AP® European History
2003 Sample Student Responses
Form B

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Using their superior military capabilities, the German armies, using the blitzkrieg tactic, invaded and overcame France during the Second World War. After France's armies suffered defeat, a new government was established led by Marshal Philippe Pétain which would last till 1944. Pétain viewed the Vichy regime which he led as a tool to keep France alive according to sickness with Germany and propaganda. While Charles de Gaulle and other resistance leaders believed Pétain to be a ruthless traitor.

Pétain claimed that he sided with the Germans as a means to preserve what he could of the French. In Dec 10, he stated that the Armistice "saved France and contributed to the victory. How ever one must question the validity of this statement due to the fact that he said this while being tried with a penalty of death. Und the truth he reacknowledged his commitment to his country. In Dec 1, when Pétain was that made Prime minister of the Occupied French state, he states he will do what ever it takes to alliviate the suffering of France attempting to boost nationalism and support for his
government. In document 8, a Fascist and therefore a simplifier with the Nazi party, writing in a newspaper states that Petain’s desire to stand behind Germany is good for only with a “German victory” could save France from disaster. He also talks of the threat of Communism in the Germans were to leave, and him being a Fascist would consider Communism one of the greatest threats imaginable.

Petain even resorted to propaganda to gain the support of the public for the Vichy Government. In Doc 2, Petain goes so far as to state that it was the old government, rather than the Germans, that was the cause for France’s current state. In Doc 6, the poster shown reveals the ideals of the Vichy government. Accusing the old government of every sin in the bible and sympathizing with Jews, the picture contrasts what they consider evil to the new France they would create. Having values extremely similar to those valued by the Nazis, the picture portrays France as the very concept of order and unity. Petain
Further tries to gain support by bolstering the German reputation to show that he is doing what is right for France.

(Doc 9) In Doc 9, a poster proclaims that Germany leads the fight against the Communists and that it protects France from those who would hurt it.

Many, however, believed that Petain was a traitor only looking out for his own interests. Patriots such as Charles de Gaulle accused the entire Vichy government of disgrace.

(Doc 3) France. In Doc 3, he states that Petain has given the domination of France to Hitler. However, the fact that he is in the African continent and seeing his homeland overrun, he may not see that Petain is working in the best interest of France. French Resistance leaders in documents 5 and 7, question Petain's motives, in which Valetin (Doc 7) directly questions why Petain would want collaboration with Germany and how close he is calling him a traitor. Document 4, clearly portrays this view by depicting...
The French view, contrasting with that of Marshal Pétain on the Vichy regime was varied. The French people condemned the regime and considered it treason to compromise with the Germans. On the other hand, Pétain considered the compromise with Germany as vital to the future of France. The documents greatly support the contention ideas that the French had towards the Vichy regime.

First, let's analyze the views of Pétain regarding the Vichy regime in which he led. The documents that will be used to show his views, all primary documents, such as those of Pétain himself. The speeches of Pétain which are nationalistic to the French cause, yet he feels that the German occupation is inevitable. Pétain in a speech of 1941 which is a speech of Pétain, supports the latter statement in assuming power of the government, but and glorifying the French armies for their efforts. Pétain's nationalistic feeling is also shown in how he speaks "with a heavy heart" to sell for the armistice.
with Germany. Doc 2 further calls for the rebuilding of France, even though half of France is being occupied by the Germans. Petain certainly shows realistic feeling and these documents show his determination to bring France out of the depressive defeated state. Therefore, we can agree from here that Petain supports the Vichy regime and considers it the only way to rebuild France.

Contrasting with Petain are the views of Charles de Gaulle, Francois Valentin, and Pierre Laval. All the documents that show their opposition and doubting of Petain and his government are the primary, and contrast with the other primary ones that showed Petain’s view of the Vichy. First, Doc 3 is a speech from de Gaulle where he firmly goes against the acceptance of the Vichy to allow Germany to keep control of half of France. This idea in the Doc 3 obviously is different from that of Doc 1 and 2, where de Gaulle does not approve of the
occupation, while there they consider it to be the only way for France to rebuild.

Doc 1 also shows the resistance against Petain and the Vichy's. It also incorporates extra value because Valentin, the speaker in the Doc, had formerly been part of Vichy's government. This doc shows the disapproval of the government and of the German occupation.

Valentin refuses to abide by Petain's idea of unifying the Germans, Valentin wants unity with the Germans. Doc 11, where Pierre Laval talks about shows another side of the thought with the Vichy regime. This speech given by the time the Vichy regime had been done attacks Petain and his ways of taking the power for himself and saying that he had no "republican legality" which would contradict, in form, Doc 1 and 2 where Petain speaks as a republican-like leader that wants to support France.

Documents 4, 6, and 8 are propaganda posters which show the ideas of a painter, one of the
Vichy regime. Doc 4 shows how
the painter, Perrier, considers Petain
to be a puppet of Hitler. This idea
against the Vichy government is like
the ideas previously expressed by Doc
3 by Fy and S. Doc 6 is a propaganda
poster which shows the old destroyed
France destroyed by democracy, communism,
Judaism, contrasting with the new house
which is the new government. Seeing
how Judaism is included as one of those
things that destroyed France, one would wonder
if the Vichy's were in fact puppets
of the Nazis. Doc 8, another Vichy
propaganda poster, calls for the support
by Germans against the Soviets, communism.
The restriction of these Docs are that
they don't show what many French
thought of the Vichy but merely the
views of the Vichy and of a painter.
Doc 5 shows how some
people even supported the Vichy
government, hailing, and applauding
Petain. Doc 8 also shows the
support of a French faction to the Pétain government. This document shows how the people were greatly divided and not set on one side.

The French and Pétain had contrasting views on the government. Not everyone thought towards it in the same way, nor did Doc's views that certain people supported it and others did not.