Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

HISTORY **9489/32**

Paper 3 Interpretations Question **October/November 2021**

1 hour 15 minutes

1053414892

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.

© UCLES 2021

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.

None of the great powers wanted a general war in 1914, but, with the exception of Italy, they were all willing to risk it. This was the marked difference with previous crises, when at most one power or one bloc had been willing to risk war. Their decisions interacted with each other so that the crisis escalated. Austria-Hungary's decision to destroy Serbia, backed by Germany, prompted Russia to begin partial mobilisation on 26 July with a view to preventing an Austro-Hungarian offensive. Russian and Austro-Hungarian aims were mutually incompatible and left no room for negotiation. As Russia mobilised, Germany followed. Whereas Russian mobilisation was one step short of war, German mobilisation was effectively a declaration of war. Because of the Schlieffen Plan, itself a product of the fear of a two-front war, Germany attacked France as well as Russia. France, which held back its troops ten kilometres from the border, had no option but to fight. Britain had more room for manoeuvre, but Grey's unclear messages alternately caused despair and hope in Berlin. Once the German army went on the offensive in western Europe, Britain could not remain out of the war, as the balance of power in Europe, one of the foundations of its security, was in danger.

What is striking about the decisions taken in the July crisis is that governments conceived of them as defensive – not the methods used, but the aims they hoped to achieve. They also considered themselves to be defending often contradictory principles: European values, international law, and sovereignty. For Austria-Hungary, its existence appeared to be at stake, at the mercy of a 'criminal state'. In St Petersburg, the Tsar and his advisers feared that Russia's great power status was at stake. In Germany, upholding Austria-Hungary's great power position had become a vital interest, the sole means of preserving Germany's long-term independence, which was threatened by the encirclement of the Triple Entente. Poincaré reasoned in a similar way about the necessity of the Russian alliance to French security. Britain aimed to uphold the balance of power and international treaty law. If each power could claim that its aims were defensive, then this signified that the international system could no longer accommodate the tensions between the great powers. Great powers could only preserve their vital interests at the expense of another power's vital interests, leading to a general war.

Why did this happen in 1914, as opposed to an earlier date? War was the result of an accumulation of decisions, each one of which individually was not designed to provoke war, but which interacted with other decisions to destroy the foundations of peace. Between late 1912 and June 1914, a series of decisions on future foreign policy was made in Vienna, St Petersburg, and Berlin, which reflected fears that each great power's position was deteriorating and could only be rescued by a more assertive foreign policy. This risked war, but the risk was outweighed by the fear that, in the future, their position would become progressively worse. Moreover, there was also the hope, even expectation, that the other side would back down in the face of an assertive military stance. Of all the great powers, it was Austria-Hungary that most clearly stepped away from the practices and norms of the international system. The concentration on its position in the Balkans, ignoring European perspectives in its confrontation with Serbia, and the issuing of ultimatums, backed by the threat of military force, all stemmed from Austro-Hungarian weakness.

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]

© UCLES 2021

Section B: Topic 2

The Holocaust

2 Read the extract and then answer the question.

Systematic genocide as it was practised by Germany has no precedent in modern history. It is sometimes said that if the Germans could lend themselves to near-extermination of a whole people, other nations are similarly capable. Possibly so. But these speculations simply beg the question. Why had mass murder of a people on the scale reached in Europe under Hitler never before occurred? No one can know with certainty the explanation for such unparalleled destruction. It is obvious, however, that Nazi Germany had to overturn all traditional values in the process of converting mass murder into a national duty. Partially, at least, this was made possible by the force of national myths and habits of thought, and by the impact of certain historical forces, some unique to Germany, some shared by the rest of western Europe.

Germany's past was shaped by the great movements that have affected all of western Europe: the struggle for unification, the Protestant Reformation, the process of industrialisation, the First World War and the post-war problems created by it. Nations responded to these in various ways. Likewise, all of Europe had its 'Jewish problem', and every country exhibited varying evidences of anti-Semitism. But the interaction of these complex forces, and the peculiar German response to them, created a nation in the very centre of Europe which, in the twentieth century, was ready and willing to exterminate other human beings. Many questions are raised by this terrifying fact. Did Germany take a wrong turn somewhere in its history? Had it never really absorbed the so-called Western liberal tradition? Did the German traditions of militarism, unquestioning obedience to authority and glorification of the power state make the nation unfit for the responsibilities of parliamentary democracy? What in German culture created the need to fuse so much hatred and contempt in the image of the Jew? Only cautious answers can be suggested.

All nations develop myths out of their history. Often these are not only more powerful than the facts of history but express a nation's way of interacting with the facts. In Germany, the myth-forming process tended to repress national responsibility for wrong turns and errors. These mistakes were converted into projections of another's guilt. The myths of the 'stab in the back', the 'encirclement' of Germany, the 'contamination' by alien races and ideas, served to avoid German responsibility and created external scapegoats. In the process leading to genocide, the myth of the Jew as 'race poisoner' and 'enemy of the nation', and its inverse—the myth of Aryan race supremacy—had a fatal power in German thought.

It is generally agreed that the leadership of the Nazi movement consisted of obsessive, irrational personalities, but the acceptance of Nazism by masses of Germans cannot be explained without conceding that the situation inside Germany fostered the influence of such individuals and made their leadership possible. The German extermination of the Jews can be seen either as a logical extension of a two-thousand-year-old anti-Semitic tradition, or as a drastic new departure from centuries of familiar persecution, pogroms and forcible expulsions. Either way, the Christian view of the Jew throughout European history formed the basis of the anti-Jewish propaganda worked up by Nazi minds and accepted as a programme of action by large numbers of Germans. The minds may have been sick and the German people too susceptible to old myths about the Jews because of their extreme fears, hatreds and envies, but the key formulation had a long history. The destruction of European Jewry could not have happened without this historic preparation.

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]

© UCLES 2021

Section C: Topic 3

The origins and development of the Cold War

3 Read the extract and then answer the question.

Clearly, the ideological differences that had made Soviet–American relations difficult before the Second World War were bound to revive after both nations emerged from that conflict as the world's leading powers. Initially Truman tried to follow Roosevelt's cooperative approach to the Soviet Union. But pressure from hardliners in his administration and the Republican Party, who were angered by the Soviet occupation policy in Eastern Europe and attempted intimidation in Turkey and Iran, compelled Truman to revert to a confrontational policy early in 1946. He pressured the Soviets to withdraw from Iran and, in the Truman Doctrine, declared his intention to extend economic and military aid to Turkey and Greece. With the Marshall Plan the Truman administration initiated a massive economic aid programme to the nations of Europe with the expectation that the reconstruction of capitalism in the region would halt the expansion of communism.

The growing US hostility towards the Soviets was fuelled by a number of other problems. The two sides were unable to agree on several German issues, including reparations, the German-Polish border, and the political and economic nature of a reunited German state. Nor could they agree on an international arrangement for the control of atomic energy. These failures inevitably promoted distrust between the superpowers. Their inability to resolve these and other issues also helped to make the United Nations a focus of Cold War confrontation, rather than a forum for the resolution of international differences.

Economic factors were important in explaining the breakdown of the grand alliance. The United States did attempt to use economic leverage to modify Soviet behaviour, for example with Truman's suspension of Lend-Lease and refusal of a US loan. Not surprisingly, the Soviets were led to believe that the Americans had a sinister motive in offering the Marshall Plan; that is, the manipulation of Soviet domestic and foreign policies, particularly the undermining of Soviet control in Eastern Europe. As a result, the Soviets rejected the Marshall Plan, and compelled its satellites to follow suit. The Soviet rejection of the Marshall Plan, the communist coup in Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet blockade of Berlin, reinforced an emerging Cold War consensus in the United States. Americans believed that, if they withdrew into isolation, Western Europe would again fall under the dominion of an aggressive power, and US forces would again have to fight on the continent. This realisation was central in persuading the United States to join the North Atlantic alliance in 1949.

To be sure, the Truman administration did exaggerate its estimates of Soviet military strength to win public support for its commitment to NATO. In fact, the Soviet Union demobilised the vast majority of its troops after the war, and had roughly the same amount of troops available to attack Western Europe as the NATO nations had to defend themselves. Anyway, a Soviet invasion at the end of the Second World War was not a realistic possibility. The Soviet Union was greatly weakened and was in no position to engage in a protracted military conflict with the United States. Still, memories of Pearl Harbor and the explosion of the first Soviet atom bomb in 1949 convinced Americans that it was better to err on the side of exaggeration than to underestimate another enemy. Moreover, the possibility of communist subversion, as the Czechoslovak coup had demonstrated, was real.

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]

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in the Cambridge Assessment International Education Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cambridgeinternational.org after the live examination series.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which itself is a department of the University of Cambridge.