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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

HISTORY **9489/31**

Paper 3 Interpretations Question **October/November 2025**

1 hour 15 minutes

1253013786

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 [ ].

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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.

Matters grew more serious on 25 July, when the Austro-Hungarian emperor authorised his army to invade Serbia.

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Use the extract and your knowledge of the origins of the First World War to explain your answer.

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Section B: Topic 2

The Holocaust

2 Read the extract and then answer the question.

The significance of the 'Night of Broken Glass' both in the development of Nazi antisemitism, and the history of the persecution of the Jews by the Nazi state, was not that it marked the completion of a phase whose focus from 1936 to 1938 had been 'Jews out of the economy' and which had now culminated in the complete dispossession and legal disabling of the Jews. The radical nature of the antisemitism which underpinned the Nazis' Jewish policy was such that the completion of one stage necessarily led to the commencement of another, and one which was much more intensely vicious, whose objectives were of a completely different order. In this new stage a completely different solution to the Jewish question competed increasingly with the tendency to drive the Jews out of Germany. This alternative was not so much a radicalisation of previous policy as its logical culmination. Only now, following the deprivation of the Jews' civil and political rights, their isolation and the theft of their property, did the extermination of the Jews seem both possible and desirable. The pogrom itself made that much clear. Its most significant feature, and the one which indicated most clearly the future direction of Nazi persecution, was not the destruction of Jewish shops and homes, not even the burning down of synagogues, but the fact that ninety-one Jews, some of them women, had been clubbed, kicked or beaten to death by Nazi murder squads, and that the culprits had been tried neither for manslaughter nor for murder.

During the pogrom itself Goebbels had greeted the murders with cynical approval. He recorded in his diary that Hitler spoke out 'very sharply against the Jews'. And, when on 24 November the South African Minister of Defence wanted to discuss with the Führer generous international plans for the emigration of all Jews, Hitler rejected the project persistently and with the thinnest of arguments. Obviously, Hitler was not in the least interested in getting the Jews out of Germany. This could have been because he wanted to keep a certain number of hostages. Jews throughout the world, but most importantly in France, Britain and the United States, might be persuaded by the threat of intensified persecution to bring pressure to bear on their governments to tolerate German territorial expansion. However, by the outbreak of war, neither Hitler nor any other Nazi negotiator ever attempted to dissuade any western politician from supporting Poland, by resorting to threats against the Jews. They would not have been successful in any case. In the first place the policy of western governments towards Germany was determined by factors other than consideration either for their own Jews, or for those living in Germany. Secondly, the Nazi leadership had consistently shown, most recently during the 'Night of Broken Glass', that protection for the Jews could not be bought by guaranteeing the success of Hitler's foreign policy. On the contrary, every success on the international stage was automatically followed by anti-Jewish activity. Rather, Hitler's reluctance to consider more comprehensive emigration projects, and the bleak prophecy in his Reichstag speech, not to mention Goebbels' cynicism during the pogrom, were obviously nothing other than the first symptoms of a growing will to destroy. This was especially the case now that all the more modest ways of satisfying the drive to persecute the Jews had been exhausted. On 21 January 1939 Hitler made this clear, and did so in a meeting with a foreign politician. According to the official German minutes, the Führer bluntly told the Czech foreign minister that the Jews would be destroyed.

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.

American foreign policy in the first six months of 1947 was coming to terms with shaping its response to the emerging Cold War. The Truman Doctrine released funds to Greece and Turkey to assist their governments in resisting leftist subversion. In June, Marshall laid out his ambitious plan to extend economic aid to all European countries. If Truman had ever been tentative and unsure in the field of foreign affairs he was becoming less so. At the beginning of 1947 he dismissed his first Secretary of State, James F Byrnes, for daring to be too independent, and replaced him with the great soldier, Marshall. Yet with Byrnes went any confidence in a better world order based on superpower cooperation. Roosevelt had always made it his policy to show confidence in the future. Truman, Marshall and their advisers, chose to be pessimistic about Europe. There was a straightforward explanation for this: fear of an expansionist Soviet Union, using indirect, and hard to resist, tactics to bring the countries of Europe under its influence. Yet this pessimism also had another source: an attitude, verging on disdain towards the nations of western Europe, and a belief that they could succeed neither politically nor economically except under American direction. This mixture of optimism and pessimism combined powerfully at the beginning of 1947 to produce purposeful American action for the reconstruction of the world order.

The structure of American foreign policies, however, provided the Soviet Union with key opportunities. The possibility of pushing the USA back into greater cooperation existed as did the possibility of driving a wedge between Britain and America. American capitalism had English capitalism as its greatest and most stubborn competitor. Such competition might prevent a stable Anglo-American alliance from emerging. Stalin had taken decisive action in the immediate postwar period to reestablish his control over any areas of Soviet foreign and defence policy on which the war had loosened his grip. His personality thus had a peculiarly influential role in shaping the Cold War. Yet very little direct evidence exists to show what motivated him. Men did not give Stalin advice; they told him what they thought he wanted to hear.

We can however suggest three broad conclusions about Stalin's general attitude to international relations. First, he perceived a very high level of threat. Even if the western nations were not joining together to strangle the Soviet Union, the internal contradictions of capitalism still threatened to produce a war into which the Soviet Union might be dragged. This point of view, which was shared by his colleagues, was sharpened by intense paranoia. In one of his last pronouncements on international affairs to the Central Committee he stated that 'a difficult struggle with the capitalist world lay ahead and that the most dangerous thing in the struggle was to show weakness, to take fright, to retreat, to capitulate.' Notwithstanding this, and second, Stalin believed in his own personal genius. The belief was genuine, and also strengthened his own political position – if he could ensure the survival of the Soviet Union, he was irreplaceable. Third, Stalin had a firm grasp of the limits of power. Despite his paranoia Stalin was not self-destructive in the sense Hitler had been. Disaster should be avoided, not welcomed. Stalin had reached his position in the Soviet Union in the face of intense opposition by using clever and ruthless political tactics. If he was to achieve the same mastery over international politics, similar tactics would be required.

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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