CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge O Level

HISTORY **2147/23**

Paper 2 Document Questions **May/June 2026**

1 hour 45 minutes

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You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question on **one** option only.
  - Option A: Nineteenth century topic
  - Option B: Twentieth century topic
- 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 **12** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Option A: Nineteenth century topic

1 Did Reconstruction fail?

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully, and then answer **all** parts of Question 1.

Background Information

Many historians have argued that Reconstruction was a failure. Some of them have claimed that the Freedmen's Bureau was a waste of money and that the South ended up being governed by incompetent black Americans, which led to a period of corruption and disorder. Others have argued that opposition from Southerners ensured that Reconstruction failed. Recently, a more positive interpretation of Reconstruction has emerged, highlighting achievements such as black Americans being given the vote and being provided with education and healthcare. It is claimed that Reconstruction was a success until it was ended by white Southerners.

How far was Reconstruction a success?

Source A

Their predictable conclusion is that the Freedmen's Bureau is a nuisance, is served by unworthy agents and its continuance will produce disagreement and oppression. It is on behalf of the blacks that they most urgently call for the ending of the Bureau. President Johnson and the Democrats accuse the Bureau of re-enslaving the blacks by contracts which impose low wages. The very success of the Bureau in restoring labour is thus turned against it as a crime. Today it is feeding more whites than blacks. With the little military support it is still allowed by the President, it is doing its best to promote industry, security, good morals and justice among all classes of the population. It is true that, through errors of judgement, a few corrupt officers have been taken from the army into places in the Bureau. But based on one-sided evidence and with hostile motives, the report is intended to weaken respect for the law.

From an American newspaper, August 1866. It is commenting on the findings of Generals Steedman and Fullerton. They had been sent to the South by President Johnson to find evidence to discredit the Freedmen's Bureau.

Source B

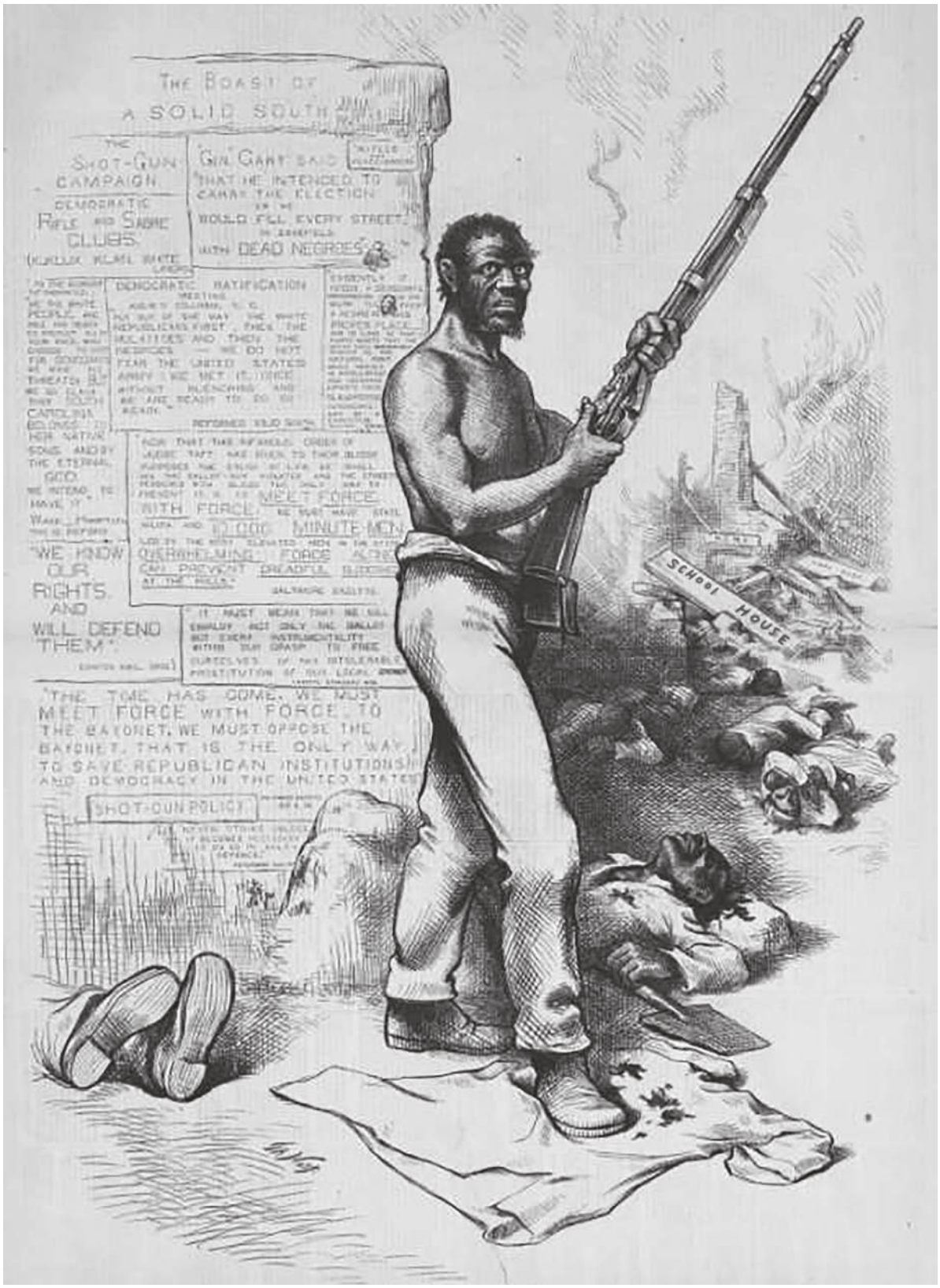
It is shown that the Freedmen's Bureau has outlived its usefulness and is now a source of trouble. It is shown that across the South the agents of the Bureau have interfered in local affairs and upset local opinion. It is shown that vast amounts of public money have been wasted, and large amounts collected by agents have disappeared. It is shown that the Bureau has made statements criticising the Southern people, knowing that they were false. Perhaps the most provoking discovery is that the Bureau has operated to the disadvantage of freedmen. It is strange that these noisy Radicals, overflowing with love for the freedmen, support a Bureau which reduced the freedmen to slavery. The attempt to hide these facts proves that the Republican faction which is in charge of the Bureau cares more about itself than it does for the truth.

A report in The New York Times*, August 1866. It is commenting on the Steedman and Fullerton report.*

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Source C



A cartoon entitled 'He wants a change too', published in an American magazine, 28 October 1876. This was a few months after the Hamburg Massacre when six black Americans were murdered and a few days before the presidential election. Threatening slogans from Southerners and the Democratic Party are shown on the left.

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Source D

I shall try to explain what was achieved by 'we radicals' in the six years of my 'dictatorship'. In the county, new bridges were completed, the size and security of the jail was enlarged and a new court-house was built. The county had never before had such facilities. Yazoo City was under the control of the Republicans. Extensive improvements were made; new side-walks and pavements, and a new steam fire-engine. A new school system was introduced with the active support of the Northerners and the freedmen. It was so popular that wealthy planters pleaded for a school for their own plantations, declaring that they not only wanted it as a way of improving the freed people, but also because they had seen that the labourers on plantations that had schools were more contented and worked better.

Albert T Morgan in his memoirs, published in 1884. He was a Republican and was elected as sheriff of Yazoo County in Mississippi. He had to flee the state in 1876 because of violence against Reconstruction.

Source E

After the Civil War ended the Confederates returned to their homes broken in health and in fortune, but strong in their patriotic determination to begin all over again. They would have succeeded quickly had it not been for the enemies of the South and Republican politicians, who swooped like vultures upon the patriotic South.

When the radical element in Congress overpowered the President and took the vote away from almost the entire white population of the South, they gave the vote to the ignorant, black ex-slaves. The white people of the county suffered from the abuse of the carpetbaggers. Both the black and the white people suffered as they have not suffered since. Many a black was misled into trouble by the carpetbaggers. Under God's guidance, we reconstructed and rebuilt that which had been lost.

An account of Reconstruction given in the 1930s by a Southerner who was being interviewed by historical researchers. He was born in Kentucky during the Civil War. His family moved to Texas soon after the war was over, and he lived there for the rest of his life.

Source F

The Reconstruction Act is already accepted by the South. It is, of course, criticised by certain noisy rebels but not many, even of these, talk of resisting it. The rebel states are to be reorganised and are to choose representatives and senators for the Congress. It is certain that most people, despite past differences, will participate in the elections. The future promises to be closer to peace and order than there has been in the South for years. Protests and violence are less widespread than they have been and there is hope that Reconstruction will be marked by no hideous tragedies.

From an article by Horace Greeley published in the New York Tribune *newspaper, March 1867. Greeley was a Radical Republican at that time.*

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Now answer **all** parts of Question 1. You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources which you are told to use. In answering **1(a)–(e)** you should use your knowledge of the topic to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

(a) Study Sources A and B.

How far do these two sources agree? Explain your answer using details of the sources. [7]

(b) Study Source C.

What is the cartoonist's message? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [8]

(c) Study Sources D and E.

How far does Source D prove that the account in Source E is wrong? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

(d) Study Source F.

How far is this source surprising? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [8]

(e) Study **all** the sources.

How far do these sources provide convincing evidence that Reconstruction was a success? Use the sources to explain your answer. [9]

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Option B: Twentieth century topic

2 Was there much support for the Treaty of Versailles?

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully, and then answer **all** parts of Question 2.

Background Information

When the Germans were told the proposed terms of the Treaty of Versailles in May 1919, they were furious. There were many reasons why they thought the terms were far too harsh. They had expected that they would be based on President Wilson's Fourteen Points, and they resented being blamed for starting the war. The losses of territory, the reduction of their armed forces and the reparations made the Treaty even harder to bear. However, opinion about the Treaty in the Allied countries was mixed.

How much support did the Treaty have?

Source A

The great mystery was the belief in Britain that Germany was worse off. No doubt it should have been, having lost the war. British sympathy for Germany was hard to explain. In many ways Germany came out of the war no worse off than Britain, and in some respects better off. The one respect in which Germany did worse was that inflation ran completely out of control, so that the Reichsmark was worth virtually nothing by the end of 1923. The Germans blamed their monetary troubles on the harsh peace terms; oddly, many British contemporaries seem to have believed them. In reality, the peace terms were not unprecedented in their harshness and the hyperinflation was mainly due to the irresponsible policies adopted by the Germans. They were also successful in not paying their debts, including the reparations demanded from them by the Allies. The reality was that the economic consequences of the Versailles Treaty were far less severe for Germany than the Germans and many of the British claimed. It cannot be maintained that the reparations total set in 1921 was an unbearable burden.

From a history book published in 1998.

Source B

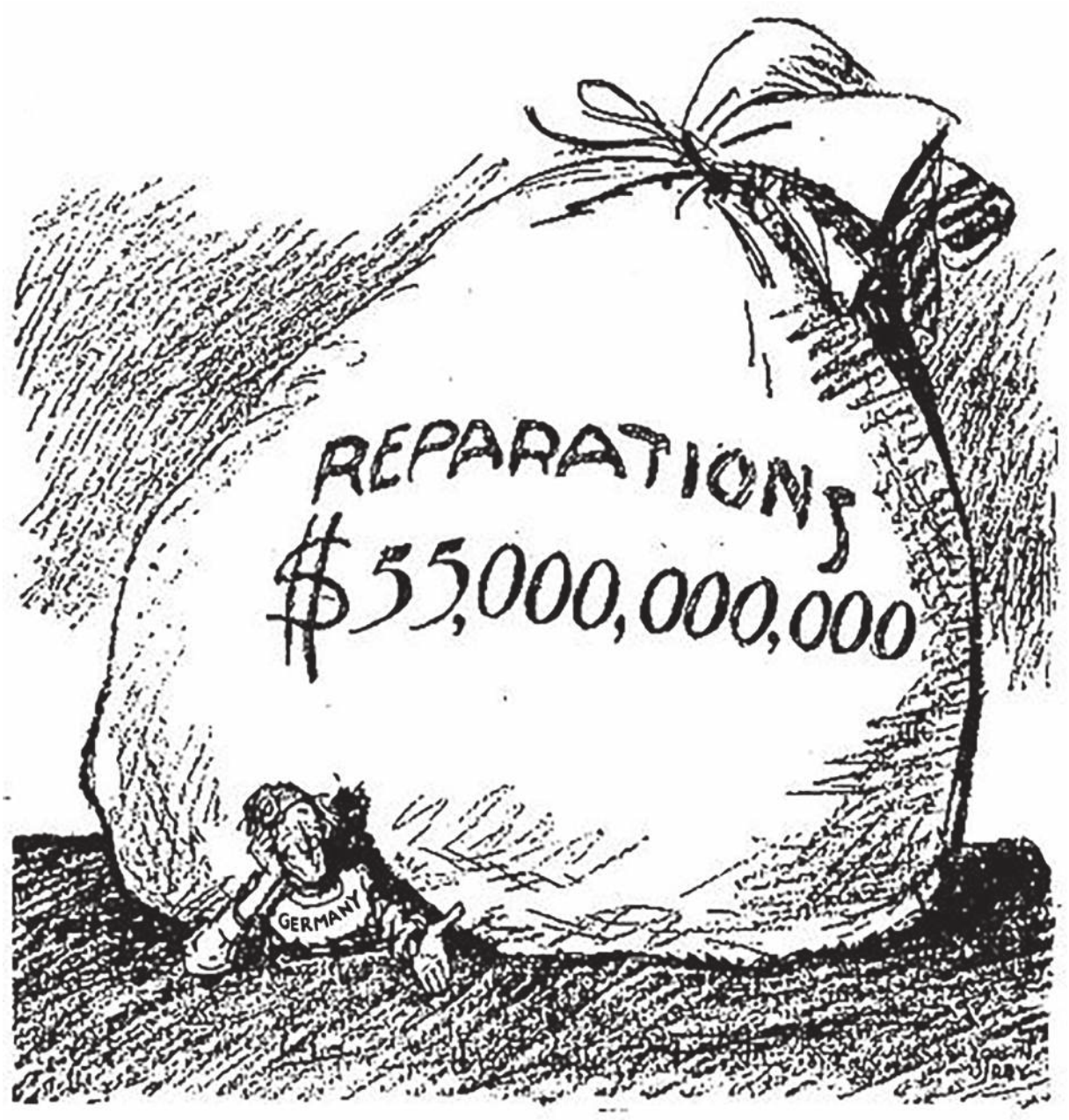
It was a harsh peace treaty aimed at crushing Germany rather than trying to preserve peace. The terms bore little resemblance to Wilson's Fourteen Points. Germany lost 10 per cent of its territory and the reparations were far beyond Germany's capacity to pay and led to inflation that was out of control. Germany soon fell behind in its payments and the reparations led to its economy falling into ruins. However, many in France still saw Germany as a potential threat to the future peace of Europe and felt the Treaty of Versailles was not harsh enough. They were worried that the Treaty left Germany largely intact; with a population almost double that of France and with no powerful east European neighbours, Germany was actually more powerful in 1919 than in 1914. The French thought that Germany had not been punished enough and Clemenceau was voted out in the next election. In Britain, many people thought that Lloyd George was a hero because of the harsh terms, but some thought the Treaty should be harsher.

From a recent history book.

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Source C



A cartoon published in an American newspaper, 1921. Germany is saying, 'Let's see you collect it.'

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Source D



THE RECKONING.
1914-1921.

A cartoon published in a British magazine, February 1921.

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Source E

The terms are in many respects terrible terms to impose upon a country. Terrible were the actions which it punishes. Germany not merely provoked, but planned the most devastating war the earth has ever seen. It deliberately embarked upon it, not to defend itself against aggressors, but to make itself more powerful at the expense of its neighbours. I cannot think of a worse crime. The aim of the Treaty is to make Germany restore and repair. And we must take every possible precaution that is in our power against another such crime happening. We wish to make such an example as will discourage ambitious peoples from ever attempting to repeat these crimes.

From Lloyd George's speech to the British Parliament, 3 July 1919.

Source F

The historian, with every justification, will come to the conclusion that we were very stupid men. We arrived in Paris as fervent followers of President Wilson and determined that a peace of justice and wisdom should be negotiated. We left, conscious that the Treaties imposed on our enemies were neither just nor wise. Those who wish to see the gap between intention and practice should read the notes to the Conference by the German delegation. It is impossible to read the German criticism without forming the impression that the Peace Conference was guilty of disguising an imperialistic peace under the cloak of Wilsonism. Seldom has such a desire for revenge been hidden by such deceit.

From a book by Harold Nicolson, a member of the British delegation at Versailles, published in 1933.

Source G

As I have travelled across our country, I have seen that men have been creating a false impression of what the Treaty of peace can mean. It is a very severe settlement, but there is not anything in it that Germany did not deserve. The punishment is not greater than it can bear. It is absolutely necessary in order that no other nation may ever plot such a thing against humanity. But the Treaty is not merely a settlement with Germany; it is a people's treaty, that accomplishes their liberation. The power of the Allies has not been used for their own glory but for the liberation of people. Not a scrap of territory is demanded by the conquerors. The men who sat around that table in Paris knew that the time had come when the people were going to live under such governments as they chose to elect.

From a speech in the USA by President Wilson, 25 September 1919.

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Now answer **all** parts of Question 2. You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources which you are told to use. In answering **2(a)–(e)** you should use your knowledge of the topic to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

(a) Study Sources A and B.

How far do these two sources agree? Explain your answer using details of the sources. [7]

(b) Study Sources C and D.

How similar are these two cartoons? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

(c) Study Sources E and F.

How far does Source E make Source F surprising? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

(d) Study Source G.

Why did Wilson make this speech at that time? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [8]

(e) Study **all** the sources.

How far do these sources provide convincing evidence that there was support for the Treaty? Use the sources to explain your answer. [9]

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