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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

HISTORY **9489/33**

Paper 3 Interpretations Question **May/June 2024**

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: Topic 1

The origins of the First World War

1 Read the extract and then answer the question.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century the German Empire had undergone a particularly rapid process of industrialisation. This technical and economic change had taken place in a country whose social and political structures were poorly prepared to cope with such a transition. These structures were pre-industrial and continued to be controlled by an elite whose economic power base was agriculture and whose existence was threatened by the factories. This elite was opposed to any kind of political modernisation, and resisted it with increasing strength. The obvious effect of this was that little or nothing was done to remove even the clearest injustices of the class system, with the result that political dissatisfaction grew and gradually became a potentially dangerous force. No one was more aware of the fragile state of the Reich than the top advisers of the Kaiser. Yet with reform out of the question all they could do to try and block the movement for fundamental change was to resort to devious national strategies of distraction: nationalism, colonial enthusiasm, anti-socialism, and armaments programmes. These were deliberately used for the primary purpose of reinforcing the vulnerable position of the monarchical system against all modernising tendencies.

William's naval and world policy at the turn of the century represented the most comprehensive attempt to mobilise the forces of conservatism. Tirpitz's naval programme aimed at upsetting the international order in order to preserve the domestic balance of power within Germany. By expanding the navy, the Reich government aimed to create a military capability which, it was hoped, would enable it to bully the other powers into making colonial concessions. The economic and emotional benefits to be derived from this would in turn silence internal criticism and generate lasting support for Kaiser and Reich. Yet this grand design of the late 1890s did not work. The international tensions which the Reich government provoked, rather than relieving its internal difficulties, had actually worsened them. The question of how the tax burdens, imposed by the arms race and Germany's 'active' foreign policy, were to be distributed was socially and politically extraordinarily destructive. The result was a growing division of social forces and the eventual stagnation of many aspects of political life. At the same time the success of the Triple Entente's policies of containment and rearmament increasingly limited the scope of German diplomacy. In the end the Reich stood completely isolated with Austria-Hungary, an empire bursting with social and national conflicts, as its only reliable ally.

Thus, while the appearance of the monarchy may have continued to look prosperous and impressive, the existing order behind it had begun to crumble – or this at least was the belief of many leading conservatives inside and outside the Army. A profound pessimism slowly displaced the optimism of the turn of the century when everything seemed to be going well at home and abroad. Soon, they argued, the German monarchy would be no more than an empty shell. Germany would collapse into a parliamentary system of government and bring to an end the dominance of the traditional elites. And what about its external enemies? Would they not try to exploit Germany's internal crisis and destroy its continental position? Germany's rulers were increasingly haunted by the nightmare of impending internal chaos and external defeat, so that an offensive war appeared to be the only way out of the general deadlock. What the Kaiser's armaments policy had failed to do in peacetime was now to be achieved by the German armed forces in wartime.

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 London and Washington, the facts about the 'Final Solution' were known within government circles from an early date. But the facts were not considered to be of great interest or importance, and at least some of the officials either did not believe them, or at least thought them exaggerated. There was no deliberate attempt to stop the flow of information about the mass killings (except for a while on the part of officials in the US State Department), but simply a lack of interest and disbelief. This disbelief can be explained against the background of Anglo-American lack of knowledge of European affairs in general and Nazism in particular. Although it was generally accepted that the Nazis behaved in a less civilised way than the German armies of 1914–18, the idea of genocide nevertheless seemed far-fetched. Barbaric fanaticism was beyond the comprehension of people accustomed to thinking on practical lines, who believed that slave labour rather than annihilation was the fate of the Jews in Europe.

But even if the realities of the 'Final Solution' had been accepted in London and Washington, the issue would still have figured very low on the scale of Allied priorities. Strategists and bureaucrats were not to be distracted from the pursuit of victory by considerations not directly connected with the war effort. Thus, too much publicity about the mass murder seemed undesirable, for fear of generating demands to help the Jews. Even in later years when victory was assured there was little willingness to help. Churchill showed more interest in the Jewish tragedy than Roosevelt but even he was not willing to devote much thought to the subject. Public opinion in Britain and the United States was kept informed by the press about the progress of the 'Final Solution', but the impact of the news was small or at most short-lived. The fact that millions were killed seemed more or less meaningless. People could identify perhaps with the fate of a single individual or a family but not with the fate of millions. The statistics of murder were either disbelieved or dismissed from people's minds.

Would it have made any difference if the information about the mass murder had been believed right from the start? Nothing could have saved the majority of the Jews of the Reich and of Eastern Europe in the summer of 1942. Some might have tried to escape their fate if information had been more widely known. Some might have been saved if Hitler's allies had been threatened with punishment and if the peoples of Europe had been called upon to extend help to the Jews. But after the winter of 1942 the situation rapidly changed. These allies and even some German officials were no longer eager to be accessories to mass murder. Some, at least, would have responded to Allied pressure, but such pressure was never applied. Many Jews could certainly have been saved in 1944 by bombing the railway lines leading to the extermination centres, and possibly the centres themselves. This could have been done without diverting any major resources from the general war effort. It has been argued that the Jews could not, in any case, have escaped, but this is not correct. The Russians were no longer far away, and the German forces in Poland were concentrated in some of the bigger towns. They no longer had the manpower to round up escaped Jews. In short hundreds of thousands could have been saved.

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.

After 1943 there were three major themes which comprised most of the concerns of those in Washington who thought about the problems of American peace aims.

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At the same time the United States defined for its own purposes the preconditions for the Soviet Union's return to the family of nations after twenty-five years of isolation, preconditions that vividly illustrate the nature of the world which the United States hoped might emerge from the war.

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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