

O Level

History

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Papers 2110/1 and 2151/1 (British & European History 1485–1688)

There was a distinct bias towards the period 1485–1603, with at least half the candidates answering entirely from *Qs. 1–5*. Very few candidates tackled any of the European questions and although there were some good answers to *Q. 11* and *Q. 13*, these were also often a last resort for the weaker candidates.

There are four general points to make about the answers.

- a) Most pupils had a reasonable amount of factual knowledge of the topics they had chosen – questions of which this is untrue are indicated below – but many also showed great difficulty in understanding or answering the second part. Unless their answer to part one is very thorough, these candidates will find it difficult to reach grade C.
- b) Although there were some difficulties in the wording of individual questions (*Q. 3* and *Q. 11* particularly), many of the irrelevant answers cannot be explained by that, and it was often clear that candidates wrote the essay they had prepared, without even the briefest of nods to the question.
- c) It has repeatedly been said that an integrated answer to both parts of the question will rarely be as satisfactory as a divided answer. This was certainly true here, and only limited credit can be given to material which answers part 2 but which is not clearly indicated as doing so.
- d) There are clearly still an awful lot of very out-dated textbooks being used, and even at 'O' level one would expect that the view (i) that sixteenth-century inflation was caused by the Spanish conquest of America, or (ii) that "Divine Right" (accompanied by all its appalling definitions) was the cause of all James I's problems, would at least be modified by a mention of other factors.

In detail:—

Q. 1 was answered by almost everyone, many of whom were extremely well-informed about Perkin Warbeck and therefore wrote far too much for one third of a question. The best answers dealt with part 2 in three paragraphs, each attached or clearly belonging to the part they had chosen. Candidates should always indicate what they are answering as this is not always clear from their scripts.

Q. 2 produced many answers, hardly any of them satisfactory. Candidates wanted to write about the break with Rome, so they did. Clearly Henry VIII's foreign policy is not taught as a topic, and very few answers covered more than 1511–14 OR 1518–25, and the stress here was on the Habsburg–Valois conflict rather than English policy. The second part was found very difficult; the only points made by those who tackled it were Wolsey's desire to be Pope and the marriage with Anne of Cleves. The best answers indicated other factors, as in "The main factor that affected Henry's foreign policy was a wish for glory..." – inelegant, but thoughtful.

Q. 3 had a phrase "on her accession" which caused some difficulty. Some candidates gave their account of Mary's reign, concluding that she died a failure with Calais written on her heart, without considering the question. The best answers confined themselves to the first year or so, up to Wyatt's rebellion, and

then covered the whole reign in religious terms. An agreeable number of answers made the point very well that in legal terms Mary was very successful, but linked the burnings, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, etc. to point out that she failed to convert all her people.

The answers here were also often pleasing exceptions to the strictures made above in d).

Q. 4 was very well answered by many candidates and part 2 was thoroughly covered – it was less taxing than most other questions.

Q. 5 was as always a minefield. A handful of shining exceptions actually covered the Tudors; most confined themselves to a woolly account of the 1601 Poor Law. Many candidates scored no marks at all, either because they wrote only about *causes* of poverty and unemployment, often at great length, or because they chose, with no justification, to write about the poverty of the Crown. The second part presented few problems to those who had an overall picture but was impossible for the others.

Qs. 6–10. The Stuart topics were less popular (particularly *Qs. 7, 8* and *9*) but often well answered. Candidates need reminding to balance their answers; four sides on the plots and religious problems of 1603–5 (and there were several candidates who did this) is not a sufficient answer to part 1 of *Q. 6*. In *Q. 7*, Laud's career was much better known than Wentworth's, with a consequent lack of balance in the second part of the question as well. The same problem surfaced in *Q. 10*, with a quite disproportionate amount of time and space given by some pupils to Monmouth and the Bloody Assize, and very little elsewhere.

Papers 2110/2 and 2152/1 (British & European History 1688–1815)

The overall work of the candidates was not as good as in previous years with more candidates who were obviously trying their best, but were simply not up to the standard of 'O' level. More candidates than usual found it difficult to answer a fourth question even reasonably.

Far more candidates wrote on British questions than European, but on British History *Q. 5* was rarely attempted and *Q. 10* mainly badly done with confused facts and lack of detail. *Q. 8* was badly dealt with, as candidates wrote everything they knew about William Pitt the Younger, especially on his domestic policy, which gained no marks: whatever is set on Pitt the Younger candidates feel they must write on everything – this has happened over the last few years. The best work appeared in answer to *Qs. 1, 3, 4, 7* and *9*, but even in these some candidates wrote irrelevantly e.g. in *Q. 3* an account of Walpole's work after 1721 was often included, and in *Q. 7* candidates continued to describe the war after 1775.

The more difficult second part of a question was usually very briefly answered, and candidates did not think carefully of what the question asked e.g. in *Q. 3* candidates often described how Walpole retained power till 1742, not why George I kept him until 1727.

There were few answers to European questions, except for *Qs. 15, 16* and *17*. *Q. 11* was often answered entirely from study of British History, and so answers were one-sided and restricted – candidates should be warned off such questions in European history if their study has been confined to British history. There were few answers to *Qs. 12, 13* and *14*.

The candidates for this paper have in the past few years been weaker than those for the other essay papers, but this year they have been of better quality, and so the standard of work was similar to that on other papers. Most candidates confined themselves to British history and there were a lot of good answers to *Qs. 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8*. In general social and economic questions were badly answered, e.g. *Qs. 5, 10 and 12*, owing to a lack of accurate factual knowledge. Among the poor candidates a reasonable attempt was made – they simply found ‘O’ level too difficult, rather than being quite able but lazy candidates. A fair attempt was made at the more difficult second part by most candidates.

The most common causes of bad marks were failing to keep to the question set, as well as poor and inaccurate factual knowledge. In particular in *Q.3* candidates would not confine themselves to Pitt’s foreign and imperial policies, but insisted on writing everything they knew about Pitt the Younger. In *Q.5* there was great confusion of the work and methods of Metcalf, Telford and Macadam.

There were very few answers to questions from the European section, and attempts that were made were confined almost entirely to *Qs. 13 and 14* – the French Revolution and Napoleon.

Clearly most candidates begin study of their syllabus in 1760 and rarely reach the end of the period, as a result there were few answers to *Q.10* onwards in British history, and even fewer to the later European questions.

Papers 2110/4 and 2154/1 (British & European History 1815–1918)

The work of this year’s candidates was fairly good over the whole entry – there was some excellent work and some very poor, but even these candidates were usually making an effort though their knowledge was very limited. In general candidates scored most of their marks on the first and factual narrative part of the question, and the second part showed the candidates who had real understanding and could use their knowledge – as these questions are intended to do. The most popular questions were *Qs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8*, but *Qs. 9 and 13* were highly popular. Many candidates confined themselves to English history and European history questions were generally much less popular, especially with girls.

As usual marks were lower when the factual knowledge was thin and vague, and where time was wasted on describing irrelevant material for which of course no credit was given. For example, in *Q.3* long accounts of why the reforms were needed were included rather than the terms of the acts, in *Q.4* the history of Mehmet Ali, Don Pacifico or the American Civil War was given rather than emphasising Palmerston’s policies, and in *Q.6* the causes of the Crimean War were given instead of the events as they concerned Britain. The same problem appeared in the European section where in *Q.19* the causes of the Franco-Prussian War were often given at length, and in *Q.23* accounts of Nicholas II’s reign often included the whole of the First World War.

In general, however, this proved a good paper with almost no marking difficulties, and it seemed to be popular with most of the candidates.

The general work for Paper 5 was good, often very good, with relatively few candidates unworthy of the examination. Candidates tended to confine themselves either to British history, or to European history, and centres failed to finish the syllabus as judged from the very few attempts at the later British and European questions. In British history there were very few attempts at *Qs. 5, 8, 10 and 11*, and in European history to *Qs. 22, 23 and 24*.

Most candidates made a reasonable attempt at the straightforward first part of the questions, but the second part mainly discriminated between those who had merely learnt their facts with limited comprehension, and those who were able really to display historical understanding. Marks were lower than they need have been by a refusal to keep to the questions, e.g. giving the reasons why reforms were needed in *Q.1* instead of keeping to the details of what each said; giving an account of German foreign policy rather than describing Anglo-German relations in *Q.9*; describing irrelevantly the causes of the Franco-Prussian War in *Q.12*; giving Bismarck’s foreign instead of domestic policy in *Q.13*, etc. Some of the frequent confusions were in *Q.6 (a)*, wherein either Cardwell’s army reforms were confused with Haldane’s or the Navy was described instead of the Army; in *Q.6 (d)* Gladstone’s work in Ireland was often described instead of the policies of the Liberal governments.

Answers to part 2 should build on the factual information given in part 1, and not merely rehearse the facts again. Conclusions are expected with some judgement based on the facts – examiners will give much credit for a well made argument, even though the examiner may personally believe the conclusion to be wrong. Often some additional information needs to be given, e.g. in *Q.13* reference needs to be made to differences over foreign and colonial policies, as well as those domestic ones already covered, or in *Q.1* criticisms of foreign policy should be included as well as the unpopularity with some people of various domestic reforms.

Papers 2110/6 and 2158/1 (World Affairs since 1919)

General Comments

Examiners commented on the good standard of work produced by candidates in this year’s examination. In particular many scored highly in the first part of questions, often showing command of the factual aspects of the topic.

There continue, however, to be some weaknesses. Part 2 of the questions does prove to be a good discriminator. There is evidence that many candidates have little awareness of the general aspects of topics tested in this part.

In some answers, especially to those questions demanding some grasp of chronology and/or geography, there was often confusion. This was particularly seen in answers to *Qs. 3, 6, 14 and 16*.

The many spelling and grammatical errors suggest that candidates depend on oral teaching so that they do not become acquainted with the terms and places related to the topic. ‘Mussolini might of (sic) done’, ‘Higher Purchase’, ‘Eucrane’, together with a huge variety of spellings of Stakhanov were among the more common examples.

Finally, examiners report a continuing increase in administrative lapses by centres. The most common, and annoying for examiners, is the failure to ensure that candidates complete the grid on the first page of their script, indicating which

questions have been attempted. There have also been more examples of inaccurate completion of attendance sheets, as well as failure to have scripts assembled in the correct order to correspond with the attendance sheets.

Comments on specific questions

Answers continue to concentrate on the first four sections of the paper. Very few attempted section E – Africa and the Middle East or any question except Q.23 in section F – Asia.

Q.1. Easily the most popular question and one which stimulated some very good answers. Many candidates seemed unaware of the differences between the armistice, the treaty and the work of the Reparations Commission. Similarly, the status of both Sudetenland and Austria before 1919 is widely misunderstood. Many answers indicated that both were part of Germany before Versailles and were taken away by the terms of the Treaty.

Answers to the second part very often stated uncritically the Nazi view of “the diktat”, ignoring the 14 Points, past history or Brest Litovsk.

Q.2. Many excellent accounts of the 1919 to 1922 period, although very much confusion was displayed concerning what Italy had been promised by the Allies in 1915. The period to 1928 was less well known, the phrase “consolidated Fascist rule” may have proved too difficult for the below-average candidate. The second part of the question was usually badly answered. Not many answers considered the quality of support for Mussolini.

Q.3. Answers were very disappointing on the whole. Chronology was weak, Japan appears to be part of Germany and many answers did not give any account of massed bombing raids even though the question refers to that strategy.

Q.4. Some good answers, mainly from overseas centres, but for the majority there was little awareness of the work accomplished by the UNO agencies. This lack of awareness became clear when candidates attempted or ignored the second part. Given the wide popular discussion of the value of agencies as well as the US withdrawal from the ILO some years ago, there seems to be little appraisal of their work.

Q.5. Seldom attempted.

Q.6. Less popular but probably the best answered of all questions. Many answers showed grasp and command of detail in the first part, together with understanding in the second part.

Q.7. There were some attempts at this question. Most dealt successfully with the period to 1930, but tailed off quickly afterwards.

Q.8. A popular question for which most candidates were less than well prepared; (c) proved to be a problem, with most answers simply ignoring it; however many answers to (a) and (b) gave a simplistic account with no attempt to bring out the wider significance. There were few good answers to part 2, mostly from those who turned the question on its head and looked at reasons for Hitler's control of Germany.

Q.9. Very few answers seen.

Q.10 Not very popular, but often answered well when attempted. Some aspects of de Gaulle's opposition to Britain (e.g. the special relationship with the USA, economic weakness) were seldom explained or mentioned.

Q.11. Popular, although few answers confined themselves to the economic boom. There were some excellent attempts at the second part, often demonstrating good understanding.

Q.12. The Agencies were usually well described, although there is confusion whether Roosevelt was interested in higher or lower agricultural production. The second part was not usually well answered. Most candidates had been prepared for a question on opposition to the New Deal and wrote accordingly. Such answers seldom scored many marks.

Q.13. Ignored by most Home centres, although a few overseas candidates made good attempts.

Q.14. Some very good answers to the first part, with many answers displaying good knowledge of the revolution in Cuba. The second part was very badly answered. Cuba's role in Africa and the Caribbean was not mentioned; even the Grenada episode was ignored.

Q.15. Popular and mostly well answered. Many candidates have, however, a sketchy understanding of the significance of the word ‘Plan’ or of any details of what industrial developments were attempted or took place. The many spellings of Stakhanov usually occurred in irrelevant material. There were good accounts of the Purges, but few answers indicated any assessment of Stalin's motives. (Incidentally, although Stalin and Stalinist appear in the question, a significant proportion of candidates use the spelling Starling.)

Q.16. Quite a popular question, with the best candidates able to grasp the wide sweep of the campaigns, but many answers displayed confusion. Leningrad was mostly omitted from accounts.

Qs. 17 and 18 were not widely answered.

Qs. 19, 20, 21, 22 were hardly attempted at all.

Q.23 proved to be a popular question with many good answers which recognised that the question is concerned with Chiang Kai-shek not Mao Tse-tung. Inevitably answers tailed off after 1936. The post-1945 Civil War seems not to be studied.

Q.24 largely ignored.

Q.25 was attempted but knowledge of the Cultural Revolution was very sketchy, with the other two parts not attempted.

Q.26 was very seldom answered.

Paper 2110/7 (The Life and Times of Sir Thomas More, 1490–1535)

A pleasing number of candidates had prepared the subject with care and wrote accurately and with interest. There was also a very large number, however, whose English was very poor indeed.

A couple of other general points: some candidates did not read the paper through carefully first and found themselves making points in one answer when they were asked for in a later question, which is a waste of their time: e.g. Q.1 (c) (i) does not ask for any information about the lives of peasants *after* enclosure, this is required by (c) (ii) and (d). Finally a plea: it would be a great help if candidates could be told that what is required in the ‘Questions’ column in the grid on the first sheet is simply the two numbers 1 and 2.

Comments on individual questions

Q.1. More's irony was quite lost on a number of candidates who, in describing the lives of peasants before enclosure said that they kept mild, shy, thin sheep, and recounted that there was literally no land left for tillage.

(a) (iii) was put in to avoid anachronisms later, but descriptions of Poor Law provision, debasement of the coinage, etc., still appeared.

(c) Evidence from the passage is asked for, but an amazing number of candidates described peasants as 'happy' and 'content' before enclosure.

(d) Most candidates were able to give a vivid description of the horrors of life on the road, or as a thief in Tudor England, but there were a number who seemed to think that kindly monks would take in and house all the dispossessed. One contemporary note was struck by the suggestion that a man could possibly 're-train as a herdsman'; unfortunately this was ruled out by (c) (ii).

(f) (ii) For full marks More's attitude is needed as well as the points he makes.

Q.2 (b) (i) was known by some, but also produced some weird and wonderful suggestions.

(b) (ii) One wonders whether the significant number who suggested 'Supreme Head of the Church of England' were covering their ignorance with a More-like joke or were really so adrift about the whole subject.

(e) Confusions between the Acts of Supremacy and Succession are unnecessary if the passage is read carefully.

(f) This proved to be the biggest mark-loser on the paper, though enough candidates tackled it in the way intended to indicate that it was clear enough in intention.

Paper 2110/8 (Agriculture in the Eighteenth Century)

With over a thousand candidates this topic remains relatively small but it is encouraging to see that it is taken by a significant number of schools which do not take the equivalent outline paper.

There is every sign that many of these candidates are taught the topic well, very many candidates scoring high marks on the factual questions. The standard overall therefore was good, and even allowing for the fact that this topic is perhaps slightly easier and more compact for study than some of the others, the proportion doing very well was very pleasing.

Q.1 (a) All parts were easy and well known.

(b) (i) Most knew the answer but not the spelling!

(ii) Many read this question as two-fold action rather than 'purpose'.

The regular planting in lines and of even depth was what the drill *did*, the purpose was to save seed and enable hoeing to take place.

(c) Candidates dealt with this sensibly.

(d) Rather varied answers. Many dealt purely with the fact that there were improvers living in the region and that the soil was either fertile and so easy to cultivate or infertile and in need of improvement. Only a few recognised its nearness to (i) the London markets and (ii) the continent for spread of new ideas.

(e) Rather a 'gift' question for an (e) type question and most candidates were well prepared on the details required.

(f) This proved to be the difficult part of Q.1. Weaker candidates had difficulty in understanding what was being asked and ended up by listing agricultural improvements. All candidates found it difficult to score high marks. Many did not say what the 'traditional view' was (surely this is still recognised) and so could not easily work out how the extracts 'corrected' it. A significant number ignored the reference to passages A and B.

Q.2 (a) (i) Good answers.

(ii) A fair amount of confusion here. Not enough made it quite clear that it was the large landowners, and were content simply to say that it was a majority of the villagers or landowners or Lord of the Manor.

(b) Both parts presented no problems for pupils or markers and high marks were regularly scored.

(c) Very well known.

(d) Both parts were generally well known although many did not show that squatters lacked legal claim to their 'possession'.

(e) Although not a difficult question it did the job quite well of differentiating the good from the weaker candidates.

(f) Not really an (f) type question, for which we apologise, but it was to the general advantage of most candidates who scored quite freely on it.

Paper 2110/9 (Britain and Ireland, 1815-1870)

The paper, although not without its problems, generally proved more straightforward for candidates than last year and thus somewhat easier. Certainly the overall performance of candidates this year was much improved. Some of the criticisms made in this report last year also seemed to have borne fruit and there was a better grasp of the details of major Acts and events. On the whole candidates found Q.1 easier to deal with.

Q.1 (a) Easy marks mostly obtained.

(b) Quite a lot put Mullingar, otherwise no problem for candidates.

(c) Some interpretation of O'Connell's words was required to score best marks, a number simply quoted his words.

(d) Generally a straightforward account of O'Connell's rise and achievement; better candidates picking up his preference for peaceful, legal action.

(e) Reasonable attempts but overconcentration on the famine and, within that, on the ravages of the blight in terms of hunger. Some detail on deaths and emigration increased mark earning. Eclipse and death of O'Connell, failure of British government to take ameliorating action for Irish peasantry as a whole in the late 1840s and the effects of Young Ireland were additional points used by some candidates.

(f) A more demanding question but dealt with quite well in many cases.

Q.2 (a) Although the vast majority had no trouble with either part there were those who did NOT look at the cartoon and consequently gave his Irish Church Act of 1869 as the answers.

Some wasted their time by giving the details of the Land Act, if these are required the question will ask for 'the terms' of the legislation.

(b) Satisfactory.

(c) Somewhat surprisingly this was very well done.

(d) Both in this and (e) many insisted on giving Gladstone's remedies to the problems rather than explaining the nature of the problems. Clearly centres are being taught a varied statistic on the percentage of Roman Catholics in the population. 80% is probably the most accurate according to the census returns but candidates were not penalised as long as they got across the point of RC overwhelming majority.

(e) (i) may have misled some in that the answer was not to be obtained from the cartoon, that was simply a reference point. The answer demanded should have been quite straightforward but answers were often disappointing.

(ii) There were some valiant, some interesting, some amusing answers. Those who showed no sign of having looked at the cartoon at all scored least.

(f) The question said 'at this time', many candidates went on to Gladstone's later work. A little of this could be made relevant, especially when trying to show the difficulty of satisfying the Irish or meeting their needs.

There is still a need for candidates to develop an awareness that factual information on its own is not likely to score highly in a typical (f) type question.

Paper 2110/10 (Cavour and Italian Unification)

A small but competent entry for this topic. It proved slightly more difficult than last year to score highly but the overall standard was very satisfactory. As expected the two (f) questions proved difficult for the weaker ones who must learn to ponder the question more and not jump to rapid conclusions about what is wanted. For 5 marks a significant amount of information and interpretation may be required.

Q.1 (a) Both reasonably known but Manin the weaker of the two.

(b) Generally well known although a number missed out reference to Piedmont's participation in the Crimean war.

(c) Almost 100% answers correct to first part and also good on the second part.

(d) Answers were a bit thin with many relying only on the monarchy/republican difference.

(e) (i) Most recognised that the Austrians occupied or influenced a large part of Northern Italy and would not go voluntarily but went no further, e.g. the growing power of Piedmont meant an inevitable challenge.

(ii) The outcome for Cavour was required, i.e. French armistice leading to Cavour's resignation. Many answers included detail on the war and especially the battles of Magenta and Solferino.

(f) A testing question and many candidates made creditable efforts to understand and answer the question, although few earned full marks. Some wasted time in quibbling about whether it was Piedmontese policy to encourage revolution or not, rather than concentrating on her role of leadership.

Q.2 (a) All parts generally well known.

(b) (i) Surprising confusion and wild answers for this although a lot who got this part wrong were able to score on (ii).

(c) Somewhat unbalanced answers. There was over-concentration on Garibaldi's arrival in Sicily but vital points such as the fact that he had come to the aid of an existing peasant revolt and the comparison between his small force and the might of the Bourbon opposition were missed.

(d) Well enough known for the most part – French interest in Rome the most common omission.

(e) Hazy answers, candidates having some difficulty in sticking to diplomatic needs.

(f) (i) Good answers.

(ii) Many good answers but too often candidates gave an account of the campaign without showing its contribution to unification.

Paper 2110/11 (The Russian Revolution, 1917–1924)

The 5000+ candidates coped adequately with the paper and it was generally thought to be a fair and reasonable test. There did seem to be an increasing number, however, who treated the paper in an off-hand manner and had clearly done little

in the way of proper preparation. These were not low ability candidates as they could write good and accurate English but just had not got down to learning the basic factual matter of the topic and relied on vague and incomplete answers which also often lacked any real sense of the chronology of events.

Having said this there were also many schools which clearly gave their candidates good coaching both in fact and in method and they are to be congratulated (I recall one centre obtaining 63 Grade A out of 85 candidates, the rest were B grades . . .). I do not believe that a pupil has to be outstandingly clever to score well on this paper, but good, interesting teaching of both the material and the techniques required makes a great difference to the final results.

Q.1 (a) (i) Most knew the answer but many simply gave a list of those countries which opposed Germany and included America and Italy.

(ii) Well known.

(b) Those who located the quotation in the extract realised that it referred to German subversive activity and then got the answer right.

(c) (i) Too many treated this as pure English comprehension and so gave alternative words for the quotation instead of explaining it historically.

(ii) Quite well dealt with, the Kornilov episode being the most popular and sometimes dealt with at great length. The question asked for ONE event, some candidates insisted on dealing with as many as they could think of.

(d) (i) Good candidates scored well on this, others contented themselves by stating that peace was what the Russians wanted.

(ii) An easy question – we did not require them to know all the terms of the treaty but we did expect more than the vague references to loss of land (unnamed) and industry. This was a question which needed only memory but many were badly served by that.

(e) Reasonably done but very many ignored the military aspect and made no mention of the Eastern/Western fronts.

(f) There were two main failings on this question. Firstly the date of the telegram was vital, probably the majority of candidates ignored this (1917) wrote their answers looking back from say, 1922, rather than looking forward from 1917. Thus we often had irrelevant comment about the Civil War and NEP. The second error was that the three divisions (put in to help candidates) were often ignored, at least in part, especially the economic aspect. The internal political problems were, however, quite well known and so candidates usually salvaged something from the question.

Q.2 (a) (i) Nearly all correct.

(ii) Most were correct.

(b) Some very garbled answers, many thinking they were geographical areas but on the whole reasonably well done.

(c) Failure to read the question carefully was the undoing of many. A typical mistake was to give blows against Tsardom and not against the Party.

(d) After last year's question on the civil war we expected a rather better showing this year. On the whole this was so but the geographical knowledge of Russia remains generally appalling. What will happen when a map question is set?

(e) There was plenty of room here for the mini-essay, for the candidate to show what he or she really knew, and there were some very good answers. On the other hand a number of candidates did not answer 'to what extent . . .' or give reasons for their statements. This was a good question designed to sort out the candidates and it did just that.

(f) The most difficult for examiners! There were various viewpoints which could be taken but we were looking for some justification for the candidates' statements. Unfortunately many just made statements like 'Stalin was correct because Lenin did mould the party', or 'he exaggerated because Lenin was not beloved of the labouring classes'. In (f) type questions candidates must realise that a degree of reasoning, justification or interpretation is usually required as well as facts, quotations from the passage or statements of opinion.

Paper 2110/12 (The General Strike of 1926)

General Comments

Whilst the standard was maintained at the level of the average candidate there were fewer reaching higher marks this year. Q.1 proved to be difficult and marks often were at a lower level than with Q.2.

Many candidates did not read the question carefully and thus failed to earn marks because of irrelevant and/or inappropriate answers.

The chronology of events leading to the Strike and during the Strike is often confused by candidates. This was especially the case in dealing with the work of the Samuel and Sankey Commissions.

Comments on individual questions

Q.1. The principal difficulty with this question was that candidates, or very many of them, failed to grasp the symbolism of the source material. Certainly the meaning of John Bull and his relationship with the Prime Minister was not understood fully. Similarly few candidates appreciated where *Punch* stood in the social and political spectrum of 1925, or even the value of a cartoon as a primary source.

Similarly, there were problems with the language of the cartoon. The phrases 'pretty penny' and 'fork out' presented difficulties.

Lastly, the wording of the cartoon was not always read carefully. Thus the date at the top of the page was ignored by candidates who wrote as if the incident took place either in 1921 or 1926.

(a) Few difficulties.

(b) Many answers strayed outside the terms of the question which refers to 'events in 1925'.

(c) Many good answers, but much confusion in chronology.

(d) Some confusion arose because the cartoon (obscurely perhaps) was also referring to the Black Friday incident when a subsidy of £10,000,000 had been paid. Answers referring to 1925 and £24,000,000 were nevertheless fully rewarded.

(e) Very few were able to "explain the cartoonist's view", nor could they grasp the significance of quotation marks for 'John Bull' and 'boy'.

(f) As with (e) to some extent candidates looked at the relationship of a boy and an indulgent uncle, rather than what the 'boy' represented. In supplying arguments for and against Baldwin's action, most looked for simple answers. Few or none considered that the Prime Minister wished to avoid a strike in the coal industry or was genuinely seeking a solution to the more general problems of the industry. Neither did many suggest that the experience of earlier subsidies coloured judgements against giving more money.

Q.2. Marks for this question were invariably higher, indicating that candidates were better able to deal with the stimulus material as well as the concepts. Where marks were lost it was often because of a lack of care in reading the question.

(a) (i) Few problems, some answers believed the Russian government to have been simply philanthropic.

(ii) Usually well answered.

(b) (i) Some misunderstanding of the meaning of the word 'body' in this context.

(ii) Few problems.

(c) Many candidates seemed not to know who A. J. Cook was. They also did not grasp the idea of 'a betrayal' so far as the miners were concerned.

(d) There were many good answers to this question, often including local detail. Poorer answers stated that there was, or was not, violence and good humour, ignoring the phrase used in the question itself (i.e. 'supported by events').

(e) (i) Here the question asked for explanation, so that statements without explanation did not score many marks.

(ii) In addition to the comment on (e) (i) many answers failed to deal with the 'clamour for revenge'.

(f) Three difficulties emerged in answers to this question:

(1) the stimulus is related to the General Strike; many answers extended their material to the miners' strike;

(2) the question refers specifically to the 'point of view of the trade unions' not just of the miners' union;

(3) more generally, candidates were asked to consider the reasons (or evidence) for agreeing and disagreeing with a statement, and very many answers demonstrated an inability to handle such a demand.

Paper 2110/13 (The Expansion of Japan, 1919-1945)

General Comments

Marks were of a similar standard to last year, with more candidates attaining a higher level of achievement than in 1983. The principal conceptual difficulty is that the topic is concerned with the Expansion of Japan, not, as many candidates imagine, the West's reaction to that expansion. Thus in this year's paper, Q.1 relates to a period which is important to the topic, but clearly many candidates had not studied that period in detail. The second question looks at Japanese, not Allied, strategies during the Pacific War. Many answers failed to bring out such an approach.

In general, most candidates would have earned more marks if they had studied the stimulus material and the questions more carefully.

Comments on individual questions

Q.1. Proved to be more difficult, with many scripts blank on questions which asked for factual recall.

(a) (i) These details were often not known.

(ii) Not well known.

(b) Most answers ignored the phrase 'closer to Japan than' in line 18 of the stimulus.

(c) Most answers developed the material in the stimulus referring to Australia and the USA, but few commented on the point made that 'the implications for Japan and the whole of Asia, were, of course, quite unacceptable'. This illustrates the general issue raised in the comment that the paper is concerned with the expansion of Japan, not the West's reaction.

(d) (i) Answers were quite good; few brought out the point that the military were more sensitive to slights to Japan.

(ii) It was encouraging that a fair proportion of answers dealt with the real strength of Japan in the Pacific some even making the useful point that intervention in 1931 was made difficult for Western powers to some extent because of the terms of the Treaties.

(e) Some candidates failed to recognise a structured question asking for comment on the politics, economy and military affairs. There were many interpretations of 'immediate post-war years'. Some regarded 1939-45 as the war referred to; many who recognised the appropriate war interpreted 'immediate' as up to 1945. The context of the stimulus material is clearly the period 1919-21, but relevant answers using information from the 1920s earned credit.

Q.2. This question was answered more fully and accurately, although the points made in the general comment meant that marks could be lower than should have been attained.

(a) No problems.

(b) (i) Few understood the reason for the phrase 'made secure against naval interference' and quoted examples in which there patently was some naval interference.

(ii) Very few got this wrong.

(c) Only the very good candidates understood this question and the phrase 'defensive ring'. This does suggest that most candidates had not made an appraisal of Japanese strategy in 1941/42.

(d) Surprisingly, there were many answers which did not take the issue of 'its prime target' into account.

(e) Most answers scored high marks.

(f) Few candidates were able to discuss Japanese strategy in the closing stages of the war and so gave accounts of US strategy. Again this illustrates the general point made.

Paper 2110/14 (The Arab-Israeli Conflict from 1948 to the present day)

General Comment

The quality of work was a little higher than in 1983. Most candidates had studied the topic thoroughly, although a few had not looked at events in the late 1970s.

There continue to be problems with geography, although fewer than previously. In particular the distinction between West and East is not always clear. ('The West Bank is that territory which lies to the East of the River Jordan stretching as far as Jerusalem' - this was a common answer to Q.2 (b) (i).)

A careful reading of the stimulus material and of the questions would help most candidates to earn higher marks.

Comments on individual questions

Q.1. Many good answers; the topic had clearly been studied carefully.

(a) (i) Usually correctly answered, although a large number gave Begin as the Egyptian President.

(ii) Few problems.

(b) (i) Many varied answers but most indicated a post involving leadership.

(ii) There is general confusion about terrorist groups. Many do not distinguish between Zionist and Arab groups (thus Stern Gang was a common answer), and

few know the history of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, so PLO appears as an answer to this question and almost any question on terrorism.

(c) Many did not pay regard to the phrase 'in the ten years after the Suez Crisis'. The date is given in the heading to the stimulus, but there were many answers which described the 1967 War.

(d) (i) Well answered.

(ii) Most introduced material from after the 1967 War and ignored the phrase 'in the next ten years'.

(e) Many good answers, most candidates were able to make use of the evidence from the extracts and then develop their material.

Q.2. For the majority of candidates this question posed few problems, although there were some who obviously had not studied the more recent aspects of the topic and so did less well.

(a) Many were confused and referred to UNO or US Congress in spite of the heading to the extract.

(b) (i) Some geographical confusion.

(ii) Few problems.

(c) There were few candidates who were able to develop this aspect to show how the USSR had manipulated Egypt's foreign and domestic policies as a result of the latter's exclusive reliance on Soviet arms.

(d) (i) Many good and very good answers.

(ii) More disappointing in that candidates did not always refer to Egypt's domestic problems and general poverty, or the strain of continued hostilities accompanied by regular defeats.

(e) Many excellent accounts of the efforts to reach a just and lasting peace, which included some who explained the effect on the world generally of the Yom Kippur War and the oil embargo.