

2006 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

Modern History

Section I (continued)

Question 2 (10 marks)

Explain why US entry into World War I proved to be the most significant of the war's turning points.

Use Sources A and B and your own knowledge to answer this question.

While the US entry into the war was late in the course of events, its ~~entry~~ entry was the ~~major~~ turning point that finally turned the tide definitively against Germany. Lloyd-George in Source B acknowledges the true benefit of American entry when he says that "French and British morale is boosted" - although the US did provide material support in the final year of the conflict, their most significant impact was upon morale.

The knowledge that the US, a massive economic power, was readying itself for entry in the war was of huge benefit to British and French confidence and morale. Conversely, it was damaging to German morale as it made the struggle seem increasingly futile. Indeed, this view is supported by

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Question 2 (continued)

Source A, which affirms that after the declaration of war in 1917, the US took "many months to raise and equip an army" - clearly, the ultimate benefit of US entry was psychological, although their material assistance in 1918 was extremely helpful.

After all, even in 1917 it was unclear who would emerge as the victor of the war. This is supported by Sources A and B. Source A describes the damaging effect of the German ~~the~~ U-boat campaign on Britain and the seeming advantage that the Germans had after the defeat of Russia - they were strong enough to launch a new offensive even as late as March 1918.

This is affirmed in Source B, in which ~~Mr~~ Lloyd George describes, in March of 1918, the war as being at crisis point.

The ~~the~~ war ^{was} ~~was~~ at a stage in 1917 and early 1918 where it seemed that either side could be victorious, as both were suffering from ~~the~~ problems caused by the naval blockade and the U-boat campaign. Thus, it was the entry of the US that tipped the balance in favour of the Allies, both materially and psychologically.

End of Question 2

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Section I (continued)

Question 3 (10 marks)

Assess how useful Sources C and D would be for an historian studying the impact of total war on the home fronts during World War I.

In your answer, consider the perspectives provided by the TWO sources and the reliability of each one.

Source C is extremely useful for a historian studying the impact of total war on the German homefront. Source D is somewhat less useful, and applies to the British home front.

Source C is very useful as it gives a broad picture of the impact of total war on life on the German home front. The ambassador ~~talks~~ discusses the rationing system and food shortages, the ability of those in higher classes to get around the shortages, the shortages of fuel and the impact that this had on public life and also goes into women in the workforce. All of these, particularly women, rationing, shortages and women, are essential aspects of the impact of total war on the home front; thus, this source is very useful for a historian seeking to understand this.

In addition, the source is ~~fairly~~ fairly

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Question 3 (continued)

reliable. Although it is a public account of the ambassador's experiences, which could ~~not~~ cause bias, he is not describing anything that he played an active role in, thus he has no ~~reason~~ ^{need} to lie to protect his reputation. He is merely describing daily life during the war in Germany, so has no reason to lie. This enhances the usefulness of the document as it gives a credible account of events.

Source D is less useful than Source C, as its content is somewhat more limited. However, it shows a working woman and demonstrates that total war extended to the home life and impacted upon daily habits including eating. It also demonstrates that there were food shortages and caution was needed in conserving food. Therefore, it is useful, though it does lack the breadth of Source ~~B~~ C.

However, it is less reliable than Source C, as it is a propaganda poster. What is presented is what the Ministry of Food wants people to do - it presents an idealised version of how they want total war to impact upon the home front, and this may differ from the reality. It provides a possible assessment of the impact, but (beyond showing the use of propaganda) it is not ^{necessarily} ~~reliable~~ ^{reliable}. Thus, its usefulness is somewhat diminished.

End of Question 3