

Section A: European option

Liberalism and nationalism in Germany, 1815–1871

Source C

Unhappily I believe in a war with France before long – her vanity, hurt by our victories, will drive her in that direction. Yet since I do not know of any French or German interest requiring a resort to arms, I do not see it as certain. Only a country's most vital interests justify embarking on a war, only its honour, which is not to be confused with prestige. No statesman has a right to begin a war simply because in his opinion it is inevitable in a given period of time. If foreign ministers followed their rulers and military commanders into the field, History would record fewer wars. On the battlefield and in the hospitals I have seen the flower of our youth struck down by wounds and disease. I would not have a moment's peace if I thought I had made war from personal ambition and national vanity. I will never advise His Majesty to wage war unless the most vital interests of the Fatherland require it.

A letter from Bismarck to a Conservative Deputy in the Landtag, March 1867.

Source D

There is nothing in our attitude to annoy or alarm France, there is nothing to prevent the maintenance of peace for ten or fifteen years by which time the French will have become accustomed to German unity and will have ceased to care about it.

I told our generals this spring, when they endeavoured to prove to me by all sorts of arguments that we would beat the French if we went to war at that time, 'I will still do all I can to prevent war. You must remember, gentlemen, a war between such near neighbours and old enemies as France and Prussia, however it may turn out, is only the first of at least six, and what should we have succeeded in doing? Ruining France and most likely ourselves into the bargain. Do you think a poor bankrupt neighbour is as desirable as a solvent one? France buys largely from us and sells us many things we want.' I strove for peace then and I will do so now. But German feelings must be respected or I cannot answer for the people or the King!

From an interview given by Bismarck to a British journalist, September 1867.

(a) Read Sources C and D.

To what extent do these two sources agree about Bismarck's attitude towards France? [15]

Student Answer

The sources are similar in that any war would be caused by France. In Source C, Bismarck believes that France's "vanity, hurt by our victories, will drive her in that direction". This shows that France would start war because of her own concerns about a united Germany's strength. In Source D it says, "there is nothing in our attitude to annoy or alarm France". Again, this shows that Bismarck's attitude is that France might decide to start a war because of her own concerns but it would not be a situation provoked by him.

Both sources portray Bismarck as wanting to avoid war with France. In Source C Bismarck outlines how important he thinks it is to avoid war, how he has seen the "flower of our youth struck down" and that he would not have a "moment's peace if I thought I had made war from personal ambition and national vanity". This is agreed in Source D where Bismarck says, "I will still do all I can to prevent war." In both sources Bismarck's attitude is that it would be France seeking war because of Bismarck's declared intention to avoid war.

However, at the end of Source D the difference is that Bismarck's attitude to France changes to a more aggressive one when he says, "German feelings must be respected or I cannot answer for the people or the King!" This is very different to his attitude in C where he stresses the need for calm and for war to be a last resort when "only a country's most vital interests justify embarking on a war". In Source C, in March he has a pacifist attitude, but by September Bismarck seems more likely to consider war.

The reason for the change in attitude would be because between the writing of Source C in March 1867 and the writing of D in September 1867, the North German Confederation had been set up. This strengthened Bismarck's position meaning that he can be much stronger in his attitude to France, almost warning them that Germany will only be pushed so far. This change explains the similarities and differences in the sources. In March the Confederation existed but it was not formally in existence until the summer and by September elections for a Reichstag had taken place. When in March Bismarck writes to the Deputy he may want to play down his 'Blood and Iron' reputation to reassure him that a stronger union would not lead to war but by September the union exists and he can send a public warning to France through the British journalist. However, Bismarck wants to make sure that in any war France was seen as the aggressor so he needs to look as though he wants to avoid war.

This is another difference in the sources, which would explain why they might show slightly different attitudes to France. C is a letter to a countryman, a man to whom any declaration of war would directly affect and so Bismarck would emphasize his peaceful attitude. In D he is talking to an audience not likely to be involved in a war with Germany or France. Britain had made it clear it had no desire to be involved in continental squabbles. Bismarck is not discussing sending any British sons to war and so this is a good place to send a warning to France as the direct audience would not be so alarmed.

Examiner comments

The answer starts immediately – there is no need for an introduction. The candidate refers to the question throughout to anchor the answer to it.

The first paragraph starts clearly by stating that the sources are similar. In the first sentence, words from the mark scheme are used but a word like ‘agree’ would do just as well. The candidate provides quotes from both sources showing how they are similar, with an explanation for each quote linking it to the similarity between the sources. This demonstrates an understanding of the question being asked.

At this point the answer is Level 2. If either the quote or the explanation were missing, the mark would reflect that although the examiner would read the whole answer before deciding on a final mark.

At the end of the first paragraph the candidate asserts again that there is a similarity between the sources.

In the second paragraph, the candidate also identifies similarities between the sources with quotes from both sources. The answer then explains both quotes together.

In the third paragraph, the answer moves to differences between the sources. The candidate makes it clear that a difference is being identified, asserts what the point is and supports it with the source. Quotes and explanations demonstrate understanding of both the question and the sources.

At this point the answer is Level 3. The quality of the similarities and differences identified would be assessed by the examiner to decide where in Level 3 the answer should be placed.

The answer could move to Level 4 but the examiner would read the whole answer before deciding on a final mark.

The answer shows that the candidate has used contextual knowledge. It explains why there are both similarities and differences in the sources using knowledge of the year the sources were written.

In this case, the sources cannot be explained by evaluating the origin because they are both by Bismarck and so the evaluation clearly considers the content rather than the medium. When evaluating sources, candidates can consider the nature and purpose of a source rather than its origin, as in this answer.

It is not necessary for candidates to point out that they are using contextual knowledge but if it helps candidates to structure their answers, they may wish to add a phrase such as ‘I know from my contextual knowledge that...’.

Marks are given throughout the answer, but the examiner would read the whole answer before deciding on a final mark. This is because the final mark is based on the qualities and strengths of the whole answer.

This answer provided all that was asked for by the mark scheme and so it would be awarded Level 4.

Common mistakes

1. Explaining the context of the situation and not relating it to the question. Candidates need to remember that they are required to find similarities and differences using the sources. They can use contextual knowledge to evaluate the sources but this is not what is being asked for in these questions.
2. Selecting quotes that do not match what the source is actually saying – this can affect whether the answer identifies similarities and differences between the sources correctly.
3. Evaluating by using stock responses such as a letter being personal so it must be true or it is from a newspaper so it is reporting facts and must be true or, alternatively, it is from a newspaper so must be biased.

Question Part

L2

dif

Yes

—

Plz
c
me

Sources C and D disagree on Prussia's responsibility for the outbreak of war with France in 1870. Source C believes that Prussia is innocent, while Source D knows Prussia's responsibility for causing the outbreak of war.

Source C states that "the clearer it appears to all eyes" that the sword was "forced" into their hands, and that Germany has done "all which honor and dignity permit". This means that source C believes that Prussia has no responsibility for the outbreak of the war with France, and that Prussia is the victim in this situation.

Source D knows of Prussia's responsibility for the outbreak of war with France. Source D states that the message Bismarck had edited had had a "different ring to it", and instead of it sounding like a "negotiation", it sounded like a "tidal wave in answer to a French insult and challenge". It also states that it is "important" that Germany gets attacked first. This shows that Source D believes in Prussia's responsibility for the outbreak of war with France.

Sources C and D

Question Part Marie Joseph

1	A	Sources A and B both agree that the cause of war was France's insult and challenge. Source A states that the "sword" was "forced" into their "hands." This shows that France's insult brought Prussia forced Prussia to respond, otherwise conflict would not have arisen. Source B states that
1	A	Sources A ^C and B ^D both agree that the cause of war was France's insult and challenge and the need to protect German honour. Source A ^C states that the "sword" was "forced" into their "hands" and that they must protect "Germany's honour." This shows that France's insult forced Prussia to respond, otherwise conflict would not have arisen, had Germany's honour not been questioned. Source B ^D states that the telegraph was an "answer" to "France's insult and challenge." This shows that Germans believe that the telegraph was a questioning of German honour as well as a response to the challenge.
		Sources A ^C and B ^D both disagree about on who the true aggressor was. Source C states that they were "forced" into action and that France were the true ones at fault. Source D states that the telegraph initially sounded like a "negotiation" and that they were a "red cape" in front of the "French bull" and that they should be the "party attacked." This shows that the Prussia technically initiated the war by waving the metaphorical cape to rile up France to respond. Source A ^C shows that the people of Germany believe that the fault lies in France, when in reality it was Prussia and Bismark's meddling.

sim

plz
c
me

write
very
well

Yes
good
point

L2

Yes
=

dis

L4

Question Part

a 1

but ok, need to tie more into prompt

Source C and D both agree to protect Germany from the war with France. Source D states "Success in the war will rely on the German effort to protect its honor." This shows that Germany will put in the effort in protecting their honor during the war. Source C states "to the love of the Fatherland and willingness to sacrifice ourselves to protect Germany's honor." This shows how Germany is willing to sacrifice themselves to protect their honor.

Sim L2 well

Source C and D both disagree on who started the war with France. Source C states "clearer it appears to all eyes that the sword has been forced into our hands today." This shows Kaiser Wilhelm I talking how France has forced Germany to war. Source D states "If I follow his Majesty's order and communicate my text, it will be known in Paris before midnight and will have the effect of a red cape upon the French bull." This shows that Kaiser Wilhelm is pushing tension towards France to start war.

L3 L4 with

yes

Dif

Jimena Albarron

Question Part

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sim
plz
c
me

write very well

dis
L3

Yes
good
point

L2

Yes
=

L4

Mayte Mondragon

Question Part

	a	b	disagree	victim	a	b	agree
	Sword has been forced	tidal wave to french	insult		Sword has been forced	Protect	honor

Sources ~~C~~ and ~~D~~ both ~~strongly~~ ^{not needed} agree that prussia should be the victim in this war. Source ~~C~~ states "The sword has been forced into our hands today." This shows that prussia is being made to fight against france and had no say in the matter of the war against France.

Source D states "it is important that we should be the party attacked." This shows that Prussia being the one to forced to fight France is key to making them seem like the victim in the war with France.

Sim L2 very good

Sources C and D both disagree ^{not needed} ~~strongly~~ that France started the war.

Source C states "North german confederation feels it done all which honor and dignity permit to maintain for europe the blessing of peace." This show's prussia thinks they did not provoke France or anger France into wanting war, that they have done what needs to be civil.

Source D states "it also depends upon the impression the start of the war makes upon us and others." This shows that prussia wanted to make it seem like war was brought to them because it was vital to the war →

Diff L3 yes

Question Part

even if in reality ~~they were the ones~~
~~who~~ Prussia was the one who started
 the war.

yes

Sources ~~A~~ C and D are ~~A~~
 both more different and strongly
 disagree that Prussia was the one
 who started the war and not France

History
 audience
 point of view
 purpose
 your opinion

The purpose for the author writing source
 C was to inform us how Prussia was
 not the one to start the war

The purpose for the author writing source
 D was to show us how Prussia made
 it seem like they were victims

L 4
yes

(The targeted audience for source C is
 the people of Prussia and outsiders
 why does this matter?)

Diani Morales

Question Part

A Sources C and D both agree that Prussia presented itself as acting in defense of German honor and responding to French provocation. In Source C, Kaiser Wilhelm I claims that war was "forced into our hands" and emphasizes protecting Germany's honor and independence, which frames Prussia as reacting rather than attacking. This idea is supported by Source D, where Bismark explains that his edited message was a response to a "French insult and challenge." Both sources therefore agree that Prussia justified the outbreak of war by portraying France as the aggressor and by appealing to national honor, helping unite the German states behind the conflict.

yes

good

not true

good

B The Sources C and D disagree strongly over how responsible Prussia actually was for starting the war. Source C denies Prussian responsibility by presenting the war as unavoidable and defensive, suggesting Prussia had "done all which honor and dignity permit." to maintain peace. In contrast, Source D reveals Prussian manipulation, as Bismark admits he edited the Ems Telegram to make it sound hostile and provoke France, comparing it to "a red cape upon the French bull." This shows that Prussia actively encouraged war rather than simply responding to French actions, meaning Source D contradicts Source C by implying -

yes

very good!

L3

Sim L2

Dif

L4

L3

Prussia played a key role in causing a conflict.