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History 7042

Additional Specimen Question Paper 1J (A-level)

Question 03 Student 2

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 1J (A-level): Additional specimen question paper**

**03** 'The consolidation and expansion of the British Empire in Africa between c1890 and 1914 owed more to the ambitions of key individuals than to economics.'

Assess the validity of this view.

**[25 marks]**

**Student response**

Britain, during the late 19th century, expanded greatly due to the pressures upon the owners of companies and also to realise Britain's dream of creating an enormous trading economy which could support itself. Their ability to maintain themselves was based heavily upon how they dealt with local tribes and how efficiently they organised the area under their jurisdiction. However, colonies under Britain's control were far more developed and made into effective trading markets, thus showing the importance of economics.

Certain individuals such as William Mackinnon and George Younger, ran companies which organised areas of the colonies in Africa. The East Africa Company had promised Sailsbury they could maintain the East African Coasts right up into the Great Lakes which were not established colonies by this time (the 1880s). Mackinnon and Younger did not have the history of achievements which the Royal Niger and Borneo companies had behind them, however, after showing some financial stability and an impressive board of directors, Sailsbury offered them a charter in 1888. By November 1889, Mackinnon had sent Frederick Lugard to Uganda to unite the country for Britain. Lugard was successful although the more he saw the ruination of the company due to the 500,000 pounds worth of expenses. In order to guarantee ownership for Britain Lugard had to settle wars between chieftains and then over religion which became a bloody affair. In the end, Lugard returned with signed treaties adopting the authoritative power of the East Africa company. However the decision to admit that British they could not maintain themselves with the debts. In 1893, a government agent relinquished the company's control over the country and went on to collapse just under two years thereafter. Harry Johnston was then put in charge by the British government and consolidated Britain's position in the area whilst making Uganda an official protectorate. This is an example of a "man on the spot" dominating a colony in the name of Britain and when it all fails the British government step in and sort it out.

It was a similar story for Sir George Goldie, who had intended to set up a monopoly. For this to work, he would have needed either the local tribal chieftains to only trade with him or the backing of the British government. He succeeded with Britain and ran one of the world's largest supplies of Palm oils, lubricants and coco beans. However, the collapse came after the expansion which had occurred up and around the River Niger. It was a positive move but Goldie admitted that he could not cope with an army backed financially by a whole nation. He had to concede and in 1900, Joe Chamberlain bought out the company, revoked its charter and turned all the territories into a colony for the crown. Goldie wanted to stop representing the company as the effort required was becoming much greater, however, the fact that the British had to once

again consolidate the position, which was created by “a man on the spot” seems to strike a pattern.

In the Cape colony, Cecil Rhodes organised and oversaw everything that happened, this input brought the addition of colonies such as Matabeleland and Southern Rhodesia, Mashonaland etc... which surrounded South Africa's borders. However, after the Jameson raid in 1895, Rhodes' ambition to create a British hegemony over South Africa was realised and he was forced to step down. The commissioner of the Cape, Alfred Milner attended a meeting in Bloemfontein where he attempted to box the Boer president Paul Kruger, over the voting rights of British workers in the Rand Mine Gold Fields. Milner did not back down after Kruger tried to compromise which opens the argument about whether or not Milner forced the back loss from the Boers. A.J.P. Taylor said that the 1st Boer war was “Milner's War” which turned out to be an expensive war. Roughly 250 million pounds was spent supplying soldiers and resources and this finally opened the eyes of the British public. They understood the extravagance of Empire and the 1st Boer War was a turning point in people's attitudes towards Empire. Britain won and reannexed the Transvaal and Orange Free State, however, the British State could not cover up and inspire the usual jingoism which occurs after a military victory. There was an expansion but one which unearthed the costs of Empire.

Economics did also inspire and affect how the Empire grew and changed. For example, continuing with South Africa, the Boers had a yearly income of £600,000 pounds. By 1890, their income was 1 million per annum after the discovery of riches in Witwatersrand. It became wealthier than the Cape and could afford a range of improvements from railways to armaments. The British were not too eager to let their neighbours' new found wealth leave the Cape behind and wanted to take it. It also had more exercisable excuses such as, it wanted to protect the 75 million pounds worth of British investment in the Rand Mine Gold Fields. Although, despite all of this, it was necessary to make sure there was no rioting by the Boers for if it became a big thing, then word would reach Ireland who were very discontent under the British and would happily revolt. So the newly found diamonds could be argued that this was an added bonus for Cecil Rhodes' original ambition to dominate South Africa.

There were various colonies which Britain were interested in but some were already under European nations' protection. In such circumstances a compromise had to be made, Zanzibar was at the end of the Suez Canal which provided trading to the centre of Africa and India. In addition to this, it brought in roughly 5 million pounds worth of trading and finance per year, for Britain proposed a swap between the two nations for Zanzibar and Heligoland. Heligoland was a small collection of rocky islands off the coast of Germany. They were of no use to Britain and made for a very convenient compromise which saw an increase in British territory and financial prowess. Its main imports were spices and rubber which come over from the Middle East. Their territorial expansion was positive and had a firm economic advantage for the British however the strategic point was probably more influential in the decision.

Finally, Nigeria, which was under the leadership of Goldie during its expansion, having the River Niger as the attraction, The Niger would use trade within the company and would help Goldie realise his trading monopoly. After expanding into and as far wide as it would, Goldie stepped down and Chamberlain named Nigeria a British protectorate whilst also naming Lugard as the man in charge. Lugard introduced a Dual mandate between the people and this increased the already large distributor of how beans from 4% to 25% of the Global Market. The other main economic interest was the Palm Oil and other assorted lubricants which were used to make products such as soap. This investment was very beneficial by the time of the First World War.

Therefore, I conclude that Nigeria had expanded in pursuit of more trade and to increase the number of foreign goods coming into Britain.

Therefore, as we can see from the evidence presented by the expansion of the Empire and the decisions made by men on the spot are inextricably linked. These individuals were important in Imperial Africa and made the big decisions on the future of the colonies. They managed areas where the British government could not reach quickly and affected everything from finances to war. Although we cannot deny that there were several other factors involved, the most predominant of these being the economic aspect of each colony.

#### **Commentary – Level 4**

The answer demonstrates an impressive grasp of detail with an appropriate focus on the role of individuals and then on the importance of economics. The conclusion suggests an interrelationship of the two, although the preceding analysis does not develop this key idea. The one major concern with this answer is that there is a tendency to become overly narrative in places without sufficient references to the question. This is a Level 4 answer.