Paper 1: AS Level sample answer with comments

Section C

These questions require you to read and analyse two sources carefully in order to develop a response which examines and makes an informed judgement about different interpretations. The best answers:

- · need to show an understanding of the extracts and identify the key points of interpretation
- · deploy own knowledge to develop points emerging from extracts and provide necessary context
- develop a judgement after developing and weighing up different interpretations.

Study Extracts 6 and 7 (pages 125 and 126) before you answer this question.

Historians have different views about how revolutionary, in the years to 1701, the Glorious Revolution was. Analyse and evaluate the extracts and use your knowledge of the issues to explain your answer to the following question.

How far do you agree with the view that the power of parliament increased as a result of the Glorious Revolution?

Strong student answer

The two extracts have quite different perspectives and develop points related to their arguments. Vallance in Extract 6 argues that the Triennial Act led to a period of 'feverish electioneering', while Horwitz in Extract 7 states that, as parliament became more important, the power of the king's government, and demand for places in it, became more pronounced. Both authors provide evidence to advance their arguments: Vallance gives election statistics, whereas Horwitz refers to the accounts of contemporaries involved in parliament and government. Vallance also refers to the Nine Years' War as an important turning point, suggesting that William became closer to the Whig Party in order to 'prosecute his war against Louis more effectively'.

Horwitz argues that the Revolution resulted in 'the enhanced importance of parliament', and it is important to be aware of the reasons why historians have come to this conclusion. Although the prevailing Whig view was that the Revolution was peaceful and sensible, resulting in minimal change, some Enlightenment thinkers, as well as more recent revisionist historians, have suggested that the Revolution was a transformative event that enhanced the power of parliament. There is certainly evidence to show that the Bill of Rights of 1689 enhanced the power of parliament. The monarchy was severely restricted in its control over the army and taxation, as well as making it clear that elections should be regular and free. The Bill of Rights has been criticised, however, for not making it clear how arbitrary monarchs could be removed and for not actually setting out how often elections could take place. Vallance, too, says that the Triennial Act ushered in a period of 'feverish electioneering', suggesting that as elections became more regular, political passions became stronger. Although both authors give weight to the role of the Triennial Act, parliamentary authority would not have been possible without the Bill of Rights.

In order to put Vallance's argument about parliament becoming more important into context, it is important to stress that William needed parliament in order to legitimise his rule. He was invited to England by parliament as a result of James II's absolutist policies. William's wife, Mary Stuart, was the closest living appropriate successor and, most importantly, they were both Protestant. William effectively had no choice but to concede power to parliament. Earlier monarchs, such as Charles I, had argued that parliament's only role was to approve taxes, but in 1689 this was simply not an option. In 1697, parliament illustrated their power when they passed the Civil List Act. This granted £700,000 per year to William for life, in order to cover his expenses. Although he was still vastly powerful, he still needed to gain the approval of parliament.

An effective opening paragraph that is driven by the extracts and identifies their key arguments. It cites some of the evidence put forward and begins to set up the debate.

This paragraph argues the case that parliament gained from the Glorious Revolution. Some effective specific evidence is deployed and a good knowledge of the historical debate is shown.

This paragraph demonstrates a good understanding of the context of Vallance's argument, and uses factual knowledge to back up the argument.

While it is true that parliament became an important part of the political system, Horwitz suggests that, with increasing parliamentary power, William actually benefitted. Horwitz states that 'there was never a shortage of suitors for offices in the Crown's gift'. Here, Horwitz is putting forward the argument that parliamentarians were keen to take up appointments in the Privy Council and royal court. Horwitz also states that 'seats in the Commons were more and more stepping-stones to office', and that gentlemen were more interested in gaining a seat at court than in parliament. There is much evidence to support the view that the Crown benefitted from the Revolution. For example, many of the demands contained within the Declaration of Rights were not implemented through the Bill of Rights, and William still behaved as a fiercely independent monarch.

Vallance states that William formed a close alliance with the Whig party, in part to mount a successful war against France. The 'Whig Junto' that formed around William became very influential, and this caused suspicion and jealousy from Tory MPs. Parliament became more fragmented as a result of this rivalry, and Vallance continues 'voting in the Commons was conducted largely along party lines'. This actually enhanced the power of the king, as he could be presented as a figure of continuity and strength when pitted against the disjoined parliament. After all, William still had the power to appoint his own advisers, and he controlled foreign policy as he still had the power to declare war, meet foreign delegations and sign treaties. He spent several years away from England fighting in the Nine Years' War, and there was nothing that parliament could do to prevent him doing this. They attempted to restrict his financial independence by limiting the amount of troops they would fund for him, but he resorted to levying a variety of short-term and long-term loans to cover the huge expense of the war.

Overall, the balance of the argument seems to favour Vallance's argument that the Revolution, in particular the Triennial Act, enhanced the power of parliament and ensured regular elections. This is especially evident when the situation after 1689 is compared with what came earlier in the century. Under Charles I, for example, parliament had little role in the governing of the country, and it was generally accepted that parliament simply existed in order to assist the king in raising taxes. Horwitz is correct in asserting that William still commanded great respect and parliamentarians were keen to join his Council, but the Bill of Rights and later Act of Settlement ensured that parliament was now a permanent and important part of the constitution.

Shows an attempt to provide balance and context. Horwitz's argument is backed up with some contextual knowledge of the Declaration of Rights, although this could be expanded further.

This is attempting to show that, as parliament became more divided, the power of the monarch was enhanced. Some more statistical or factual information to back up the argument would help here.

The concluding paragraph comes to a clear judgement based on the balance of the evidence.

Verdict

This is a strong response because:

- it identifies and illustrates the arguments of the two extracts, and demonstrates an excellent understanding of them, analysing the issues raised through comparison of them
- it deploys a sound range of specific evidence in most cases to develop points emerging from the extracts in order to provide a sense of the context
- it develops an argument that considers both interpretations and tries to provide balance, and a clear judgement is made that is supported by a combination of source analysis and contextual knowledge.
- Communication and organisation are excellent throughout.