



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Tuesday 21 May 2019 – Afternoon

A Level History A

Y317/01 China and its Rulers 1839–1989

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet
(OCR12 sent with general stationery)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Answer Question 1 in Section A and any **two** questions in Section B.
- Write your answers in the Answer Booklet. The question number(s) must be clearly shown.

INFORMATION

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

SECTION A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in both of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the causes of the First Opium War. [30]

Passage A

This story must be understood from both European and Chinese viewpoints. There was a landmark British reconnaissance voyage along the Chinese coast made in 1832, but the administrators of the Qing had bigger, internal worries. Three weeks before... a major rebellion had erupted... The news from the south was for too long worryingly bad. When the rebels in Hunan were defeated, a related revolt exploded further south. There was also rebellion in Taiwan, and there were bad harvests. Hundreds of the troops from Canton were found to be useless because addicted to opium. Something was wrong: Canton was rotten. This was the real worry in the 1830s: the seeming ineffectiveness of the administration and military in the south due to their poisoning by the foreign drug, opium.

The Qing authorities had decided to act decisively to deal with the disorder and corruptions that the opium boom gave rise to. Officials knew that the imbalance in trade was destabilising regional economies and the Imperial treasury. They knew the impact of opium addiction, and of smuggling. Imperial decrees prohibiting the drug were being flouted; it was time to act. The course of events that followed is well known. How Lin Zexu was sent as a special commissioner to investigate the problem in Canton and to put a stop to the opium trade, how he set about making his mark. The Canton British sent representatives back to Britain to lobby for proper action. The pressure on the British Cabinet to vote for war grew. On 1 October 1839 the decision was taken.

Adapted from: R. Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire 1832–1914*, published in 2012.

Passage B

There were other issues [than opium] that may have been for the London government even more important. They had, in principle, to do with state equality and sovereignty. These matters started to come to a head when supervision of the traders at Canton was shifted from the East India Company to an official appointed by the British Crown and government. From that point on, London, very conscious of having so recently beaten Napoleon Bonaparte and owning the greatest navy in the world, flatly rejected China's insistence that the British "headman" could only communicate with provincial Chinese authorities indirectly and by way of "petition", instead of on terms of diplomatic equality.

There was also general irritation with Chinese constraints on trade and confinement of the Western traders to Canton lest, in the view of the imperial authorities, too many foreigners roaming around the empire should disturb the tranquility of Chinese life. Yet the British, like everyone else, were dazzled by the prospect of a limitless Chinese market, if only they could get there, beyond Canton. So they wanted more ports opened to trade, and proper diplomatic relations at Beijing. It would, among other things, and by increasing British earnings in China, make the opium sales much less necessary. Above all, free trade was becoming a moral imperative.

The real issues for the British therefore became not opium but jurisdiction, ultimately sovereignty, expansion of trade and by no means least the safety of British men, women and children threatened, chased away or imprisoned without charge or trial.

Adapted from: H.G. Gelber, 'China as "Victim"? The Opium War That Wasn't', *Harvard University Center for European Studies Working Paper Series 136*, published in 2006.

SECTION B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** 'The nature of Chinese government saw more continuity than change in the period 1839–1989.'
How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 3*** 'Chinese governments failed to modernise the economy throughout the period 1839–1989.'
How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4*** 'The Communist takeover of 1949 was the most significant turning point in the development of Chinese society in the years 1839–1989.' How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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