

**AS LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **HISTORY A**

**H105**

For first teaching in 2015

**Y251/01 Summer 2023 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper Y251/01 series overview

Y251 is one of five non-British Period Study units for Paper 2 for the revised AS Level examination for GCE History. This unit tests a period of study of about 50 years through a traditional essay and an essay based on evaluating an interpretation. The examination paper contains three questions. The first two questions, in Section A, are traditional essay questions and the candidate is required to answer one of them. The third question, in Section B, all candidates are required to answer. This is the interpretation question.

Every candidate followed the rubric correctly by selecting one of the 30-mark essay questions and no candidate attempted both essay questions. Responses to Question 3 focused on evaluating the strengths and limitations of the given interpretation. A lack of knowledge impacted on the quality of answers across all papers. Furthermore, key words or phrases were misunderstood. The quality of written communication was reasonably good, and most responses were clearly organised.

The quality of some responses to all the questions was hindered by a lack of detailed knowledge and key words/phrases in the question not being fully understood. Overall, the quality of written communication was fair to good, and most responses were clearly organised.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussed at least two issues in depth in the essay question</li> <li>• gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the question set, not just the topic</li> <li>• reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question</li> <li>• made a series of interim judgements about the issues discussed in relation to the question</li> <li>• considered the strengths and limitations of the given interpretation in the interpretation question</li> <li>• referred to at least one other interpretation</li> <li>• gave supporting detail that was both accurate and relevant to the issues in the interpretation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• produced a judgement in the essay question that was not supported and was, therefore, assertion or a judgement that did not follow logically from the response</li> <li>• were unable to use their knowledge to address the issue in the question</li> <li>• showed a poor understanding of the major issues in relation to the question</li> <li>• were unable to support their response with relevant or accurate material</li> <li>• did not focus on the precise wording of the question</li> <li>• made unsupported comments about issues in the interpretation question which were no more than assertions.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

Two essays are set, each from a different Key Topic. Here the candidates were asked to examine the effectiveness of Nazi youth policies in the period from 1933 to 1939 and the extent of social change in the DDR in improving the lives of ordinary people. The questions set require candidates to analyse causes and consequences of major historical issues.

### Question 1\*

1\* How effective was Nazi policy towards youth in the period from 1933 to 1939?

[30]

This was answered by the vast majority of candidates and elicited a good range of responses. The best responses considered a wide range of evidence of youth policies including the spread of the HJ and its associated organisations, the implementation of education policies, the key improvements to health and physical fitness and the suppression of alternative youth organisations. In contrast candidates who contradicted the premise in the question pointed to informal opposition movements emerging, acts of petty rebellions such as listening to jazz, the survival of the Catholic Youth movement and the necessity of introducing compulsory participation as evidence that Nazi policy was unsuccessful. A very good consideration of these factors is seen in the chosen exemplar. Weaker responses wrote narrative accounts or considered evidence from beyond 1939, including the role of the White Rose group.

#### Misconception



Some candidates included information on the White Rose group in this question. The White Rose group emerged after 1939.

## Exemplar 1

Nazi policy towards youth from 1933 to 1939 was multifaceted. It was all-encompassing and infiltrated many aspects of youth life, but at the same time, some opposition could be seen. Despite this, Nazi policy was still ~~extremely~~ <sup>quite</sup> effective.

Nazi youth policy was one of indoctrination. And such the policies were extremely effective in such a goal, with Nazi policy infiltrating every aspect of a youth's life, from school to his daily life. Much of this can be attributed to the policy of Gleichschaltung, or co-ordination of the educational system. In this matter indoctrination was all-encompassing. Teachers were required to instruct students on 'German heroes'. In reality this was manifested in the setting of essays on men like Horst Wessel, a Nazi martyr, and Adolf Hitler. Naturally these were positive essays, and through the system of education the Führer cult was reinforced. Disguising itself as legitimate education such as 'History' classes, Nazi indoctrination spread far. Even sciences were not spared, with the apolitical subject replaced by 'Biology' discussions on the inferiority of Jews. Nazi views were thus normalized, and indoctrination set deep roots in a child's foundational years. Books for toddlers held propaganda and blatant antisemitism, injecting ~~and~~ ideology in a

children's most formative years. If the thousand-year Reich had truly lasted so long, within a few generations no child would even know an alternative. Co-ordinated Nazi pedagogy was presented as objective truth in classes, creating a new generation who only knew Nazism. Such a system would be brutally effective.

Nazism permeated every aspect of life as well. There was no escape from indoctrination even in a youth's private life. All recreational activities were co-ordinated into the Hitler Youth<sup>(HJ)</sup>, the Party's youth organisation. Sports and recreation were all Nazified, and youths who wished to engage in sports had to join the Hitler Youth. Activities of the HJ included military-style marches and studies on Nazism. If a youth in Germany wished to participate in any sport at all, they had to join the HJ. In this manner many joined and were indoctrinated, lured by some forced to because the HJ had a monopoly on any sport. Those who did not were often ostracised by their peers. It is clear that Nazi indoctrination permeated even a child's recreational time. Youth of the period from 1933 to 1939 would only ever know Nazism. Other youth groups had been banned in 1933, with only one holdout, the Christian youth group banned in 1939. The system of indoctrination

was, in effect, inescapable. From schools to even a youth's peers, pressure was put on them to join up, and be indoctrinated into Nazi militarism and ideology. To have such a large effect on the life of teens was astounding. The

Even in private life the youth were indoctrinated. If a teen, against all odds, was not schooled, escaping the systematic co-ordination of the education sector, and resisted peer pressure from joining the Hitler Youth, nor had an interest in sports, of which HJ membership was required, youth would still be educated on Nazi ideals. At home, a youth's books would be Nazified. The anthem ~~he~~ song ~~to~~ he and his parents would be Nazified — The Horst-Wessel Lied, depicting the brave actions of a Nazi martyr against Bolsheviks, would be drilled into him. His sole form of entertainment (for he could not participate in sports without HJ membership) — the People's Radio, was designed for the purpose of spreading propaganda broadcasts to the most remote of villages. There was truly no escape from indoctrination. If the war had not ended in Germany's defeat, this ~~not~~ system of indoctrination would have continued on. Children would read Nazi books, listen to Nazi songs, <sup>in school</sup> learn Nazi 'science', every aspect of his life would be National-Socialist.



He could not hope to break the system of indoctrination, as there was simply no alternative ideology known to him. This massive web of propaganda and ~~ide~~ ~~ide~~, aimed at youth from a very young age, was greatly effective.

Of course, some resistance could be seen with groups such as the Edelweiss pirates. Naturally some youth did not believe in joining the Hitler Youth, and despised the militarist nature of the HJ. In the period 1933 to 1939 some youth movements did pop up. The Swing Movement resisted German tradition and continued listening to Western, 'decadent' music, proving somewhat of a problem to indoctrination. Much more radical was the Edelweiss Pirates, which in defiance of the HJ's monopoly on recreation and sports organised their own hikes and activities. In such a manner, they can be seen as posing some threat to Nazi youth policy, subverting it. However, such movements were relatively minor in the grand scheme of indoctrination. The Swing Movement had little impact on political goals, only desiring to continue listening to their 'Swing' music. Nothing substantial was ever achieved. The Edelweiss Pirates, despite being more radical in nature, was splintered and lacked organisation. While being more of a severe threat during the war period,

not much action was undertaken by them during the period from 1933 to 1939. Thus, resistance to Nazi youth policy was often limited.

Further strengthening the argument for a successful and all-encompassing youth indoctrination system was the indoctrination of young girls and women.

Groups such as the Jungmadel modeled and trained young girls into the ideal German female of the People's Community.

According to the three K's of Children, Family and Kitchen they were trained in modesty and child-bearing,

modelling a generation of subservient women indoctrinated to the Volksgemeinschaft, the ideal

conservative community. The deep permeation of Nazism into education again appeared with

women, with females banned from studying Latin in school, preventing access of female students to any form of higher education.

~~Polities~~ Lebensborn was also implemented as a subset of racial policies and the creation

of a new generation of Nazi youth, with

SS men procreating a new generation of Nazis. Such policies ~~are~~ had a wide effect.

In conclusion, Nazi policy towards youth was all-encompassing and inevitable. Nazism permeated every step of a youth's life,

from conception (as seen with Lebensborn), to his school and home life. HIT membership was widespread, and indoctrination into an ideal 'People's Community' was inevitable. A male youth would learn ~~Nazism~~ learn Nazi 'truths' at school, partake in Nazi military activities ~~at~~ in the HIT, and read and listen Nazi propaganda at home. If such policies had persisted a generation of youths who knew only Nazism would be created. ~~And even after WWII~~ Despite some opposition the policies were never greatly challenged, and the creation of an ideal Peoples Community via the Hitler Youth and the League of German Maidens continued. The policy was thus greatly effective, lasting not just from 1933 to 1939, to even after the end of the war, where many who grew up in Nazism struggling to adapt, feeling conflict. The extent of indoctrination is seen.

This exemplar gives a very good consideration of the factors covering a wide range of knowledge. Also, the exemplar offers evidence that supports and challenges the effectiveness of Nazi policy towards youth and as well, there is a conclusion. This was given Level 5: 26 marks.

## Question 2\*

2\* To what extent did social change in the DDR improve the lives of ordinary people in the period from 1949 to 1963? [30]

There were not enough responses to this question to be able to write a meaningful report.

## Section B overview

In this section candidates were asked to consider a short interpretation that stated that Germans voted Nazi for economic reasons in the years from 1928 to 1933. They should consider the strengths and limitations of the given interpretation.

### Question 3

3 Read the interpretation and then answer the question that follows:

'Germans voted Nazi for economic reasons in the years from 1928 to 1933.'

**From: J. Hite and C. Hinton, Weimar and Nazi Germany, published in 2000.**

Evaluate the strengths and limitations of this interpretation of the period from 1928 to 1933, making reference to other interpretations that you have studied.

**[20]**

At the higher level, candidates analysed different interpretations and assessed the strengths and limitations of this interpretation with a secure contextual knowledge. The strongest responses were balanced, analytical and well supported with a good range of factors used to support and justify this interpretation. These answers explored the strengths of this interpretation by examining the legacy of Versailles, the impact of the Depression, the actions of various chancellors after 1930 and Nazi relations with big business. Limitations were evaluated by considering political factors, antisemitism, and fear of communism. In addition, they offered detailed and assured knowledge and provided a balanced assessment of the interpretation. This can be seen in the exemplar given below. However, there was significant tendency to provide a list of reasons for voting Nazi with little on use of views and theories. The weaker responses provided generalised comments with limited support and evidence, offering limited evaluation of the interpretation. Responses that were very descriptive with general comments were given Level 1 and Level 2.

## Exemplar 2

The interpretation <sup>puts forward</sup> ~~puts~~ the view that Germans were not attracted by Nazi racial, political, or foreign policy, rather that they voted for the NSDAP only for "economic reasons" because of the <sup>economic</sup> effects of the great depression on the Weimar Republic. However, other historians would argue that the impact of the Great Depression was very much social, and that people voted for the NSDAP because they had lost faith in democratic processes. This view is supported by the loss of support for democratic parties to special interest parties and general opposition to the republic.

The interpretation is correct to argue that in the years 1928-1933, the economy was in a dire situation, meaning that many were desperate for any chance to improve the economy. After the Wall Street crash in 1929, unemployment rose at an alarming rate, and by 1932 6 million were unemployed. The Weimar Welfare State was designed to accommodate for less than 1 million unemployed, so this resulted in mass starvation. Unemployed workers <sup>going</sup> queuing for hours waiting for benefits and food would see Nazi propaganda posters advertising "bread and work", which suggests that these economic reasons are why people voted for Nazis in these years. The % vote for the NSDAP gradually rose throughout these years as coalitions with other parties failed, Brüning even being nicknamed "the hunger chancellor".

which again suggests that the first and foremost priority of the population was economic needs. There is even evidence that most did not initially support Nazi racial policies, as on April 1 1933 there was a boycott of Jewish shops. Even though SA stood outside these shops and threatened anyone who ~~enter~~ entered, the boycott was cancelled after only one day because of a lack of support. This shows that the Nazis did not receive their support in these years for their racial and political policies, but rather their economic promises.

However, the interpretation is limited in that many voted for the Nazis not specifically because of their economic policies, but because they had lost faith in the Weimar regime. This has merit as even though the working class were the most badly affected by the depression in these years, they were severely underrepresented at a proportion of about 10% of Nazi votes. However, the SPD still lost ~~about~~ 100 votes to the KPD - an extremist <sup>communist</sup> party which was anti-Weimar. Similarly, even before the depression, the DVP and DNVP had lost 14% of their votes to special interest parties and their policies were becoming more extreme. This shows that the voter ~~base~~ <sup>electorate</sup> was becoming more extreme and more anti-republican, which attracted them to the Nazi propaganda of a single strong leader - which was reminiscent of Bismarck. The interpretation also overlooks that the ~~many who had not supported the republic in the first place~~ <sup>many who had not supported the republic in the first place</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>first place</sup>

Great Depression not only came with economic, but also political ruin, as the Weimar Republic Reichstag relied increasingly on Article 48 and "chancellor democracy". Throughout four consecutive governments, the system as established in the constitution was unable to function, which led to people losing faith in the regime and looking for something else to put their faith into, which was ultimately why they voted for the Nazis.

This exemplar gives a confident appraisal of the stated interpretation. It also challenges the main interpretation by contrasting with the breakdown of trust in democracy and the Weimar Republic. It was given Level 5: 18 marks.

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