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History 7042  
Specimen Question Paper 2K (A-level)  
Question 01 Student 1  
Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0

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**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 2K (A-level): Specimen question paper**

**01** With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying the treatment of Germany in the Treaty of Versailles.

**[30 marks]**

**Student response**

Source A is a German response to the Treaty of Versailles and offers a tone that is shocked at the terms faced by Germany. The source discusses the decision to make Germany responsible for all 'war expenses' through Article 231 (the War Guilt Clause) and subsequent reparations which would indeed make economic life 'impossible' for Germany in the 1920s and 30s. The source is also accurate in suggesting that the actual terms were different to those initially expected, with Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' changed to fit a more severe punishment favoured by the French. In fact the 'Fourteen Points' had been widely distributed in Germany previous to peace negotiations and many there believed that they would be treated as per Wilson's plans; the harshness of the treaty would come as a shock to Germans. Although the source is widely accurate in its suggestions of what the impact of the treaty would bring for Germany, value may be questioned due to its partisan nature, it is obvious that a German delegate would be frustrated by the perceivably harsh outcomes of the Treaty of Versailles for Germany.

Source B is an official response to German arguments against the Treaty of Versailles; although written on behalf of the Allies it comes specifically from Georges Clemenceau and is therefore more likely to reflect the very anti-German, and thus one-sided, attitude held by the French during the negotiations for the Treaty. The tone is unforgiving and aims to justify the harsh treatment of the Germans by emphasizing the destruction of the war, particular in submarine warfare which saw the sinking of not just war ships, but a number of merchant ships and even a passenger vessel. Clemenceau is adamant that Germany should be held responsible and that it is not right that the victims of war are made to pay, especially given that the fighting itself has had a limited impact on the German nation directly ('whose industries are still intact'). France was worried that Germany would be able to rise again and threaten security, especially along the Franco-German borders, which is why Clemenceau was so insistent that Germany be punished so severely. Whilst the destruction within France helps to explain this viewpoint, due to this the source does not necessarily reflect the views of the other nations it claims to represent. This would become particularly evident when Lloyd George and later British Prime Ministers sought to work with Germany to lessen the pressures caused by the treaty in the 1920s and 1930s.

Source C comes from a leading Socialist and was published in a party newspaper, therefore reflecting a German socialist viewpoint on the Treaty of Versailles. The tone is very damning, suggesting that at the time of the treaty Germany would face serious problems whether they signed the treaty or not. The author suggests that not signing the treaty would bring greater problems, reflecting the fact that the allies had given Germany an ultimatum – sign the treaty or face invasion and further hardship. The suggestion is that the war was indeed lost and trying to hold on would only lead to harsher punishments, a view that was ultimately correct as Germany

was facing a severe food blockade and mass starvation at the time of surrender. The source also goes on to argue that Germany had more to gain by signing the treaty and then trying to negotiate once 'the whole world' realised the damage caused and how Germany would fight back. This is quite a reasoned view and does not necessarily reflect a wholly German view on the treaty; many right wing groups believed that the German government had stabbed them in the back by signing an armistice and that Germany would have been able to continue fighting rather than sign such a harsh peace deal. As such, the source may lack value in understanding the treatment of Germany in the Treaty of Versailles as this may be simply represent the a socialist, pacifist view which viewed the Treaty of Versailles as a means to end the fighting and hopefully save working class lives.

#### **Commentary – Level 4**

The answer clearly summarises the content and views of each source and comments, somewhat briefly, on tone. Some contextual knowledge is deployed to corroborate or challenge the sources' views, although this contextual knowledge is not developed fully. The answer is most strong on identification of content and argument, but comments on value are not fully developed. It is a low Level 4 answer.