Pearson Edexcel Level 3 GCE

History

Advanced
Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations
Option 1F: In search of the American dream: the USA, c1917–96

Friday 9 June 2017 – Morning
Extracts Booklet

Paper Reference
9HI0/1F

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Extracts for use with Section C.

Extract 1: From David Stockman, *The Great Deformation: The Corruption of Capitalism in America*, published 2013.

The long ago Reagan-era battle of the budget ended in dismal failure. Notwithstanding decades of Republican speech-making about Ronald Reagan's rebuke to 'big government', it never happened. Republican administrations whose slogan was 'smaller government' only made big government bigger. Republican hypocrisy about the evils of deficit finance was evident. Almost nobody was willing to challenge the core components that comprise big government. Thus, the giant social insurance programs of Medicare and Social Security had barely been scratched; means-tested entitlements had been modestly reformed but had saved very little money because there weren't so many welfare queens* after all; farm subsidies and veterans' benefits had not been cut because these were Republican voters; and the Education Department had emerged standing tall because middle-class families demanded their student loans and grants. In all, Ronald Reagan had left the 'welfare state' barely one-half of 1 percent of GDP smaller than that in the late 1970s, and added a massive structural deficit as well. In fact, Reagan was an out-and-out supporter of big government in the realm of the military and national security. All the well-warranted scepticism he had about big government did not apply to the Pentagon. Nor did he have any sense that money spent on defense imposed the same burden on taxpayers and drain on the economy as did all other kinds of government spending.

* welfare queens – a term used to indicate those supposedly living prosperous lives from welfare fraud

Extract 2: From Andrew Busch, *Ronald Reagan and the Politics of Freedom*, published 2001.

The Reagan coalition, declared dead by many commentators after 1992, proved itself quite alive in the 1994 elections. Essentially the combination of voters that had appeared at the presidential level in 1980, 1984, and 1988 reappeared in 1994 to give Republicans control of both houses of Congress for the first time in forty years. They retained this control (albeit by somewhat narrower margins) throughout the 1990s. The coalition also proved powerful enough to block most major expansions of government, or when that failed in the 1990 and 1993 tax increases, to exact a sharp revenge, first against George Bush and then against congressional Democrats. Indeed, much of what the supporters of big government have called 'stalemate' or 'gridlock' in the two decades since Reagan took office has been a consequence of the continuing power of Reagan's new coalition to balance and block the old coalition's appetite for bigger government. Before 1980, America lacked a strong electoral coalition for limited government. By 1988, it had one.

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