

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.

As suggested in Source A, US entry brought into the war a new source of weaponry and war resources, thus allowing the Allies to gain the military and economic advantage over Germany. Russia having just withdrawn allowed Germany to focus all her war efforts on just one front, and thus the US entry allowed the Allies to prevent Russian defeat having a large negative impact upon them. Source B also suggests that Allied morale was boosted at the sight of US troops, their arrival also had the opposite effect on German troops. The arrival of endless supplies of fresh troops when they themselves were war weary and exhausted crushed their morale. The US admiralty also had an immediate impact upon the war, as US troops were not involved until the second battle of Ypres in which 250,000 US troops fought. Sims negotiated with British admiralty and put into place a Convoy Scheme which allowed US supplies and soldiers

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Question 2 (continued)

to cross the Atlantic Ocean safely without being affected by the German U-boat campaign. The US admiralty also placed a mine barrage in the North Sea to making it all but inaccessible to the German submarines. Thus US entry had a large economic impact on the war, allowing the Allies a new source of troops, food, weapons, ships etc which proved to be a major turning point. This also was more significant than Russian defeat in WW1 because the US was a much more superior fighting force economically and militarily. US also had the ability to enable technological innovations to be produced, such as the tank in mass quantities, this proved to be a major factor as it was an area which Ludendorff failed to develop. Thus US entry was the major turning point in the war as it broke the stalemate and gave allies further superiority. Throughout the war the Allies mobilised 40 million men in comparison to the German and her allies with just 23 million. However one must remember that there were other factors precipitating German downfall.

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, written by an American ambassador in 1917 describes the impact of total war on German citizens and the restriction of their liberties. Thus the perspective of an Allied ambassador may lead to the source containing an element of propaganda, additionally because it was published in 1917 it may be used to convince the Allies about the impact war was having on the German front and to show that they were suffering. The content of the source is supported by many other sources from the time, particularly that of women in the workforce and rising cost of living. Despite its potential to be subjective it is a largely reliable resource because the source is supported, however when studying it an historian must remember it might be biased, although the ambassador concedes that suffering in Berlin was not so great and thus implies he is presenting an overall and objective viewpoint. Thus it is useful to an historian.

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Question 3 (continued)

Studying the impact of total war on the home front in Germany but it does omit some information such as ersatz or substitute goods. Source D is from a credible source, the Ministry of Food and was released at the time of war, 1917 when rationing was still voluntary. The poster was one of many released to encourage women to make sacrifices around the home in Britain in order to contribute to the total war effort. It shows the perspective of the Ministry of Food and the propaganda techniques employed to influence the home front. The propaganda campaign had an extensive influence upon the home front and contributed to the war effort. However the source does not discuss other total war efforts such as the dilution of jobs, changing fashions, the entry of women into the workforce and that 80% of munitions were produced by women whilst it examined voluntary rations of bread it does not cover sugar and meat voluntary rations. Thus the source is reliable for the impact of total war on the home front however it does not present a complete representation. It is useful to an historian studying the impact of total war on the women of the home front but ~~and~~ an historian must note there were other aspects to total war in Britain.

End of Question 3