



History 7042
Specimen Question Paper 2E (A-level)
Question 02 Student 1
Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0

Specimen answer plus commentary

The following student response is intended to illustrate approaches to assessment. This response has not been completed under timed examination conditions. It is not intended to be viewed as a 'model' answer and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Paper 2E (A-level): Specimen question paper

02 'Religion was the main reason for conflict between Crown and Parliament in the years 1625 to 1629'.

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Student response

Religion was a reason for disputes between Crown and Parliament in the years 1625 to 1629. While some of these became heated it could be argued that even when Charles dissolved Parliament in 1629 there was still no conflict between Crown and Parliament. Religion was not, however, the only source of tension between Crown and Parliament and it was the other issues such as foreign policy, favourites and finance that also caused tension. Indeed all the factors were inter-related. Rather than religion it could be argued that Charles I was the main reason for conflict.

In a time of Personal Monarchy the role of Charles I was always going to be central in shaping Crown and Parliament relations. Charles's provocative style of rule provoked concern among MPs and was key in the deterioration of the relationship between Crown and Parliament in the years to 1629. Charles had a very inflated but also defensive interpretation of the Divine Right of Kings that meant he was aggressive in his use of his prerogative. In doing so he escalated disputes over practical concerns in to more serious constitutional tensions.

Religion was undoubtedly a key reason for dispute between Crown and Parliament in the years 1625 to 1629 because of Charles's determined promotion of the anti-Calvinist Arminians. This can be seen by his stance, through his favourite Buckingham at the York House Conference that left relative moderate Puritans like the Earl of Warwick little scope but to become disenchanted with the monarch's breaking of the Jacobethan balance.

It was Charles's support for the Arminian Montagu that most clearly shows his destructive tendency to escalate disputes. In 1625 and 1626 Parliament sought the impeachment of Montagu for his second Arminian tract, A New Gagg. Charles's refusal to countenance this and more provocatively his promotion of Montagu to be his royal chaplain made a clear statement that he would not tolerate any questioning of his authority as Supreme Governor. In doing so Charles turned a dispute over religion in to a more serious constitutional argument.

Foreign Policy failures in Cadiz and La Rochelle were also sources of tension in the period. It could be argued that these were also related to religion in that MPs were concerned about Charles' failures against the Catholic Spanish and his support of the Catholic French crown against its Protestant Huguenot subjects. What made these disputes worse was the role of Charles's favourite Buckingham as Lord High Admiral. Charles' refusal to sacrifice Buckingham as a scapegoat to parliamentary calls for his impeachment again escalated the disputes over foreign policy in to constitutional arguments.

Finance was also a source of dispute as to conduct his foreign policy Charles needed substantial funds. There was an immediate clash over tonnage and poundage and Charles was bitter over the limited £140,000 granted to him by Parliament when he needed at least £1 million for his aims. Charles use of prerogative to impose a Forced Loan in 1626 again merely escalated arguments over finance to constitutional levels. Ultimately Parliament, however, knew that they could use finance as their main source of influence over Charles and this was clear in their forcing through of the Petition of Right of 1628. When Charles dissolved Parliament in 1629 after the Three Resolutions the relationship between Crown and Parliament had in 4 years become seriously weakened. While there may not have been real conflict there was a level of distrust that would be hard to overcome.

Inter-related practical concerns, such as foreign policy or finance, were the surface source of the discontent between Parliament and Crown. Charles's style of rule, however, escalated these disputes in to more serious constitutional discourse because, driven by his inferiority complex to defend his prerogative, his inability to compromise provoked many in Parliament to respond in defence of their privileges. In the context of an 'unwritten constitution' the lack of open dialogue between Crown and Parliament increasingly led to a polarisation of views that when underpinned by the dynamic of conflicting religious views over time established a framework for possible conflict between Crown and Parliament and within the 'political nation'. Religion as such a central and emotive part of early modern life made the disputes over practical concerns potentially more destructive as they made some, particularly Puritans, view all Charles did as steps to the establishment of Catholicism and absolutism and thus it can be argued that it was religion that was the driving force with the potential to turn disputes between Crown and Parliament in to, eventually, real conflict.

Commentary – Level 4

This is a very good Level 4 response. The response is consistently focused on the question and has a good level of supporting information to illustrate the points made. The information is, however, not always developed, particularly with regard to the later period on the relationship between Crown and Parliament after 1627. It addresses religion directly and is particularly effective in the conclusion in bringing all the themes together. The overall judgment placing blame on Charles is well argued. In places in the essay it could link the argument together more and be more developed in the ways there was conflict between Crown and Parliament.