EXERCISE 5.2.5

Robespierre as an idealist

Exercise Question: To what extent was the French Revolutionary, Maximilien Robespierre, an idealistic proponent of Enlightenment ideas?

EXERCISE 5.2.6

DBQ The Boer War

Exercise Question: Analyze the ways in which the Boer War was portrayed in published works.

Historical Background: In 1899, the British Empire embarked on an expansion of its territory in South Africa by attacking the Dutch Boer republics. After a year of difficult setbacks, the British finally captured the capital cities and believed the war to be over. The Boers, however, refusing to give up, began a guerrilla conflict that lasted until 1902. Although the British won and accomplished their military goals of expanding the empire, the long war had diminished public support for further imperialist ventures, thus marking the beginning of the end for the British Empire.

DOCUMENT A

Just as they had reached the centre of the town, General Sir George White and his staff rode down from headquarters and met the men whose coming meant for him life and peace and success. They were advancing at a walk, with the cheering people hanging to their stirrups, clutching at their hands and hanging to the bridles of their horses.

General White's first greeting was characteristically unselfish and loyal, and typical of the British officer. He gave no sign of his own incalculable relief, nor did he give to Caesar the things which were Caesar's. He did not cheer Dundonald, nor Buller, nor the column which had rescued him and his garrison from present starvation and probable imprisonment at Pretoria. He raised his helmet and cried, "We will give three cheers for the Queen!" And then the General and the healthy ragged and sunburned troopers from the outside world, the starved, fever-ridden garrison and the starved, fever-ridden civilians stood with hats off and sang their national anthem.

The column outside had been fighting steadily for six weeks to get Dundonald or any one of its force into Ladysmith; for fourteen days it had been living in the open, fighting by night as well as by day, without halt or respite; the garrison inside had been for four months holding the enemy at bay with the point of the bayonet; it was famished for food, it was rotten with fever, and yet when the relief came and all turned out well, the first thought of everyone was for the Queen!

SOURCE: Richard Harding Davis, from With Both Armies in South Africa, 1900
DOCUMENT B

To describe with any degree of adequacy the excitement in London, and indeed throughout the country, consequent upon the announcement yesterday of the relief of Ladysmith would be an almost impossible task. The news was made known a few minutes before ten o'clock at the War Office, and soon after the hour the welcome intelligence was proclaimed by the Lord Mayor from a window of the Mansion House.

SOURCE: from a news article in *The Guardian*, March 2, 1900

DOCUMENT C

To anyone who has seen Ladysmith, the wonder grows, not only that it was ever relieved but that it was ever defended. Indeed, had the advice of General Sir George White been followed in the first place, the town would have been abandoned to the Boers. For a garrison at Ladysmith is in a strategic position not unlike that of a bear in a bear-pit at which the boys around the top of the pit are throwing shells instead of buns.

The fact that the town of Ladysmith lay outside [the] marvelous breastwork of hills and ridges should have been treated as one of the misfortunes of war, and for the greater good of the greater number the town should have been sacrificed to the enemy, and all the residents and the garrison withdrawn for twelve miles inside the great complex mass of hills which guard the twisted course of the Tugela.

SOURCE: Richard Harding Davis, from *With Both Armies in South Africa*, 1900
The Boer scouts stealthily watched him, crawling through the thick bush in which a stranger without his bearings is as helpless as a ship without compass on the trackless ocean, and, on the information which they gave, Cronje marched swiftly north, and a second time placed himself on the British line of advance. Already runners had come in to the British camp from the north. One, from the brave and steadfast Colonel Plumer, announced that that officer would effect his junction with Mahon north-west of Mafeking; the other, from Colonel Baden-Powell, asked for information as to the numbers, guns, and supplies of the column.

Such information was not lightly to be entrusted to any messenger; there was no cipher of which Baden-Powell had the key; but in these straits, Colonel Rhodes, the intelligence officer with the column, succeeded in inventing a most ingenious reply, unintelligible to the Boers, but clear as daylight to the British. It is thus given by Mr. Filson Young: “Our numbers are the Naval and Military multiplied by ten; our guns, the number of sons in the Ward family; our supplies, the officer commanding the 9th Lancers.” The key to the message was that there were 940 men, 94 Piccadilly being the number of the Naval and Military Club; that the guns were six, that being the number of sons in the house of Dudley; and that the supplies were little.

SOURCE: H.W. Wilson, from With the Flag to Pretoria, A History of the Boer War, 1899–1900, 1901
DOCUMENT F

The announcement of peace was made at the evening service at St. Paul's Cathedral to a fairly large congregation. . . . The Bishop of Stepney then ascended the pulpit and said: "I desire to announce to the congregation that God has been pleased to answer our prayers and to give us the blessings of peace." He added: "I will read to you the telegram which has been sent by the Commander-in-Chief to the Secretary of State for War." Having done this he proceeded: "Comment is needless, but I ask you to offer your heartfelt thanks to Almighty God by singing instead of the hymn on the paper another hymn suitable to the occasion, and to follow that by singing two verses of the National Anthem." The hymn referred to was "Now thank we all our God," and the congregation sang it with much feeling and impressiveness.

SOURCE: from a news article in The Guardian, June 2, 1902

DOCUMENT G

Monday, October 30th, 1899, is not a date which can be looked back to with satisfaction by any Briton. In a scrambling and ill-managed action we had lost our detached left wing almost to a man, while our right had been hustled with no great loss but with some ignominy into Ladysmith. Our guns had been outshot, our infantry checked, and our cavalry paralysed. Eight hundred prisoners may seem no great loss when compared with a Sedan, or even with an Ulm; but such matters are comparative, and the force which laid down its arms at Nicholson's Nek is the largest British force which has surrendered since the days of our great grandfathers, when the egregious Duke of York commanded in Flanders.

SOURCE: Arthur Conan Doyle, The Great Boer War, 1902

DOCUMENT H

The force Baden-Powell had with him was a mere handful—irregular mounted infantry, just learning to hold on to their saddles, Cape, Rhodesian, and Protectorate police, and a scratch selection of volunteers and town guard, with half-a-dozen antiquated little muzzleloaders for artillery—but animated with a spirit of confidence in themselves, and in the courage and resourcefulness of their leader, that was to prove of more worth than numbers or training, or batteries of field artillery, and to frustrate Cronje's hopes and the whole Boer plan of campaign in the west.

About 2 A.M. on the 16th a party of Boers came down to Klippoortjie, a place about a mile and a half outside Heidelberg, and drove off a few cattle. The Kaffirs to whom it belonged stated that the enemy numbered about 200.

On January 17, the South African Constabulary, whose camp was on the left of the 13th, began to form a depot at Heidelberg; and at Greylingstad and Waterval detachments were similarly employed.

January 23, 1901. An official announcement of the death of Her Majesty Queen Victoria was received.

A telegram concerning the accession of His Majesty King Edward VII was received by Lord Kitchener three days later. This contained a message to the army in South Africa, which was duly communicated to the troops. A loyal and dutiful reply was forwarded by his lordship conveying the devotion of the troops to the King.

SOURCE: C. R. B. Barrett, from History of the XIII Hussars, 1910

My orders were to raise two battalions of Mounted Rifles, to mount, equip, train, and supply them, with the least possible delay and the least possible display.

... Also, I was to take charge of and organise the Police of Rhodesia and Bechuanaland as part of my force.

But I was to make as little show as possible of these preparations for fear of precipitating war by arousing the animosity of the Boers.

The object of my force and its establishment on the north-west border of the Transvaal was, in the event of war, to attract Boer forces away from the coast so that they should not interfere with the landing of British troops: secondly, to protect our possessions in Rhodesia and Mafeking, etc. Thirdly, to maintain British prestige among the great native tribes in those parts.

SOURCE: Sir Baden-Powell, from Lessons from the Varsity of Life, 1933