Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

HISTORY **9489/31**

Paper 3 Interpretations Question **May/June 2021**

1 hour 15 minutes

1025531471

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question from **one** section only.
  - Section A: The origins of the First World War
  - Section B: The Holocaust
  - Section C: The origins and development of the Cold War
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 40.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

This document has **4** pages.

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Answer **one** question from **one** section only.

Section A: Topic 1

The origins of the First World War

1 Read the extract and then answer the question.

In December 1920 Lloyd George made a famous speech in which he argued that the nations had 'drifted, or rather staggered and stumbled' into war. As late as 1936 he still maintained, 'No sovereign or leading statesman in any of the belligerent countries sought or desired war – certainly not a European war.' This 'slide to war' thesis makes careful examination of the July Crisis unnecessary: no motive, no intention, no responsibility. We suggest instead a consistent pattern, multiple instances of moves for engagement, and we argue that the very essence of decision-making is a matter of choice.

And so it was in 1914. For decades European leaders had assessed the likely scenarios for conflict on the Continent. In each case, they rejected the notion that a war could be localised or isolated. They recognised the danger of diplomatic escalation leading to armed conflict. They knew the dangers of a general European war. In each case they accepted those risks and dangers in July and August, and they decided for war with the full expectation of winning and thereby solving the problems that prompted them to consider armed conflict in the first place. That is what made the July Crisis radically different from previous crises, such as the two Moroccan crises, the two Balkan wars, and the Tripoli crisis. In fact, there was a surprising single-mindedness of purpose in the decision-makers of 1914. Almost all of them recognised that the strategic argument of perceived decline or threat demanded the call to arms. The murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand quickly disappeared from their considerations. Instead, the leaders in Vienna and Berlin, St Petersburg and Paris, persisted in their view that war alone could resolve their perceived insecure positions in the European balance of power. And when two monarchs, Wilhelm II and Nicholas II, at the last moment tried to draw back, the governing cliques in Berlin and St Petersburg forced them back on course.

The 'slide to war' thesis is also disproven by the various actions, especially in the three critical capitals, Vienna, Berlin and St Petersburg, to block possible mediation of the crisis. As early as 3 July Berchtold boldly informed the German ambassador in Vienna of his government's need for a 'final and fundamental reckoning' with Serbia. Kaiser Wilhelm endorsed that with his note, 'now or never'. Vienna refused a state funeral for Franz Ferdinand in part because it might have offered the crowned heads of Europe an opportunity to coordinate their responses to the assassination. Vienna was determined to strike out at Belgrade; Berlin seconded that initiative. And once Russia had decided to block the proposed 'punitive expedition' against Serbia, Foreign Minister Sazonov prevented further discussion and possible resolution of the crisis by instructing the chief of the General Staff to smash his telephone!

Perhaps the last word on the 'slide to war' thesis should go to one of the pivotal players, the chief of the German General Staff. Already in March 1913, Moltke confided to the Italian military attaché Germany's intention to violate Belgian neutrality in case of war. The next war, he stated, would be between France and Germany. In brutal terms, he stated that this war would be 'a question of life or death for us. We shall stop at nothing to gain our end. In the struggle for existence, one does not bother about the means one uses.' And in retirement in June 1915, Moltke in a private letter spoke of 'this war which I prepared and initiated'. No drift, no slide.

What can you learn from this extract about the interpretation and approach of the historian who wrote it? Use the extract and your knowledge of the origins of the First World War to explain your answer. [40]

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Section B: Topic 2

The Holocaust

2 Read the extract and then answer the question.

The evidence confirms the impression that the various authorities of the National Socialist regime were ready in late 1941 for the extermination process aimed at reducing the number of Jews. There existed no real capacity to absorb the mass deportations which everybody urged and, further, the campaign in the East, which had reached a stalemate by the winter, offered no prospect for sending the Jews beyond the Urals. There were other reasons as well: the ghettos which had been created in order to isolate and select the Jews for deportation (in occupied Poland, as early as 1939–40) were now spreading destitution and disease, and the Nazis regarded the ghettos as sources of an infection to be wiped out. The Jews had to be 'exterminated somehow'. This fatal expression recurs again and again in documents of various origins at this stage (late 1941), revealing evidence of the improvisation of extermination as the simplest solution – one that would, with additional extermination camps in occupied Poland, finally generate the potential for the mass murders.

If we base our interpretation on the concept that the annihilation of the Jews was thus 'improvised' rather than set off by a one-time secret order, it follows that the responsibility and the initiative for the killing were not Hitler's, Himmler's or Heydrich's alone. This does not, however, free Hitler from blame. We know almost nothing about the way in which Hitler spoke about these matters with Himmler and Heydrich, who bore institutional responsibility for the acts of liquidation, and who at this time frequently visited the Führer's headquarters. Hitler had good reasons that prompted him to hide the full truth even from high-ranking associates; these strictly unlawful measures could be ordered only by verbal instructions on the part of Hitler and not by way of legally binding formal directives. His responsibility for the murder of the Jews can only be established indirectly. The idea that it would be possible to 'prove' this by means of some document signed by Hitler, as yet undiscovered, is derived from false assumptions. Hitler, as is well known, rarely processed files himself, and his signature or handwriting on documents, except in the case of laws and ordinances, is hardly ever found.

Indications pointing to his responsibility are nonetheless overwhelming. A great number of documents concerning anti-Jewish legislation prove that Hitler concerned himself with numerous details of the measures, and that these were dependent upon his decisions. It could not be hidden from any important functionary of the National Socialist regime that Hitler had the greatest interest possible in the solution of the Jewish question. To assume that such important decisions as the measures for the destruction of Jewry could be taken by any individual without Hitler's approval is to ignore the power structure and hierarchy of the Führer state. It is especially baseless regarding Himmler, whose loyalty to his Führer was at this stage absolute. Such an idea is also flawed as the preparations for the extermination of the Jews (e.g. transportation and the release of Jews from essential war work) interfered directly with the interests of the Wehrmacht, and could not be implemented without the backing that Hitler alone could impose. Goebbels reveals in his diaries that every important stage of the deportation of the Jews from the capital of the Reich required the approval of Hitler: at the Wannsee Conference (January 1942), which convened to discuss the 'final solution of the Jewish question', Heydrich made pointed reference to the necessary 'previous authorisation of the Führer'.

What can you learn from this extract about the interpretation and approach of the historian who wrote it? Use the extract and your knowledge of the Holocaust to explain your answer. [40]

Section C: Topic 3

The origins and development of the Cold War

3 Read the extract and then answer the question.

America emerged from the war without a very clear, well worked out conception of the role it would play in the post-war world. In the process of dealing with a series of 'crises' that arose as a result of Soviet actions in 1945–46, America's policy-makers slowly elaborated a series of 'worst case' predictions about Russian intentions. By 1947–48, these predictions reflected what had by then become a fairly widespread set of assumptions about Russian behaviour. The core assumption was that Soviet Russia was a dangerous country, motivated essentially by its official Marxist-Leninist political ideology – an ideology that was expansionist and intent on converting the world to its beliefs. By definition this was seen as completely opposed to the American way of life, and thus a real threat to the freedom, liberty and economic wellbeing of people throughout the world. A second assumption, consequently, was that any country close to the Russian zone of influence was inevitably a target for communist penetration.

However, the United States did not arrive at this view all at once. While Moscow's behaviour during the war confused and exasperated American policy-makers, preoccupation with waging the war led the president and his advisors to believe that something could be worked out with the Russians. Roosevelt realised that Russian power flowing into the vacuum left by the defeat of Germany would have to be accepted. As Kennan would later write, no one could have denied Stalin 'a wide military and political defence zone on his western frontier except at the cost of another war, which was unthinkable'.

The public declarations of ideology made by both sides created problems. Whereas in private both countries would have been prepared to consider a 'spheres of influence' policy, which in Eastern and Western Europe (if not in Germany) involved some acknowledgement of each other's interests and sensitivities, that is not what they said in public. Privately Roosevelt spoke the language of spheres of influence, but official American foreign policy was couched in terms of one world, open only to democratic values. Roosevelt and Truman believed the American people would not tolerate conducting the nation's business in the language of Europe's traditional diplomacy, but by encouraging misleading expectations they paved the way for growing public disenchantment with what the Russians were doing and, in the process, unwittingly played to Moscow's suspicions. Roosevelt's death cleared the way for a revision of strategy that he himself would probably have executed in time, but perhaps not in as confused and abrupt manner as was actually done. Ironically, Truman at first embraced a policy of mutual trade-offs in the belief that he was following Roosevelt's lead, but in doing so only convinced the Russians that he was departing from it.

As the Cold War developed steadily, the available evidence indicates that policy-makers on both sides had not been following confrontational blueprints from an early stage; rather, they gradually lost faith in the strategy of collaboration without having anything clear-cut to put in its place. Over time the basic assumptions each side had developed about the other were allowed to dictate policy. In the case of America, the basic assumption was that Russia's intentions were revolutionary. As for Russia, it assumed fundamental capitalist opposition. As a result, each side's attitude and approach toward the other underwent significant changes from the summer of 1945 through to the winter of 1947–48, leading the two countries down the path to the all-out confrontation that would follow.

What can you learn from this extract about the interpretation and approach of the historian who wrote it? Use the extract and your knowledge of the Cold War to explain your answer. [40]

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