



# Cambridge International AS & A Level

## HISTORY

9389/31

Paper 3 Interpretations Question

May/June 2020

1 hour



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question from **one** section only.  
Section A: Topic 1 The Causes and Impact of British Imperialism, c.1850–1939  
Section B: Topic 2 The Holocaust  
Section C: Topic 3 The Origins and Development of the Cold War, 1941–1950
- 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. Blank pages are indicated.

## Section A: Topic 1

## The Causes and Impact of British Imperialism, c.1850–1939

## 1 Read the extract and then answer the question.

We must ask exactly what the British Empire was, whether, even, there was an empire at all. How far was there any central control over the territories which allegedly 'belonged' to Britain? Was there a uniform relationship between Britain and the 'dependencies' which makes it possible to generalise about a single empire? Historians have long debated how far Britain 'possessed' its dependencies. British rule in India rested on conquest, but the British themselves took care not to appeal to this embarrassing origin, and had not enforced their conquest either by confiscation of land or by demanding tribute payments. In fact, British manipulation of the Indian economy and financial system simply favoured British commercial and manufacturing interests. However, in India a tiny administrative garrison – 760 British members of the Indian Civil Service in 1939 – could govern 378 million Indians only by allying with, rather than by dispossessing, powerful groups within local societies. Once established on top of an administrative pyramid, the British became, to a large degree, dependent upon the structure that supported them. But even administrative regulation could have fundamental and unforeseen effects. Two of the bases of political power in India were law and land ownership. All that seemed necessary to the British for both law and land was some reorganisation and the introduction of some improving features. But these seriously upset the existing social balance. Land settlements altered the rural power structure, while the Anglicisation of Hindu law strengthened the trend towards personal, rather than family or communal, rights to property – itself a step towards 'western' political activity which eroded the foundations of the Raj.

It was one thing to claim the British ruled India, another to argue that they controlled what happened. For in certain crucial respects 'empire' was a myth, an illusion based on a gigantic confidence trick, devised by rulers and accepted by the ruled. The argument should not, however, be carried too far. The 379 Indians who died at Amritsar in 1919 were not victims of an illusion. They died when a British general ordered soldiers, trained to kill, to fire into a demonstrating crowd. Behind the paper sovereignty there lay military force. And yet force itself could only be selectively used to create another illusion, that of power. Without acceptance of this illusion among subject peoples, the empire could hardly have functioned at all. In any case, the mystique of British power rested more on the prestige of the navy than on the activities of the army. Hence the special significance of the sinking by the Japanese of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* on 10 December 1941. An empire without battleships meant an emperor without clothes.

The problems of maintaining an illusion of control were similar both in the white colonies and in the non-European territories, compounded by a much livelier disrespect for attempts at metropolitan coercion among colonists than among subject peoples. Governors, of course, disregarded or even disobeyed orders, and they frequently got away with defiance, as did viceroys of India. The problem of maintaining a facade of imperial rule over white colonists was, then, as troublesome as in India or in Africa. The key to the problem was not simply power but the comforting illusion of power. The difference lay in the belief of colonists not that British power would punish them, but that it would protect them.

*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 British Empire to explain your answer.* [40]

**Section B: Topic 2****The Holocaust****2** Read the extract and then answer the question.

The decision to kill the Jews could have been made by Hitler regardless of the war and its development. In this view, a decision was to be made, and the war simply allowed it to be implemented. Yet there is a problem with this assertion, and this must be seen in the light of the forced emigration policy beforehand, which obviously did not entail the physical annihilation of the deportees. Nor can we prove on the basis of Hitler's moves before late 1940 that he had envisioned a multifront war, which would allow him to kill the Jews wherever he found them. The genocide decision was made in October or November 1941, following the initial decision to destroy the Jews in occupied Soviet territory. It was shaped by the overall framework of the war as it had developed until then, including dubious American neutrality, British policies and actions, and Nazi–Soviet relations. Hence, the Final Solution decision was the result of a radicalised policy towards the Jews in the context of the behaviour of other nations towards the Third Reich after the 'Battle of Britain'. Yet one may ask immediately how Soviet Jews became the first victims of Hitler's anger against the British and the Americans, while Polish Jews had been under Germany's control since the autumn of 1939. Indeed the very fact that the Polish Jews were not liquidated until later, following the initial decision to kill the Soviet Jews, requires explanation.

The initial decision to destroy the Soviet Jews extended as a matter of course to those others already in Nazi hands, and then to all other Jews, in connection with the broadening and prolongation of the war, and in response to the behaviour of other nations. The experience gained allowed the few to kill the very many, and the initial decision evolved due to a combined drive both from above and from the executioners, while the German home front and others under Nazi control either remained passive or even helped them in various ways. Thus, the initial secrecy in regard to the Final Solution was gradually lifted, at least by Hitler and some others, while the failure of the forced emigration policy was used to blame other nations for the Final Solution itself.

In fact, the forced emigration policy continued for some time after the outbreak of the Second World War. Then came the Madagascar Plan, and the larger framework of Hitler's 'New Order' for Europe, which the British rejected out of hand. At the same time came the growing American aid to the British, ascribed by Hitler to the Jews, and finally Hitler's related decision to invade Stalin's Soviet Union and the initial decision to kill the Jews there.

Whilst the Russian campaign was conceived in terms of solving the 'Jewish problem' in Europe, the military planning and the actual developments on the ground (i.e. the serious problems of supplying the troops across the enormous Soviet front), and the ensuing setbacks in carrying out a short campaign, contributed to the radicalisation of the initial campaign against the Jews in which all the components of the invading forces were involved. The view that the Jews were an enemy that should be annihilated, or at least brutally neutralised, prevailed amongst all of these forces.

*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, 1941–1950

## 3 Read the extract and then answer the question.

Despite recent research in newly opened archives, some basic questions about the Soviet road to the Cold War remain. Was Stalin's Soviet Union seeking security or expansion? Was Stalin a revolutionary romantic, a Russian/Soviet imperialist, a cynical practitioner of Realpolitik, or a megalomaniac seeking power for power's sake? Furthermore, was he a genius, however evil, or an incompetent who often ended up getting precisely what he sought to avoid? Such questions may have no definitive answers, but one can draw some tentative conclusions.

First, there was clearly some logic to what often looked like the madness of Soviet foreign policy. Its overriding goal was remarkably consistent: security through expansion and consolidation of the Soviet sphere. Whether the Kremlin was guided primarily by Marxist ideology or by national security interests is largely an artificial distinction. Ideology was important as a lens through which Soviet leaders saw the world and which made them predisposed to see US policies as expansionist and threatening. Besides, in the Bolshevik mentality, ideology and national interests were blended into a single whole, since for Stalin and his circle preservation and expansion of the Soviet domain were essential for promoting world revolution. But whenever there was a conflict between Soviet and ideological interests, they would invariably choose the former over the latter. For Stalin, enhancing Soviet power, which also meant enhancing his own power, was unsurprisingly the first priority. Everything else came second, whether the Russian people, foreign communists or former capitalist allies.

Much the same can be said about the elusive line between security and expansion. Even in America's case, seeking security and building an empire were two sides of the same coin. It is even debatable whether Soviet empire-builders were any more driven by ideological universalism than their American rivals, although for Americans ideology was more vague than for the Bolsheviks. Both sides in the Cold War were similar in their strategic thinking as well. After all, Soviet leaders had their own crude version of containment. In Marxist terms, Western capitalism was both hostile and inherently unstable. The task confronting the Kremlin, then, was to hold the line and exploit their enemies' difficulties until capitalism's internal contradictions would lead to a new cycle of depression, war and revolution – developments that would, in the Soviet view, make possible another breakthrough for communism.

If this was the logic of Soviet strategy, then one must ask how effective Soviet leaders really were in pursuing their own aims. For many years, observers have repeatedly made the case that by frightening the West into united opposition instead of engaging in a more skilful game of give-and-take, one that might have undermined Western resolve, Stalin was his own worst enemy. Soviet understanding of American politics was too crude for such a sophisticated approach, but one can still make the case that the men in the Kremlin thought it was too risky to accommodate their rival. If even the United States, with its overwhelming power and margin of safety, would not adopt a more accommodating policy, then in the view of the Kremlin, a weaker Soviet Union could afford one even less. For both sides, the focus was on toughness and on worst-case scenarios, which together led to escalation of the conflict between them.

*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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