Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer **all** questions.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided – there may be more space than you need.

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 53.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets – use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.
- Questions labelled with an **asterisk** (*) are ones where the quality of your written communication will be assessed.
- The marks available for spelling, punctuation and grammar are clearly indicated.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Keep an eye on the time.
- Try to answer every question.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.
Answer ALL questions.

Look carefully at the background information and Sources A to G in the Sources Booklet and then answer Questions 1 to 5 which follow.

1 Study Source A.

What can you learn from Source A about the Anti-Poll Tax protest in London on 31 March 1990?

(6)
What impression does the author try to give of the behaviour of the protesters? Explain your answer, using Source B.
3 Study Sources B, C and D.

How far do Sources B, C and D suggest that the police had made preparations to deal with a violent demonstration? Explain your answer, using these sources.

(10)
(Question 3 continued)
(Question 3 continued)
4 Study Sources E and F.

Which of Sources E or F is more valuable to the historian who is investigating the violence in Trafalgar Square on 31 March 1990? Explain your answer, using Sources E and F.
Study Sources A, E and G and use your own knowledge.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in this question.

‘The actions of small groups of extremists were responsible for turning a peaceful demonstration into a riot on 31 March 1990.’

How far do you agree with this view? Use your own knowledge, Sources A, E and G and any other sources you find helpful to explain your answer.

(16)
Background information

The largest of the protests against the Poll Tax was a demonstration that took place in central London on Saturday 31 March 1990. The demonstration started peacefully but turned into rioting and violence. It became known as the ‘Battle of Trafalgar Square’. Some people blamed the violence on demonstrators hoping to cause a riot and others blamed it on aggressive police tactics.

This paper presents you with sources about the ‘Battle of Trafalgar Square’ and gives you the opportunity to decide for yourself if it was the actions of small groups of extremists that were responsible for turning a peaceful protest into a violent one.


Coaches poured into London from all parts of the country for what was meant to be a peaceful demonstration against the Poll Tax. There was a carnival atmosphere as a crowd of over 145,000 assembled. The organisers of the demonstration did not want any trouble. The police had been warned in advance about the intentions of some anarchist* groups. The police wore riot gear but kept out of sight. It was more likely that tension was caused by stewards controlling the crowds, who were given contradictory instructions by the organisers.

* anarchist = someone who wants to change society by challenging the authorities

Source B: From a report given by the senior steward to the Anti-Poll Tax Federation in April 1990. He is talking about the events of the Anti-Poll Tax protest on 31 March.

Our stewards came under attack from various groups within the demonstration. The most worrying report was that a small group of plain-clothes policemen joined the demonstrators just before the trouble started and left just before the riot police moved in. If the job of these plain-clothes policemen was to provoke the crowd, it was made easier by the actions of extremist groups such as the Socialist Workers Party, the anarchists and other groups. These groups ignored the instructions of our stewards and taunted the police. The most disgusting antic of these extremist groups was to attack our stewards. There was kicking, spitting, punching and missile-throwing.
Source C: From an account given in 2002 by Police Superintendent Malcolm Eidmans about the events in Trafalgar Square, 31 March 1990.

I was lucky in that none of my men were seriously injured. However, a lot were very badly shaken by a level of violence they had not seen before. They had to retreat, hide or take cover. Many of them openly admitted that they were frightened for their own safety. We knew beforehand that there would be a group within the demonstration who would attempt to disrupt it. Troublemakers were identified and cordoned off but no-one expected that level of violence, especially when there were so many families and children and respectable people on the march.

**Source E:** From an interview with Clare Prout, an Anti-Poll Tax demonstrator, on Channel Four News, 1 April 1990.

There may well have been troublemakers there who were waiting for some incident they could turn into a riot. But there was no incident until that first police charge caused panic, and finally anger at their unnecessary show of force. This made everyone, not just militant idiots, show their strength of feeling against the police.

**Source F:** A photograph showing police lines during the ‘Battle of Trafalgar Square’, 31 March 1990. It was taken by a journalist for a newspaper.

**Source G:** From an anonymous protester quoted in *Poll Tax Riot*, a pamphlet published in 1990.

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