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Essay Breakdowns

History - Dictatorship and Democracy

Britain's Socio-Economic Problems (2019)

The Question

Context

- Make sure to give some **background** to this entire episode.
- Talk about the entirety of the time frame.
- Start at 1920 and cover all relevant years up until 1939 at least.

‘During the period 1920-1939, what social and economic problems faced Britain and how effectively were they tackled’?

The word **"and"** is repeated twice which means that there are **three parts** to this question. Make sure you answer **all parts**.

Use synonyms for "effectively"!

- You will be using this word over and over again in your essay so make sure you have alternative ways of saying it.
- It transformed....
- This disimproved .....
- This highlighted .....
- This illustrated .....

Make the link!

Show the examiner that you can make a clear **connection** between the problems and how they were tackled.

- **Sets the scene** quite well.
- Sums up all of these years in a few sentences.
- Gives good detail on the background.

Paragraph 1

Good use of **facts** and **statistics**!

Although Britain was victorious in World War One, the cost of victory was high. Over 750,000 soldiers were dead and over a million badly wounded. Its national debt was also 10 times higher than it was in 1914. After a brief boom in 1919 the economy began to decline and by 1930s Britain was a depressed country. This was also due to their main industries such as ship building and coal being produced elsewhere, such as America and Germany, cheaper and faster.

Explain the word **"depressed"** more. Talk about the **high unemployment**, the **low standard of living** and the **poor education**.

Refer to the question more clearly and explicitly!
Use the words of the question in the introduction!

Paragraph 2 & 3

Too much is squashed into this one paragraph. It could easily be split into 4 paragraphs.

Accurate and relevant **facts** and **statistics**!

However the three most impoverished areas were South Wales, Central Scotland and Cumberland. They faced 4 main social problems: poor standard of living and working conditions as well as high unemployment and infant mortality. While the British government provided money to improve local economy it did nothing to improve the region's position.

Then, in 1931, the social benefit was introduced but it was means-tested and only lasted 26 weeks. All of this poverty was due to three main reasons. The first was that in 1925 Winston Churchill linked the pound to gold. The gold standard raised the cost of British exports by 10% which seriously affected the exports. In 1926 the Trade Union Congress called a General Strike in protest of lowering wages and increasing working hours; the government overreacted, claiming it was the start of a communist takeover and so in 1927 the Trade Dispute act banned all further strikes. Finally the wall street crash happened in 1929 and hit Britain in 1930, exports fell by 50% and massively affected employment. In 1929 there were only 1.5 million unemployment but 3 years later this rose to 3.5 million. To combat this the government cut the unemployment benefit, reduced civil servant wages and abandoned the gold standard!

Split this into 4 detailed paragraphs on....

- Paragraph on post WW1 Britain.
- Paragraph on the General Strike, 1926.
- Paragraph on the Wall Street Crash.
- Paragraph on the Hunger Marches.

Paragraph 4

More detail needed here on how Jarrow had prospered since the opening of Palmers in 1852.

Great amount of relevant statistics here, they serve to clearly illustrate the problems of Jarrow.

Jarrow was one of the worst affected areas. In the north east of England on the river Tyne, it was a small town of 300,000 people. It was unofficially known as Palmersville to its heavy dependence on the company which once built half the world's ships and employed 10,000 people. Unfortunately, following the great depression, they only built 7% of the worlds ships and in 1934 after 82 years of building ships, they closed down. This was the same for about 50% of the shops in the town of Jarrow. National unemployment was 15% compared to that of Jarrow's 72%. The same is said for their infant mortality rates which was 3.8% nationally and 9.7% in Jarrow.

This is a well-expressed and accurate paragraph. It does highlight how bad things were but it could use the words of the set question a bit more.

Good, **simple language.** Once you are clear, you can use simple language.

Good use of **short paragraphs.**

Paragraph 5 & 6

So in 1932, the National Unemployment Workers Movement organised a hunger march and the people of Jarrow were inspired. They called theirs a crusade however, as to not be linked with the NUWM's link to communism. They drew up a petition with a request to provide industry for Jarrow and they got 11 thousand signatures. So after a thorough medical examination 200 of the fittest men were selected to march 300 miles from Jarrow to London.

More detail needed: Comment on the Jarrow Borough Council, £1500 raised etc.

There was a 2nd hand bus which provided food, transport and shelter. The Lord Mayor and Ellen Wilkinson also joined in on the march. They kept the petition in a wooden oak box. They would walk for 50 minutes with 10 minutes rest and they would average 15 miles a day. They also had a Labrador mascot. The BCC covered the march heavily as well as local newspapers. They received plenty of donations from places like Leeds of meat and cigarettes.

Use of **linking phrases** needed.

More **reference to the question** needed! Link the information and the facts to the question itself. What do these facts highlight?

The British Cabinet referred to the marchers as "altogether undesirable". This paragraph could make a bit more of the fact that the effort made by these people did not get the desired attention of government.

Paragraph 7 & 8

After 23 days and two rest weekends, they arrived in London on the 31st of October. Halloween. They held a meeting at Hyde park on the first of November and on the 4th of November they presented a petition to the Parliament. The Prime minister Stanley Baldwin "said he was too busy.", according to Ellen Wilkinson. So she and Lord Mayor approached a group of Ministers in the House of Commons but nothing was done.

Despite the initial lack of support, the march attracted a lot of attention. In 1938 an engineering works and ship breaking yard were set up in Jarrow as part of Britain's rearmament programme before World War 2. Additionally, the governments protectionist policies did eventually improve the British economy somewhat, by increasing domestic consumption. In addition, cheap mortgages led to a housebuilding boom.

Good simple summation of the Jarrow March, but not of ALL of the socioeconomic problems that faced Britain

This essay **needs a more general, overall conclusion**.

Make a judgement on the effectiveness of those actions taken!

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