



# Cambridge International AS & A Level

**HISTORY**

**9389/32**

Paper 3 Interpretations Question

**May/June 2020**

**1 hour**

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question from **one** section only.  
Section A: Topic 1 The Causes and Impact of British Imperialism, c.1850–1939  
Section B: Topic 2 The Holocaust  
Section C: Topic 3 The Origins and Development of the Cold War, 1941–1950
- 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 4 pages. Blank pages are indicated.

## Section A: Topic 1

## The Causes and Impact of British Imperialism, c.1850–1939

- 1 Read the extract and then answer the question.

One problem with contemporary apologists for empire is their reluctance to acknowledge the extent to which imperial rule rests upon coercion, on the policeman torturing a subject and the soldier blowing up houses and shooting prisoners. It is the argument of this book that this is the inevitable reality of colonial rule, and, more particularly, that a close look at British imperial rule reveals episodes as brutal and shameful as in the history of any empire. This book is, then, primarily concerned with the relationship between the imperial power and its conquered peoples. The best description of this relationship was provided by George Orwell in his novel *Burmese Days*, where he wrote that imperialism consisted of the policeman and the soldier holding the 'native' down, while the businessman went through his pockets. Of course, countries were not invaded and occupied just for reasons of economic exploitation. Strategic considerations were also an important factor, although these strategic considerations invariably involved protecting colonies that were of economic importance.

It is the argument here that imperial occupation inevitably involved the use of violence and that, far from this being a glorious affair, it involved considerable brutality against people who were often virtually defenceless. For too long the image of imperial conquest that has prevailed in Britain is that shown in the 1964 film *Zulu*. This tells the epic story of a small band of British soldiers battling against overwhelming odds at Rorke's Drift (in today's South Africa) in 1879. The British fight with courage and honour, and emerge victorious, more because of their national character than their superior weaponry. What the film conveniently leaves out is the subsequent slaughter of hundreds of Zulus wounded, clubbed, shot and bayoneted to death, and some hanged. This was and remains the reality of colonial warfare. Once a country was conquered, imperial rule was maintained by force. Whatever the particular structure of colonial rule, it always rested in the end on the back of a policeman torturing a suspect.

And what of those who support and glorify the British Empire? What they have to be asked is how they would respond if other states had done to Britain what the British had done to other countries. How pro-imperialist would they feel for example if, instead of Britain forcing opium on the Chinese Empire, it had been the other way round? What would their response be if, when the British government had tried to ban the importation of opium, the Chinese had sent a powerful military expedition to ravage the British coastline, bombard British ports, and slaughter British soldiers and civilians? What if further British resistance provoked another attack that led to the Chinese occupying London, looting and burning down Buckingham Palace, and dictating humiliating peace terms? None of this is fanciful because it is exactly what the British state did to China in the nineteenth century.

The British Empire, it is argued here, is indefensible, except on the premise that the conquered peoples were somehow lesser beings than the British. What British people would regard as crimes if done to them, are somehow justified by supporters of the Empire when done to others, indeed claimed to have been done for their own good. This attitude is at the very best implicitly racist, and, of course, often explicitly so.

*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 British Empire to explain your answer. [40]*

## Section B: Topic 2

### The Holocaust

2 Read the extract and then answer the question.

British and American inaction in the face of what the Nazis called the Final Solution of the Jewish Question represented a fundamental failure of western civilised values. The question is how to explain and evaluate that failure. One way is to condemn most of or all those in positions of power and influence in Britain and the United States as ‘passive accomplices’ to murder – self-absorbed and amoral, if not actually evil. Such retrospective moral absolutism can only exist in an oversimplified world. It overlooks the fact that Allied leaders and governments were capable of moral action on some occasions. And to blame every politician or private individual who did not ‘move heaven and earth’ in a desperate attempt to halt the Final Solution is to condemn virtually the whole world. This sweeping judgement may seem morally appropriate, in view of the magnitude of the tragedy, but it ignores important distinctions of behaviour amongst individuals and governments.

It also fails to identify those courses of action most likely to have spared Jews from the gas chambers. To reach any judgement on which methods might have saved lives, we have to take into account not only political conditions in the United States and Britain, but also the policies and ideology of the Third Reich. To condemn the Allies for failing to negotiate with Germany for the release of Jews is hollow criticism unless we can demonstrate that negotiations had some chance of success. Before we can judge what might have been, we need a careful and balanced analysis of what actually occurred. Nazi persecution and murder of Europe’s Jews was one of many world crises during the 1930s and 1940s. Western policies towards Nazi Germany and towards European Jewry must be examined in their historical and political context; only then can we understand the real constraints and trade-offs faced by government officials. If we want to understand why the US government made certain choices, rather than simply condemn them, then we must recreate the broad sweep of governmental concerns and activities in the Roosevelt era.

The possibility of a refugee policy for European Jewry was discussed at the highest levels of the US government as early as 1933, and it continued to be a subject of debate throughout the 1930s. It is possible to understand US policy during the Holocaust, and the motives of the policymakers, only in the light of the earlier debates and outcomes. US policy was a product of four major factors: pre-existing restrictive immigration laws and regulations; an inflexible State Department bureaucracy committed to a narrow interpretation of its functions and to the protection of US interests alone; the American public’s opposition to an increase in immigration; and the reluctance of Roosevelt to accept the inherent political risks of the humanitarian measures on behalf of foreign Jews that were being suggested by Secretary of Labor, Frances Perkins, representatives of Jewish organisations and others.

Among previous scholars who have written on this subject, few deny that various motives underlay US restriction of Jewish immigration – fear of introducing new workers into the economy during a depression, fear of foreigners and radical ideas. But some still overestimate the influence that individual anti-Semites wielded in shaping US policy. Others have failed to penetrate beneath the broad social forces that encouraged restriction. They have not adequately explored the institutional operation of priorities of the government agencies that dealt with the refugee issue. They have underestimated the importance of conflicting perceptions amongst policymakers of their institutional and moral responsibilities.

*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]*

## Section C: Topic 3

## The Origins and Development of the Cold War, 1941–1950

3 Read the extract and then answer the question.

As the Second World War was coming to an end, the seeds of the Cold War were already sprouting. Never had there been so many problems left in war's wake. President Truman had come on the scene just as the shape of these problems was beginning to be noticed. They involved, in every major instance, the failure of the Allied political and military leadership to properly assess the true nature of the dynamic Communist strategy of world conquest. Among the legacies that Truman received from Roosevelt was a determination that a stable relationship between the West and Russia could be found in patience and tolerance. To this end, the Allies at the Tehran and Yalta conferences had gone far in meeting Russia's concerns about having friendly powers on her border in the post-war European arrangement. It was Roosevelt's view that all these agreements must be strictly adhered to, even when his faith was provoked by a Russian trick or by an outright violation. Truman felt obligated to carry out this policy of Roosevelt's, but almost from the outset he had misgivings. Within his own circle there was a strong element (but still in the minority) that regarded Russia's intentions with deep suspicion. Churchill shared this scepticism about Russia. In many communications, with both Roosevelt and Truman, he urged them to see the political realities of a post-war world in which Russia would wield a power comparable to that of the Western Allies. It is reasonable to suppose that Truman did perceive these trends, that even in his first weeks in office his intuition led him to distrust Russian sincerity. But he mistrusted his own judgement, and the people who might have backed him up, such as Churchill or Ambassador Harriman in Moscow, were figures he hardly knew. On the other hand, the men he did know, and on whom he was forced to rely daily, were obsessed with the military rather than the political implications of the war. They agreed with the Roosevelt doctrine of getting along with the Russians at all costs. In addition, of course, Truman felt under a sense of obligation to continue in the steps of his predecessor.

For all these reasons, then, Truman did not follow his instincts, and so lost one of the great opportunities of History. For if ever there was a time when the Cold War might have been averted – when the pattern of Communist conquest might have been broken – it was in those critical three months from May to September 1945. In April 1945, the Allies were closing on Germany more rapidly than had been anticipated. Churchill foresaw that whatever Russian military power penetrated into Germany and Central Europe, Russian political power could not thereafter be dislodged. In repeated appeals to Roosevelt, and then to Truman, he urged that 'we should join hands with the Russians as far to the East as possible'. In particular he pleaded that the Western partners press on to Berlin, which in April appeared as easily within their grasp as within the Russians'. But Truman refused to go against Eisenhower's intention to scrupulously respect Russian rights in her agreed zones of occupation. 'The only practical thing to do', Truman said later, 'was stick carefully to our agreements and to try our best to make the Russians carry out theirs.' With this decision, the stamp of inevitability was placed on the Cold War. It began with the German problem, and the German problem remained the hard, stubborn core of the Cold War for many years to come.

*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]

---

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in the Cambridge Assessment International Education Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org) after the live examination series.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which itself is a department of the University of Cambridge.