Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Thursday 23 May 2024 – Morning

A Level History A

Y311/01 The Origins and Growth of the British Empire 1558–1783

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

You must have:
- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS
- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

INFORMATION
- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets **[ ]**.
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE
- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

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SECTION A

Read the **two** passages and answer Question 1.

1 Evaluate the interpretations in both of the **two** passages.

Explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the reasons for privateering during the reign of Elizabeth I. **[30]**

Passage A

During Elizabeth I's reign the international atmosphere allowed for blatant acts of piracy. These violent and untrustworthy acts arose from a combination of religious differences and the search for economic prosperity. The Elizabethan pirates complemented and complicated an already anxious atmosphere. On the one hand, Spanish America was defenceless and England took advantage of the open seas and insecure lands to gain financial stability. On the other hand, Elizabeth feared the impact of pirating on her relationship with Philip II.

Different circumstances converged to produce a unique relationship between Elizabeth and her pirates. The New World's vast lands and abundance of natural resources intrigued the European world and England sought to benefit from its wealth. Beyond the state's interest in the Americas, private merchants and explorers began to covet Spanish America's assets. These men desired trade with the colonists, but Spain rejected pleas for open trade. In these moments of rejection merchants and explorers became pirates. John Hawkins's expeditions first sought trade accessibility, then plundered to gain profit. Francis Drake's expeditions, however, were nearly all piratical in nature. Religion and politics played a role in the voyages of Hawkins and Drake, although the quest for wealth was their primary concern.

The potential results of English pirating the seas of Spanish America engaged Elizabeth, recognising the potential wealth the expeditions could yield. By supporting Hawkins and Drake, Elizabeth benefitted economically and politically. This strategy became an intelligent form of cold war. Drake and Hawkins brought England wealth while weakening Spain, expanding geographical boundaries and defending England in the open seas. The pirates' aspirations of wealth at Spain's expense complemented those of the Queen.

D Jones, Royal Protectors, explorers and thieves: pirates of the Elizabethan cold war 1558–1585, published in 2000.

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Passage B

By the end of 1568, a crisis was approaching. Alva* had achieved a military victory over all his opponents in the Netherlands, including Louis of Nassau and William of Orange. There were few options open to Elizabeth to combat this danger to England's security. War was out of the question, for England did not have the military power to face Alva on equal terms, and the dangers of sending a small force to aid the Netherlanders were apparent. Harassment of Spain may have seemed the only viable policy. One method of harassment was to encourage the attempts of seamen to break through the Spanish trading monopoly, and perhaps Hawkins's voyages should be seen in this light. John Hawkins, who made three voyages in 1563, 1565 and 1567, sailed to West Africa, purchased or seized slaves there and sold them in Spanish America. In so doing, he was breaking the monopoly of the Portuguese king in West Africa and that of the Spanish king in Spanish America. Yet some of his ventures were financially backed by high-ranking court officials and even the Queen herself. Greed was no doubt a powerful motive, but aside from the profit motive there was a strong possibility that the trade was being used by the Crown as an instrument of its policies.

* Alva – The Duke of Alva was the Spanish governor of the Netherlands during the early years of the Dutch revolt.

S. Doran, England and Europe 1485–1603, published in 1986.

SECTION B

Answer any **two** questions.

2* ‘Of all the key individuals driving imperial expansion in the period from 1558 to 1783, Clive was the most important.’

How far do you agree? **[25]**

3* ‘Plantations were the most effective method of economic exploitation in the period from 1558 to 1783.’

How far do you agree with this view of British colonial rule? **[25]**

4* ‘The acquisition of raw materials was the most important effect of Empire on Britain in the period from 1558 to 1783.’

How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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