

GCE 'O' Level Elective History
Collated Set of Essays

1.1 – Treaty of Versailles

1 Explain why the Germans hated the Treaty of Versailles. [8]

One reason why the Germans hated the Treaty of Versailles due to the economic impact it had on Germany. The Saar coalfields which was a rich and important industrial area that belonged to Germany was given to France. This caused the German economy to further exacerbate. Coal was a resource to generate power which led Germany to industrialisation due to its products made from coal being exported in order to gain revenue. This will hamper the German's post-war reconstruction, resulting in the source of income to be meagre. Thus, it caused an adverse effect on the German economy, implying that Germany would not have sufficient money to compensate for the allied powers. The Germans felt that their **economy would worsen due to the loss of an important and resourceful piece of land**, therefore they hated the treaty.

Another reason why the Germans hated the Treaty of Versailles was due to the social impact it had on Germany. The treaty imposed reparations but when Germany was unable to pay them to France, the French and Belgian troops invaded the Ruhr which was a rich and industrialised area. The Ruhr workers went on strike so the Weimar government printed more money which made the German currency worthless. The middle and working classes were greatly affected since their wages fell hence their savings were wiped out. They became poor and this caused an adverse effect on the standard of living for the Germans. The standard of living dropped which resulted in them **lacking some of the basic necessities for survival**. Thus the Germans hated the Treaty of Versailles due to the social impact it had on Germany.

2 Explain why the Germans felt that the Treaty of Versailles was unfair. [8]

One reason why the Germans felt that the Treaty of Versailles was unfair was due to the economic impact it had on Germany. They had to pay an enormous amount of reparations. The treaty gave the allies the right to claim reparations for the damage caused as Germany was forced to admit that she was guilty for World War 1. Germany was forced to pay reparations totaling around 6600 million pounds, tipping Germany into chaos because the German economy was in tatters and people had very little food, with many living in poverty. The Germans felt that the reparations that was demanded was designed to destroy their economy **since it was harsh and unrealistic, requiring Germany more than 40 years to repay**. Hence, the Germans felt that the treaty was unfair. (**Add on!**)

2.2 – Impact of Stalin’s Rule

1 ‘Stalin’s persecution of his political enemies was the most important factor that enabled him to secure his power and position.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [12]

Stalin’s persecution of his political enemies was an important factor which enabled him to secure his power and position. In the 1930s, the high-ranking officers, intellectuals who were of the Red Army, alongside with Stalin’s political enemies, were persecuted. Bukharin, Kamenev and Zinoviev were forced to confess to their accused crimes of planning to overthrow the government during the show trials. This got them executed. With the loss of these political enemies who competed with Stalin in order to be the leader of the Communist Party, **they could not oppose him in the future. Stalin could no longer worry about the presence of these threats** which would affect his position as the leader of the USSR, hence he could make decisions freely without opposition from his enemies.

However, another factor was due to the fact that Stalin used propaganda to secure his power and position. This involved the use of posters, broadcasts and speeches which portrayed Stalin as a great and powerful leader. Some posters had him portrayed as a fatherly figure, a person who showed great love for children and some portrayed him as a God-like figure who was uncontested and assumed much power. These reflected Stalin’s positive traits and it showed that he would be **well-loved by the Soviet people and he could gain their support.**

3.1 – Rise of Hitler

1 ‘Economic factors were the main reason Hitler rose to power in 1933.’ How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [12]

I agree as Hitler rose to power in 1933 due to economic factors. Such unfavourable economic conditions included the effects of the Great Depression. Germany had depended on the United States of America for loans and investments. As a result, Germany was affected in particular as it began in the USA. This triggered a crisis for German companies and it forced them to retrench workers. This is due to the fact that the German companies were unable to pay their workers as Germany had lost a potential loaner. The unemployment rate skyrocketed from 1 million in 1928 to 5 million in 1932. Unfortunately, the Weimar government was unable to take decisive action. **The massive unemployment rate in Germany drove many to seek alternative leaders and Hitler’s propaganda, which portrayed hope and a greater Germany, appealed to them. He was seen as one who could overcome the hardships faced by the Germans.** This exposed the incapability of the Weimar government and in turn, led to the rise of Hitler.

I disagree as Hitler rose to power in 1933 due to his personal capabilities. These included his charisma and oratory skills. He was a powerful speaker who was able to appeal to the emotions of the audience. His rallies were conscientiously planned and they attracted crowds. With his fiery delivery, Hitler appeared sincere in his passion to set Germany right. He also identified with the people and painted his enemies as scapegoats. His enemies included the Weimar government, the Communists and the Jews. He put these people in bad light. **Hitler's speeches increased his image as a charismatic leader who was deemed as an ideal leader who could solve the political, economic and social problems which Germany was facing.** As a result, he managed to garner support from the Germans and rose to power in 1933.

3.2 – Impact of Hitler's Rule

1 Which factor was more important in helping the Nazis consolidate their rule – the use of fear or the use of propaganda? Explain your answer. **[12]**

Nazis used fear to consolidate their rule. The rise of the SS, especially the Gestapo, began a new wave of terror as they were responsible to no one and had power to detain persons without trial. Through the use of torture, murder, arrests and dirty tactics, **any opposition to Hitler and the Nazis was suppressed.** People could be taken into custody just based on the suspicion that they might commit a crime, with many Germans being arrested and put into concentration camps without a trial. **No one dared to think about questioning Nazi rule for fear of being arrested.** The persecution of the Jews and minority groups and the prevalence of concentration camps helped to reinforce this element of fear. Many of those who had been sent to the concentration camps did not leave it alive and this helped to suppress any potential opposition against the Nazi Party. The atmosphere of fear created by the Gestapo meant that **there could not be any strong bottom-up opposition of Nazi Rule as people distrusted each other.**

Nazis used propaganda to help consolidate their rule. Goebbels used every form of media to communicate the idea that Hitler was Germany's saviour and also spread anti-Semitic and anti-Communist feelings. **With this demonization of the Jews and Communists, it gave the Germans a target to take their anger out against. The Nazi Party became the means to seeing the vengeance against these enemies fulfilled.** Propaganda was also used to appeal to deep-seated German desires for national unity and order while the Nuremberg rallies showcased Germany's might. **These gave Germans a strong sense of belonging and an increase in nationalistic sentiments, with the Nazi Party seen as the party best able to help Germany regain their former glory.**

2 'Hitler brought more harm than good onto the German people.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [12]

Hitler brought harm to the German people because he did not allow them to have freedom. When he became Fuehrer in 1934, he censored all foreign materials such as radios and music and all radios in Germany had coverage of only German channels. Book burning was common in Germany as many Germans were forced to burn their books which were not considered German in public areas in order to prevent the spread of communist beliefs such as communism. The Germans had a **lack of freedom** as they were unable to read or listen to books and music which were considered 'un-German'. The Germans were as such indoctrinated with Hitler's beliefs like Nazi propaganda.

Hitler brought harm as he instilled fear in the German people. With the rise of the secret police which comprised the SS and Gestapo, it resulted in them having unlimited powers of arrest. Those who had the slightest sense of hatred or even those who did not bother to salute Hitler with the 'Sieg Heil' were sent to concentration camps. **The Germans became extremely fearful of Hitler as his actions were tyrannical.**

Hitler did bring a good impact on the German people as he reduced unemployment in Germany. As unemployment figures went up to about 6 million in 1934, Hitler knew that he had to resolve the unemployment situation in Germany quickly. Together with Schacht, Hitler came up with projects to build infrastructure and houses as well as autobahns. This provided jobs for the Germans which resulted in the number of unemployed to fall to about 1 million in 1938. **Hitler provided many jobs for the Germans and at the same time, it provided infrastructure for Germany.** With these numerous job opportunities, it showed that Hitler's rule did bring about some good onto the German people.

5.1 – Defeat of Germany in WWII

1 'Germany was responsible for its defeat in WWII.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [12]

Yes, Germany was responsible for its defeat. As the German military was poorly structured, there was often confusion as conflicting commands were given. Hitler made all the decisions and refused to listen to trained and experienced military generals, leading him to make many wrong military decisions. This **overstretched Germany's forces in the Soviet Union and it enabled the Soviet Union to defeat the Germans.** As Hitler had opened up the second front by launching Operation Barbarossa (attacking Soviet Union) in December 1941, it overstretched the German army. The **German army did not have the resources**

to fight both fronts simultaneously so the Allies were able to push Germany back against the warfront.

No, Germany was not responsible as the USA responsible for Germany's defeat. When the USA became directly involved, it contributed a vast amount of manpower and resources. The USA was the world's largest industrial power at that time and it converted its industries to produce military equipment quickly. The Axis powers could not match with the USA in terms of its efficiency in producing military supplies. **Allied manpower was strengthened significantly. Hence, the Allies emerged as a formidable fighting force capable of taking the war to Germany.** The USA also collaborated with other Allied powers to work out effective military strategies to defeat Germany. Such an example was during the Battle of the Atlantic. The Allied forces destroyed many German warships, hence the Allies were able to gain full control over the sea. They also destroyed the Luftwaffe (German airforce). Hence, **Germany could only attack the Allies on land and their efforts in trying to secure a victory against the Allies was greatly hindered.**

6.1 – Outbreak of WWII in Asia-Pacific

1 Explain why the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour in 1941. [8]

The worsening relations between the USA and Japan played a significant part in prompting Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour on 7th December 1941. Initially, the USA was very angry by the fact that Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. When Japan started building up its navy, the USA perceived it as a threat to Japanese interest in the Pacific. The USA imposed a trade embargo on Japan in 1937, banning the exports of natural resources such as steel, scrap iron and fuel. This implies that Japan would have limited resources in order to sustain itself as it is unable to use an adequate amount of resources to produce weapons. As such, Japan felt very angry at Roosevelt's implementation of the embargo as it was a disturbance to Japan's personal interest and survival. Roosevelt's main intention of implementing the embargo was to coerce Japan into surrendering. Japan could not give up due to their samurai code and if they surrendered, it would be dishonour and disloyalty to their samurai code. As Pearl Harbour was in far proximity to mainland USA, Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour was to force a peace settlement on the USA.

Japan's aggressive expansionist policy was also a reason for the attack on Pearl Harbour. The Japanese army felt that Japan had to invade and control other countries in order to expand its economic empire and improve its economy by acquiring more territories and raw materials. Japan wanted to further expand into Southeast Asia and it eventually colonised countries such as Singapore. Southeast Asia was left unprotected as there were growing tensions in Europe. The Allied powers were occupied with these tensions which

were caused by Hitler's expansionist policy. Roosevelt moved the US Pacific Fleet from California to Pearl Harbour in 1939. However, this action was a threat to Japan, who wanted to expand into the Pacific. Japan felt that by bombing Pearl Harbour, it would weaken the US forces in SEA and obtain natural resources more efficiently. As part of the Japanese expansionist policy, Japan therefore instigated an attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941.

2 Explain why the Japanese attacked Manchuria in 1931. [8]

Japan attacked Manchuria due to the adverse effect the Great Depression had on Japan. The Depression hit Japan severely and Japan plunged into an economic crisis. The exports dropped, negatively affecting its industrialisation programme. The Japanese government had a difficult time overcoming these economic problems. In order to acquire raw materials to ensure a ready market, the Japanese military convinced the government into adopting an aggressive foreign policy. The Japanese wanted to expand their control over China as they already had several economic interests over Manchuria. Therefore, the problems posed by the Great Depression prompted Japan to attack Manchuria.

3 Explain how the weakness of the League of Nations contributed to Japanese aggression in Manchuria and China. [8]

In 1931, Japan used the pretext of an explosion near Mukden to invade Manchuria. The Japanese army then set up a satellite state called Manchukuo in Manchuria, under Japanese military control. China refused to recognise this new puppet state and appealed to the League for help. The LON set up the Lytton Commission to investigate and concluded that Japan was the aggressor. The LON demanded Japanese withdrawal. Japan refused and withdrew its membership from the LON. **By failing to get Japan to withdraw its troops from Manchuria and its subsequent non-action against Japan, the LON had failed to stop Japanese occupation of Manchuria and uphold China's sovereignty. The League's failure meant that Japanese aggression went unpunished**, leading to Japan's control of Manchuria and its resources.

Following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident which involved clashes between Japanese and Chinese troops, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China, starting the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937. China appealed to the LON for help. However, the Western powers were reluctant to intervene as they were preoccupied with the growing tensions in Europe caused by Hitler's aggressive expansionist policy. **The Western powers only started offering aid after hearing about the Nanking Massacre which attracted international attention. The delayed response from the LON allowed the Japanese troops to**

advance into China unchecked and took over more territories there. The LON failed to act as an effective deterrent, making it easier for Japan to expand its sphere of influence.

4 To what extent was the outbreak of war in the Asia-Pacific due to the weakness of the League of Nations? Explain your answer. [12]

The weakness of the LON was a factor which resulted in the outbreak of war in the Asia-Pacific. When Japan launched a full-scale invasion of Manchuria in September 1931, the Japanese set up a satellite state called Manchukuo. However, China refused to recognise this new puppet state and sought help from the LON. The LON set up the Lytton Commission to investigate. The Lytton Report concluded that Japan was the aggressor and the League demanded Japanese withdrawal. The Japanese refused and withdrew its membership from the League. The lack of effective deterrence from the League in failing to stop Japanese occupation in Manchuria implied that the League was unable to enforce its decision of Japan, resulting in Japan's actions to be unpunished. When Japan invaded Manchuria, it further pressurised the Japanese army to push for more expansion in Asia, making war inevitable. As such, the LON's failure paved the way for Japan to further pursue its ambitious foreign expansionist policy, resulting in the outbreak of WWII.

The crises in Japan was a factor which resulted in the outbreak of war in the Asia-Pacific. Japan's population rose by about 40% from 1900 to 1930. However, Japan was running out of raw materials and still using primitive and inefficient methods of farming, resulting in the agricultural field to be ineffective in producing sufficient crops for food. Moreover, the standard of living fell when Japan was adversely affected by the impact of the Great Depression, causing its exports to decrease. The Japanese army in Japan wanted to pursue an expansionist policy to conquer other territories in Asia and acquire more natural resources to improve the standard of living in Japan as a solution to its economic woes. The crises led to Japan's eventual invasion of Manchuria and Southeast Asia and then resulting in the war in the Asia-Pacific.

The worsening relations between Japan and the USA was a factor which resulted in the outbreak of war in the Asia-Pacific. When Japan conquered Manchuria, it led to the USA being very angry. As such, Roosevelt imposed a trade embargo on Japan, banning the exports of steel, scrap iron and fuel. Roosevelt's intention of imposing the embargo was to undermine Japan's war effort and jeopardise Japan's chances of success, and by doing so, he wanted to coerce Japan into surrendering by preventing further Japanese expansion. However, Japan could not give up due to its samurai code and if Japan surrendered, it would mean dishonour to their samurai code. Moreover, given the

fact that Pearl Harbour is far away from mainland USA, Japan's knockout attack on Pearl Harbour was to force a peace settlement on USA.

5 Japan was responsible for the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [12]

Yes, Japan was responsible as it had an aggressive expansionist policy to build an empire in the Asia-Pacific. Japanese military leaders wanted to emulate the example of Western countries and have an empire to boost the prestige of Japan. It invaded Korea and Manchuria to gain raw materials and land for resettling Japanese farmers so they could grow more food. These achievements helped Japan gain prestige and recognition as a great power. Japan gained confidence to invade the rest of China in 1937 which alarmed the Western Powers who had commercial interests in China. Japan desired to occupy Western colonies in Southeast Asia which were unprotected to secure control of raw materials. When Japan invaded Southeast Asia in 1941, it led to direct conflict and war with the Western Powers.

Yes, Japan was responsible as it wanted to free Asians from western colonial control. Many Japanese leaders felt that it was Japan's responsibility to liberate Asia from colonial rule. They came up with the propaganda of a 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' to get the support of Asians who were discontented with Western rule. This meant an Asia free of Western colonialism. In reality, Japan merely wanted to replace Western colonial rule with its own colonial rule so it could exploit the raw materials of Southeast Asia. Japan's ambitions to create an 'Asia for Asians' threatened to rival and undermine the Western Powers which controlled the region. To achieve this objective, it had to use force to drive the Western powers from Asia. This happened when Japan invaded Southeast Asia in 1941.

No, the US was responsible as it placed an embargo on the sale of scrap iron, fuel and oil to Japan in 1941. Japan lacked and needed such raw materials to produce armament and to power its war machines. It could not continue its expansion of its territories without these valuable raw materials. However, it did not want to agree to Western demands to withdraw troops from all its previous conquests as this would imply national humiliation. Japan's military leaders thus opted for war against the Western powers to conquer Southeast Asia to obtain raw materials which it needed. They decided to bomb Pearl Harbour to prevent US warships from interfering in the Japanese invasion of Southeast Asia.

7.1 – Defeat of Japan in WWII

1 Explain how the USA caused the defeat of Japan in the Asia-Pacific War. [8]

The US defeated Japan as it had vast industrial and manpower resources. The USA was the world's largest industrial power which had many women workers and factories which could be quickly converted to produce armaments. It could produce large amounts of armaments such as tanks and warplanes which boosted the might of the US military. The US had vast military manpower resources. Millions of US troops were sent to the Pacific to **fight Japan on land, at sea and in the air, which greatly outnumbered the Japanese forces. This made it easier for the US to successfully counterattack the Japanese and capture Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945**, which could be used to bomb and invade Japan directly.

The US defeated Japan with the use of the atomic bomb. As Allied forces advanced nearer Japan with the invasion of Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945, the Japanese military sent kamikazes to sink Allied warships. However, these were not enough to prevent the Allied forces from capturing these islands which made Japan vulnerable to Allied bombing and invasion. Shocked by Japan's resistance in the defence of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, Truman feared that an invasion of Japan would result in the loss of millions of Allied soldiers. He decided to use the newly tested atomic bomb on Japan to terrorise the Japanese government into surrendering without a fight. He ordered the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima in August 1945 which killed many Japanese civilians. The Japanese militarists refused to surrender. He ordered another atomic bomb to be dropped on Nagasaki to force Japan to surrender to the USA immediately. **In desperation, Emperor Hirohito overruled the militarist and surrendered unconditionally to avoid further loss of civilian lives.**

8.1 – Reasons for the Cold War in Europe

1 Explain how the postwar actions of the USSR caused the Cold War in Europe. [8]

The USSR caused the Cold War by establishing Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe after the war. Soviet troops occupied Eastern Europe and the USSR set up communist governments in each of them using salami tactics. The Eastern European countries became satellites of the USSR. The USA and Britain were convinced that Stalin was trying to spread communism in Europe. They criticised the USSR for violating the Yalta Conference by denying the citizens of Eastern Europe and the right to determine which forms of government they wanted, while the USSR defended its actions as self-defense against Western invasion. **This war of words resulted in mutual suspicions, hostility and worsening of relations between the two sides.**

The USSR caused the Cold War by establishing Cominform and COMECON. Stalin refused to allow the Eastern European countries to receive US aid under the Marshall Plan as he saw it as a US strategy to spread democracy to Eastern Europe. He set up COMECON to encourage trade and coordinate the economic policies amongst communist countries. **As a result, ideological division between the two sides was further entrenched as Western countries were more firmly tied to the USA while Eastern European countries were more closely tied to the USSR. This increased the hostility and tensions between the two sides, worsening relations.**

2 Explain why the Berlin Blockade in 1948 was a failure for the USSR. [8]

Describe the Berlin Blockade.

Roads, railways and waterways connecting East and West Berlin were cut off. Food supplies were cut off.

What was Stalin's purpose in imposing the Blockade?

At Yalta, it was made clear that the Western Powers controlled 2/3 of Germany and Stalin occupied the rest, splitting Germany into East and West Germany. He felt resentful as he wanted a Communist influence over Germany in the long run. Stalin wanted to starve the West Germans.

How did the West counter the Blockade?

The Western Powers came up with the Berlin Airlift. They airlifted supplies to the West Germans to sustain their hunger and health, thus keeping them warm for 11 months and throughout the winter.

So why did it fail?

The Soviets did not fire any Western planes as this would give the impression that they were engaged in an act of war. Stalin did not get what he wanted which was to get the Western Powers out of West Germany. The Western Powers were still in control of West Germany and West Berlin. This humiliated the USSR and boosted the credibility of the USA.

3 Explain why the USA and USSR became enemies after the end of WWII. [8]

Points to elaborate: ideological differences, secrecy of American nuclear policy

What were the differences in ideologies between the USA and USSR?

The USA embraced democracy whereas the USSR embraced communism. Democracy involves the rights of an individual. Communism was about utopia or creating the perfect world where everyone shares their resources.

So how did this lead to tensions between the two superpowers?

Both superpowers aimed to spread their ideologies around the world to influence as many governments as possible. It was inevitable that they would threaten each other's survival during the process because they wanted to destabilise each other's systems.

Describe the secrecy of the American nuclear policy.

America had intentionally chosen not to reveal the development of the atomic bomb to the USSR. Truman only revealed to Stalin about them in 1945. However, due to leakage, Stalin already knew about the Manhattan Project before Truman told him.

As part of the Manhattan project, the 2 bombs – Fat Man and Little Boy were developed. They were subsequently dropped onto Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively, resulting in Japan's defeat in WWII. This gave the USA political leverage over the USSR in post-war negotiations.

The USA chose not to reveal its nuclear developments to the USSR. So how did this lead to tensions between the two superpowers?

The USSR felt suspicious of the USA's aims and felt it was a threat. It thus coerced the USSR to further develop its abilities such as in terms of the arms race to catch up with the Americans.

4 'The main reason for the outbreak of the Cold War was due to the actions of the USA.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [12]

Question to ask: why did the Cold War break out? Which parties were involved?

It broke out due to a variety of reasons and it was between the USA and the USSR.

Counter-responses?

Truman Doctrine and Cominform, Marshall Plan and COMECON, Berlin Blockade and Berlin Airlift, NATO and Warsaw Pact

5 'The Truman Doctrine started the Cold War.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [12]

The Truman Doctrine did not start the Cold War. Instead, it was the difference in Soviet Union and the USA's ideologies that started it. The Soviet Union embraced communism, a system that conflicted with the USA's democratic and capitalist ideology. The USA's vision was to create and sustain social, economic and cultural conditions that ensure political self-determination but the Soviet Union's vision was to incite world revolution and destroy capitalism via a worldwide class struggle. Both countries tried to spread their ideologies to other countries in Europe and other parts of the world. **Russia's effort to spread communism would be greatly hindered by the involvement of capitalist USA. Both ideologies were a threat to each other's existence. Tensions built up between both countries as they wanted to eradicate the other ideology.**

The Truman Doctrine started the Cold War. Introduced in 1947, the doctrine was a response to the unstable conditions in Turkey and Greece. Truman believed that the weak states like Greece were more likely to succumb to communist influence and this might lead to more countries being communist. Aid was offered to countries which were threatened by communists to resist a possible communist takeover and uphold democracy. This signalled the start of the US's policy of containment. It showed the clear division between the two sides (the USA and the Soviet Union) and the **conflicting intentions of both superpowers**. The Soviet Union perceived this as **a step to undermine Soviet influence in Europe**. This **worsened the relations between the two countries, increasing hostility**, leading to the start of the Cold War.

9.1 – The Korean War

Roles of Powers in the Korean War

USA – Contain the spread of communism in East Asia

UN – Put an end to the North Korean invasion of South Korea

USSR – Spread communism in East Asia

China – Spread communism in East Asia (help North Korea as it had helped them during their Civil War), defend its borders against American invasion

1 Explain why the Chinese got involved in the Korean War in 1950. [8]

Points: need to ensure national security, desire to gain Soviet support to establish its credibility

China got involved because of the need to ensure its national security which had been threatened in 1950. As the UN troops secured key victories in pushing back North Korean troops, MacArthur gained confidence and decided to rollback communism by advancing beyond the 38th parallel in an attempt to capture North Korea. The Chinese government

was concerned that US presence in Korea would leave China vulnerable to possible US aggression given the proximity of Korea to China. The American military advance was perceived upon by China as a security threat and when MacArthur defied orders and continued to push towards the Yalu River, China responded by sending in troops and got involved in the Korean War.

2 'The USA was responsible for the outbreak of the Korean War than the USSR.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [12]

Yes, the USA was more responsible than the USSR for the outbreak of the Korean War as the actions of the USA created a perception of disinterest in South Korea which influenced Stalin's decision to support Kim. By withdrawing their troops in mid-1949, the USA seemed to be indicating they were unlikely to get involved in South Korea if an invasion were to take place. Such a move convinced Stalin that the USA was not likely to get involved in the event of a conflict in Korea and that it was a good opportunity to establish a communist state in Korea while the US was disinterested and unlikely to intervene. Even though Stalin was reluctant to provide support for Kim's aggressive plan out of fear of American intervention, he changed his mind and eventually agreed to provide military support as long as he remained indirectly involved. This was **crucial in enabling the invasion of South Korea to take place and thus, the USA was more responsible as it was their actions which assured Stalin of a successful attack and gave Kim the necessary support he needed.**

No, the USSR was more responsible than the USA for the outbreak of the Korean War as it was the USSR's desire to spread communism that motivated Stalin to agree to give Kim military support. By 1950, the USSR had gained confidence in its own military capacity with its first detonation of the atomic bomb in 1949. It also gained an important ally when Mao secured a communist victory in China and Stalin subsequently signed the Sino-Soviet Treaty which would assure that he could rely on China to provide aid if needed and the USSR would remain indirectly involved. These events not only boosted Stalin's confidence of Soviet's ability to deal with American confrontation but also resurged his hopes of spreading communism worldwide. In particular, he became increasingly convinced that it was crucial to establish a communist state in Korea to counter American influence in Japan so as to establish a communist bloc in East Asia. **Encouraged by the attainment of the atomic parity and the alliance with Mao, Stalin would have granted Kim permission to carry out the invasion and from how dependent Kim was on Stalin for military support,** it is clear that the USSR was more responsible than the USA for the outbreak of the Korean War.

3 Explain why the USSR decided to support North Korea in its invasion of South Korea in June 1950. [8]

The USSR supported North Korea's invasion of South Korea as North Korea's plan to control South Korea into its master plan to spread communism in East Asia and eventually to the rest of Asia. The Soviet Union had control and established communism in Eastern Europe after WWII while the USA had influence in Western Europe. However, Stalin had been concerned with the alliance of USA with Japan after WWII. Although China had fallen to communism in 1949, Stalin felt there was still a need to counter American influence in the region by having control of the Korean Peninsula which could tip the balance of power between the two super powers in East Asia. By supporting the invasion, the Soviet Union hoped to have a bigger communist bloc and make a stronger communist presence in the region.

The USSR was encouraged by its ally, China, which had fallen to communism in 1949. Then, the USSR and the USA were at atomic parity. However, Stalin was not so keen to be involved directly in the invasion for fear that it would lead to a direct conflict with the USA. The alliance with China gave him the opportunity not to be directly involved. In February 1950, China, North Korea and the USSR agreed to a military cooperation to support North Korea's plan in a Sino-Soviet Alliance. The Treaty provided for them to come to each other's aid if either country was attacked. The Alliance meant that China could assist North Korea if the invasion encountered problems. This would protect the USSR from a direct involvement in the invasion. With China behind North Korea in the invasion, the USSR was thus willing to support North Korea.

10.1 – Cuban Missile Crisis

1 Explain the reasons for the breakdown of the USA-Cuba relations. [8]

One of the reasons is because the USA seemed to have its economic interests in Cuba as priority as compared to the welfare of the Cubans. When Batista rule became increasingly corrupt, he exploited Cuba's commercial interests by establishing relations with American mafias who controlled illegal businesses in Cuba. Batista also had secret police to oppress the Cubans. However, the USA did not intervene even though in the past, the USA was known to intervene in Cuban politics. The USA was reluctant to stop supporting Batista as they were afraid that getting rid of Batista may give rise to a communist regime in Cuba. **The selfishness of the USA led to a breakdown in USA-Cuba relations as the people of Cuba could no longer trust the USA as they did not want to solve the problem for the Cubans.**

Another reason why there was a breakdown of the USA-Cuba relations is because of Castro's new policies. When Batista was overthrown and Castro became the leader of Cuba, he introduced new economic policies that seemed to threaten USA's relationship with Cuba. Castro initiated that Guevara visit several other countries to establish trade connections so that Cuba would tap into other markets and reduce its dependence on the USA's economy for the growth of its sugar industry. Through this, the Soviet Union and Cuba established a trade connection and this was a **threat for the USA. The USA perceived it as a sign that Cuba was aligning itself with the communist bloc. This sparked off tensions between Cuba and the USA.**

2 Explain why the Cuban Missile Crisis broke out. [8]

The Cuban Missile Crisis broke out due to Castro's personal friendship with Khrushchev. This friendship highlighted the tensions between the superpowers as Cuba was seen associating with USA's cold war enemy. USA saw this friendship as a sign that Cuba was becoming ideologically distant with Castro in power and decided to respond through aggressive economic sanctions. The USA carried out military operations like the Bay of Pigs invasion and Operation Mongoose to overthrow Castro's government and assassinate him. Cuba felt that an invasion by the US was inevitable and turned to the USSR to seek a formal alliance as an answer to its security concerns. **The USA's worst fears were realised as now the USSR had a stronghold in Cuba through which the USA can be attacked leading to the immediate tension that resulted in the CMC.**

The CMC broke out due to USA's response to USSR's deployment of missiles in Cuba. Although the USSR claimed the missiles were deployed as a defensive measure, Kennedy felt they were indeed offensive of the stealthy method in which they were placed in Cuba by the Soviets. Facing Florida, Kennedy believed that these missiles had the capability to strike the heart of the USA. As a result, Kennedy embarked on his strategy of brinkmanship where a naval blockade would be formed around Cuba and the American forces would be mobilised in Cuba to force Cuba to remove the missiles facing Florida. Khrushchev did not intend to use the missiles to attack the USA but rather to counter the presence of American missiles in Turkey. This led to an **escalation of tension between the US and Cuba in which Cuba responded with mobilisation of its own forces as well as a public declaration of their readiness to die fighting**, being the immediate cause of the breakout of the CMC.

3 Explain why USA and Cuba's relationship worsened before 1962. [8]

The relationship between the USA and Cuba worsened because Castro had a friendship with Khrushchev. In 1960, Khrushchev visited Castro at his hotel in Harlem. Castro developed a personal friendship with him. Their meeting at Castro's hotel strengthened their relationship. Castro openly associated himself with the Soviet leader Khrushchev. During the cold war, as Khrushchev was the USA's enemy, it strained relations between Cuba and the USA.

The relationship between the USA and Cuba worsened because there were threats to American interests in Cuba. Cuba was a major producer of sugar which was a cash crop, signifying that Cuba was a region of great economic value. However, the Sugar Quota determined by the USA was detrimental to the Cuban economy. As such, Castro sought new markets to sell Cuban sugar in countries like the USSR. This implies that it threatened US economic investments in Cuban sugar plantations because the USA could no longer acquire Cuban sugar. Moreover, the USA perceived Cuba's trade relations with the Soviet Union as a sign that Cuba was aligning with the Communist bloc. Hence, the relationship between Cuba and the USA worsened due to Castro's action of seeking trade agreements with the USSR.

11.1 – The End of the Cold War

To tackle essays in this chapter, to explain the end of the Cold War, you have to usually determine that either (1) one side is clearly losing and cannot keep up with the other or (2) one side is already defeated.

1 'Gorbachev was responsible for the end of the Cold War.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [12]

Yes, Gorbachev was responsible. Gorbachev introduced domestic policies such as Glasnost and Perestroika. Glasnost means 'openness and transparency', allowing information of Western Europe to be disseminated to the Soviet Union. It allowed people to have freedom of speech, resulting in **greater opposition and resentment towards the communist government. The growing opposition in the Soviet Union led to the people in the Soviet satellite states to fight for independence.** Perestroika means 'restructuring'. Problems which existed in the Soviet Union included poor development and infrastructure and corruption. The government relaxed its control over the kinds of goods and services that may be produced and their quantities. Small business owners had to pay high taxes to purchase trucks and tractors. Agricultural infrastructure remained very inadequate. Many lost interest in wanting to start their business. Shortages of basic

necessities were common, **worsening the standard of living. Instead of recovering the then worsening Soviet economy, the reforms as part of Perestroika further exacerbated Soviet economy.** Indeed, Gorbachev was responsible as his policies had worsened the Soviets' and it had had a negative impact on the Soviet economy.

No, Gorbachev was not responsible as there were long-term factors which led to the end of the Cold War. An example is due to the failure of the Soviet command economy. The Soviet government made all the economic decisions and no private ownership was allowed. In contrast to the US free market economy, they allowed private ownership and gave individual producers the freedom to decide on what and how much to produce. In the Soviet Union, poor quality of information was available to the decision-makers, leading to a decline in the quality and quantity of consumer goods. Poor economic conditions led to unproductivity and corruption. As a result of the failure of the command economy, the Soviet Union **could no longer commit itself to supplying military equipment and oil at low prices to the Eastern European countries.** This led to those in the Eastern European countries to **express greater resentments against the Soviet government as they felt disapproved the communist way of life. As a result, overthrowing of communist governments and successful uprisings in Eastern Europe became prevalent.** This led to the downfall of the Soviet Union, and eventually the end of the Cold War.

2 Which factor was more important in leading to the end of the Cold War – Gorbachev's policies or USA's superiority? Explain your answer.

Gorbachev's policies were important in leading to the end of the Cold War. He introduced Glasnost which meant greater transparency, freedom of speech and expression. Censorship was relaxed and reconstructions of Soviet history were allowed. Information about how poorly the Soviet people were doing in comparison with people in the USA and Western European countries were made available. The positive picture of Soviet life that the government previously presented to the public quickly fell apart, with many citizens in the Soviet bloc believing that the government had lied to them. There was **greater opposition toward the Communist Party's leadership, with many citizens desiring independence from the communist regime. Glasnost had created a platform where criticism of communist rule in the Soviet Union could not be controlled.** This was further enabled by Gorbachev's 'New Thinking', where he claimed that each country within the Communist Bloc had the right to choose its political and economic system. This created the conditions for the members of the Communist Bloc to believe that it was acceptable to break away from the Soviet Union with no repercussions, **drastically reducing the Soviet Union's support base.** With the collapse of the Communist Bloc,

the Soviet Union thus became unable to support itself as a superpower, leading to the end of the Cold War.

USA's superiority was important in leading to the end of the Cold War. For example, the USA was able to maintain a position of economic and military superiority over the Soviet Union. It had survived and even prospered through two oil crises through the benefits of the Marshall Plan and its trade relations with Japan. This economic developments enabled the USA to continue developing militarily to the extent that it was able to fund research for the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) even though it was expensive. The Soviet Union was less able to survive the strain the arms race placed on its economy. Due to the weaknesses of the command economy, the Soviet Union was in a poorer position to pursue the arms race. **The USA's ability to continue the arms race forced the Soviet Union to draw on its already-stretched resources, draining it severely** to the point that it was unable to develop good-quality consumer goods for its people. The poor standard of living and low quality of life in the Soviet Union **drew great resentment amongst the people, who became more vocal in their resistance against the Communist Party's leadership.** USA's superior position economically and militarily meant that **the Soviet Union was fighting a losing battle**, and internal resistance soon grew strong enough to overwhelm Communist Party's leadership, leading to the collapse of the superpower.