

**30 April 2012 – 14 May 2012**

**A2 GCE HISTORY B**

**F985** Historical Controversies – British History

Candidates answer on the Answer Booklet.

**OCR supplied materials:**

- 16 page Answer Booklet  
(sent with general stationery)

**Other materials required:**

None

**Duration:** 3 hours



**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Write your name, centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on the Answer Booklet. Please write clearly and in capital letters.
- Use black ink.
- Answer **both sub-questions** from **one** Study Topic.
- Read each question carefully. Make sure you know what you have to do before starting your answer.
- Do **not** write in the bar codes.

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

- The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.
- The total number of marks for this paper is **60**.
- This paper contains questions on the following 4 Study Topics:
  - The Debate over the Impact of the Norman Conquest, 1066–1216 (page 2)
  - The Debate over Britain's 17th Century Crises, 1629–89 (page 3)
  - Different Interpretations of British Imperialism c.1850–c.1950 (page 4)
  - The Debate over British Appeasement in the 1930s (page 6–7)
- You should write in continuous prose and are reminded of the need for clear and accurate writing, including structure of argument, grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The time permitted allows for reading the Extract in the one Study Topic you have studied.
- In answering these questions, you are expected to use your knowledge of the topic to help you understand and interpret the Extract as well as to inform your answers.
- **You may refer to your class notes and textbooks during the examination.**
- This document consists of **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

## 1 The Debate over the Impact of the Norman Conquest, 1066–1216

*Read the following extract about the impact of the Norman Conquest and then answer the questions that follow.*

It is usual in books on the Norman Conquest to take a position on the tired old question: was Anglo-Saxon England feudal or was it not? This was a genuine and important question for older historians such as Freeman and Stubbs, who believed that Anglo-Saxon England was a commonwealth of free peasants with a primitive but democratic constitution. Stubbs and Freeman, both of whose Latin was a great deal better than their Anglo-Saxon, knew quite well that after 1066 England was a land of great magnates surrounded by flocks of knightly vassals, resting on a mass of semi-servile peasants, the whole very hierarchically organized. What they had to explain was, how does one get from what they saw as the peasant commonwealth of King Alfred, say, to the hierarchical England of William I and his successors? The Norman Conquest was the convenient occasion, and the introduction of Norman feudalism the convenient means, by which this was done. The English historian has no need of any feudal revolution to explain how English society became hierarchical. It always was.

It would be foolish to deny that the Conquest mattered or that in the long run it was a catastrophe for the Old English state. But what kind of catastrophe and in what fields it was felt still prompts many unanswered questions. It is contended here that debating about feudalism does not advance the inquiry, but hinders it. Leaving feudalism aside, then, it is possible to compare Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, noting both differences and resemblances. Certainly William gave England an almost completely new ruling class, mostly made up of Norman magnates who had been his friends and companions for years. William and his successors maintained and developed the administrative organization of the Anglo-Saxon state. England was no longer divided up into great earldoms. This must have enhanced the significance of the sheriff, the royal official for each shire. This office was in existence by the early eleventh century, and sheriffs were already of considerable importance under Edward the Confessor. The sheriff by the early twelfth century accounted for royal revenues before a body known as the Exchequer. This was called after a squared cloth, a kind of abacus, resembling a chess board. Before it was called the Exchequer the central accounting office was called the Tallies. Tallies were pieces of wood marked and split to give foolproof receipts; they were almost certainly pre-Conquest. By Henry I's reign the Exchequer was a formidable central accounting system, and some elements of it went back at least as far as Edward the Confessor's reign, and it is likely that many did so.

More evidence of the importance of shire and sheriff in the last years of the Anglo-Saxon state is provided by William I's great survey of 1086 that produced Domesday Book. Although Domesday Book is rightly regarded as an Anglo-Norman achievement, the more one looks at it the more Anglo-Saxon it seems. It was compiled shire by shire. Summoning the juries at the right time and place was done by the sheriffs. The crucial importance of sheriff and shire for Anglo-Norman government is that in Domesday Book the information is not presented in terms of Anglo-Norman honours but of Anglo-Saxon shires. It is certain, then, that crucial elements in English local and central government not only began but were well-developed before 1066. It was government in the Old English style, rather than the French, which was the basis of the power of kings of England after the Conquest. That is why kings could prevent Anglo-Norman magnates reaching positions of quasi-independent power such as many of their counterparts had enjoyed in France. The tenth-century kings of the house of Wessex laid the foundations of the English state, not only by unifying England, but also by devising the enduring institutions which made England governable.

- (a) What can you learn from this extract about the interpretation, approaches and methods of the historian? Refer to the extract and your knowledge to explain your answer. **[30]**
- (b) In their work on the impact of the Norman Conquest some historians have focused on local studies. Explain how this approach has contributed to our understanding of the Norman Conquest. Has this approach any disadvantages or shortcomings? **[30]**

## 2 The Debate over Britain's 17th Century Crises, 1629–89

Read the following extract about Britain's 17th century crises and then answer the questions that follow.

What of the war's actual impact on the people of the western counties? The most obvious impression the evidence leaves is one of misery and havoc, confirming the not very original conclusion that war, and particularly civil war, is hell. Much of the distress cannot be quantified – the emotional scars of the widows and parents who lost children, the psychological scars of families divided by the war, the physical scars of the maimed, the financial scars of the ruined. England may not have 'turned Ireland', as a London news-writer thought was the case after Rupert sacked Marlborough in December 1642, but some places came uncomfortably close to a state of social breakdown. No part of England suffered more than the western counties and the adjacent Severn Valley and Welsh border regions, in which the most long drawn out and ruinous campaigns of the war occurred. War taxation; the quartering of soldiers; plundering; the physical devastation of town and countryside; these were universal realities for the population of all regions, royalist and parliamentarian alike.

For much of the war, failure by either army to keep control prevented either side in the West Country from establishing anything resembling normal tax-collecting procedures. Instead, the inhabitants were subjected directly to the demands of rival armies and garrisons. Such demands, backed by threats of plunder and destruction often led to enforced payment to both sides. In May 1643 Sir William Waller ordered the districts near Cirencester to pay contributions to his army, but the royalist Earl of Crawford arrived soon afterwards, 'threatening fire and sword if they paid him a penny' and ordering them to pay it to him instead. The double burdens on the Wiltshire clothing towns during the first winter of the war are apparent in the records of Chippenham.

Ill-paid and poorly disciplined troops inevitably resorted to plundering. Soldiers on both sides seized money, food, livestock and goods, with or without their officers' consent. It made little difference which side people were on: friend was as likely to be looted as neutral or enemy. How far plundering had become commonplace is evident from the plea of Mary Wilde of Market Lavington, accused in 1644 of stealing clothes from various houses in the Devizes area: she had bought them, she declared, 'from several troopers'. True or false, it was a plausible story. The western counties produced a familiar list of complaints: of tenants unable to pay rents, vacating their holdings. In Wiltshire late in 1644, Sir Edward Nicholas's steward found that 'no money could be had from any body, only complaints of plundering and losses'.

Both sides also recognized the adverse effects that plundering had on their own popularity. But the contrast in their behaviour is significant. The Royalists showed some concern for gentry-controlled institutions of local government, but were less interested in reforming abuses which fell most heavily on the middling and small property-owners. Parliament, on the other hand, showed less respect for established institutions, replacing them with committees responsible to Westminster and often staffed by men from outside the old governing circles. However, it was distinctly more responsive to complaints about the behaviour of its troops. In October 1642 plundering by Roundhead forces in Somerset and Dorset 'much incensed the county against them': Parliament ordered them to join Essex's army and subsequently sent down the MP John Ashe to hear complaints.

- (a) What can you learn from this extract about the interpretation, approaches and methods of the historian? Refer to the extract and your knowledge to explain your answer. **[30]**
- (b) In their work on 17th century Britain some historians have focused on the relationship between Court and Country. Explain how this approach has contributed to our understanding of Britain's 17th century crises. Has this approach any disadvantages or shortcomings? **[30]**

### 3 Different Interpretations of British Imperialism c.1850–c.1950

*Read the following extract about British imperialism and then answer the questions that follow.*

To describe Britain as imperial draws attention not just to British economic, political, and military power and its exercise over others, but also to the ways in which British culture was full of things and ideas associated with empire. Bernard Porter, however, claims that empire was irrelevant to most Britons most of the time. Porter puts great emphasis on the test of empirical evidence. A historical subject must explicitly state, for example, that he or she has been influenced in a particular way by empire. This narrow approach makes no attempt to understand the world of assumptions in which decisions are made. These assumptions are largely unconscious and form the commonsense of the period which is never explicitly stated.

Britons encountered the empire in many ways. It was nothing special, just an ordinary part of the world in which they lived. A substantial number of Britons spent years on one imperial site or another. Each brought their stories home. Their listeners told these stories to others, spreading the word about the imperial world. At the same time peoples of the empire came to Britain. African sailors, Indian servants, enslaved men and women from the Caribbean, students, colonial politicians, Australian-Aboriginal cricketers all passed through. Some, especially sailors and dockers, settled in Britain, establishing mixed communities. Most Britons had seen people of colour by the mid-nineteenth century.

Britons were also entirely familiar with the fruits of empire – tobacco from North America, sugar from the West Indies, tea from India – all enjoyed by the majority of the population. There was opium from the East, cocoa and coffee from the West Indies and there were the raw materials, from cotton and wool to oil and rubber.

But knowledge of the empire was not confined to direct encounter with its peoples, places, and products, for ideas about empire played a significant part in the imaginative life of Britons. They read of colonial wars in their newspapers, sang missionary hymns and founded missionary activities across the globe. Some heard talks about the inevitability of the disappearance of aboriginal peoples, or new theories of racial difference. At the time of the 'Indian Mutiny' in 1857 the country was shocked by stories in the press of horrible violence. By the late nineteenth century music-hall songs, postcards, the popular press, advertisements, youth movements, magazines and fiction all contributed to a rising tide of imperial sentiment. Few questioned the existence of empire or imagined a Britain without it.

Empire was found in every aspect of British culture. The definition of culture here is not a set of things – paintings, novels or newspapers – rather it is about a set of practices. Culture is how we make sense of the world.

- (a) What can you learn from this extract about the interpretation, approaches and methods of the historian? Refer to the extract and your knowledge to explain your answer. **[30]**
- (b) In their work on British imperialism some historians have focused on economic factors. Explain how this approach has contributed to our understanding of British imperialism. Has this approach any disadvantages or shortcomings? **[30]**

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#### 4 The Debate over British Appeasement in the 1930s

*Read the following extract about British appeasement and then answer the questions that follow.*

A major problem with the whole appeasement debate has been the extent to which it has revolved around very different interpretations of largely the same documents. The chief danger of these documents is that they were drafted, collected and selected by state officials who were deeply involved in the very events they seek to record. Such documents can all too easily mislead the historian into writing a naive official version of events. It seems that the time is ripe for a study which asks searching questions about the inter-relationship between foreign policy and society.

The foreign policy Chamberlain followed grew out of a set of key assumptions which underpinned British foreign policy during the entire inter-war period. The most important assumption was that another war would be disastrous for Britain, and to prevent it was an all-consuming aim. It is clear that a majority of the cabinet, most of the Tory Party and even the Foreign Office never seriously favoured a determined policy of stopping Hitler by the use of military force until 1939.

However, it would be completely wrong to believe the appeasement of Hitler was ever as popular, or exactly the same, as appeasing disarmed and democratic Germany before 1933. Under Chamberlain the prevailing desire to prevent war took on the form of a stubborn and inflexible belief system. The very idea of standing up to Hitler was viewed almost as an act of heresy when put forward by critics who, Chamberlain claimed, 'differed from me because they were ignorant'. What Chamberlain brought to British foreign policy was a firmer and clearer belief that a bold effort of compromise with Germany was required if war was to be averted. This fundamental desire to avoid open confrontation with the dictators and to avoid alliances determined Chamberlain's decisions on foreign policy and led to fatal errors of judgement.

The military strategy which Chamberlain favoured centred around a long war of self-defence. Chamberlain kept rearmament before Munich concentrated exclusively on air defence and naval power. As Chamberlain said in a speech in January 1937, 'As I reflect on the growing cost of this vast exercise when we have completed it, I cannot help being impressed by the incredible folly of civilisation.' Thus, the reluctance to engage in all-out rearmament actually justified a policy of compromise. It is equally clear that Chamberlain's passionate desire to avert war was linked to a belief that war was likely to damage Britain's world-wide trading and imperial interests.

Political judgements played a deeply significant role in the errors in foreign policy during the inter-war years, but all the errors cannot be blamed on Chamberlain alone. The desire within British government and society to avoid war, predominantly to preserve economic and imperial interests, was woven into the fabric of British foreign policy. It proved difficult for any politician to take a leap of faith away from it. Yet this widely felt desire to avoid war resembled in Chamberlain a fundamentalist religious creed. Appeasement was a bold endeavour to find out whether Hitler was out for a revision of the Treaty of Versailles or whether he aimed at European domination. It failed because Chamberlain took too long to decide on the answer; even when he knew the answer, he kept on trying to believe it was not true.

Neither can it be convincingly accepted that Chamberlain's policy of appeasement enjoyed widespread and sustained public support. A high level of news management and media manipulation was employed by the Chamberlain government, especially on BBC radio and the cinema newsreels. The evidence from opinion polls shows that appeasing Hitler was not a popular policy. Most British people – even small children – booed whenever they saw Hitler in cinema newsreels and over 86 per cent of the public at the time of Munich did not believe that the Sudetenland was really Hitler's 'last territorial demand in Europe'.

- (a) What can you learn from this extract about the interpretation, approaches and methods of the historian? Refer to the extract and your knowledge to explain your answer. **[30]**
- (b) In their work on British appeasement some historians have focused on the constraints on British policy makers. Explain how this approach has contributed to our understanding of appeasement. Has this approach any disadvantages or shortcomings? **[30]**

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