



History 7042
Specimen Question Paper 2E (A-level)
Question 03 Student 4
Specimen Answer and Commentary

V1.0

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 2E (A-level): Specimen question paper

02 Religion was the main reason for conflict between Crown and Parliament in the years 1625 to 1629.'

Assess the validity of this view.

[25 marks]

Student response

When all of the reasons are fully assessed, it is clear that- although religion did raise tensions significantly- religion was not the main reason for the conflict between Crown and Parliament. For blame to be apportioned fairly, it is important to see how each reason for the conflict affects the other reasons. When looking at evidence for each reason, Charles' firm belief in royal prerogative and divine right appears to be at the root of each issue.

Although it was not the main reason for conflict between Crown and Parliament, religion did cause a huge amount of tension between them. Charles' enthusiasm to advance Arminian's in the Church- like William Laud- and force the rest of the country to share his views created a great divide in the population and caused resentment against himself from Parliament. By allowing William Laud to preach a sermon at the opening session of his first Parliament, Charles alienated and frustrated his Low Church, Protestant Parliament. The Arminian belief that Bishops were support for the monarchy and the pulpit should be used to preach sermons supporting the divine right of kings, along with the York House Conference in 1626, headed by the Duke of Buckingham (another reason for conflict), showed Charles' crave for power. By allowing the commons to protest the direction of religion yet not let them have the power to change anything at the York House Conference, Charles' belief in divine right was both oppressing and angering Parliament. The level at which religion effected Parliament is reflected in Elliot's three resolutions in which Parliament declared that anyone promoting Arminianism was condemned a "capital enemy to the King".

Parliament's belief in Parliamentary privilege caused them to challenge the monarchy on issues that were not considered to have been their concern, adding to the tensions which built up to the conflict. However, despite being a large contributor to the issue, this did not influence all reasons for the conflict and was therefore not the main reason. Parliament began reacting to Charles' policies and decisions that the disagreed with in more extreme ways- like Elliot's three resolutions in 1629, part of which was influenced by taxation- which Charles considered to be a personal attack on both his authority over the country and also the loyalty of his subjects. The assault placed on the speaker in 1629 was seen as an assault on the King himself and was the final straw for Charles, he reacted by proroguing Parliament for eleven years. Parliament reacted like this because they were genuinely perturbed about the direction in which the country was headed. Charles did not see it like this however and believed that all issues concerning how the country was run were down to him and that Parliament's only job was to provide taxation money, such as Tonnage and Poundage.

Taxation caused huge levels of tension between Parliament and Charles because both parties were now changing the way taxation happened and did not always agree with how tax money was being spent in a way that would be most successful, which affected some other causes of conflict but not all of them. Since Parliament had gained some power during James' reign, and were able to restrict Charles' allowance of Tonnage and Poundage to just one year rather than the lifetime supply every other monarch had been granted, Charles felt betrayed and as though his God given rights as King were being undermined. When Charles took it upon himself to collect money in the form of the forced loan and prosecuted five gentlemen in what was widely known as the Five Knight's case, ideological issues were raised supporting a further involvement of Parliament in decisions made regarding the country. Since Charles believed that, due to Divine Right, he was able to do as he pleased and found that this form of taxation was much faster than going through Parliament and he received more subsidies, he wanted to continue taxation in this way.

This issue with taxation also contributed heavily in the arguments based on foreign policy. One of the main problem when regarding foreign policy was the complete misunderstanding of the costs of seventeenth century warfare. Due to this misunderstanding, Parliament believed they were being very generous with the subsidies being provided for the expeditions and were therefore resentful and felt unappreciated when Charles refused to thank them and criticised their slowness in getting the money together. His refusal to explain crown policy to Commons when regarding warfare, since he believed that if they were loyal they wouldn't need an explanation put huge strains on relations. At the beginning of Charles' reign, it appeared that foreign policy was something that both Parliament and Charles agreed on, since both parties were adamant on going to war with Spain. However, the military failure in the Cadiz expedition- led by Buckingham- caused Parliament to lose trust in Charles and led them to be more sceptic towards his decisions, since he allowed Buckingham to lead an important expedition without any military experience. When the second expedition to La Rochelle- once again led by Buckingham- failed, Parliament introduced the Petition of Right.

It is difficult to prove that the Duke of Buckingham was not a large cause of conflict. Buckingham's failure in multiple military commissions was just one of the many factors that resulted in George Villiers himself being a reason for the conflict between Charles and Parliament. Buckingham's strong Catholic relations and rumours linking him to James' death and dabbling in witchcraft and black magic, increased his unpopularity further. His domination of both James and Charles' affection, amorally gained wealth, and large levels of control over power in court, angered Parliament and caused Charles' subjects to find it difficult to respect and trust their King. The increase in Buckingham's power during Charles' reign- for example he removed potential rivals from the Privy Council and the court, and began to formulate policy's almost entirely without restraint- caused Parliament to demand the King for the Duke of Buckingham to be impeached. Charles always refused to allow this to happen due to their long term friendship and he became more and more obsessed with protecting and defending the Duke.

As shown in evidence mentioned earlier, Charles' belief in royal prerogative was the main reason for conflict between Crown and Parliament. Charles' stubborn personality caused him to have an obsession with loyalty and he was unable to handle criticism well without seeing it as an attack on him personally. When people resented Charles for attempting to force Arminianism on them, he did not consider why the Church of England had been set up and continued to advance Arminian clerics since he believed it was his right as head of the church. Charles was

not wrong about his right however, had he listened to his subjects and to Parliament, he may have been more popular. Because Charles was incredibly impertinent with Parliament and saw them only as a way to get money, they often felt resentful and angered. Their demand for Charles to sign the Petition of Right in 1628 was rational since the main points were fait accompli from the Magna Carta. Charles' feelings towards the change in Tonnage and Poundage was understandable, however his set up of the forced loan was not. By prosecuting the five knights without habeas corpus, Charles created martyrs and put the freedom of English people in danger. His persistence in war against Catholic's did boost Charles' popularity, however the repeated failures did nothing but cause Parliament and the public to question how well Charles was running the country. His refusal to reassign the title of Admiral to someone who had naval experience, in the hopes that Buckingham would lead the troops to victory and the people would reconsider their feelings towards him, angered Parliament a lot and led them to want more power over decisions.

In conclusion, there were multiple aspects of seventeenth century monarchy and government that put a strain on relations between Crown and Parliament. When considering every aspect that caused conflict between Parliament and Charles, it is obvious that Charles' belief in royal prerogative was the main reason.

Commentary – Level 3

The answer does consider a range of reasons for the conflict but has some weaknesses which limit the effectiveness of the response. The assessment of the importance of religion is somewhat weak. There are serious errors and a lack of development (in relation, for example, to the York House Conference). There is also some tendency to present generalised and unsupported comment: did Parliament gain power under James, and if so, what power and how significant was it? There is also some confusion over the exact direction of foreign policy in the period. The assessment of the importance of Buckingham is strong, but there needed to be a clearer distinction made between the relative importance of Charles' beliefs and personality which are largely conflated. This has the potential for a strong answer but is not fulfilled. It is a Level 3 answer.