

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced Level

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2015 series

9389 HISTORY

9389/23

Paper 2 (Outline Study), maximum raw mark 60

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Generic levels of response

Part (a)

Level 4: Evaluates factors

[9–10]

Answers are well focused and identify and explain a range of factors. Answers are supported by precise evidence and demonstrate clear understanding of the connections between causes. Answers consider the relative significance of factors and reach a supported conclusion.

Level 3: Explains factors

[6–8]

Answers demonstrate good understanding of the demands of the question, providing relevant explanations supported by relevant and detailed information. Answers are clearly expressed. Candidates may attempt to reach a judgement about the significance of factors but this may not be effectively supported.

Level 2: Describes factors

[3–5]

Answers show some knowledge and understanding of the demands of the question. Answers are either entirely descriptive in approach with few explicit links to the question, or they provide some explanation which is supported by information which is limited in range and depth.

Level 1: Describes the topic/issue

[1–2]

Answers contain some relevant material but are descriptive in nature, making little reference to causation. Answers may be assertive or generalised. The response is limited in development.

Level 0: Answers contain no relevant content

[0]

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Part (b)

Level 5: Responses which develop a sustained judgement [18–20]

Answers are well focused and closely argued. Arguments are supported by precisely selected evidence. They lead to a relevant conclusion/judgement which is developed and supported. They are fluent and well organised.

Level 4: Responses which develop a balanced argument [15–17]

Answers show explicit understanding of the demands of the question. They develop a balanced argument supported by a good range of appropriately selected evidence. They begin to form a judgement in response to the question. At this level the judgement may be partial or not fully supported.

Level 3: Responses which begin to develop assessment [10–14]

Answers show a developed understanding of the demands of the question. They provide some assessment, supported by relevant and appropriately selected evidence. However, these answers are likely to lack depth and/or balance. Answers are generally coherent and well organised.

Level 2: Responses which show some understanding of the question [6–9]

Answers show some understanding of the focus of the question. They are either entirely descriptive with few explicit links to the question or they may contain some explicit comment with relevant but limited support.

Level 1: Descriptive or partial responses [1–5]

Answers contain descriptive material which is only loosely linked to the focus of the question. They may only address part of the question. Alternatively, there may be some explicit comment on the question which lacks detailed factual support. Answers are likely to be generalised and assertive. Answers may be fragmentary and disjointed.

Level 0: Answers contain no relevant content [0]

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Section A: European Option

Modern Europe, 1789–1917

1 France, 1789–1804

- (a) Account for the failure of the counter-revolutionaries in France between 1789 and 1795.** [10]

The key issue here is to provide a range of reasons why there was no successful counter-revolution in France in this period. There are a variety of factors which could be considered. Localism played a large part, with an inability to obtain a coherent national movement. There was considerable disunity amongst the likely allies of a return to pre-1789 days. A lack of any serious leadership by the King or any other after his death was also important. The flight and ‘treason’ of the émigrés and the background of war could also be stressed. The Terror dealt with many potential supporters and may have warned others off. There was a determination by many for the Revolution to succeed and there were too many bad memories of the Ancien Régime for support for a ‘restoration’ to gain much momentum. There were positive gains, epitomically in 1791, and many did not want to see those lost.

- (b) To what extent was Napoleon’s military ability the main reason for his rise to power by 1799?** [20]

The key issue here is the relative importance of Napoleon’s military ability, when compared to a range of other factors, in his successful seizure of power. There are a variety of factors which should be considered. He was a very successful general in Italy and had sent, very publicly, a fair amount of loot back to France. Glory and prestige for France were associated with his name. He had benefited from considerable freedom of action in Italy and was used to decision-taking on a large scale – the dealings with Austria, for example. He benefited from the disputes between the executive and legislative powers in France, with the regime there falling into disrepute and the royalist victories in the election of 1797 causing more concern. Coups such as 18 Fructidor V did not help give the impression of future stability. The Directory was discredited and there was fear for the return of the Terror. France had been ruled by an authoritarian regime for centuries and there may well have been a yearning for a return to ‘normalcy’, and his association with military success and ‘élan’ plus clever use of propaganda did him no harm. He was also good, initially, at cloaking his ambitions. His boldness and military support were factors, as were his use of force and support by his brother Lucien.

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2 The Industrial Revolution, c.1800–1850

(a) Why did the Industrial Revolution begin in Britain before France and Germany? [10]

The key issue here is to identify and then prioritise the main features which explain why the UK was the pioneer in industrial development and expansion and why Germany and France lagged behind. Certainly the UK had many advantages. A more flexible social structure, which meant that the rich aristocrat could happily get involved in trade and industry and did not object if his daughter married a millionaire from a lower class, was a factor – there was no caste system there. A stable political system and an established banking and capital-raising structure also helped. Government was sympathetic to innovation and expansion, there were no obstacles, and the law protected the patentee and also banned unions and encouraged enclosure and things like compulsory purchase of property for canals and railroads. There was a good supply of coal for energy provision, an established merchant fleet, good geographical conditions, raw materials abroad and ample commercial expertise. The ground was very fertile for rapid growth and entrepreneurs thrived. War was a stimulus as well. There were very different political, social and economic conditions in both France and Germany, and war was a disruptive force. Many of the reasons why it happened in the UK were present, in terms of raw materials, demand, etc., but until there was a stimulus from above and a radical change in the attitude of both government and society it did not happen.

(b) ‘Industrialisation helped the working classes.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Refer to any two countries in your answer. [20]

Better answers will reflect on exactly what ‘helped’ implies as well as a fairly clear picture of who formed the ‘working classes’. There should be a clear distinction made between the rising and growing ‘middle class’ and the industrial and rural proletariat. There is a good case to be made each way, particularly if looked at with a longer term view, and those who stray over the 1850 line should not be penalised and could be credited. On the one hand there were the implications of the enclosure movement on the rural working class, with the move from landless peasant to the urban worker. There were also the frequently dreadful factory conditions, which affected all ages and both sexes, with the accompanying living conditions and the rise of ‘urban’ diseases such as cholera and TB. Ultimately, both living and working conditions were to improve with greater regulation and state intervention. Unions gained recognition, workers could organise and children were educated. A regular wage replaced a rural subsistence existence. The fact that populations expanded rapidly is an indicator to improvement as is the rise in literacy and welfare systems.

3 The Origins of World War I, c.1900–1914

(a) Why did Germany challenge Britain’s naval supremacy in the years before World War I? [10]

Much was due to the personal wishes of the Kaiser and the influence that Tirpitz had over him. Given the structure of German politics, the Kaiser’s personal wishes became German policy. There was the desire for ‘Weltpolitik’ and a growing dislike of Britain and her imperial status. The prevailing ideas of Mahan and the experience of the Russo/Japanese war stressed the importance of naval power. The Kaiser wished to see his Empire and influence expand outside Europe as the Moroccan crisis showed and he felt that a large navy was vital for this process. There was a lot of pressure from German industrialists, who were after large profits, and a very strong national pressure group as well within Germany.

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- (b) To what extent should the Kaiser's support for Austria be seen as the cause of the outbreak of war in 1914? [20]

The key issue here is the relative importance of Germany's support for Austria, the blank cheque in particular, when compared with other factors in the immediate outbreak of war in the summer of 1914. Certainly the 'blank cheque' is seen as a critical factor in determining Austria's thinking and there is an on-going debate as to whether Austria would have acted so strongly without what it assumed was unconditional support. Certainly if the Kaiser and his government had been emphatically hostile to any such action it would not have happened, or at least not in the way it did. However, Austria was determined to protect the status of its empire and its Emperor was not known for cautious and considered responses. It is argued that if it was not this event, then it could so easily have been another, given the tensions and alliances already present. The Kaiser was irresponsible and belligerent, the Schlieffen Plan was ready and lethal, and the Tsar was just as likely to provoke a crisis elsewhere.

4 The Russian Revolution, 1905–1917

- (a) Why did the Tsar agree to the October Manifesto in 1905? [10]

There were a variety of reasons. The principal one is felt to be the pressure put on the Tsar by Witte and also other more aristocratic advisers frightened for their status and the future of Tsardom. Nicholas could be easily influenced. Simple fear of possible revolution played a part as well. Witte hoped to isolate the radical 'left' by the concessions of the Manifesto, thus gaining the support of the Liberals. While the Tsar felt that it might well be just a temporary concession, Witte and others felt it was a genuine move towards a constitutional monarchy and a better future for Russia. The humiliation of the Russo-Japanese war played a role as did the events which surrounded the 1905 Revolution.

- (b) 'The Provisional Government collapsed because it failed to make peace.' How far do you agree? [20]

The key issue here is the relative importance of the factors which led to the collapse of the Provisional Government in October 1917. There are three broad areas to consider. The first is the background of the war which created ideal conditions for radicalism. There was massive dislocation, an alienated army deserting in large numbers, a total breakdown of order in the countryside, hunger and high inflation. There was simply no tradition of a democratic government of any sort in Russia; autocracy was built into the system and the idea of government by consent was totally alien. The second factor is the failings of the government in general and of Kerensky in particular. The decision to stay in the war was probably fatal and the management of the Kornilov Affair and the arming of the Soviets were also inept. The magnitude of the problems facing the Provisional Government was staggering and arguably it had no mandate to adopt policies which might lead to their solution. It was also a badly divided group of men. Finally there is the role of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. His slogans were perfect for the time, there was a power vacuum at the centre, Trotsky's work with the Soviets was paying dividends, and both their broad strategy as well as their tactics were just right.

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Section B: American Option

The History of the USA, 1840–1941

5 The Expansion of US Power from the 1840s to the 1930s

- (a) Why did the USA lead European powers to accept the Dawes Plan of 1924? [10]

The Dawes Plan was the first international agreement about the issue of German reparations, an issue which had divided all great powers ever since 1918. Dawes was an American banker acting in a private capacity and not as a US government delegate. This was because the Coolidge government could not antagonise isolationists, especially those in the US Congress. However, there were links between the US state department and Dawes.

The reparations issue was so politically sensitive by 1923 that the Dawes committee's terms of reference did not include the word. 1923 had been a disastrous year for Europe, mainly because of the issue of reparations. France had occupied the Ruhr, Germany had responded with a policy of passive resistance. The German people had had to live with the hyperinflation of the mark. Both the extreme left and the extreme right in Germany had tried to seize power. It was in every state's interests, even the USA's, to restore order to the European economic and financial systems. Candidates do not need to know the detail of the Dawes Plan beyond understanding that it helped restore the economies of both Germany and Europe. Its acceptance by both France and Germany is implied in the question. The focus is on the USA. Rather surreptitiously, the US government involved itself in the affairs of Europe despite US isolationism because its continued economic success required economic order in Europe. It could also be argued that the USA had started to despair of the European great powers' inability to sort out their own affairs.

- (b) How successful was 'dollar diplomacy' in Central America and the Caribbean in the early twentieth century? [20]

Dollar diplomacy is a policy primarily associated with President Taft and his one-term presidency of 1909–13. It was based on a policy developed by Taft's predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt, with regard to the Dominican Republic. There, US private banks had paid defaulted loans in return for a US-led body to collect customs duties which would in turn repay the bankers. Thus US loans – not US government loans – could encourage better financial and fiscal housekeeping and thus ensure greater political stability. Dollar diplomacy would seem to be a more subtle way of extending US influence than military intervention.

US intervention in the Dominican Republic was an example of the Roosevelt Corollary in action. That Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine said that if any country in the Americas was so unstable as to make it vulnerable to European control, then the USA had the right to intervene to prevent such an outcome. Taft applied the policy to Nicaragua between 1912 and 1914. However, the US-backed regime faced opposition from Nicaraguan rebels, which meant that US troops had to be sent in, thus undermining a key feature of dollar diplomacy. Taft also tried to apply dollar diplomacy in Honduras and Haiti, each time with little success. The concept of dollar diplomacy soon became a term of criticism of US foreign policy. It was financial imperialism rather than economic. The model of sending in financial experts to affect a country's financial system and currency, however, became one used with greater frequency in the twentieth and even twenty first centuries, if with varying degrees of success.

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6 Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877

(a) Why were three constitutional amendments passed between 1865 and 1870? [10]

The three amendments were the 13th, abolishing slavery [1865], the 14th, introducing legal equality for all US citizens [1868], and the 15th, giving citizens the right to vote, whatever their colour [1870]. They became the formal constitutional outcomes of what is sometimes called the second American Revolution. These three related amendments were necessary because of the limits of the first two. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery but said nothing about the status of the ex-slaves. The 14th Amendment made those ex-slaves citizens but said nothing about their political rights. Only the 15th Amendment gave those to ex-slaves.

The changing political context of 1865–70 also helps explain why three amendments were passed so quickly. The 13th Amendment was passed while the civil war was still being fought. Emancipation of the slaves was as far as the US congress and two-thirds of Northern states were prepared to go. [Note that the US president has no formal role in approving constitutional amendments.] Even then, compared with 1861, it was a huge step. The 14th Amendment was passed because the passage of Black Codes by several Southern states showed that the 13th Amendment and the subsequent Civil Rights Act of 1866 were not enough to protect ex-slaves. The 15th Amendment was necessary to ensure that all states accepted the rights of African Americans to vote; even some Northern states had been reluctant to do so unilaterally.

(b) ‘Freed slaves were given no support in the Reconstruction era.’ How far do you agree? [20]

While Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 declared the freedom of slave, those under Confederate control were not freed. Only with the 13th Amendment did slavery become unconstitutional. Some Southern states, however, as they approved the 13th Amendment, also introduced Black Codes which limited the legal rights of ex-slaves. Also the first Ku Klux Klan was formed in North Carolina and began intimidating the ex-slaves. The federal government responded by taking action to help and protect ex-slaves. Black Codes so infuriated the North that Congress passed the 1866 Civil Rights Act and the Reconstruction Acts of 1867–68, which established military rule of the South. Black Codes were quickly abandoned.

Secondly, the Freedmen’s Bureau was established in March 1865 to provide ex-slaves with a wide range of support, including provision of schools and hospitals. Renewed annually, the Bureau functioned fully until 1868 when its roles were restricted, before being closed down in 1872. Though always underfunded and understaffed, the Bureau was seen as doing some effective work with freed slaves. In addition, in 1870–71 the US Congress passed three Enforcement Acts to uphold the laws to protect ex-slaves.

The third was known as the Ku Klux Klan Act as it enabled the President to take effective action against the white supremacist organisation. Thus the freed slaves were not left to fend for themselves in many areas of public life. However, when it came to farming, hardly any help was provided. Freed slaves were given no land on which to farm. They usually ended up working for their former owners by one of a series of relationships: crop lien, sharecropping, wage labour. The Freedman’s Bureau helped ex-slaves and slave owners agree their contracts but once the Bureau had gone, no real help was provided. Then, when Reconstruction came to an end in the 1870s, the Republican Party of the North did leave the freed slaves of the South to fend for themselves. Their position deteriorated as Southern Democrats introduced Jim Crow laws.

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7 The Gilded Age and the Progressive Era from the 1870s to the 1920s

- (a) Why did Theodore Roosevelt support the presidential campaign of Taft in 1908 and yet run against him in 1912? [10]

On winning the 1904 election, Theodore Roosevelt [TR] said he would not run again in 1908. Almost immediately, he regretted the decision. William Howard Taft had been TR's Secretary of War, a close and trusted colleague, from 1904 to 1908. In 1908, with TR's support, he won the Republican Party's nomination for the presidency, and then was elected president. TR saw Taft as a Progressive who would carry forward his Progressive policies. In some respects, President Taft was a Progressive. However, he worked more closely with the conservative wing of the party, especially over the issue of tariffs. Thus Roosevelt despaired of him. He was narrowly defeated in the Republican Party convention of 1912. He broke away and formed his own Progressive Party, soon nicknamed the Bull Moose party after TR declared that he was as fit as a bull moose. The division of the Republican Party allowed the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson, to win the presidency. Roosevelt did much better than Taft in terms of electoral college votes, if less so in terms of the popular vote.

- (b) 'The USA is the great melting pot, where all races are melting and reforming.' How accurate is this assertion about the place of immigrants in the USA in the early twentieth century? [20]

The quote is taken from a play called 'The Melting Pot', first performed in 1908. 'Melting pot' became a term much used to describe American society. The quote talks about all immigrant communities melting *and reforming*. The phrase presumably means that various ethnic or religious identities melt away and a new American identity is formed. 'Hyphenated Americans', e.g. Irish Americans, were a source of criticism at the time, by both Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson amongst others.

By the early twentieth century, mass immigration from Europe and Asia had been underway for several generations. Chinese immigrants had been a problem from the later nineteenth century, hence the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The major event of the early twentieth century was the First World War, which caused problems for some immigrant groups and especially the Germans. The combination of the Red Scare of 1919–21 and the economic recession of 1920–21 caused further social tension, thus leading to the 1924 Immigration Act, which restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe in particular. In these first two decades of the twentieth century, there were various attempts, public and private, to assimilate – or Americanise – immigrant communities, especially Jewish and Catholic, to create the melting pot. Economic growth together with social and geographical mobility also helped reduce the likelihood of ethnic conflict. If the USA was never quite the melting pot of the 1908 play, the USA did assimilate many different immigrant communities with relative ease. Its ideology, its resources, its size made this possible.

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8 The Great Crash, the Great Depression and the New Deal, 1929–1941

(a) Why did right-wing conservatives oppose the New Deal?

[10]

Right-wing conservatives could be found in the Democratic Party as well as the Republican Party. There were two main organisations which claimed to represent right-wing views: the American Liberty League, 1934–36, and the Conservative Coalition in Congress from 1937. The former combined big business interests with a popular membership which, by 1936, totalled some 125 000. Its aim was to defend the Constitution and its rights and liberties. It criticised the Agricultural Adjustment Act as marking a trend towards ‘fascist control of agriculture’ and the idea of Social Security as marking the end of democracy. The Conservative Coalition published a Conservative Manifesto in 1937, which attracted a lot of support from Chambers of Commerce and business associations. Its ten-point plan included achieving a balanced budget, cutting public spending and taxation, and limiting the government’s ability to compete with private enterprise. The arguments and assertions of these two organisations show that the Right opposed the New Deal for a mixture of political and economic reasons, which combined into an opposition to the increased role of federal government that was the essential means of implementing the New Deal. How effective that opposition was is not relevant here.

(b) Evaluate the argument that the peacetime domestic achievements of Franklin Roosevelt were not as great as is often claimed.

[20]

The main achievements of FDR can be divided into political and governmental, discrete and systemic. On the governmental side, discrete achievements include reforms such as the minimum wage, Social Security and the Wagner Act. Each can be analysed for the benefits they brought and the problems they created. More systemic achievements include the stabilisation of the banking system and the revival of American capitalism, which some thought was in danger of collapse. Again, balanced analysis is required. Political achievements include the winning of three presidential elections in succession, a unique feat, the formation of the New Deal coalition, and the maintenance of American democracy at a time of grave economic crisis. When fascism and communism seemed on the rise in Europe, the USA was able to reverse economic collapse while remaining a liberal democracy. Some also advance the argument that another of FDR’s achievements was to accept and advance the revolution in economic policy associated with John Maynard Keynes. In practice, FDR’s economic policies were more orthodox, less radical, as shown by the ‘Roosevelt recession’ of 1937–38.

The main criticism of Roosevelt’s domestic policies is that the great effort and ingenuity of the New Deal did not lead to sustained economic growth. Only the Second World War brought that about. There is an argument that if FDR had been a more conventional two-term president, he would not be seen as one of the great US presidents.

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Section C: International Option

International Relations, 1871–1945

9 International Relations, 1871–1918

(a) Why did Germany declare war on France in 1914?

[10]

Germany was a member of the Triple Alliance, France of the Triple Entente. Although intended for peaceful/defensive purposes, the secrecy involved in these alliances caused concern. Germany was afraid that, in the event of war, it would be involved in fighting on two fronts, against France in the west and Russia in the east. As early as 1904, Germany had devised the Schlieffen Plan to deal with such a situation – this required a quick victory against France before addressing the problem of Russia. When Austria-Hungary attacked Serbia, Russia declared war against Austria-Hungary which led to Germany's involvement in the war in support of its ally, Austria-Hungary. Germany put the Schlieffen Plan into action, attacking France through Belgium.

(b) To what extent was the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 responsible for Japan's victory in the war against Russia?

[20]

The Alliance did give Japan some credibility as a world power and unquestionably delayed the arrival of the Russian Baltic fleet (delayed through the North Sea and forbidden access to the Suez Canal). However, there were arguably more significant reasons for Japan's victory. For example, it had more modern ships and weaponry; it could mobilise its troops more quickly and easily; Japan's armed forces were better led than their Russian counterparts; Russia was unprepared for the initial Japanese attack on Port Arthur; Japan had control of the local seas, enabling it to move troops around without resistance; the Russian fleet was widely dispersed and consisted largely of slow-moving and outdated ships; Russian arrogance, assuming that Japan would be easily beaten.

10 International Relations, 1919–1933

(a) Why did Germany sign the Locarno Treaties?

[10]

The Paris Peace Settlement left Germany isolated. Isolation meant vulnerability, especially for a country whose military strength was so heavily restricted. Germany did sign the Treaty of Rapallo with Russia in 1922, but this simply added to Germany's isolation from the other major European countries (which feared Russia's communism). German vulnerability was exposed in 1923 when the French occupied the Ruhr. Although the occupation failed to achieve French aims, it paralysed industry in the Ruhr, with catastrophic effects for the German economy. Gustav Stresemann, the German Chancellor/Foreign Minister, was determined to forge improved relations with Britain and, particularly, France, aided by his good working relationship with his French counterpart, Briand. Germany was, therefore, prepared to accept the permanent loss of Alsace-Lorraine, Eupen and Malmedy in exchange for assurances that there would be no further incursions onto German land. By agreeing with France and Belgium to respect each other's frontiers, Germany was creating improved relations with Western Europe.

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(b) To what extent was the period from 1919 to 1933 marked by international tension? [20]

In support of the view that 1919–39 was a period of international tension, it could be argued that:

- The Paris Peace Settlement was undermined by the USA's refusal to ratify it, adding to French fears of vulnerability
- Relations between Britain and France were strained by their different attitudes towards German recovery
- Due to the fear of communism, Russia was largely isolated from the rest of Europe
- Border disputes were common in Europe, further undermining the peace settlement (e.g. Turkey took land given to Greece by the Treaty of Sèvres)
- The issue of German reparations, together with the USA's insistence on the repayment of war debts, caused problems (e.g. French occupation of the Ruhr)
- There was growing hostility between the USA and Japan in the Far East
- France remained concerned about the possibility of a future German invasion – there is doubt regarding how sincere France actually was in forging apparently improved relations with Germany after Locarno.

In challenging the view, it could be argued that tensions were greatly relieved by improved relations, for example:

- The issue of German reparations was largely resolved by the Dawes Plan (1924) and the Young Plan (1929)
- The Washington Naval Conferences of 1921–22 enabled agreement to be reached between the USA, Japan and major European countries regarding naval power in the Far East
- The Locarno Treaties (1925) were widely hailed as restoring good relations between the major European powers
- The fact that 65 nations signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928) indicated a clear desire for improved relations and international peace and security
- Despite the absence of the USA, the League of Nations was largely successful in dealing with disputes during the period before 1933
- Russia's communist government was officially recognised by the major European powers.

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11 International Relations, 1933–1939

(a) Why did King Alfonso XIII of Spain abdicate in 1931?

[10]

Spain was politically unstable, its constitutional monarchy unable to cope with the divisions which beset the country (political, social, economic and geographical). The system did not provide strong, consistent and effective leadership, which led to the bloodless coup of 1923. Miguel Primo de Rivera was able to govern the country as a military dictator, a situation which Alfonso accepted as the only way to maintain some power of his own. The world economic crisis after 1929 caused massive unemployment and poverty in Spain, leading to riots and potential bloodshed. Unable to cope, Primo de Rivera lost the support of the army. In elections in 1931, the Republicans gained control of all Spain's major cities. Fearing bloodshed, Alfonso abdicated and Spain became a Republic.

(b) ‘Hitler’s desire for lebensraum was the main reason for the outbreak of World War II.’ How far do you agree?

[20]

In support of the statement, it could be argued that Hitler had long maintained that Germany should take land to the east to provide lebensraum (living space) for the German people. Stalin was well aware of this, appreciating that Hitler’s designs on Poland were merely a precursor to a German attack on the USSR. Hitler believed that Britain and France would do nothing to protect Poland or Russia – this was because of the weakness they had shown in the past, particularly over the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, and because Russian communism was feared in Western Europe. However, he misjudged the British and French response; it was the German invasion of Poland which led Britain and France to declare war on Germany.

In challenging the statement, it could be argued that Hitler had already gone too far by taking Czechoslovakia in defiance of the promises he had made at Munich. Whereas Hitler’s earlier actions could have been justified by the argument that he was merely righting the wrongs imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, there was no such justification for the taking of Czechoslovakia. Within 48 hours of the German occupation of Czechoslovakia, Chamberlain was moving away from appeasement, making war-like speeches directed at Hitler and introducing conscription in Britain. Therefore, it was Hitler’s on-going acts of aggression in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno and Munich agreements which led to WWII, rather than his desire for lebensraum.

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12 China and Japan, 1919–1945

(a) Why was China so weak by 1919?

[10]

China had been disintegrating for a long time, largely as a result of the government's failure to prevent foreigners gaining influence within the country. Moreover, the government had faced internal rebellion, defeated only with the aid of foreign soldiers. China was becoming modernised largely as a result of foreign intervention – this led to increasing industrialisation, improved transport and westernisation. This process was accompanied by an increasing demand for reform, which led to political disintegration. Internal rebellion led to provinces declaring themselves independent, and the likelihood of civil war was only averted when Pu Yi abdicated in 1912. As a result, a monarchy which had lasted for 2500 years ended, leaving China as a Republic with no tradition or experience of constitutional forms of government. Japan and Russia both had designs on taking Chinese land, and, indeed, had gone to war over this in 1904–5. During WWI, Japan had continued to exploit China, in particular through its Twenty-One Demands. Although these were 'watered-down' by foreign intervention, the Paris Peace Settlement provided no recompense for China, which remained vulnerable to foreign attack.

(b) To what extent did Japanese foreign policy change as a result of the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941?

[20]

In support of the view that Japan's foreign policy did change, it could be argued that prior to the German invasion of the USSR, Japanese politicians were split over what action to take. Some argued that Japan should exploit the fact that Britain and the USA were distracted by their involvement in WWII, seizing Dutch, British and French possessions in the Far East. Success against Indochina, Thailand, Burma, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies would provide Japan with vital new supplies of tin, oil and rubber. Conversely, others (including the Prime Minister, Prince Konoye) argued for a more cautious approach – they were concerned about the possibility of an attack by the USSR and felt it was more important to safeguard against this than to embark on further military engagements. The German invasion removed this threat, enabling Japan to embark on a more aggressive policy under the new Prime Minister, Hideki Tojo.

In challenging the view, it could be argued that Japan had already embarked on an aggressive foreign policy, as evidenced by the invasion of Manchuria and the Sino-Japanese War. Since Japanese public opinion was heavily nationalistic, it is highly likely that Japan would have continued on its aggressive foreign policy despite the opposition of more cautious politicians.