



History

Paper 2H (AS) Specimen Question Paper

Question 01 Student 2

Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0 26/02/16

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 2H (AS): Specimen question paper

01 With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, which of these two sources is more valuable in explaining why the Civil Constitution of the Clergy led to divisions in France?

[25 marks]

Student response

The civil constitution was a very controversial document and caused division among France when it was issued in 1790. Source A is in favour of the constitution and highlights the extreme wealth of the church as the reason for opposition while source B is very anti-constitution and cites the undermining of spiritual authority and detraction of power from the pope as the main divisions. Source B is the most valuable as it offers explanations that were aroused only because the constitution was announced whereas the divisions seen in source A were reasons that existed before the constitution and so had less of a controversial impact when the constituent was created to source B is he most valuable.

Source A is from a 'radical' newspaper so that creators and audience would be very subjective and extreme in their view and are very likely to be in favour of the revolution and the constitution. It was written in July, very close to when the constitution was announced and therefore it's significant in showing the short term reaction and may not be significant in showing the long term reasons why divisions were created in France. The tone of the source is very critical of the church and celebrates the constituent and so this tone is valuable in highlighting divisions as they contrast with the views in source B for example it calls the church's wealth 'insolent' and that they 'foment' civil war. This could mean the source is too emotive and extreme to be valuable in showing accurately the divisions in France caused by the constitution. Because the audience is made up of radicals, the newspaper would want to align with the views of their readership and so may exaggerate the crimes of the church to appeal to the anti-church natures of groups like the sans-culottes and enlightenment thinkers.

The source highlights the church's wealth as one of the biggest factors for the division between radicals and the church. It's accurate that the church was extremely wealthy with 7% of France's land under church control as well as being paid tithes by the third estate and being exempt from paying taxes. This inequality made peasants and the bourgeoisie very angry as it seemed unjust. Enlightenment thinking acted as a catalyst for a call for change and opposition to organised religion, preferring the idea of free will for individuals, and demands for the church to be more productive in society. The constitution took all land from the church and sold it off, which didn't actually cause much division as a majority of France benefited from this while only the church suffered. The fact that bishops were 'crying out' is accurate as only 7 bishops took the oath later on. Although, it's clear that there was a division in France due to the unjustifiable wealth of the church and the huge poverty in the rest of France however this may not make the source valuable in explaining why the civil constitution led to divisions as the opposition to the church's wealth existed before the constitution. In regards to the church trying to 'foment civil war at any possible price', this claim seems to be

inaccurate as many members of the 1st estate were in favour of the National Assembly, 'the lawful will of the nation' and although not many bishops became jurors, many parish priests (50%) were in favour of the constitution as the state would be in charge of their wage and could stand to gain financially with the constitution. This makes the source slightly less valuable in showing how the constitution led to divisions because it's exaggerated slightly and inaccurate.

Source B was written by Archbishop Vienne who lost his seat when the Assembly cut 135 bishops to only 83 in an effort to make a more organised system based around local government. He lost his job and therefore is likely to be very anti-constitution but this may be valuable in showing his grievances. The fact that he was a bishop also means he was directly affected by the constitution and would have a more informed view of the situation than the radical newspaper. The tone is critical of the constitution but slightly less angry and emotive than source A. The letter he's writing is a warning to the people in his area and other clergy so its purpose would be to persuade the readers into being aware of the constitution that could 'destroy faith' therefore it's likely to exaggerate some divisions which could detract from its value. It was written in November, so a few months after the constitution was announced. This may make it more valuable as it's taking into account the events of the past months and offers a more long term account of the divisions created once the initial reaction has passed.

The source highlights the main divisions as being because the constitution undermined the ecclesiastical power of the church, the pope and the 'spiritual authority of Jesus Christ' because it was issued by a 'purely civil authority' (the Assembly). The laws banned the annates paid to the pope and also made it so bishops were to be voted for by enfranchised citizens instead of being appointed by the pope. This shows the power of the pope was undermined greatly and this division is highlighted further when the pope condemned the constitution in the spring of 1791. Because France was an extremely Catholic country and only a minority of radicals had renounced religion completely, it's clear this undermining of 'spiritual authority' would cause a lot of division and conflict in France as people who were previously in favour of reforms that would benefit them financially and socially are now conflicted about how to feel when their religion is attacked. This led to widely spread criticism of the National Assembly. This means source B is the most valuable in explaining how the constitution led to divisions.

In conclusion, source B is the most valuable source because it's more useful in showing how the civil constitution of the clergy itself led to divisions rather than source A which shows wealth as a reason for the divisions but this reason was not necessarily down to the constitution but more the long running injustices created by the Ancien Regime. If the constituent was not created nobody would feel divided because of the undermining of the pope's power but people would still be opposed to the church because of their wealth so source B is the most valuable.

Commentary – Level 4

This is a good answer. It comments on provenance, tone and content and deploys knowledge of context to support the points made. Whilst some of the conclusions reached might be disputed, there is a clear attempt to justify them and the points made are reasonable and appropriate. It needs to be noted that subjective and emotional sources are not necessarily of limited value, especially in the context of this question, but the answer attempts to recognise this. There is extensive and appropriate comment on the content of the sources and it is a strong Level 4 answer bordering on Level 5.