

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.

..... although significant turning points resulted
from Russia's withdrawal from the war,
Germany's exhaustion from the naval blockade
and the German Spring offensive of 1918,
US entry is certainly the most crucial.

~~Although US troops took some time to
reach Europe they were fresh.~~

As Source A outlines, it took many
months for the Army to reach Europe
and meanwhile Germany was able to send
forces to the West. However when US troops
did arrive, the Allied forces became numerically
superior and were fresh, providing a stark
contrast to the disillusioned German Army
that had begun recruiting boys and elderly
men. The production capabilities of the
Allied powers increased exponentially after
America's entry whilst Germany remained
starved of raw materials. Although America's

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Question 2 (continued)

entry also had immediate impact in terms of naval warfare. The use of the convoy system protected goods and men travelling to Europe whilst 120 submarines were deployed in the Adriatic. Reconnaissance aircraft and blimps also carefully monitored German U-boats. The successful mine barrage of the North Sea was also a US initiative.

Source B highlights the immense crisis faced by the Allies after the German Spring offensive - an important turning point. However US entry played a far more significant role in determining the direction the war would take. Over 2 million US troops were sent to France and 1.3 million to the Front. These soldiers were crucial in the success of the ~~British~~ Allied Counter-Offensive as well as the Second Battle of the Marne and the Argonne Battle. In Source B Lloyd George exemplifies however, perhaps the greatest impact of US entry - the increase in moral of the British and French soldiers. The psychological impact on Germany was also immense, however their morale spiralled into degeneration. The US entry into WWII was the most significant of the turning points given its impact on allied production, troop numbers, naval warfare, the Allied Counter-Offensive and morale.

End of Question 2

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Modern History

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 an extract from My Four Years in Germany written by former American Ambassador James Gerard and published in London in 1917. Given it is from the perspective of an American citizen living in Germany during the ~~war~~ naval blockade his purpose seems to be to record his experiences and the sheer magnitude of the impacts. The source criticises rationing practices, the breakdown of transport, shortages of raw materials, impacts on different classes and the changing role of women.

Source C can be considered reliable for several reasons. Firstly it can be supported by other sources of the time. The informative nature of the extract which is neither overly emotive or ~~expressive~~ ^{expressive} suggests Gerard is merely recording his experiences. As the source is a primary source, the author has the benefit of actually experiencing the effects of total war. Given it was published so close to the event it can be assumed that the experience

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Question 3 (continued)

was still fresh and could be remembered with accuracy. Although the commercial motivations of Gerad must be considered, the autobiographical nature of the extract suggests he was genuinely trying to inform his audience of the conditions he experienced. Although he is American, there is no evidence of bias.

Therefore, Source C can be considered very useful to an historian studying the impacts of total war on the home front as it is reliable and outlines a variety of social and economic changes such as shortages and rationing, the role of women. However, the source only describes the German home front so it would be particularly useful in collaboration with other sources.

Source D is a British poster produced by the Ministry of Food in 1917. This primary source, from the perspective of the a Govt British Govt organisation highlighting the importance of rationing and reducing wastage on the British home front.

The source can be considered reliable as it is supported by other sources of the time. Although it is from the can be considered biased as it is a propaganda poster this does not interfere with the reliability of the information imparted about impacts of total war. The rousing language highlights the dire situation Britain was facing in terms of shortages whilst the nation the poster targeting women demonstrates their important and changing role at home. The source also provides insight into the British use of propaganda which greatly impacted upon the home front. Therefore, Source D can be considered very useful to an historian studying the impacts of total war on the home front. End of Question 3 as it offers information on rationing, propaganda, food shortages and the role of women. Its usefulness is however limited as it only deals with experiences on the British home front.