

Specimen Paper Answers

Paper 3

Cambridge International AS & A Level History 9489

For examination in 2021, 2022 and 2023



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Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level History 9489 and to show examples of very good answers.

In this booklet, we have provided answers for Question 1 (The origins of the First World War), Question 2 (The Holocaust) and Question 3 (The origins and development of the Cold War) which have been marked by a Cambridge Examiner. Each response is accompanied by a brief commentary explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the answer. The examiner comments indicate where and why marks were awarded and how answers could have been improved.

These answers should be considered in conjunction with Specimen Paper 3 and the Mark Scheme.

The Specimen Paper and Mark Scheme are to download from the School Support Hub.

These files are:

9489 History 2021 Specimen Paper 03

9489 History 2021 Specimen Paper Mark Scheme 03

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Assessment overview

Paper 3 Interpretations Question

Written paper, 1 hour 15 minutes, 40 marks

Candidates answer on interpretations question on one of the options given in the syllabus.

Externally assessed

20% of the A Level

Assessment objectives

AO1

Recall, select and deploy historical knowledge appropriately and effectively.

AO4

Analyse and evaluate how aspects of the past have been interpreted and represented.

Section A: Topic 1 The origins of the First World War

Question 1

Section A: Topic 1

The origins of the First World War

- 1 Read the extract and then answer the question.

Princip did not intend to inspire Austria to invade Serbia. Quite the contrary, under questioning by his captors he attempted to keep them from learning of any connection between the Serbs and himself. Moreover, the Austro-Hungarian foreign office was at work planning the destruction of Serbia even before Princip struck. The troubled and confused adolescent terrorist did indeed open the door to the Austrian invasion by killing the Archduke who had been blocking the way to war, but Princip did not know that; what he did, in that respect, was unintentional.

Kaiser Wilhelm, Chancellor Bethmann, Foreign Minister Jagow, and an assortment of their German military and civilian colleagues, encouraged the Austrians to launch an attack on Serbia, and so were directly responsible for that war. However in the case of the Kaiser, when it looked as though there were a peaceful solution, he opted for it enthusiastically.

Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Berchtold was the man most responsible for bringing about the Serbian war. Sometime during or after the Balkan Wars he decided that his country could survive only if Serbia were crushed and altogether eliminated as a factor in politics. He seems to have believed that a merely diplomatic triumph would be insubstantial and might not last. Only victory in war would achieve his goal, and that could be accomplished only if Germany would keep Russia from interfering, while big Austria-Hungary crushed little Serbia.

As soon as Germany's blank cheque was received, Berchtold put himself to work starting his war. He was, like Princip, persistent and undiscouraged. He refused to be turned aside. He would not be drawn into conversations or negotiations that might trap him into keeping the peace, even (and this confused other leaders) on favourable terms. The other players in European politics found the July crisis uniquely puzzling because they sensed they were missing something. What they were missing was the knowledge that Vienna did not want peace. They assumed that Berchtold hoped to secure his terms, which might well have been extreme. But he did not desire his terms or any terms; he preferred to fight a war. After the war he did not want a subservient Serbia (as the Kaiser wanted); he wanted there to be no Serbia at all.

Berchtold operated under severe handicaps: the machinery of the Austro-Hungarian state moved with maddening slowness. He could not move swiftly enough to achieve the outcome that the Germans wanted. Everything took time, time during which the powers might impose a peace. Since his armies could not move for weeks, he declared war anyway, doing nothing but using the 'at war' status to fend off potential peacemakers.

Berchtold had one great asset in pursuing his goal. The foreign minister of any other great power would have been reined in by his allies. If Russia wanted to invade a neighbour, France – which financed Russia's military expansion – would keep St Petersburg from doing so. When Germany meddled in Morocco in 1911, even Austria-Hungary refused support and thereby helped stop Berlin. Only one country had an ally that would not restrain it, that would support it blindly. That was Austria-Hungary, backed unconditionally by Germany, and it was the one country in Europe led by a man who was determined to start a 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 origins of the First World War to explain your answer.

[40]

Specimen answer

The focus of the argument in this extract is the determination of Austria (and more specifically Berchtold) to go to war with Serbia. Austria's responsibility for war is the first element of the argument. The author also considers the role of Germany as Austria's ally and, although the Kaiser is shown to be in favour of peace, at least in the part of the extract when it says, 'when it looked as though there were a peaceful solution, he opted for it enthusiastically' it becomes clear that Germany is also to blame for war against Serbia. It is notable that the author does not consider the causes of a wider European conflict. There are some references to the context, for instance in paragraph four the author mentions the 'other players in European politics' which reminds the reader that the July Crisis had bigger implications than merely a war between Austria and Serbia. However, these implications are merely hinted at and the argument stays focused on Austrian and German responsibility for war with Serbia.

The author argues that Austria wanted to destroy Serbia, and actively sought an opportunity to do so. This is a recurring theme throughout the extract. Princip's assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand is seen as playing into Austria's hands. While the historian argues that Princip fully intended to assassinate the Archduke, 'he did not intend to inspire Austria to invade Serbia' and that what he did 'in that respect, was unintentional'. The historian highlights this point by explaining that Princip tried to hide any connection between himself and Serbia from his captors after his arrest. This emphasises the historian's argument that Princip played unwittingly into Austria's hands. In fact, the author argues that Austria was already 'planning the destruction of Serbia'. The historian makes it clear that Austria was determined to destroy Serbia and if Serbia had a role in causing the conflict, it is not discussed. This point is developed later in the extract when the historian argues that 'he (Berchtold) did not want a subservient Austria, he wanted there to be no Serbia at all'. This quote shows two key elements of the argument about Austrian responsibility: Berchtold was a warmonger and he was determined to wipe out Serbia.

The author makes it crystal clear where the blame for war between Austria and Serbia lay with the statement that 'Foreign Minister Berchtold was the man responsible for bringing about the Serbian war'. This unequivocally blames Berchtold, although Germany's responsibility is also argued later in the extract. The historian argues that the decision to crush Serbia was probably taken 'during or after the Balkan Wars' of 1912-13 when it appears that Berchtold decided that Austria's survival was dependent on the destruction of Serbia. The historian cites Berchtold's belief that a 'diplomatic triumph would be insubstantial

Specimen answer, continued

and might not last' to show Austria's determination was to crush Serbia completely. Berchtold's responsibility is also highlighted later in the extract where he is portrayed as deliberately avoiding 'conversations or negotiations that might trap him into keeping peace' ('trap' underlining his desperation to avoid peace). The author points out that 'Vienna did not want peace' as the key point missed by other European politicians who were puzzled by Austria's implacable stance, again showing Austria's determination to fight. The historian portrays Berchtold as putting 'himself to work starting his war', laying heavy emphasis on his personal responsibility.

Although Austria's responsibility (in the shape of Berchtold) is without question in this extract, the culpability of Germany is also explored. The historian argues that Germany, in the shape of the Kaiser, Chancellor and Foreign Minister and 'an assortment of German military and civilian colleagues' encouraged Austria to start a war against Serbia. The historian shows that Austria's plans to 'crush little Serbia' would only work if Germany 'would keep Russia from interfering'. Thus, the historian clearly suggests that German support was essential to Austria and therefore Germany shares responsibility for the outbreak of war. However, there is an interesting sub-message that the Kaiser was keen to see a peaceful solution. This idea is picked up again in the fourth paragraph where there is a divergence between the views of Berchtold to destroy Serbia and the Kaiser who would apparently settle for a subservient Serbia.

Nonetheless, despite the Kaiser's less extreme position, the author argues that Germany caused war. German support is portrayed as vital to Austria's ability to pursue her aim. The author states that 'as soon as Germany's blank cheque was received, Berchtold put himself to work'. In this way, the historian suggests that Berchtold could act only after he received a guarantee of unconditional support from Germany (the 'blank cheque' allowed Austria a free hand in their policy against Serbia with a promise of full German support). The author refers to 'the outcome the Germans wanted', making them appear more in control of the situation than previously suggested and underlining the extent of their involvement.

German culpability is most clearly stated in the final paragraph where Germany is 'the one great asset' Berchtold possessed in pursuing his goal. To emphasise this, the author considers how actions would have been addressed if a similar situation had arisen between the members of the Triple Entente. If Russia had wanted to invade a neighbour, so the extract argues, France would have stepped in to prevent this. The historian uses this example to highlight the importance of German support to Austria. The message is very clear when the author

Specimen answer, continued

describes German support for Austria as both 'blind' and 'unconditional'. The historian argues that unquestioning German support allows Austria to pursue its aggressive aims.

In conclusion, the author argues that Berchtold was a man 'determined to start a war'. That war, it is argued, would mean the destruction of Serbia and Germany's unconditional support in the form of the 'blank cheque' enable him to go ahead with his plans. Both Austria and Germany were to blame for the outbreak of war against Serbia.

Examiner comment

The candidate demonstrates a complete understanding of the interpretation advanced in the extract. It is clearly understood that this historian holds both Austria and Germany responsible for war. This argument, on its own but fully supported from the extract, would demonstrate a sound understanding and would merit Level 5. The response goes one step further to demonstrate complete understanding by recognising that the interpretation is focused on war against Serbia, rather than the causes of the wider European war.

The whole of the argument of the extract is outlined in the introduction and this is significant. It shows that the candidate has spent time reading the extract carefully and considered the message of the entire extract before writing their response. This ability to focus on the key elements of an interpretation is an effective way to start an answer. The rest of the answer explains the interpretation, illustrating its different aspects.

A strong feature of this answer is the way in which it maintains a consistent focus on the extract. There is a little supporting contextual knowledge but the focus is firmly on the extract throughout.

The candidate has firmly grasped the essential points of the interpretation, which is shown by the focus and relevance of the answer. The response does not address everything in the extract; rather, sections of the extract are selected and quoted to support points about the interpretation.

The argument presented is consistent and the response does not contradict itself. Although the tendency of the Kaiser to seek a peaceful solution is noted, it is seen as a sub-message which does not detract from the main argument. The conclusion reasserts the candidate's view of the overall message of the extract. The answer is awarded Level 6 for both AO1 and AO4.

Common mistakes

- Writing about the topic rather than the extract. For example, candidates may become side tracked into writing about the historical context of the Sarajevo assassination, the Balkan Wars or the July Crisis.
- Not spending enough time (as much as 30 minutes may be needed) at the start of the examination reading and thinking about the extract before starting to write. Candidates may then not demonstrate a strong grasp of the argument as a whole, which will be evident in their response.

Section B: Topic 2 The Holocaust

Question 2

Section B: Topic 2

The Holocaust

- 2 Read the extract and then answer the question.

In every country that suffered Nazi and Fascist occupation Jews were found taking part in the struggle against the enemy. This aspect of the anti-Nazi Jewish campaign took many different forms and reached considerable proportions.

Throughout Europe the Jews were condemned to death. For every Jew in occupied Europe, passively obeying the orders of the authorities could have no other effect – except by a miracle – than death. The only way a Jew could hope to survive was by disobeying the orders of the German occupying forces. This disobedience could take many different forms; armed resistance was only one of them. It began with refusing to be registered as a Jew, refusing to wear the yellow star, refusing to go to the assembly points, refusing to live in the ghettos. Some Jews infringed German orders by procuring false identity papers and ration books. They tried to go into hiding, and above all to ensure that their wives and children were out of harm's way, and here they were often obliged to depend upon the non-Jewish population. In most cases, and particularly in Western Europe, national resistance movements considered it one of their main duties to come to the aid of Jews on the run. Hitler's war against the Jews was in a way a 'war within a war', and from the Jewish point of view, every time one of these 'small' actions succeeded, the Nazis suffered a setback. Since it was a question of killing all Jews, each Jew who escaped represented a defeat for the Third Reich. Every time a Jew provided himself with false papers and went into hiding, either to take part in resistance activities or simply to avoid being deported, he accomplished an anti-German act, an act of resistance.

When the Jews obeyed Nazi laws and regulations, or those of the Nazis' local accomplices, they suffered enormous losses. The more closely they conformed to the law, the less were their chances of surviving. Where they disobeyed the law by changing identity, leaving their homes or their ghettos and going into hiding, the percentage of losses visibly diminished, sometimes showing a spectacular drop. In Kiev, capital of the Ukraine, only one Jew survived out of the 33000 or so resident in the city when the Germans entered, while in the Jewish resistance in the swamps of White Russia, where whole families had sought refuge under the armed protection, such as it was, of the Jewish Resistance fighters, at least half of the fugitives survived.

However, the Jewish Resistance came up against enormous problems. The ceaseless surveillance of the Gestapo and the local police was by no means the only problem. Sheer terror of the Nazis drove most of the ghetto population to oppose any action likely to provoke reprisals. In an extreme case in Vilna, the leader of the ghetto resistance organisation was literally forced by the other inhabitants to give himself up to the Gestapo; and even when the Jewish population were less timorous, the Resistance fighters remained isolated. This sort of reaction was in no way confined to Jews, and in all the occupied countries only a minority took part in the resistance.

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]

Specimen answer

The focus of this extract is on Jewish resistance to the Nazis in the occupied territories. The extract does not consider Holocaust causation and therefore does not fit into any of the categories of intentionalism, functionalism or structuralism. Although the events discussed in the extract clearly take place in wartime, the impact of war on Nazi policy towards the Jews is not discussed. The extract forms part of the wider debate about the ways in which the Jews (the victims) reacted to Nazi control and the policies towards them. This author, unlike Hannah Arendt who argues that some Jews were actively complicit in their own downfall, argues that many were involved in resistance, highlighting this with the opening comment that 'Jews were found taking part in the struggle against the enemy' in every country occupied by the Nazis. The author not only suggests that a minority of Jews did resist but offers a wider framework of what resistance might involve. The author also argues that resistance, although by no means a guarantee of survival, was a route which at least offered the Jews a slim chance. The extract is similar to arguments put forward by Yehuda Bauer who has challenged the view that all Jews were passive victims of the Nazis.

The author argues that resistance offered the Jews at least a chance of survival. He points out that a passive reaction to Nazi occupation would result in certain death. This point is emphasised in the third paragraph with the example of Kiev where only one Jew from a total of 33,000 survived the German occupation. The historian even goes so far as to suggest that 'the more closely (the Jews) conformed to the law, the less their chances of surviving'. This shows that no matter how law-abiding the Jewish population, the Nazis were determined to destroy them. In fact, the author argues that the more law-abiding, 'the less were their chances of surviving', demonstrating that resistance was the Jews' only hope.

The extract argues that resistance not only offered a chance of survival but could be effective. The historian explains that 'where they disobeyed the laws by changing identity, leaving their homes the percentage of losses visibly diminished.' The historian emphasises this point by citing the example of those who resisted in the 'swamps of White Russia' where families who sought refuge under 'armed protection' had a much higher chance of survival than those who complied with Nazi regulations. Although not addressed in detail in the extract, there is an implication that there was some help from local non-Jewish populations and resistance fighters in Western Europe for those who attempted to hide or escape. The historian argues that 'national resistance movements considered it one of their main duties to come to the aid of Jews on the run' which challenges the views of other historians who have suggested that local populations either ignored or became implicated in the fate of the Jews. The author shows that local populations in the occupied territories were more than mere 'bystanders'.

Specimen answer, continued

The historian uses the example of Jews escaping to White Russia to illustrate that there was armed resistance. However, throughout the extract the author offers a much broader definition of resistance than fighting back. 'Disobedience' is seen as a form of resistance, be it through 'refusing to be registered as a Jew', or 'refusing to live in the ghettos'. These steps to disobey orders, the historian argues, increased chances of survival. Even small actions of disobedience were 'a setback' to the Nazis and each Jew escaping, 'avoiding being deported, or supplying himself with false papers was an act of resistance' and increased the Jews chances of survival. In this way the author argues that resistance took on many forms and 'anti-German acts' were in fact 'acts of resistance'.

The author also recognises that resistance was not the norm and that only a minority resisted. Fear was one of the key factors which prevented wider resistance or disobedience. The example of Vilna, where the leader of the ghetto resistance was forced, by other Jews who were afraid of reprisals, 'to give himself up to the Gestapo' is used to illustrate the point that most Jews continued to believe that their chances of survival were higher if they obeyed orders. The author concludes that the Jewish reaction was typical of a wider reaction to Nazi occupation and that only a small number of Jews resisted and survived the Nazi regime. However, the extract also argues that this minority was more significant than previously thought and that any anti-Nazi act should be considered as resistance.

Examiner comment

Both elements of the message, that there should be a wide definition of resistance and that a minority of Jews resisted, are evident from the beginning of the response and are supported with detail from the extract as the response develops. This demonstrates that the candidate has a complete understanding of the extract and the response would be awarded Level 6.

One strength of this answer is that it recognises the extract is about the victims of the Holocaust and it would not be appropriate to label this extract as though it addressed the issues of causation or responsibility.

The candidate has used their contextual knowledge of historians' approaches to the Holocaust to show where this extract might be located within the debate. However, there are some sections of the answer which could make more detailed reference to the extract, for example in the second and final paragraphs.

Another positive feature of this answer is that it is short and clearly focused throughout. The candidate illustrates the sub-messages and main messages of the extract without digressing into contextual knowledge. To write in such a concise, focused way suggests the candidate has spent some time reading the extract carefully before beginning their answer.

The candidate demonstrates complete understanding but could support their response more fully from the extract. The final sentence of the response about the significance of resistance is a slight digression from the main message of the extract. The answer is awarded Level 6 for both AO1 and AO4.

Common mistakes

- Attempting to label a Holocaust extract which does not discuss causation or responsibility, having seen that the context of wartime is not enough to attach a functionalist label to the extract and that any comments about the Nazis do not justify either an Intentionalist or Structuralist label.
- Providing a summary of each of the main interpretations about causation as an introduction to their response.
- Describing Nazi policy towards the Jews during the Second World War.
- Forcing the extract to fit a particular historian's argument.
- Challenging the views of the historian. This is important – in extracts about the Holocaust candidates are often tempted to evaluate the views presented because their own view of what happened is different. The focus in the answer must however be on what the historian has argued, rather than any other points of view which they might have included or which the candidate deems preferable.

Section C: Topic 3 The origins and development of the Cold War

Question 3

Section C: Topic 3

The origins and development of the Cold War

- 3 Read the extract and then answer the question.

The inevitable consequence of the Second World War was an active and aggressive US intervention in ever-widening reaches of the globe, for, left alone, the transformation of European and Asian societies in unknown and undesirable ways, from Washington's viewpoint, was certain. This meant US interference in internal social conflicts to prevent the imminent victories of leftist forces and the provision of economic and military aid to rightist and capitalist elements wherever they might still be found to fill the breach. Only in Eastern Europe was such a strategy impossible, if only because there the security interests of the Soviet Union clashed with the policies of the US.

Washington's concern for Russian policies and actions must not obscure the great measure to which US policy merely fitted the Soviet problem into a much larger context, a framework which would have existed apart from anything Russia might have done. Indeed, no one can understand Soviet–US relations except as one of a number of vital aspects of the larger advancement and application of heightened US power in the post-war world, a greater undertaking that time and again was never caused by Russian policy and very often in no way involved Moscow. The so-called Cold War, in brief, was far less the confrontation of the US with Russia than US expansion into the entire world; a world the Soviet Union neither controlled nor created.

It was both easy and rational for Washington in the months immediately after the war to focus on the intentions of the Soviet Union and the seeming threat it posed to the restoration and reformation of the pre-war world which was the starting point for US wartime planning for the peace. Events in Iran, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere reinforced the increasingly bitter wartime diplomatic relations with Russia. Washington could not distinguish between left-wingers in the Greek mountains or in northern French coalfields and the policies of the Kremlin. It did not necessitate the total collapse of the London foreign ministers' conference during September 1945 to create a deeply pessimistic vision in Washington of the future course of relations with Russia, for that had existed for well over a year. It certainly did not require the hypersensitive dispatches of Kennan from the Moscow embassy, with their ingenious discoveries of grand strategies and meanings in this or that *Pravda* article; these were filed away and largely ignored. The ambassador to Moscow, Harriman, had his own cheerless opinion and the more important Soviet experts in the State Department fully shared it. By his wartime record and his first six months in office Secretary of State Byrnes had shown his stern firmness towards Russia and by the beginning of 1946 was learning to adopt the tone as well as the substance of US policy towards the USSR. 'I am tired of babying the Soviets,' Truman scolded him in January 1946. 'Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another war is in the making.' Such blunt, tough style was what made the President most comfortable, and the Russians had already been familiar with it since April 1945. No later than the beginning of 1946, the critical American policymakers were assuming that Russia had embarked on a course that would certainly lead to sharp conflict and probably, someday, to 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]

Specimen answer

This is a Revisionist extract in which the author blames the US for the outbreak of the Cold War. The USA is portrayed throughout the extract as an 'active and aggressive' power which sought to intervene and extend its influence, not just in European affairs but also in Asia. This suggests the extract was written in the 1970s when the US faced widespread criticism for its policies to contain communism, especially in Vietnam. The author argues the Cold War was not so much a confrontation between the USA and the USSR as 'US expansion into the entire world', reflecting their message that US was the expansionist power and that relations between the US and USSR were somehow secondary to the real intentions of the US. The historian employs a critical tone towards the US. US aggressive behaviour is seen as an 'inevitable consequence of the Second World War', implying that victory gave them the confidence to act aggressively wherever they saw fit. Their intervention in the internal social conflicts of other countries is described as 'interference'. At the same time, the historian does not consider Soviet motives or culpability and does not pursue a post-revisionist approach. Throughout the extract the USA's implacably hostile view of the USSR is discussed, how the USSR might be responsible is not considered.

The historian argues that the US was expansionist and deplored the changes taking place in the post-war world and viewed any left-wing or communist movements in a suspicious and hostile manner. In the first paragraph, the author argues that the US were determined to interfere to prevent 'imminent victories of leftist forces' such as the communist insurgency in Greece. In order to prevent the rise of communism, the author shows how the US provided 'economic and military aid wherever rightist and capitalist elements might be found'. Such behaviour was not possible in Eastern Europe, so the extract argues, as the 'USSR's security interests directly clashed with policies of the USA'. This is the only point in the extract where the author might have alluded to Soviet aggression. That this clash is pointed out without attributing blame to the USSR serves to underline the strength of the revisionist argument.

The author blames US aggression and hostility for the Cold War. The author argues that although Washington was concerned about Russian policies and actions, these fitted in to a pre-determined view of how the post-war world should be shaped, suggesting the US already had a 'framework' for their policy 'which would have existed apart from anything Russia might have done'. The author argues that US policy 'was never caused by Russian policy and very often in no way involved Moscow', illustrating that the US was pursuing other aims, independently of their reactions towards the USSR. This highlights that the US had already

Specimen answer, continued

decided on an expansionist policy which did not result from any concerns about Soviet behaviour, emphasising the revisionist argument by denying Soviet responsibility for the way US policy developed.

The historian demonstrates that Washington sought to justify its pre-determined policy in the light of Soviet intentions and refers to the 'bitter wartime diplomatic relations', implying the breakdown in relations between the Allies by the time of the Potsdam Conference. However, the Soviet threat to the restoration of peace is described as 'seeming' suggesting it suited Washington to see it as a threat whether this was the case or not. The historian strongly suggests that US policy was both pessimistic and ignorant, arguing the US were unable to see the difference between 'left-wingers in the Greek mountains and northern French coalfields and the policies of the Kremlin'. This implies that all movements with any elements of socialism or left-wing leanings were lumped together into one threatening bloc by the US. The collapse of the London Conference in 1945 is seen by the author as symptomatic of Washington's 'deeply pessimistic' view of how relations would develop with Russia. That this view had existed for 'over a year' adds to the argument that the US was pursuing a pre-determined policy. Kennan's influence, which is seen by traditional historians as being central to the way the US reacted to the Soviet Union, is dismissed by the author. This extract argues Kennan's dispatches were 'filed away and largely ignored', suggesting the line taken by the US was not influenced by Kennan but was already decided. The historian stops short of calling Kennan a liar but shows there was a degree of creativity in Kennan's 'ingenious discoveries of grand strategies', suggesting that Kennan exaggerated in order to prove a threat existed and was looking to find what the US already expected to see.

The negative attitude of the US towards the USSR and their determination to find a threat where they may not have been one, is a recurrent theme. Ambassador Harriman and Soviet experts in the State Department are described as having a 'cheerless opinion' of the Soviets, suggesting they would take a negative view regardless. The historian argues that it was Truman who crystallised this hostile attitude with his comment in 1946 to Byrnes that he was 'tired of babying the Soviets'. The author uses this comment to show the hardening of US attitudes, although he points out that the Russians had become used to this tone since the death of Roosevelt in 1945.

By 1946, the author concludes, it was clear the US 'assumed' the Russians had embarked on a course that would lead to war. By highlighting that this was an assumption, not based on hard facts but a pre-determined idea of how the USSR would behave, the historian underlines

Specimen answer, continued

the view that the US was were responsible for causing the Cold War. The author argues that US had decided upon an aggressive course of action to expand their own power and that their negative view of the Soviets was used to reinforce this policy.

Examiner comment

This answer has a clear introduction and it confidently (and accurately) labels the extract as revisionist. US aggression and expansionism is recognised from the outset and the candidate is clear that the historian holds the US responsible for the Cold War. The second element of the main message that the US took a negative view of the USSR, which this response argues was predetermined, emerges as the response develops. This response would be awarded Level 6 for showing complete understanding of the argument.

The answer demonstrates an understanding of the context of the historical debate, suggesting when this extract might have been written and showing briefly why it cannot be anything other than revisionist. This shows that the candidate has considered how the USSR is presented in the extract and has used this to support their conclusion about the nature of the argument presented.

Having included the overall interpretation in the introduction, the answer moves on to illustrating it with support from the extract. The candidate recognises the first aspect of the interpretation, that the US is an expansionist power. However, this element of the response could have been more developed and better supported from the extract.

The answer moves on to consider the idea that US policy was not formulated in response to Soviet aggression, clearly explaining the way in which the US attitude towards the USSR is portrayed in this interpretation. There is effective use of the extract, particularly in relation to this element of the main message.

To achieve a higher mark in the level, treatment of both elements of the main message should be more balanced. More effective use of the extract should be made to support the 'expansionist' element of the argument. The answer is awarded Level 6 for both AO1 and AO4.

Common mistakes

- Developing references to the wider context into a discussion of context which is not related to the extract provided.
- Contradicting the original stance that the extract is revisionist. For example, some answers find 'hints' of traditionalism in extracts with an overall revisionist argument.
- Not developing a sense of the extract as a whole by careful reading and planning before writing the answer.

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