



BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

2011

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION

WRITING BOOKLET

Examination

History Extension

Section	Part	Question Number
1	1	1

Date

3/11/11

Number of booklets
used for this question

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Instructions

- Write your Centre Number and Student Number at the top of this page.
- In the boxes provided write the name and date of this examination, and the number(s) of the question(s) attempted in this booklet.
- If you have not attempted the question, you must still hand in the Writing Booklet, with the words 'NOT ATTEMPTED' written clearly on the front cover.
- Write using black or blue pen. (Black pen is recommended.)
- You may ask for an extra Writing Booklet if you need more space.
- You may NOT take any Writing Booklets, used or unused, from the examination room.

Start here.

~~Historians have an equal~~
To say that historians "owned" history would be ~~to say~~ akin to saying that a geologist owned the ground one stands upon. History is the study of past events that have happened all over the earth, and that history is shared between each and every inhabitant of this planet. It is the historians that bring this shared past to light, illuminating time's ideas, concerns, and issues, and sharing them to the rest of the population.

The sharing of ~~ideas~~ the facts of the past by the historian to the public is key to ~~the~~ the joint-ownership of history, but, as Eric Foner points out in "Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World", historians tend to retreat to groups of their own kind, rather than risk the backlash and hatred of the public lest their interpretation is not adequate. Foner uses examples such as critics

condemning "a proposed new history curriculum for British schools for not being 'British enough', and Japanese demonstrators protesting "the introduction of new texts said to sanitize the country's aggression in WWII and its maltreatment of occupied peoples such as the Koreans and Chinese."

These examples acknowledge that these are reasons for historians to move from the public arena. They leave ~~because no one~~ for fear of having their reputation and career destroyed by a bad public image. However, there are greater reasons to remain in the public spotlight.

Foner uses an address made by American president Charles Francis Adams to back up his claim that historians should tarry on in the public arena. He "called on historians to step outside the ~~public arena~~ ivory tower and engage forthrightly in public

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discourse. ~~The study of history... had a public function, and historians had an obligation to contribute to debates in which history was frequently invoked with little genuine understanding or ~~base~~ knowledge.~~

The author of "Why Didn't We Know?" backs this point up, somewhat. In it he states that, after many presentations he makes, he is approached by an audience member and questioned as to why that knowledge that was shared is not more widely known. The author turns the question around - how does he know, how did he come by these facts?

He comes to the conclusion that ~~it is because he and his fellow~~ the reason he is partial to these facts is because he and his fellow historians have researched the past's ~~its~~ issues and concerns, and gathered their knowledge ~~by themselves~~.

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On the other hand, the reason the general public is not aware of these facts is because the self-same historians may be unwilling to reveal their findings and open themselves to scorn and hatred.

In the end, Foner concludes that history must become a public domain. While it is the ~~ultimate~~ responsibility of the historian to determine the ultimate truth, there is no harm in leaving the door open for public discussion. He believes that "the study of history... had a 'public function', and historians had an obligation to ~~continue~~ contribute to ~~bad~~ detestates in which history was frequently invoked with little understanding or knowledge... history should not be left to the 'journalist and politician'".

A commonly used phrase is ~~knowledge~~ "knowledge is power". When it comes to history, this statement rings true. In the past historians have held on ~~to~~

~~the~~
monopoly over history, namely because
no one else held the knowledge of it.
However, historians are attempting
to open up the domain to the public
so that history may become a shared
thing.

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