

Higher - Paper 2, Option 11
The Road to War 1933-39 (Section 2)

Source A is from statements made to the press by Churchill after his visit to Mussolini, the Italian fascist dictator in 1927.

To a question of the personal impression which signor Mussolini made upon him Mr Churchill replied:

I could not help being charmed, like so many other people have been, by his gentle and simple bearing and by his calm, detached poise in spite of so many burdens and dangers.

Mr Churchill declined to discuss Fascism in its national aspect, he said:

Different countries have different ways of doing the same thing...If I had been an Italian, I am sure that I should have been whole-heartedly with you from start to finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism. But in England we have not yet had to face his danger in the same deadly form.... But that we shall succeed in grappling with Communism and choking the life out of it – of that I am absolutely sure.*

*Leninism - Communism

Extract from press statements made by Churchill, January 1927 (Churchill Papers, CHAR 9/82B)

Source B is from a letter written to Churchill on April 15, 1936 by Sylvia Pankhurst. In it she refers to the Hoare/Laval pact.

The danger to world peace and to the freer nations arising from the Fascist dictator states, of which you write, has been present in my mind from the first. In the days when I read, with regret, speeches favourable to the Mussolini regime from yourself and others, I was already working strenuously to bring this danger before the British public. The ideals and practices of Fascism are obviously directed towards war and conquest.

It is for this reason that it was and is specially important to prevent a victory for Italian Fascism in Africa. To permit Fascism to reap a victory there would be absolutely disastrous....

...The British public is long suffering and slow to move, but the national consciousness has been deeply impressed by the ideal of the League of Nations and collective security.

...Meanwhile, the British public was gulled by the utterances of Sir Samuel Hoare and Mr Eden at the League of Nations, and by the declarations of Mr Baldwin on the eve of the Election, to believe that the British Government was taking the lead in imposing sanctions to check the aggression and uphold the Covenant of the League. Malice, weakness and folly have produced the greatest betrayal of history.”*

*gulled – fooled

Extract from letter by Sylvia Pankhurst to Churchill, 15 April 1936 (Churchill Papers, CHAR 7/32)

Source C is an election poster issued by Churchill's son in February 1936.



(Churchill Papers, CHAR 2/287)

Source based activities suitable for candidates preparing for Higher:

Answer all of the following questions.

- 1) 'The British public has been deeply impressed by the ideals of the League of Nations and the policy of collective Security.'
What 'ideals' and 'policy' was the writer of source B referring to?
- 2) How useful are sources A and B as evidence of attitudes towards the rise of fascism in the inter-war years?
- 3) How fully does the evidence in sources B and C support the view that public opinion was opposed to the Hoare Laval agreement ?
- 4) How far do sources A and B explain the differing attitudes towards fascism in the inter-war years?
- 5) 'Malice, weakness and folly from Messers Laval and Hoare have produced the greatest betrayal in history.'
How far do you agree with the view expressed in source B about the Hoare Laval agreement?

