Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Thursday 23 May 2024 – Morning

A Level History A

Y321/01 The Middle East 1908–2011: Ottomans to Arab Spring

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

You must have:
- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS
- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

INFORMATION
- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets **[ ]**.
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE
- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

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SECTION A

Read the **two** passages and answer Question 1.

1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages.

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the achievements of Nasser's social and economic policies. **[30]**

Passage A

The positive achievements of the Nasserist revolution were considerable. They included agrarian reform, the building of the High Dam, substantial progress in industrialisation, the expansion of education, health, and other social services, and the 'Egyptianization' of the country's economic and cultural life through the elimination of foreign domination. But these must be set against Nasser's overriding aim which was nothing less than the regeneration of Egypt's national life. Despite some terrible setbacks, especially at the end of his career, and the natural retribution suffered by excessive ambition, Nasser did much to restore a sense of national dignity and self-confidence to the Egyptians after centuries of humiliation.

Egypt made substantial progress in industrialisation during the 1950s and 1960s towards its long-term objective of becoming the 'Japan of Africa and the Middle East'. It was turning out a wide range of heavy and light manufactured goods.

Although Egypt's rural poverty had not been eliminated, it is doubtful whether collectivisation would have achieved better results and the administration of the land reform areas was highly successful.

He was successful in inspiring a remarkable degree of loyalty and devotion from the Egyptians which was invaluable in stimulating them to great exertion, as in the building of the High Dam or the management of the Suez Canal, for little reward.

His principal failure was only another aspect of his powerful domination of Egyptian life: his rule secured the consent but not the participation of his people.

P. Mansfield, Nasser and Nasserism, published in 1973.

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Passage B

While the faithful may point to his advocacy of Arab nationalism and his commitment to the welfare of the Egyptian masses, critics are not without an abundance of setbacks to dwell upon: the Yemeni fiasco, which was dubbed Nasser's Vietnam; his many regional quarrels, which consumed his resources and attention; his failure to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict; the performance of his armies in 1956 and 1967; the failure of his agrarian reform; and his inability to create a durable and viable base of power and legitimacy outside the sheer charisma.

Almost two decades of Nasserist rule did not eradicate the eternal problem of Egyptian poverty and scarcity, and one of his dreams, ambitious in the Egyptian context, of making meat a regular feature of the Egyptian diet, never materialised.

On a different track, his record is equally dismal. As an attempt at ideological change and transformation Nasserism was abortive and the new society that he claimed to be his goal has yet to be built. The feudalistic structure that he inherited may have been weakened, but the cultural bias in favour of class, privilege and status that has always been part of Egyptian culture is largely intact. A new generation of officers and technocrats came to power at the expense of landed feudal aristocracy, but the hierarchical vision of the world and the deference towards power and its symbols are still dominant in the Egyptian political landscape. He flirted with socialism, but in such a context it never really had much of a chance.

F. Ajami, On Nasser and His Legacy, published in 1974.

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SECTION B

Answer any **two** questions.

2* To what extent did the aims of the Great Powers in the Middle East change in the period from 1908 to 2011? **[25]**

3* To what extent did the reasons to find a solution to the Palestinian issue change in the period from 1908 to 2011? **[25]**

4* 'Christian communities were the most important cause of religious tensions in the Middle East in the period from 1908 to 2011.'

How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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