

2006 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

Modern History

Section I (continued)

Question 2 (10 marks)

Explain why US entry into World War I proved to be the most significant of the war's turning points.

Use Sources A and B and your own knowledge to answer this question.

By 1917, the war looked like it was turning against the allied powers. The constant battles and trench warfare in the continuous attempts to break the stalemate resulted in many troops from the Army being 'forced to retire' (Source B). The failing battles of attrition, such as Verdun in 1916, ~~and~~ the disastrous Somme in 1916 and also Passchendaele meant, ~~that~~ according to Lloyd George they were at 'the crisis of the war'. Also, the U-boat attacks on British food supplies affected the homefront, as well as the troops in a sense that resources were becoming scarce. Morale on both sides was dwindling. The German's attack on the US neutral shipping resulted in the US government finally declaring war on Germany. However, according to Source A it 'took her many months to raise and equip an army to send to Europe'.

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Question 2 (continued)

It was the psychological impact of the millions of potential US troops, all fresh and healthy, that had a great impact on both the Allies and the Germans. For the Allies, it meant they had USA's industrial capabilities supporting them and new troops to relieve their casualties, ~~and also~~ for the Germans, the effect was devastating. Germany knew that to continue a battle of attrition with the Allies now would end in their ultimate defeat, thus German general Ludendorff organised the 'Spring Offensive' as a result of the US involvement. According to Source A 'the defeat of Russia in the East allowed Germany to send massive reinforcements', and therefore the attack was launched in March 1918. However, with the French and British morale boosted, the offensive, whilst severely damaged both sides, the surplus troops and the newly devised tactics such as 'bite and hold' method, resulted in the Allied counter-offensive. In this way, the US' entry into World War One was crucial, as it impacted both psychologically and physically, as shown in the sources.

End of Question 2