Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

HISTORY **9489/31**

Paper 3 Interpretations Question **October/November 2023**

1 hour 15 minutes

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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: The origins of the First World War

1 Read the extract and then answer the question.

Diplomatic historians tend to detach foreign policy from domestic politics, and to disconnect foreign policymakers from the political and social contexts from which they originate and in which they operate.

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These mounting social, political and economic struggles radicalised the extremes, weakened the centre, and inclined governments to push military preparedness and diplomatic stubbornness as part of their efforts to maintain their vulnerable domestic social positions.

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]

Section B: The Holocaust

2 Read the extract and then answer the question.

On 29 November 1941, Heydrich invited twelve leading civil servants and SS figures to a conference to be convened at midday on 9 December. Its apparent purpose was to achieve a definitive resolution on the question of who was to be regarded as a Jew, for among German Jews being deported to the east were Great War veterans, 'half Jews' and Jewish spouses of 'Aryan' partners. Lack of precision was causing problems. In the east some Nazi functionaries objected to killing assimilated German Jews without clear higher authorisation. A messy situation ensued, with some deportees being murdered on arrival, others starving to death, while still others were consigned to ghettoes whose original inmates had been killed to make way for them. Those attending the conference were not people used to dealing with contradictions, inconsistencies or partial solutions. They wanted someone to assume overall responsibility for taking the Jews off their hands. The German declaration of war on the United States on 11 December meant that the conference was postponed until 20 January 1942. By the time it was convened, the purpose of the Wannsee Conference was not to resolve who were Jews. American entry into the war had brought about the situation Hitler had 'prophesied' in January 1939, a 'prophecy' coupled with dire consequences for the Jews, whom he blamed for Roosevelt's decision. The conference's purpose changed accordingly.

Hitler had addressed fifty Nazi Party leaders on 12 December in his private apartment at the Reich Chancellery. The essence of what he said was recorded. It was time to 'clear the decks' on the Jewish Question 'without sentimentality or pity'. Those who had caused a conflict that would cost Germany so many dead were to pay for it with their own lives. In effect, Hitler was provoking general murder. Although this record does not tell us when Hitler had decided in his own mind to murder the Jews of Europe, for that may have been there all along, it represents the best evidence we have for when he decided to share this decision with his most trusted followers. On 18 December, Himmler noted in his appointment book after an afternoon session with Hitler: 'Jewish Question: exterminate as resistance fighters'. This shows that at high levels murder was in the air and that the excuse used in Russia was to be extended elsewhere.

The prospects opened up by Hitler's speech probably explain why the Wannsee Conference was postponed for six weeks. The Conference did not create the 'Final Solution' since most of the participants were not the most senior decision-makers in their agencies and ministries. It was a formal sit-down between mass murderers and senior civil servants, designed to test the reactions of the ministerial bureaucracy, which would inevitably have to be involved in the massive operations that were planned. Determining who was a Jew was now secondary to making plans to kill every Jew in Europe. Heydrich, who assumed the burden of solving everyone's 'Jewish problem', unveiled indisputable evidence that the Jews were going to be killed. The assembled bureaucrats did not object. Heydrich restated his personal control of the 'Final Solution' 'without regard to national boundaries', although no one present had much of an interest in disputing the issue. No one would have to bother any longer with improvised regional killing centres, randomly established to deal with each local 'Jewish Question'. Heydrich and the SS had taken over everybody's problem and had outlined how they planned to proceed.

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]

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Section C: The origins and development of the Cold War

3 Read the extract and then answer the question.

The Russians, though extremely sensitive about the buffer area, were not impossible to deal with. Had their security requirements been met, there is evidence that their domination of Eastern Europe might have been much different from what it turned out to be. In early 1945 Stalin was holding to his agreement not to aid the Greek Communists. Even in much of their border areas the Russians seemed willing to accept substantial capitalism and some form of democracy – with the crucial condition that the Eastern European governments had to be 'friendly' to Russia in defence and foreign policies. Finland serves as a model of a successful border state. Here, the peace put the Soviets in control, with the right to maintain Soviet military installations. However, the USA made no effort to intervene. Finland maintained a foreign policy 'friendly' to Russia, and the Russians were prepared to accept a moderate government. Although it is often forgotten, a modified application of the Finnish formula seemed in 1945 and much of 1946 to be shaping up elsewhere: in Hungary and Bulgaria, where elections took place that most Western observers (apart from the US State Department) felt should have been accepted, and in Czechoslovakia from which the Red Army withdrew in December 1945.

Almost all of this was to change, of course. But writers who focus on the brutal period of totalitarian control after 1947 and 1948 often ignore what happened earlier. The few who do try to account for what was happening in 1945–46 usually do so in passing, either to suggest that the elections must have been a smokescreen formed by Moscow while waiting for the USA to leave Europe or that the Russians must have been using the period to prepare for the later takeover. However, if the Russians were just waiting for the right moment, they certainly were preparing a lot of trouble for themselves by allowing free politics, pulling out their army, or by ripping up the main rail connections across Poland, as they did in the autumn of 1945. As well informed an observer as US Ambassador Harriman believed that Soviet policy in 1945 was undecided: that it could have become more moderate within a framework of security and understanding with the West or more hardline and totalitarian within a framework of insecurity and conflict.

At least one reason for Russia's shift to a tough line may be traced to mistakes made by US officials. Their demand for more influence in Soviet-controlled areas was doomed from the start. The other error was the failure of US policymakers to turn their energies to an early solution of the crucial German problem. Strengthened by the atomic bomb, US leaders delayed over Germany. Moreover, by refusing to hold to Roosevelt's agreement that a specific target for German reparations would be set, and by halting German reparations shipments, US policy seemed to raise the very prospect that the Russians feared most – the abandonment of political and economic controls, and the possibility that a new and powerful Germany would rise from the ashes of Nazism to lead Western capitalist aggression in Europe. The USA had no such aggressive intent. Doubtless, the Russians were not easy to deal with. Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that US policy may have to share responsibility for the establishment of totalitarian control in Eastern Europe. The addition of increased insecurity to known Soviet paranoid tendencies may explain the rigidity which Soviet leaders displayed in their policy after 1946.

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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