UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Admissions Testing Service

HISTORY ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT **D566/12**

Wednesday 2 November 2016 **60 minutes**

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SECTION 2

Candidate number	F						Centre number					

	d	d		m	m		y	y	y	y
Date of birth			–			–				

First name(s)	

Surname / Family name	

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Please read these instructions carefully, but do not open the question paper until you are told that you may do so. This paper is Section 2 of 2.

This question paper requires you to read two passages and answer a related question.

You should write your answer in the space provided in this question paper. Please complete this section in **black pen**.

You can use the blank inside front and back covers for rough working or notes, but no extra paper is allowed. Only answers in the space indicated in the paper will be marked.

Dictionaries may NOT be used.

Please wait to be told you may begin before turning this page.

This question paper consists of 13 printed pages and 3 blank pages.

PV1

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Duelling and British politics, 1798-1850

The point of this task is to explore your ability to handle historical evidence and how you work with it. It is not designed as a test of knowledge so no previous knowledge is expected or required. Please think not just about the differences and similarities between the events described in the accounts, but also about what we might learn from these extracts about the culture of politics in this society. For example, what might these extracts tell us about the ways in which politicians were expected to behave, or about attitudes towards violence in this society? There may be other points that you want to comment on. A glossary of some words that may be unfamiliar is given at the end of the extracts.

TASK

In your own words, compare and contrast the views of duelling expressed in these passages.

Extract 1

The *Times* reports a duel between the Prime Minister, William Pitt, and his political opponent George Tierney in May 1798. At the time of the duel, Britain was at war with France.

We are authorised to state, that in consequence of what passed on Friday last in the House of Commons, which produced a challenge from Mr Tierney, Mr Pitt, accompanied by Mr Ryder, and Mr Tierney, accompanied by Mr George Walpole, met at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon on Putney Heath. After some ineffectual attempts on the part of the Seconds[1] to prevent farther proceedings, the parties took their ground at the distance of 12 paces. A case of pistols was fired at the same moment without effect. A second case was also fired in the same manner, Mr Pitt firing his pistol in the air. The Seconds then jointly interfered, and insisted that the matter should go no farther, it being their decided opinion that sufficient satisfaction had been given, and that the business was ended with perfect honour to both parties.

The Public will read the cause of the above *rencontre*[2] between Mr Pitt and Mr Tierney very accurately reported in the *Times* of Saturday. We shall studiously refrain from making all those observations which naturally occur to our mind on considering this transaction: but we are sure the Public at large will think with us, that a life so valuable as Mr Pitt's, and in which the hopes not only of this Nation, but of every Cabinet in Europe is [*sic*] concentered[3], ought not to have been risked to gratify the passions of any man.

Extract 2

Letter from Richard Cobden (a Liberal MP) to the editor of the *Times* (19 December 1850)

Sir, – May I beg the favour of your inserting the enclosed letter, being my reply to Sir Thomas Hastings's challenge [to a duel]?

I received his combustible missive[4] on Sunday morning, – not exactly the day for answering an invitation to a duel. … The public has now an opportunity of forming an opinion of the cool judgement, the prudence, temper, and ability of a man who has been placed at the head of the commission for giving us an improved guarantee against the war with France, and upon whose recommendation, in a great degree, many millions of public money has been expended upon our national defences.

I remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Richard Cobden

Sir, … I understand you to propose that we should lay down our pens and have a personal interview, not to talk over the matter in dispute, not even to approach within speaking distance, but to take our stand at 12 paces apart, with pistols in hand, and endeavour to blow out each other's brains. Now, I am satisfied, without any such experiments upon my head, at least that half an ounce of lead propelled by less than a quarter of an ounce of powder is quite sufficient to shatter the human skull to atoms, and extinguish in a moment all powers of reason, all sense of justice, and every religious sentiment. But how such a process would satisfy me that I had acted unjustly towards you, or convince you of the contrary is, I confess, quite beyond my comprehension.

So soon as I had recovered from the fit of laughter into which I must confess your challenge threw me … I endeavoured to procure a copy of the report of the committee [containing the supposedly offensive words] … What, then, is your complaint? Why, that Mr Bright alleged that the authority of the Bishop was the only proof brought forward by you of the warlike disposition of the French nation. … Your grievance is then confined to one word, the word 'only.'

You are a public servant, filling a very responsible office, and in receipt of a liberal public stipend[5]. As chairman of the commission for increasing our coast defences, you were largely instrumental in promoting the expenditure of many millions of public money for purposes and in a manner which, whether right or wrong, are open to discussion. Your voluminous evidence before the committee on the army, navy, and ordnance[6] invites criticism; and much of it, in my humble opinion, is open to animadversion[7]. Such being your position you must, like all public men, expect that your conduct will be freely canvassed; and your fate will be a luckier one than that of most of us if you do not find yourself often misapprehended, and sometimes misrepresented.

If, unable to restrain the ebullitions[8] of an irascible temper, you must needs challenge a member of the Legislature to mortal combat, merely because another member is reported to have made a mistake in a single word in a speech of an hour's length, or because a reporter's pen may have slipped at a critical moment, then you have mistaken your vocation, and you would be consulting your

own reputation and the interest of the country by retiring from the public service, and seeking security for your susceptible nerves within the inviolable precincts of your own domestic circle.

I remain, Sir, yours, &c.,

Richard Cobden

Glossary

[1] Second – one who assists someone fighting a duel, frequently delivering the challenge, arranging the location of the duel and loading the weapons
[2] *rencontre* – meeting
[3] concentered – of a person's attention or other faculty: directed at a single goal or object, focused
[4] missive – letter
[5] stipend – salary
[6] ordnance – military materials and supplies
[7] animadversion – hostile criticism
[8] ebullitions – outburst / agitation boiling over

Write your answer in the space below.

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