

# Edexcel GCSE

## **History A** (The Making of the Modern World) Unit 3: Modern World Source Enquiry Option 3B: War and the transformation of British society, c1931–51

Tuesday 7 June 2011 – Morning

**Sources Booklet**

Paper Reference

**5HA03/3B**

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## The General Election of 1945

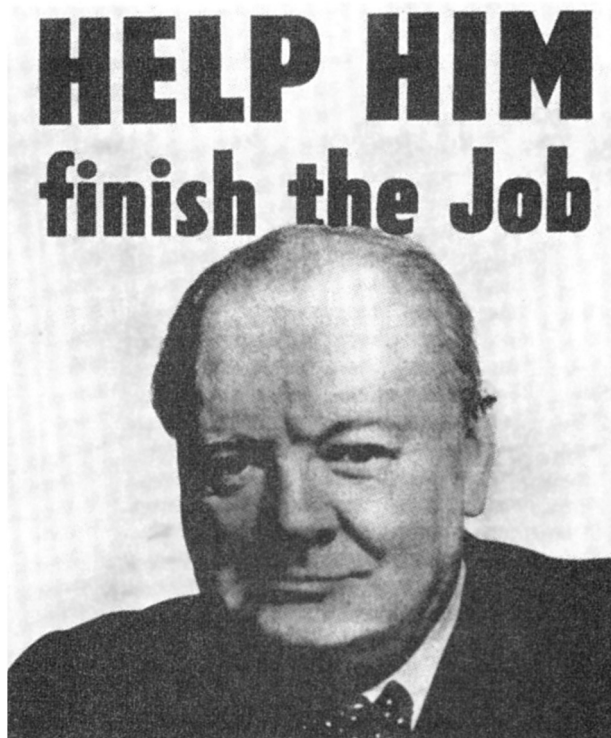
### Background information

Winston Churchill's success and popularity as wartime prime minister encouraged many people to believe that the Conservative Party would win the General Election of 1945. Instead, it brought a landslide victory for the Labour Party, who won a majority of 145 seats. Some historians believe this was due to the unpopularity of the Conservative Party. Other historians suggest it was due to other factors such as the desire for change.

**Source A:** From the memoirs of Harold Macmillan, written in 1969. Macmillan was a Conservative MP who lost his seat in parliament in the 1945 General Election.

The British people did not want to trust Churchill and the Conservatives with the government of Britain after the war. People had been persuaded that under Labour there would be prosperity in a world of peace. The British people had not forgotten, or been allowed to forget, the last years before the war. It was because of the memories of the 1930s and unemployment, not because of Churchill, that the Conservatives lost the 1945 election.

**Source B:** A Conservative Party poster used in the General Election campaign of 1945.



©Conservative Party

**Source C:** From the memoirs of Reginald Maudling, written in 1978. He became a Conservative MP in 1950.

In 1945, the Conservative Party did not have much to offer those who wished to see change. Moreover, we relied too heavily on the personality of Winston Churchill. There was no doubt about his popularity but, as it turned out, we over-estimated the effect this would have on voting. People saw a clear difference between Churchill the War Leader, and the Conservative Party as a peacetime government.

**Source D:** A Labour Party poster used in the General Election campaign of 1945. It includes the famous wartime 'V for Victory' symbol.



**Source E:** From the Labour Party Manifesto published for the 1945 General Election campaign.

The nation needs a tremendous overhaul, a great programme of modernisation of its homes, its factories, its machinery, its schools, its social services. All the parties say so – but the Labour Party means it. That is why the Labour Party is prepared to achieve it by drastic policies of re-planning. The Labour Party will put the interests of the community first and the interests of private business after.

**Source F:** From a history of the twentieth century, published in 1994.

In 1945, most voters believed the Labour Party's promises that it would carry out the changes suggested by the Beveridge Report of 1942 without delay. On the other hand, Churchill and the Conservatives warned voters that the country was in a difficult economic position and it would be hard to introduce these measures quickly. Many people associated the Conservatives with the failure to reduce high unemployment and to stand up to dictators such as Hitler in the 1930s.

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