

## 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.

By 1917, the war looked like it was turning against the allied powers. The constant battles and trench warfare in the continuous attempts to break the stalemate resulted in many troops from the Army being 'forced to retire' (Source B). The failing battles of attrition, such as Verdun in 1916, ~~and~~ the disastrous Somme in 1916 and also Passchendaele meant, ~~that~~ according to Lord George they were at 'the crisis of the war'. Also, the U-boat attacks on British food supplies affected the homefront, as well as the troops in a sense that resources were becoming scarce. Morale on both sides was dwindling. The German's attack on the US neutral shipping resulted in the US government finally declaring war on Germany. However, according to Source A it 'took her many months to raise and equip an army to send to Europe'.

Question 2 continues on page 4

## Question 2 (continued)

It was the psychological impact of the millions of potential US troops, all fresh and healthy, that had a great impact on both the Allies and the Germans. For the Allies, it meant they had USA's industrial capabilities supporting them and new troops to relieve their casualties, ~~and also~~ for the Germans, the effect was devastating. Germany knew that to continue a battle of attrition with the Allies now would end in their ultimate defeat, thus German general Ludendorff organised the 'Spring Offensive' as a result of the US involvement. According to Source A 'the defeat of Russia in the East allowed Germany to send massive reinforcements', and therefore the attack was launched in March 1918. However, with the French and British morale boosted, the offensive, whilst severely damaged both sides, the surplus troops and the newly devised tactics such as 'bite and hold' method, resulted in the Allied counter-offensive. In this way, the US' entry into World War One was crucial, as it impacted both psychologically and physically, as shown in the sources.

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.

Both Sources C and D ~~are~~ should be considered useful for an historian studying the impact of total war on the homefronts during World War I.

Source C provides immense detail at the state of society in Germany as a result of total war. The source describes the increase of prices, the scarcity of resources, and the need for women in the workforce.

The Source (C) can be seen as useful because of its descriptions, as well as by the fact that the author was present in German society at the time, and thus ~~experienced~~ is likely to have witnessed these events occur. Due to the fact it is written by a former American ambassador, it could be seen to provide a more neutral perspective. The date of 1917, ~~is a~~ ~~more~~ when the USA entered

Question 3 continues on page 6

## Question 3 (continued)

the war could be seen as important as in theory the author could encompass a sense of bias, however, the date is not specified exactly and thus could be seen to be a neutral perspective from before the USA entered the war, thus increasing its reliability. The fact that the extract is from a possible book on memoirs should be considered when assessing its usefulness and reliability. Gerard ~~son~~ is likely to have been writing for an audience and so with this purpose, a sense of exaggeration could have been applied to make it sound more interesting.

Source D can also be seen as useful and reliable for an historian studying total war in Britain. The poster displays a woman cutting bread with words stating 'Don't Waste Bread... Repeat the U-boat'. In this sense, ~~because~~ it can be seen to be useful because the impact of the total war can be visually seen and also the effects of the U-boat campaigns. The fact people had to save their bread highlights the effect total war was having on the population. However, the poster was produced by the Ministry of Food in 1917, and thus is a large scale form of propaganda as a result of the increasing shortages of food. ~~Therefore~~ It is useful as it shows the extent of British propaganda. However, for this reason its reliability should be questioned as propaganda was ~~used~~ usually exaggerated and emotive in order to persuade its audience, so bias is obviously involved. It is also not particularly useful for study of the effects of total war because, being a poster, it only displays one aspect of the state of society.

End of Question 3