



**Answer the following question.****Nominated topic: The period 1789–1792 and the descent into civil and foreign wars**

- 1 Study the following documents and answer all the questions which follow. In evaluating and commenting upon the documents, it is essential to set them alongside, and to make use of, your own contextual knowledge.

**A** *A radical Jacobin expresses his opposition to war in a debate in the Jacobin Club.*

What position should the Nation take to its internal and external enemies? No one doubts that we are threatened by powerful enemies abroad. However, the most extravagant idea that can be born in a politician's head is to believe that it is enough for a country to invade a foreign people to make them adopt its laws and constitution. No one loves armed missionaries; and the first instinct of nature is to repulse them as enemies. Before the effects of our Revolution can be perceptible to foreign nations, it is necessary that they should be consolidated within France. War in the hands of the present government is only a means to undermine the constitution, only the climax of a profound conspiracy to destroy liberty. Favouring the cause of war is to serve the cause of liberty badly.

Robespierre, *Discourse on War*, 11 January 1792.

**B** *Another radical Jacobin responds to Robespierre in the debate.*

Will anyone deny that the émigrés succeeded in gathering forces at Worms, at Coblenz to threaten us with future invasion? Does anyone deny the considerable aid given to them by various princes? France must crush its impudent neighbours to stop these menaces; it is obvious that we are not free to want or not to want war. It is not our aggression, for we are being attacked; our security is in danger. The French court wants war and it is necessary to be wary of its secret intentions. The fears that some have about the government are well founded. The people do not have control over the government, and it was truly criminal that the Constitution deprived the people of this influence. However, the Constitution puts the direction of the army in the King's hands. It should remain there, but all his actions should be carefully watched.

J. P. Brissot, *Third Discourse on the Necessity of War*, 20 January 1792.

**C** *The US ambassador sends a report to President Washington about the support for war.*

The situation of France's finances is such that every considerate person sees the impossibility of going on in the present way; as a change of system is dangerous among a people so wild and ungovernable, it has appeared to them that a war would furnish some plausible pretext for measures of a very decisive nature. Others suppose that, in case of a war, there would be a leaning from the King towards his brothers, from the Queen to the Emperor, from the few nobles who remain towards the mass of nobles who have left the kingdom. They suppose that the people then would be persuaded to banish all of them and set up a republic. Lastly, the aristocrats, most of them poor, and all of them proud, hope that, supported by foreign armies, they should be able to return victorious and re-establish the despotism most suited to their greed. It happens that the whole nation, though with different views, are desirous of war.

Gouverneur Morris, letter, January 1792.

**D** *A Paris newspaper reports on the popularity of a new war song, 'La Marseillaise'.*

At present, people in all the theatres are requesting the song 'Forward Children of the Fatherland'. The words are by M. Rouget. The troops from Marseilles brought it. They sang this martial tune in all the villages they passed through and the words truly make one shiver!

Forward children of the homeland!  
 The Day of Glory is upon us;  
 Against us, the bloody standard  
 Of tyranny is raised.  
 Do you hear the ferocious soldiers,  
 Bellowing in the fields?  
 They come into your very midst  
 To slaughter your sons, your wives!  
 To arms, citizens, form your battalions.  
 What do they want, this horde of slaves,  
 Of traitors, of conspiratorial kings?  
 For whom are these vile fetters,  
 These shackles so long prepared?  
 What? These foreign troops  
 Would lay down the law in our homes!

Great God! By means of shackled hands  
 Our heads would bend before the yoke!  
 Vile despots would become  
 The masters of our Destiny!  
 Liberty! Beloved Liberty!  
 Fight alongside your defenders!

*Paris Chronicle, 29 August 1792.*

**E** *A modern historian considers the reasons for war in 1792.*

The Brissotins, when they began to make warlike speeches in September 1791, were anxious to take the leadership in the National Assembly and to undermine the political influence of rival groups. The war supporters were also responding to the threat of hostile forces abroad. They misjudged these forces and exaggerated the threat. Prussian policy was more concerned with Poland. The Emperor was concerned for his sister, Marie-Antoinette, but was content with passively observing developments. The British government had remained neutral. The war, when it came, was mainly against the French émigrés. King, court and ministers, for their part, expected to recover their authority, either at the hands of victorious foreign armies, or at the head of victorious French ones.

*J. F. Bosher, The French Revolution, 1989.*

- (a) To what extent does Document B challenge the view of Document A about the necessity for war in 1792? [10]
- (b) How convincing is the evidence provided by this set of documents for the view that the war of 1792 arose out of misjudgement and lack of understanding on the part of those in France who advocated it?

In making your evaluation, you should refer to contextual knowledge as well as to all the documents in this set (A–E). [20]

**Answer one of the following questions.** *Where appropriate, your essay should make use of any relevant documents you have studied as well as contextual knowledge.*

- 2 Assess the view that Louis XVI was poorly served by his leading ministers between 1774 and 1788. [30]
- 3 What best accounts for the loss of royal power during 1789? [30]
- 4 Why was there so much political violence in France in the years 1793–94? [30]

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