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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

HISTORY **9489/33**

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.

The narrative of events from the assassination to the decisions of August demonstrates the importance of individuals and their actions. Our comprehension of the choices that lay before those involved in the crisis enables us to grasp the values, the hopes, and the fears of those whose decisions led to the catastrophe. Blind 'historical forces' did not devise ultimatums or mobilise millions. Men of flesh and blood did. Assumptions about honour and prestige, the past and the future, determined all the decisions they made. The statesmen responsible for guiding the policies of the Great Powers believed, ultimately, that they could not appear to be weak. Weakness would erode the prestige of their state; without prestige, they would no longer command respect; without respect, they could be ignored. Their study of the past had taught them that the great could decline. The only safeguard against decline, decay and disappearance was strength of purpose. For Austria-Hungary to admit that it lacked the toughness or determination to put an end to Serbian propaganda and plots would be an admission that it was no longer a Great Power. For Russia to admit that it could do nothing to stop Serbia from becoming an Austrian satellite state would confirm that it was an empire in decay, incapable of exerting itself in the Slavic sphere and of protecting its brothers in the Orthodox Church.

There were, however, many choices made between 28 June and 4 August. The choices were made by men of experience and intelligence, and they made their choices consciously, rationally, on the basis of national interest, on the foundations of the fears they faced in the present and on their hopes for a better future. Few were eager for war – or at least for the great European war they got in August. Most of the men who mattered in Austria-Hungary were prepared for war with Serbia but believed it unlikely, given Germany's support, that Russia would go to war to defend fellow Slavs. Most Germans who mattered agreed with this assessment. They were mistaken. Their mistakes came from a mix of wishful thinking and deliberate blindness – that Russia was not yet prepared and would back down; that Britain cared nothing for the fate of Serbia; that France would not back Russia without a guarantee of British support. Every one of their assumptions proved to be mistaken, but they rushed ahead anyway, confident that – in spite of everything – they still enjoyed a military advantage, and fearful that this advantage would slip away if they waited too long.

Austria-Hungary, with Germany's support, seized the initiative. Russia, France and Britain reacted to it. Their statesmen and diplomats proved to be as mistaken and misguided as those of the Triple Alliance. Europe had been through many crises as bad as this one – and some that seemed worse. Serbia, they believed, would be disciplined, punished in some manner or other. Indeed, Serbia deserved to be punished. Surely, they thought, it would not take an unprecedented intellectual effort on the part of Europe's statesmen to devise a formula that would satisfy Austrian honour and limit the chance of Serbia upsetting the balance of power in the future. They all trusted that Germany would restrain Austria from going too far; even some Germans thought this should be their role in the crisis. On almost every day of the July crisis a solution seemed to be at hand. No one knows what would have happened had different decisions been taken. War was not planned, but neither was it accidental.

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: The Holocaust

2 Read the extract and then answer the question.

Between 1939 and 1941, several key Nazi agencies, including the SS and the Führer's Chancellery, were engaged in developing policies to change radically the population of the occupied parts of Poland.

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The genocide of the Jews developed almost unnoticed as the outcome of everything that occurred before it: the failed resettlement project, the inability to defeat the Red Army, and the skill acquired in killing the handicapped and shipping masses of people from one part of the Nazi empire to the other.

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 Cold War was a strange war. We call it a 'cold' war because each great power was using every technique at its disposal, short of actual war, to counter the objectives of the other. The United States and Russia acted in this manner because each believed the other was out for world domination and might start a third world war. Neither side, as far as we can tell, ever seriously contemplated an attack on the other. The United States had the atomic bomb and Russia had a great army. Each felt insecure. But once the tension started, each nation considered the moves of the other as offensive. Consequently, each power tightened control over its sphere of influence. A vicious, escalating circle of move and counter-move had begun, fed by the distorted perceptions of the leaders and peoples of each country. Soviet blindness resulted from years of communist indoctrination. But many in the West had similarly poor insight. They had swung from popular affection for Russia to hysterical anti-communism. Americans were angry because they felt betrayed by Russia, and guilty because of what was happening in Eastern Europe. Each move by Russia was interpreted as part of an elaborate scheme to dominate the world. With the advantage of hindsight, Stalin's objectives in this period seem actually to have been much less ambitious.

Nonetheless, the Soviet Union must bear the major share of guilt for the Cold War. It was Stalin's growing appetite for territory and power which finally provoked the West to action. The Soviets had legitimate security needs and Western leaders were willing to grant these. But Stalin did not stop there. At a certain point his demands began to look illegitimate. In addition, Stalin's techniques for controlling the areas the Red Army had occupied looked questionable. Perhaps Stalin began to communise the East European countries just to ensure they were friendly to Russia. Perhaps he was not simply pushing Marxism–Leninism. But to the people involved – and to the West – communism was communism regardless of why it was imposed. Why didn't Soviet Russia put its faith in the United Nations? Why was Stalin's concept of security so different from that held by Roosevelt? True, Russia had seen the League of Nations fail to stop Germany. But Roosevelt had offered to merge American and Russian might with that of the other Western Allies to preserve world peace. Stalin was unmoved.

It has been argued by some historians that Stalin's mistrust of the West and its international organisation stemmed basically from his difficulties with the Western powers during the war, and particularly with Truman's abrupt termination of Lend-Lease. Certainly, there could have been some cause for suspicion, but this could hardly have justified the belief that the West was determined to destroy the Soviet Union. Roosevelt had gone out of his way to treat Stalin decently and even generously. Moreover, US armed forces were being rushed home from Europe. What was Stalin afraid of? In fact, Stalin feared the Western Allies from the day the war began – and from long before. His ideological conditioning, added to his personal insecurity, led him to believe that all capitalist statesmen were fundamentally opposed to the very existence of the Soviet Union. He could hardly rely on an international security organisation which consisted of a solid bloc of capitalist states ranged against one socialist state – the Soviet Union. There wasn't much the West could do to prevent the Cold War except appeasement, and there's no real reason to assume appeasement would have worked any better on Stalin than on Hitler.

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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