Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 24 May 2023 – Morning

A Level History A

Y319/01 Civil Rights in the USA 1865–1992

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes

You must have:
- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS
- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

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

ADVICE
- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

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SECTION A

Read the **two** passages and 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 weak position of organised labour during the Gilded Age. **[30]**

Passage A

Increasing industrialisation did result in the development and growth of a number of unions. However, after the violence of the Haymarket affair, the Knights of Labor collapsed. It was not just the violence of the Haymarket affair that affected membership of unions, but also the Homestead strike, which virtually bankrupted the Union, and the Pullman strike. There were also obvious divisions within the workforce. In this period, the arrival of African American workers in the labour market after the abolition of slavery and the end of the Civil War meant that white workers no longer enjoyed a monopoly of the labour market. Former slaves were now available for employment in the growing industries and accepted lower rates of pay. Employers exploited this, firing white workers and replacing them with African Americans. The position of white workers was made more difficult by the arrival of new immigrants from Europe, as well as Asia, which only added to the available pool of workers. Existing unions saw these arrivals as a significant challenge and therefore refused to allow them to join the unions, which further limited the size of the unions and therefore their ability to exert pressure on employers. A divided, rather than a united, workforce, made it easier for employers to exploit them.

Adapted from: N. Fellows and M. Wells, Civil Rights in the USA 1865–1992, published in 2019.

Passage B

Divisions within the workforce impeded the development of the kind of unity and solidarity that labour needed in order to assert its rights and be recognised. Instead, employers were able not only to reject any concept of labour rights but also exploit the divisions. Hence, in times of unrest, white Americans and immigrant workers were laid off and replaced by black labour. The ability of the workforce to protest was fundamentally weakened by poverty and the need to survive. Troublemakers were dismissed and labelled as such, making it harder for them to find other employment. This did much to impede the emergence of the kind of assertive leadership necessary to unite the labour force and win change and reform.

However, there were other powerful factors at work, other than the divided workforce, that impacted on the slow progress towards union organisation and the acquisition of labour rights. It could be argued that a significant factor was the power of employers. One source of their strength was the laissez-faire* policy pursued by the government. This effectively empowered capitalists to form powerful business corporations. This made it possible for a small number of highly successful capitalists to control several key industries and, in the process, come to monopolise them. As a result, manufacturers could and did cut wages without warning, lay off workers and change working hours. Employers resisted any kind of union organisation and, in some cases, employed labour spies to root out potential disruptive elements. The use of armed force in the event of attempted strikes was not unusual. The fact that not only the authorities, but also the courts, supported the employers further limited the development of labour representation.

*laissez-faire – minimum interference

Adapted from: D. Paterson, D. Willoughby, S. Willoughby, Civil Rights in the USA 1865–1992, published in 2009.

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SECTION B

Answer any **two** questions.

2* ‘The roles of the Federal and State governments were the most important factors in the development of African American civil rights in the period from 1865 to 1992.’ How far do you agree? **[25]**

3* To what extent did Union and Labour rights improve in the period from 1865 to 1992? **[25]**

4* ‘The Roe v Wade judgement was the most important turning point in the development of women’s rights in the period from 1865 to 1992.’ How far do you agree? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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