

**EUROPEAN HISTORY
SECTION II**

Part B

(Suggested planning and writing time—35 minutes)

Percent of Section II score—27 1/2

Directions: You are to answer ONE question from the three questions below. Make your selection carefully, choosing the question that you are best prepared to answer thoroughly in the time permitted. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your answer. Write your answer to the question on the lined pages of the Section II free-response booklet, making sure to indicate the question you are answering by writing the appropriate question number at the top of each page.

Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis.
- Addresses all parts of the question.
- Supports thesis with specific evidence.
- Is well organized.

2. Analyze the impact of the rise of militarism and the Second World War on the lives of European women. In your answer consider the period 1930 to 1950.
3. Considering the period 1953 to 1991, analyze the problems within the Soviet Union that contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet system.
4. Analyze the problems and opportunities associated with the rapid urbanization of western Europe in the nineteenth century.

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Question 2

Analyze the impact of the rise of militarism and the Second World War on the lives of European women. In your answer consider the period 1930 to 1950.

8–9 Points

- Thesis is explicit and fully responsive to the question.
- Thesis is supported with substantial evidence and well-developed examples.
- Major topics suggested by the prompt are all covered at some length (militarism, Second World War, full 1930-50 period).
- Essay is well balanced and demonstrates understanding of the diversity of experience of European women during the entire period. (This is most commonly expressed through distinctions between or among nationality, region, or military alliances.)
- Analyzes at least two types of women's roles and or impacts on women (e.g., military, domestic, agricultural, or professional).
- Understands militarism as a prelude to the Second World War but need not deal explicitly with the concept.
- May contain errors that do not detract from the argument.

6–7 Points

- Contains a thesis that is responsive to the question.
- Each major assertion is supported by at least one piece of relevant evidence.
- All major topics suggested by the prompt are covered at least briefly.
- Essay is balanced and contains some understanding of the experiences of European women either chronologically or geographically. (This is most commonly expressed through discussion of either one geographic region, military alliance, or country through the entire time period or two geographic regions, military alliances, or countries through a portion of the time period.)
- Contains some analysis of types of women's roles or impacts on women (military, domestic, agricultural, or professional).
- May deal with militarism in a limited fashion.
- May contain an error that detracts from the argument.

4–5 Points

- Thesis is relevant but may not address militarism (addresses question with generally accurate but limited specific information).
- Contains a limited discussion of at least one portion of the time period with limited understanding of the diversity of women's experiences. (This is most commonly expressed through reference to one geographic region, military alliance, or country. May largely discuss Europe in general or deal exclusively with the Second World War.)
- Contains at least one specific reference to a type of women's role or impact on women (military, domestic, agricultural, or professional). Analysis may be limited.
- Essay shows some imbalance; may focus only on militarism or the Second World War.
- May contain errors that detract from the argument.

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Question 2 (continued)

2–3 Points

- No explicit thesis or a thesis that merely repeats/paraphrases the prompt.
- Organization is unclear and ineffective; does not support analysis.
- Offers very limited specific evidence concerning the experiences of European women; may cite only one nongeneric example.
- Conflates militarism and World War II.
- May contain numerous errors that detract from the argument.

0–1 Point

- No discernable attempt at a thesis.
- No discernable organization.
- Addresses the question only in general terms not specifically relevant to the period.
- Only notes that women worked and/or suffered without providing specific evidence.
- May contain significant errors that detract from the argument.

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Question 2 Historical Background

The peace settlement at the end of the First World War was more of a truce, or cease-fire, than a genuine “peace agreement.” The children of those who had fought the “Great War” would fight the Second World War, following a decade of virulent militarism. By the 1930s, several of the major powers were committed to overturning the Peace of Paris and thus began to rapidly increase military production (in violation of the terms of several treaties in some cases). The Great Depression of the 1930s provided further incentive for some European nations to begin militarization in earnest as a way of creating employment opportunities.

Between 1930 and the outbreak of the Second World War, every European country, including democratic ones, had concerns about what the falling birth rates would do to the supply of soldiers, if war should break out. Women were also trained, long before the outbreak of the war, in civil defense units, as every government expected future wars to involve a far more extensive use of airpower than previous ones. In the first half of the 1940s, during the hostilities, most nations had committed their civilian populations to “total war.” Even in nations such as Italy and Germany, where women of the early 1930s had been encouraged to remain at home, providing their nations with more numerous progeny, women began to enter the workforce, but usually only to increase agricultural production, while men engaged in battle. Their presence in industrial workplaces was still discouraged, especially in Germany. Women also contributed directly to the war effort by serving in field hospitals as nurses and medics or by transporting goods and weapons to the troops. In the Soviet Union, some women even participated in combat, most notably in the Soviet Air Force.

Following the war, many women remained active in the workforces of European countries, as the total devastation of many regions virtually required their participation in Europe’s reconstruction. In France and Italy, women finally gained the franchise in 1945, in recognition of their contributions to civil society, and their political rights.

Specific Information Relevant to Question 2

Note: The list that follows is suggestive, not prescriptive, and is not intended to be exhaustive. It is organized largely by geography, because this is the way many students approached the question with respect to specific examples, but other organizational structures are possible and were used by some students.

Russia

Night witches (combat pilots) and snipers; women in combat, resistance
Active in farms and factories in 1930s
Stalin reduced women’s rights in Russia from revolutionary gains
Holocaust
Starvation and food shortages (Leningrad, Stalingrad)
Women depicted in posters and art as motivators
Women utilized in the workplace to strengthen the state

Eastern Europe

Women remain in factories after war
Holocaust
In Balkans, women revert to prewar status and rights

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Question 2 Historical Background (continued)

Germany

Lebensborn program; women as breeders

Women on a pedestal; glorification of motherhood

Loss of positions in professions

Nazis do not want women to work, but they go to work in factories anyway, especially late in the war

Women as motivators through propaganda, including posters

Militarism seen as German rearmament

Suffering in concentration camps, bombing, occupation

Italy

Mussolini and “Battle for Births,” but birth rate goes down

No factory work wanted for women

Women gain rights after WWII

France

Suffrage won in 1945; women vote

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, after WWII

Resistance fighters: rescued British pilots, hid Jews, engaged in sabotage, and served as spies and messengers

Women lose jobs in the Depression

Britain

Women lose jobs after WWI (Depression era)

Women in factories again to manufacture various war materials

Sending children out of London during the Blitz

Propaganda posters as motivators

Nurses in Battle of Britain help wounded

Take over traditional male jobs owing to mobilization/military service/deaths of men

Role in food rationing, using substitutes, doing without items such as gasoline, rubber, and nylons

Women in noncombat military roles

European equivalents of “Rosie the Riveter” as role models and propaganda devices (note that Rosie herself is American and not appropriate)

Further rights, opportunities won to complement suffrage gained after WWI

Combat Areas

Threatened by bombing, military attacks

Serious shortages

Work in dealing with air raids; wardens in blackouts

Food shortages, starvation, family disruption

Jewish Women

Die in Auschwitz

Survive to tell stories

Protect their children

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Question 2 Historical Background (continued)

Aspects of Militarism

Stockpiling weapons/rearmament

Gearing up factories for war production

Societal acceptance of military mindset

Physical education programs for youth

Propaganda to promote nationalism/militarism: posters, film, print media

Cult of domesticity/baby production to create future soldiers

Nationalism

Development of technology for military purposes

Glorification of soldiers, war, and “masculine virtues”

Emphasis on role of women in supporting state/race/ideology

Reduction of women’s rights/opportunities

Many other examples were used, despite the appearance that they were drawn from experiences of Americans or Europeans during nineteenth-century or earlier wars, ranging from the Crimean War to World War I. These items were not considered as effective specific evidence, because they were not European or not responsive to the question, which dealt with the period 1930-50.