

General Certificate of Education
June 2008
Advanced Level Examination



HISTORY
Unit 6W

HS6N

**Alternative N: The Problem of Poverty in Tudor England,
1525–1603**

Thursday 12 June 2008 9.00 am to 10.30 am

For this paper you must have:

- a 12-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is HS6N.
- In answering the questions you must use your own knowledge and understanding of the period.
- Answer **all** questions.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 40.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- You will be marked on your ability to use good English, to organise relevant information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Advice

- You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on part (c).

Answer **all** questions.

1 Study the following source material and then answer the questions which follow.

Source A Not until 1572 did a positive and realistic national policy begin to emerge. An Act of that year attempted for the first time to provide work for the able-bodied poor. An Act of 1576 strengthened the new policy by ordering every town to provide stocks of materials to give work to the able-bodied unemployed so that ‘rogues
5 might not have any juste excuse in saying they could not get service or worcke’. Justices of the Peace were ordered to build Houses of Correction for those unwilling to work. Finally, the Act of 1598 instituted the office of overseers of the poor. The problem of the poor was a major preoccupation of contemporaries. Yet it would be misleading to conclude that it was as serious and growing a problem
10 as reports by contemporaries might suggest. Private philanthropy and municipal charity seem normally to have been sufficient to cope with the worst of the problem.

Adapted from D PALLISER, *The Age of Elizabeth*, 1984

Source B Adapted from a letter sent to Lord Burghley in September 1596 by Edward Hext, a Justice of the Peace in Somerset

Right honourable and my very good Lord, I have long observed the acts of violence and thefts committed within this county where I serve. They multiply daily to the utter impoverishing of the poor husbandmen who bear the greatest burden. Knowing your most honourable care for the preservation of the peace, I
5 think it my bounden duty to present unto you these lists of prisoners executed and delivered in this county of Somerset. The most dangerous are the wandering soldiers and other sturdy rogues. Of this sort of wandering idle people there are three or four hundred in a shire. And they grow the more dangerous in that they have bred such fear in the Justices and other officers that no man dares to call
10 them into question.

Source C The initiatives adopted in response to the vagrancy crisis (especially the introduction of martial law and houses of correction) significantly extended state authority. The martial law of the 1590s entailed the appointment of provost marshals, salaried military officers who rode armed with a dozen or so deputies
5 and were empowered to execute summary justice on vagrants in general and on disbanded soldiers in particular. Counties such as Hertfordshire, Sussex and Worcestershire undoubtedly benefited from martial law. But other counties resisted the pressure to declare martial law. While they acknowledged the dangerously high levels of vagrancy, the Cheshire justices claimed it was ‘an office in this shire not usual’; Devon assured central authorities that there was ‘no
10 need for a provost marshal to take the government of this county’.

Adapted from S HINDLE, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, 1550–1640*, 2002

- (a) Use **Source A** and your own knowledge.

Assess the validity of the view in **Source A** about the problems of vagrancy and social disorder in the later sixteenth century. *(10 marks)*

- (b) Use **Source B** and your own knowledge.

How useful is **Source B** as evidence about the difficulties of dealing with rogues and vagabonds in the 1590s? *(10 marks)*

- (c) Use **Sources A, B** and **C**, and your own knowledge.

‘Government responses to the perceived problems of poverty in the later sixteenth century were a harsh over-reaction.’
Assess the validity of this view. *(20 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page

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