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History review

November 2012 Volume 8 Number 2



When the USA realised it could not win

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September 2012 Volume 8 Number 1

Was fear a factor?

German acceptance of Hitler's regime

Khrushchev, Kennedy
and Cuba

The lead up to the 1962 crisis

The Western Front in the
First World War

A visual chronology

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The roots of the Nazi terror state

MICHAL MIASKO/FOTOLIA

Mike Wells argues that several decades of state police control prepared the way for German acceptance of the Nazi regime

AQA AS Life in Nazi Germany 1933–45

Edexcel AS From Second Reich to Third Reich: Germany 1918–45

Edexcel A2 From Kaiser to Führer: Germany 1900–1945

OCR (A) AS Democracy and dictatorship in Germany 1919–63, Study topic 8

OCR (A) A2 Nazi Germany 1933–45

Argument



State police control was nothing new

State police control had been accepted practice in Germany before unification, so it would be an exaggeration to say that German acceptance of Hitler's regime was predominantly the result of a terror state.

After the fall of the Third Reich, the names of Germany's police institutions, and those of their leaders, became common words in Britain. Churchill unwisely suggested that a Labour victory in 1945 would mean a 'Gestapo'. In Terence Rattigan's 1948 play *The Browning Version*, the nickname of the declining schoolmaster is 'The Himmler of the Lower Fourth'. British institutions were compared favourably with Germany's 'secret police' and it was a source of pride that British policing was to protect the individual and not the state.

Revelations about the horrors of the regime reinforced the view that Hitler had brainwashed the German people and imposed a terror state on them, and that an all-seeing secret police had made opposition impossible and conformity to the most awful crimes and murders unavoidable. Academic studies such as E. K. Brandstedt's *Dictatorship and Political Police: the Techniques of Control by Fear* (1946) supported this view.

'Secret police' was a misnomer

The activities of the political police in Germany had been open and clear for all to see. The headquarters of the Gestapo in Berlin, in Prinz Albrecht Strasse, was openly signed. Gestapo offices were known about and one punishment was for citizens to have to report there daily. There were regular magazine and newspaper articles about all aspects of the political police and SS. The concentration camps were not hidden away in deepest rural regions. Dachau was just outside Munich and Sachsenhausen was not far from Berlin, near the town of Oranienburg. There was an extensive correspondence between citizens and the 'secret police' as denunciations to the Gestapo.

Questions

- E. K. Brandstedt's book *Dictatorship and Political Police: the Techniques of Control by Fear*, written in 1946, suggests that fear was a factor in the acceptance of the Nazi police state. After studying this article, and the suggested further reading, what do you think? List arguments for and against.
- Discuss how far German people were aware of what was going on in the concentration camps.

Continuity with the police of Weimar and imperial Germany

In 1899 the Munich security police created a special department to keep detailed records on gypsies as possible risks. These records included identification cards, fingerprints and photographs. Agents kept surveillance on the Roma (gypsy) community. The basis of this seemed to be racial distrust. The police in Weimar Germany enforced regulations that segregated gypsies from other citizens when they entered public swimming pools, parks and other recreational areas.

In imperial Germany, police had powers to arrest, fine and imprison suspects that exceeded those of British police at the time. There was a concept of *Polizeihaft* — police custody — long before 1933. Policing was considerably militarised, with a predominance of ex-soldiers. A police officer could close down a meeting at will: a case in 1853 was widely reported as a policeman had closed a political meeting because the delegates agreed to ban smoking

in the hall. The policeman told them, 'Smoking is legal in Prussia' and dispersed them.

The political persecution of Bismarck's 'enemies of the Reich', such as Catholics in the 1860s and socialists after 1878, was done by Prussian police. They enforced bans, raided meetings and arrested a wide variety of people, from socialist officials to priests and nuns who had fallen foul of the repressive power of the state. Auxiliary units drafted into the police were not an innovation. When the SA was legitimised in 1933 there were precedents. Employers in the Ruhr had recruited their own 'police groups' during the industrial disturbances of 1905. In 1918 the SPD Prussian interior minister, Severing, recruited a security police (*Schutzpolizei*) from ex-soldiers and **Freikorps** members to suppress left-wing disturbances.

The growth in the size of the police and arbitrary actions and imprisonment by and large had the support of the Berlin middle classes after 1870. The working classes were more resentful but the rising crime wave and growth of city slums left the middle classes grateful for what was often heavy-handed and repressive police action. In the 1920s, famous cases like the Düsseldorf vampire, a sort of German Jack the Ripper, and the Hamburg serial killer, Fritz Haarmann, gave rise for calls for tougher policing. Many felt that the legal restrictions of the Weimar Republic were putting the rights of the individual before those of the community. This was a position the Nazis were happy to endorse.



PETER NEWARK'S PICTURES

Gestapo German secret state police set up in 1933 by Hermann Göring, with authority to investigate cases of treason, espionage, sabotage and criminal attacks on the Nazi Party and Germany.

Himmler From 1934 the Nazi police chief given control of the Gestapo. As minister of the interior from 1943 he was responsible for ordering genocide in the concentration camps.

SS Schutzstaffel, the Nazi Party's 'protective squadron'.

SA Sturmabteilung (Storm Battalion), the Nazi Party militia, led by Ernst Röhm until the Night of the Long Knives, when he was murdered.

SPD The Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*).

Freikorps Private armies, set up after the First World War, intended to defend Germany against possible invasion by the Red Army. Later they were used against attempted revolutions in Germany.

German police rounding up political dissidents in 1933

Mao's China, 1949–76

AS Unit 1 D2



TOP PHOTO

Edexcel's Unit 1 'Mao's China, 1949–76' paper covers China from the Communist Party Revolution of 1949 to Mao's death in 1976. It covers, essentially, four aspects of Chinese politics and society:

- 1 Consolidation of political power from the revolution to the Anti-Rightist Movement of 1957–58.
- 2 Mao's agricultural and industrial policies in the 1950s and 1960s, and his drive for economic modernisation.
- 3 Mao's social policy, particularly the treatment of women, and the campaign against the middle class.
- 4 The origins, course and consequences of the Cultural Revolution.

The Unit 1 exam lasts 1 hour and 20 minutes. During that time you are required to complete two questions out of a choice of four across two topic areas.

This exam focus deals with the second aspect: Mao's economic policy. The essay question concerns Mao's attempt to industrialise China.

Question

How successful was China's First Five Year Plan, 1953–57? (30 marks)

Examiner's advice

Questions dealing with economic policy can be tricky. There are some common mistakes that you should avoid:

- **Agriculture or industry?** Economic questions can ask about agriculture or industry, or about both. Make sure you read the question carefully and only deal with the aspect of the economy raised by the question. In this case the question is concerned with industrial policy.
- **Dates:** Economic policy and economic performance can change quickly. It is therefore important to make sure you are on top of what happened and when. This question concerns the First Five Year Plan, so do not confuse it with the Great Leap Forward.
- **Success:** This question concerns success. In order to judge how successful Mao's economic policy was, you will need to be clear about what Mao was trying to achieve. Essays that ignore Mao's goals are unlikely to get marks in the highest levels.

- **Statistics:** In order to discuss the success or failure of Mao's First Five Year Plan you will need to refer to detailed statistics. Make sure you learn key facts, so that you can use them if a question on the economy comes up in the exam.

Example answer

China's First Five Year Plan was undoubtedly a great success because it achieved Mao's key aim by raising production in almost all areas. However, some aspects of the plan were more successful than others and not all areas of the economy met the targets set by Chinese state planners. In order to show this I will consider China's heavy industry, energy production, development of transport, and the economic impact of the Sino-Soviet Pact. Nonetheless, in the final analysis the First Five Year Plan was highly successful as it achieved the goal of boosting industrial growth across the Chinese economy.

China's First Five Year Plan was undoubtedly successful in terms of heavy industry. Steel production increased from 1.3 million tonnes in 1952 to 5.35 million tonnes by the end of the plan in 1957. What is more, steel production exceeded its Five Year Plan target of 4.12 million tonnes by more than 1 million tonnes. Similarly, the production of iron increased dramatically. From 1949 to 1952 iron production did not exceed 1.9 million tonnes. By the end of the plan in 1957, however, production had increased to 5 million tonnes. Once again iron production had beaten its target of 3.7 million tonnes. Clearly, the First Five Year Plan was very successful in terms of heavy industry because it increased production of iron and steel dramatically and in both cases exceeded its targets.

China's First Five Year Plan was fairly successful in terms of energy. The production of oil, coal and electricity all increased. However, not all of these energy sources met their planned targets. Electricity production was highly successful as over 19 billion kilowatts were produced and this was more than the target set by the plan of 15.9 billion kilowatts. However, the power generated by hydroelectric turbines did not meet its target of 79,000 kilowatts as it only generated 75,000 kilowatts during the plan. Equally, oil production did not meet its 2,012 million tonnes target as only 1,458 million

tonnes were produced. Coal, however, was more successful as it exceeded its target of 113 million tonnes by 2 million tonnes. In this way, although the plan raised energy production from 1952 it was not wholly successful because not all of the energy targets were met.

Transport was a broadly successful part of the First Five Year Plan. Major civil engineering works such as the Yangzi Bridge were constructed as planned. Also the plan produced more than twice as many bicycles as planned and also produced more trucks than the targets set by state planners. However, only a third of the merchant ships that were planned were actually produced. Locomotives and freight cars also missed their targets. Again, the plan did improve China's transport but it was not a total success because in important areas such as locomotive production the plan was not fulfilled.

The Sino-Soviet Pact (1950) was of mixed economic benefit to China during the period of the plan. Only 5% of Russia's aid was actually in capital goods, and China had to pay a high price in terms of their gold reserves and high interest loans. Nonetheless, China did get 10,000 economic experts and was able to learn from the successes and failures of the Russian plans which had been going on since 1928. In this way the pact helped but this help came at a high price and because of this it was only a limited help in promoting economic growth.

In conclusion, the First Five Year Plan was a great success, but it was more successful in some ways than others. Heavy industry was highly successful because it raised output and exceeded all of its targets. Energy and transport were also successful, but less so because although they increased production they did not always meet their targets. Finally, the Sino-Soviet Pact had mixed results and was only of limited help because Russian aid came at such a high price. Therefore, it is clear that the plan was highly successful but there was room for improvement in some areas.

Examiner's comments

Unit 1 essays are marked against five levels, as shown in Table 1.

This is a good essay for the following reasons:

- It focuses clearly on the question.
- It sets out clear criteria for success and analyses the extent of success.
- It contains accurate and relevant information.
- It links each paragraph back to the question, evaluating how far the information in the paragraph suggests success or failure.

As this essay is clearly focused on the question, uses accurate and relevant information and analyses the extent of success, it must get a mark in Level 4 or Level 5. This is, however, essentially a Level 4 essay. It is analytical throughout — every paragraph analyses a factor — but there is only a limited attempt to tie everything together and develop an overall argument. The essay could therefore be improved and raised to a Level 5 response by showing how the factors interrelate.

The essay does nevertheless get a high mark within Level 4, due to the large range of factors it discusses and the depth of specific, accurate detail it uses.

Total mark: 24/30



A poster of an oil field worker proclaiming 'Rely on your own efforts to build up our motherland'

Table 1 Edexcel Unit 1 generic mark scheme

Level	Description
1	Simplistic Very limited focus on the question Very limited factual accuracy
2	Generalised Some focus on the question Some factual accuracy — probably very generalised
3	Generally accurate and focused Generally focused on the question Generally accurate Attempts analysis
4	Analytical Generally focused on the question Generally accurate Attempts analysis
5	Sustained analysis Like Level 4, but with a consistent argument

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Go online for some additional material to help you with this Edexcel unit.

Robin Bunce is a history teacher and an examiner.

'Rivers of Blood'

Enoch Powell and race relations in the 1960s

Diana Laffin

Diana Laffin examines why Enoch Powell's views on immigration seemed to do a U-turn during the 1960s

AQA A2 The making of modern Britain, 1951–2007

Edexcel AS British political history 1945–90: consensus and conflict

OCR (A) AS Postwar Britain, 1951–94, Study topic 6

OCR (B) AS The end of consensus: Britain 1945–90, Study topic 4

Argument

Speak out, lose job

Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech was a defining moment in complex race relations in Britain during the 1960s.

I have set and always will set my face like flint against making any difference between one citizen of this country and another on grounds of his origin.

These were the brave words voiced by Enoch Powell in 1964 at a time of considerable anxiety about the influx of nearly half a million people from Asia and the Caribbean to Britain. The British government had encouraged immigration to ease labour shortages in the growing National Health Service and transport

system. Yet restrictions had been introduced in 1962 as increasing numbers of Commonwealth migrants and their families settled in the country.

Rising racial discrimination in the 1950s and 1960s

Although postwar Britain had lost much of its empire by 1964, colonial attitudes persisted. Brown faces were treated with fear, distrust and sometimes contempt. Black and Asian people in Britain faced discrimination in employment and housing. While most immigrants found jobs fairly rapidly, over half had to accept posts that were below the level of their skills and qualifications. In the streets they regularly faced abuse and they were often barred from pubs and dance halls.

Racial tensions increased, especially in urban areas such as north London. Right-wing groups, such as the Union of British Freedom, targeted the newcomers, daubing walls with slogans such as 'Keep Britain White'. Teddy boys would taunt black people in the street and find reasons to pick a fight. In response, immigrants began to defend themselves and some carried knives. Tensions rose to a peak in the late summer of 1958 with serious riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill in London.

teddy boys Mostly working-class young men, often operating in gangs in the 1950s and 1960s.

Enquiring History: it makes you think!

Diana Laffin's *Britain since 1945*, published by Hodder Education in the Enquiring History series will be available from March 2013 as both paperback and e-book (www.hoddereducation.co.uk).

The Enquiring History series helps you with the most difficult part of history — thinking through the issues. Examiners report that A-level history candidates often let themselves down because they know a lot but they don't think hard enough about the question. Deeper thinking = improved understanding = better grades.



Questions

- List as many reasons as you can why both political parties deemed it necessary to introduce Race Relations Acts. Have a look at Hansard parliamentary debates about the bills.
- Compare and contrast reasons why different sections of the community agreed with or were disgusted by Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech. Remember to put yourself, as far as you can, into the minds of the people who lived through the experience 44 years ago.



West Indian immigrants disembarking from the liner *Begona* in Southampton, July 1962

Political parties agree immigration policies are necessary

In 1968 both Labour and Conservative parties agreed that:

- the level of immigration must be reduced
- racial tensions and discrimination needed to be addressed

The Labour government introduced the Commonwealth Immigration Act in February, which insisted on a 'close connection' with the UK, giving preferential entry to white immigrants. This bill had been prompted by the arrival of 1,000 Kenyan Asians who had been forced from their jobs and businesses by the Kenyan government. Although they had British passports, their arrival was greeted with public unease. The Immigration Act was passed by 372 votes, with only 62 against.

From 1965 it had been illegal to discriminate in public places against people on the grounds of their race, nationality or ethnicity, but this did not extend to housing or employment. In April 1968 the government decided to remedy this with further

legislation. This was a more controversial move. In Wolverhampton, for instance, there was an ongoing dispute over the rights of Sikh bus drivers to wear their turbans. Many landlords refused to rent property to black applicants — a survey in Birmingham in the 1950s revealed that only 15 out of 1,000 would do so. This new law would force them to change.

Enoch Powell's views on immigration

Enoch Powell was a complex man with complex views. A great admirer of Indian culture and customs, he spoke fluent Urdu. He had witnessed the appalling violence in India in 1947–48 (resulting from partition), giving him a great fear of **communalism**. In 1959 he had spoken passionately in Parliament about the deaths of African detainees in British-ruled Kenya, arguing that African lives must be valued as much as those of white colonialists. As health minister in the early 1960s, Powell had initiated a recruitment drive in the West Indies. It was only later in the 1960s that he began to speak out against immigration, most notably in a speech in Walsall in February 1968.

• **communalism** Having stronger loyalty to your ethnic group than to your country or wider society. Powell believed this caused the huge slaughter in India after independence.



Enoch Powell and a team of helpers trying to cope with the flood of letters he received following his controversial speech

The 'Rivers of Blood' speech

There was nothing accidental in the time, location or content of Powell's speech in Birmingham on 20 April 1968. Speaking to a Conservative audience on home turf, Powell admitted to a friend that his speech would 'go up like a rocket'. Although a routine annual meeting, both press and television were there to record it.

In his speech, Powell reaffirmed the three central points of Conservative Party immigration policy:

- stricter controls on entry to the UK
- encouragement of voluntary repatriation
- equal treatment of immigrants who had settled here

Powell opposed the new Race Relations Bill, arguing it would be used as a weapon against the white community, and he predicted serious repercussions unless immigration was reduced.

A disaster for Powell's career

After the speech Powell was expelled from the shadow cabinet by Conservative leader Edward Heath, and never recovered a mainstream voice in British politics. Broadsheet newspapers condemned it — an editorial of *The Times* branding it an 'evil speech'. University students campaigned vociferously against him. In many mixed-race neighbourhoods tensions rose in the weeks after the speech. Politician Paul Boateng, a schoolboy in London at the time, stated, 'I was shouted at and spat at and abused in the street for the first time ever, the day after that'. 'That' was Powell's speech.

Yet for many people, Powell was a hero — the man who dared to say what most people were thinking. Opinion polls showed that over two-thirds of the British public agreed with his views on immigration. Workers expressed their support for Powell — over 4,000 dock workers went on strike and the Transport and General Workers' Union sent a petition to Heath. Powell himself received over 100,000 letters with only about 800 opposing his speech.

Chronology



- 1962 April** Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 restricts immigration using a voucher system.
- 1965 December** First Race Relations Act, making public discrimination illegal, is passed.
- 1968 January–February** Large numbers of Kenyan Asians arrive in Britain. Powell makes a strong speech at Walsall against immigration.
- March** Commonwealth Immigrants Act further restricts immigration.
- April** Government drafts its Race Relations Bill to make racial discrimination in housing and employment illegal. Powell makes his 'Rivers of Blood' speech and is sacked from the shadow cabinet.
- October** Second Race Relations Act becomes law.

The speech is deemed insulting and inflammatory

While the majority of the speech repeated party policy on immigration, the passages that are remembered are those when Powell repeated the words of his constituents. He described an 'ordinary working man' who wanted to leave Britain because, 'In 15–20 years' time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man'. This seemed to be a deliberate reference to the slave trade and a suggestion that the 'natural' superiority of white people was being threatened.

The most controversial passage in his speech was a report of the experiences of an elderly woman who ran a boarding house. As more immigrant families moved into the neighbourhood, white people left and she felt increasingly intimidated. Powell explained in his speech:

She is becoming afraid to go out. Windows are broken. She finds excreta pushed through her letterbox. When she goes to the shops, she is followed by children, charming, wide-grinning **piccaninnies**. They cannot speak English, but one word they know. '**Racialist**', they chant. When the new Race Relations Bill is passed, this woman is convinced she will go to prison. And is she so wrong? I begin to wonder.

Powell's speech ended with a warning. A renowned classical scholar, he quoted from Vergil's *Aeneid*, predicting a violent and troubled future, 'As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see "the River Tiber foaming with much blood".'

It was not what Powell said that caused a problem for politicians or the public, it was the way he said it. Defending his sacking of Powell, Edward Heath commented, 'I don't believe that the great majority of British people share Mr Powell's way of putting his views in his speech'.

What does Powell's speech tell us about race relations in the 1960s?

- In 1968 there was considerable agreement about race and immigration between the main political parties: that the level of immigration must be reduced and efforts needed to be made to address the racial tensions.
- Most politicians agreed that immigrants who had settled in the UK needed protection from prejudice and ill-treatment, although not all agreed that legal changes were the best means to achieve this.
- Working-class families were the most likely to live in mixed-race neighbourhoods and many were worried about the impact of immigration on jobs, education and housing. Some felt threatened by measures to give ethnic minorities equal legal rights.
- The use of inflammatory racial language was unacceptable for leaders of public life, and also many British people by this time.
- Immigrants to Britain faced serious social and economic discrimination in their daily lives.

It is hard to believe that the same man who made the opening statement in this article also used the offensive language of the so-called 'Rivers of Blood' speech. But in many ways Powell's contradictory and changing attitudes are a reflection of the complexity of British race relations in the 1960s. From a twenty-first-century viewpoint these views would certainly be regarded as racist. As historians, however, it is important to go beyond simple judgements and understand how and why people thought as they did at the time.

Weblinks



The BBC home page gives a contemporary account of the speech and reactions to it: www.tinyurl.com/9bfys. See also www.sterlingtimes.co.uk/powell_press.htm for additional information.

Further reading



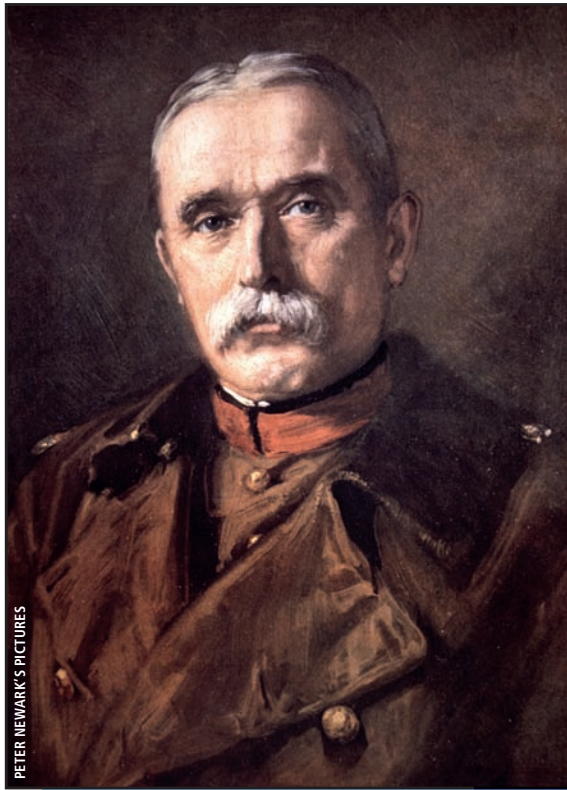
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Diana Laffin is assistant director for teaching and learning and senior curriculum manager for history at Farnborough Sixth Form College. She is the author of *Better Lessons in A-level History*, published in 2009 by Hodder Education.

piccaninnies An offensive term for black children, associated with the era of slavery.

racialist An older term for racist. The word 'racist' did not become common until the US civil rights movement spread to Britain.

The Western Front during The British Army's



PETER NEWARK'S PICTURES

Race for the sea (September–November 1914)

After the German attempt to take Paris quickly failed, the two sides focused upon securing control of Channel and North Sea ports.

Stalemate and (November 1914–August 1918)

British commander-in-chief: Field Marshal Sir John French

Deployment of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) (August–September 1914)

Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914 and rapidly deployed the BEF, battle-ready sections of the British Army, to France.

The 'miracle on the Marne' (September 1914)

Following a month of German military successes, the French and British armies succeeded in halting the German advance towards Paris during the first Battle of the Marne.

Battle of Loos (September–October 1915)

A costly British assault on the Germans. Failure to achieve a clear victory at Loos undermined support for the leadership of Sir John French. Loos was also notable as the first place the British used poison gas.

The British Expeditionary Force embarking on a troopship to France, August 1914



PETER NEWARK'S MILITARY PICTURES

Battle of the Somme (July–November 1916)

Haig ordered a huge strike against the German Army near the River Somme. The battle was preceded by a week-long bombardment. The depth and strength of the German trenches meant that the bombardment was ineffective. While there was no decisive British victory, ultimately the BEF gained control of the area. The battle was the largest in British military history and the first day alone cost the British and its allies 57,000 casualties.

1915

1916

the First World War

Barbara Warnock

perspective

trench warfare

The two sides formed a line of trenches across northwestern Belgium and northeastern France. Stalemate developed as the front line remained fairly static.

Hundred Days Offensive

(August–November 1918)



PETER NEWARK'S MILITARY PICTURES

British commander-in-chief: Field Marshal Douglas Haig

1917

1918

Third Ypres (Passchendaele) (July–November 1917)

The British aimed to remove the Germans from the position they held overlooking the Belgian town of Ypres. Poor weather reduced the battlefield to a muddy swamp. Britain and its allies eventually succeeded in capturing Passchendaele, at the cost of 200,000 men.

Spring Offensive (March–July 1918)

Germany launched a final attempt to win on the Western Front with a series of attacks. However, German forces and resources were exhausted.

Battle of Amiens (August 1918)

The British forces, whose tactics and weaponry were by this stage highly effective, played a decisive role. By 2 October the German defences on the Hindenburg Line had been breached.



The British front in Flanders, 1917

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Khrushchev, Kennedy and Cuba

Gregory Slysz documents the political situation and events leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962

AQA A2 Aspects of international relations, 1945–2004

Edexcel A2 A world divided: superpower relations, 1944–90

'Manifest Destiny' A political doctrine, set out in the nineteenth century, that stipulated the right of the USA to expand westwards towards the Pacific Ocean.

Argument



No victor, no loser

The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, which brought the world to the brink of a potential nuclear war, was both caused and resolved by the two sides in this Cold War conflict.

The Cuban Missile Crisis is one of the defining episodes of the Cold War. Unsurprisingly, opinion about its causes, its unfolding and its aftermath has been divided, consistent with general interpretative approaches to the Cold War itself. Orthodox historians, such as Arthur Schlesinger, blame the recklessness of the Soviet Union for threatening the peace of the entire world. Revisionists, conversely, such as Ronald Steel and Barton J. Bernstein, cite a combination of US economic and domestic issues that frightened the Soviets into action in Cuba. Post-revisionist historians, however, like John Lewis Gaddis,

reject the partisanship of both views, and point to many different motives and causes, as well as to mutual blunders.

Context: the 'Monroe Doctrine'

As with most episodes of the Cold War period, the Cuban Missile Crisis had deep roots and it is important to view it in proper context. When in 1823 the US president, James Monroe, declared that the USA would no longer tolerate European colonial interference in the Americas, he set in motion a policy that would eventually form the basis of US strategy in the region. Growing naval and economic power enabled the USA to establish huge influence in the region. In 1904 President Theodore Roosevelt, in the spirit of 'Manifest Destiny', added to Monroe's declaration with his so-called corollary (supplement). This committed the USA to intervene as a 'police power' in any South American country in the event of 'chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilised society'.

Concern over lapses in civilisation was certainly not the reason why the USA was so 'protective' of its neighbours. On the eve of the First World War it had amassed huge economic interests across the region, from fruit to petroleum, sugar to agricultural land

— its dominance symbolised by the opening of the Panama Canal in August 1914.

US policy in Cuba

US interests in Cuba must be seen in the context of the Monroe Doctrine. The USA's defeat of Spain in the American–Spanish War of 1898 forced Spain to give up sovereignty over Cuba. Although Cuba was formally granted independence, it came under the USA's neo-colonial control in all but name — the USA having already annexed other former Spanish possessions of Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam. The myth of US pre-Second World War isolationism is thus put into perspective.

Over the next half a century or so, US–Cuban relations strengthened, as did US economic interests in Cuba, which by 1958 amounted to 90% of all foreign direct investment there, worth billions of dollars. The USA continued to interfere in Cuban affairs when it deemed it necessary to protect its interests, turning a blind eye to human rights abuses and inordinate levels of corruption. Cuba's uneven economic development, which favoured the top levels of society, provoked much unrest, particularly during the dissolute regime of Fulgencio Batista. In 1958 he was overthrown by a group of populist revolutionaries led by the charismatic young lawyer, Fidel Castro.

The Russian/Soviet game

Russia's links with Spanish colonies were sporadic, the remoteness of the area and its distance from Russia making closer relations extremely difficult. The Russian Revolution of 1917 altered matters little, Russian/Soviet interests being restricted to the

Questions

- Why is it important to view the Cuban Missile Crisis in a broad context?
- Why can it be argued that long-term US foreign policy drove Castro into the hands of the enemy?
- Can it be argued that Khrushchev provoked the Cuban Missile Crisis and Kennedy ended it?
- Why did each side claim victory?
- Why is there such diverse historical opinion as to the causes of the crisis?
- What did Zbigniew Brzezinski mean by claiming that the outcome of the crisis was a 'tactical victory for the USA and a strategic victory for the Soviet Union'?

activities of the Comintern. The Soviet Union was too preoccupied with its own security to expand its geopolitical interests much beyond its immediate borders.

With the Soviet Union's build-up of huge military forces during the Cold War that could project its power globally, however, matters were to change. The developing world from Asia to Africa was a particular target as former colonial Western powers were departing, leaving political vacuums in their wake. National and ideological interests were never far beneath the surface of the Soviet Union's propaganda that proclaimed liberation from capitalist oppression as its motive. The brutality of 'liberation', however, as it had been in Eastern Europe after the Second World War, was all too common. Cold War superpower competition provided ample opportunity for conflict where political stability was at a premium.

• **Fulgencio Batista** During his corrupt regime of 1952–59, he was keener to attract lucrative US contracts than engage in a comprehensive programme of reform.

• **Comintern** Also known as Communist International, formed in Moscow in 1919 to coordinate revolutionary activity around the world. It was dissolved in 1943. By 1930, 13 states in Latin America had Communist parties within the Comintern structure.

Members of the Cuban militia celebrating after defeating the CIA-backed invasion by anti-Castro exiles at the Bay of Pigs, April 1961



TOP PHOTO