

2022 AP EUROPEAN HISTORY DBQ SAMPLE RESPONSES

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MY RESPONSE (Note: I would not expect an essay to be of this caliber to earn full credit):

PREWRITING (T-CHART):

RELIGIOUS	POLITICAL	CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE (Bystanders)
<i>DOC 1 - MP</i>	<i>DOC 4 - Royalist's Wife</i>	<i>DOC 3 - Praying for Peace</i>
<i>DOC 2 - Anabaptists</i>	<i>DOC 6 - Battle Flag</i>	<i>DOC 5 - Merchant</i>
<i>DOC 7 - Soldier's Catechism</i>	<i>OE - Petition of Right</i>	<i>OE - Beheading of Charles I</i>

In 1603, Elizabeth I, the “Virgin Queen,” died without an heir, and was succeeded by James VI of Scotland, who reigned as James I of England. James was an absolutist who believed in the Divine Rights of Kings, which taught that a monarch’s authority came directly from God, and a king should not share this God-given authority with a representative body full of men who were not ordained by God to rule. James was succeeded by his son, Charles I, who tried ruling alone for some years before needing to call Parliament in order to get money. The conflict between Charles and Parliament would escalate into the English Civil War. The English Civil War was primarily a political war caused by a power struggle between the king and parliament. However, religious differences were used and amplified in order to motivate people to support one side or the other. Those who were reluctant to get involved believed it was more of a conflict between two factions than a holy war.

Religion was used effectively as a pretext by both sides during the English Civil War. In 1640, Charles called Parliament and dismissed it almost immediately – this would be known as the “Short Parliament.” The next Parliament was called the “Long Parliament” because its members refused to go home after Parliament was dismissed by the king again. When Charles I dismissed the Short Parliament, he promised to preserve the purity of the Church of England, implying that the members who were against him were a threat to true Christianity (Doc 1). Charles persecuted Anabaptists who refused to assemble in their parish churches. These Anabaptists said that they did not have to obey the king in religious matters, but only in matters of civil law (Doc 2). This is consistent with Anabaptists, in general, who believed in the complete separation of church and state, believing religion to be a personal matter of conscience. The soldiers in Parliament’s New Model Army carried a “Catechism,” which said that “papists” had seduced the king with their false teachings and that the soldiers were fighting “in defense... of the true Protestant religion” (Doc 7). However, this catechism also stated that the soldiers were fighting for their laws and liberties, as well as for the rights of Parliament.

While England had religious tensions in the 1640s, the English Civil War was not fought so that Anabaptists could have church in their homes. The war was a power struggle between the king and Parliament. A wife of a Royalist wrote to her friend, who was married to a “Roundhead” (Parliament supporter), that the Parliament supporters were “the King’s

subjects” who had no right to fight against their “lawful king” (Doc 4). For Royalists, the war was fought in defense of the laws and legitimate royal authority. As a Royalist, lady Sydenham focused on the lawlessness of the Parliamentary faction, but she did not focus at all on Charles I’s violations of the traditional rights of Englishmen – and these violations were many. A battle flag of the Parliamentary Army said “Preserve the law, O Lord!” and also had the words “MAGNA CHARTA” written on it (Doc 6). The Magna Carta, signed by King John in 1215, guaranteed the rights of English subjects to consent to taxation through representatives and to have jury trials. Before the English Civil War, Parliament sent Charles the Petition of Right, describing the misconduct of royal officials and the violations of the liberties of English subjects, such as being thrown in jail without being charged with a crime. Charles received the petition, but took no action (thus, the English Civil War).

Confirmation of the primarily political nature of the English Civil War can be found in the accounts of people who were caught in the middle. Colonel Hutchinson, who decided not to take sides and pray for peace, noted that while there did seem to be attempts by the king to bring back Catholicism, the violation of traditional English liberties was a stronger case for the war (Doc 3). It should be noted that this account comes from Colonel Hutchinson’s wife – not from his own hand – so it might not be fully representative of his views (but still reliable overall since it was his wife who knew him well). Jonathan Langley, a merchant, seemed to think that both sides were legitimately Protestant, but that each side misrepresented the other for its own benefit (Doc 5). This is a valuable source given that this person was not wishing to identify with either faction, and could see the situation clearly. In 1649, Charles I was beheaded, and the Roundhead faction won the English Civil War. Oliver Cromwell and his “Rump Parliament” would govern in England for about a decade before the monarchy was later restored.

The English Civil War was motivated primarily by political reasons, as its participants fought primarily to uphold the king’s authority or to defend their traditional rights. However, religion was used often as a rallying cry to motivate people to fight. Bystanders saw through the veneer of religion and discerned the war’s true causes.