This question was generally answered well. The better responses kept a clear focus on exactly what the question was asking. The key was to keep the focus on the period after 1950, and not get involved in the causes of the Cold War before 1950. It was also important to keep the focus on the 'globalisation' and its causes and keep away from a description of the arms race and the development of nuclear weapons. There were some excellent responses which set out the question very clearly in the opening paragraph while at the same time giving a precise response to the question about 'extent'. It was refreshing to see so many diverse arguments which were really well supported. Some argued that it was the case, looking at a range of individuals such as Dulles, Acheson, Nixon and Kissinger, while others felt that the Soviets should bear more responsibility. There was a good 'international' perspective there.

10 How far was Gorbachev responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union?

Candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of this topic. The best responses really reflected on whether Gorbachev was simply carried along by the tide coming in within the USSR, paying the price for the failings of the system and his 'gerontocracy' predecessors, or whether his policies accelerated the process of decline or maybe even actually caused it. This was then contrasted with a range of external factors, such as the policies of Reagan and Thatcher or the sheer amount of 'people pressure' within the USSR or the satellite states. Many candidates did not tackle the issue of 'how far', although there were some implicit answers which assumed it must have played 'quite' an important part. The majority of weaker responses tended to list information and did not progress towards a judgement.

11 'The victory of the Chinese communists in 1949 was caused by the weaknesses of the KMT.' How far do you agree?

Very few candidates selected this question. While there was a good grasp of the chronology of the period, there was a marked reluctance to deal with the question of 'how far'. Knowledge of the KMT was sound, but there was less known about other factors such as Soviet support or the harm done by the invading Japanese. Some candidates made reference to events that were too far back into the 1920s and 30s to be of clear relevance to the question.

12 'President Sadat of Egypt consistently sought peace with Israel.' How far do you agree?

This question was selected by few candidates. Knowledge of Sadat's work generally was well known, but the 'consistently sought peace' aspect was often not well considered. The focus of answers was usually kept correctly on Yom Kippur, its motives and the results. The consensus was, amongst the better responses, that it probably was not.