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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

HISTORY **9489/32**

Paper 3 Interpretations Question **February/March 2022**

1 hour 15 minutes

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 **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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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.

The catastrophe, though long predicted by a good number of statesmen, soldiers and writers, took the mass of mankind by surprise.

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Their excessive armaments made war, if not inevitable, then at least increasingly difficult to avoid.

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.

In late February and March 1941, Hitler made a number of statements in which he outlined his vision of a war of destruction – an ideological and racial war – in the Soviet Union.

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What was not yet certain was exactly how and when the prophecy would be fulfilled.

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: Topic 3

The origins and development of the Cold War

3 Read the extract and then answer the question.

Even if, as the revisionists suggest, American officials had enjoyed a completely free hand in seeking a settlement with the Soviet Union, it seems unlikely that they would have succeeded. Accomplishment of this task required not only conciliatory actions by Washington but a receptive attitude on the part of Moscow. The latter simply did not exist. Traditional distrust of foreigners, combined with ideological differences, would have made a relationship of mutual trust with the United States unlikely regardless of who ruled the Soviet Union. Stalin's paranoia, together with the institutionalised suspicion with which he surrounded himself, made the situation much worse. Information on the internal workings of the Soviet government during this period is still sparse, but sufficient evidence exists to confirm the accuracy of Kennan's 1946 conclusion that Russian hostility came chiefly from internal sources not susceptible to gestures of conciliation from the West.

Historians have debated at length the question of who caused the Cold War, but without shedding much light on the subject. Too often they view that event exclusively as a series of actions by one side and reactions by the other. In fact, policymakers in both the United States and the Soviet Union were constantly weighing each other's intentions, as they perceived them, and modifying their own courses of action accordingly. In addition, officials in Washington and Moscow brought to the task of policy formulation a variety of preconceptions, shaped by personality, ideology, political pressures, even ignorance and irrationality, all of which influenced their behaviour. Once this complex interaction of stimulus and response is taken into account, it becomes clear that neither side can bear sole responsibility for the onset of the Cold War. But neither should the conflict be seen as unavoidable. The power vacuum in central Europe caused by Germany's collapse made a Russian–American confrontation likely; it did not make it inevitable. Men as well as circumstances make foreign policy, and through such drastic expedients as war, appeasement or resignation, policymakers can always alter difficult situations in which they find themselves. To view their actions as predetermined by blind impersonal 'forces' is to deny the complexity of human behaviour, not to mention the ever-present possibility of accident.

If one must assign responsibility for the Cold War, the most meaningful way to proceed is to ask which side had the greater opportunity to accommodate itself, at least in part, to the other's position, given the range of alternatives as they appeared at the time. Revisionists have argued that American policymakers possessed greater freedom of action, but their view ignores the constraints imposed by domestic politics. Little is known even today about how Stalin defined his options, but it does seem safe to say that the very nature of the Soviet system afforded him a larger selection of alternatives than were open to leaders of the United States. The Russian dictator was immune to the pressures of Congress, public opinion or the press. Even ideology did not restrict him: Stalin was the master of communist doctrine, not a prisoner of it, and could modify or suspend Marxism-Leninism whenever it suited him to do so. This is not to say that Stalin wanted a Cold War – he had every reason to avoid one. But his absolute powers did give him more chances to surmount the internal restraints on his policy than were available to his counterparts in the West.

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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