

Name: _____ ()

Class: _____

**PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2025
YEAR FOUR (O-levels)
HISTORY PAPER 2
(2174/2)**

Tuesday

19 August 2025

1 hr 50min

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A: Answer all parts of Question 1.
- Section B: Answer two questions.
- If you use more than one sheet of writing paper, fasten them together. **Attach the answer cover page to the TOP of your answers.**
- Be careful to number all questions attempted correctly.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[50 marks]**.

Section A: _____/30 marks

Section B: _____/20 marks

Total marks obtained: _____ / 50 marks

This question paper consists of **6 pages**, including the cover page.

Section A: Source-Based Case Study

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully, and then answer **all** the questions.

You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources you are told to use. In answering the questions, you should use your knowledge of the topic to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

- 1 (a) Study Source A.
What is the message of this source? Explain your answer. [5]
- (b) Study Sources B and C.
Having read Source C, are you surprised by Source B? Explain your answer. [6]
- (c) Study Source D.
How useful is this source as evidence of USSR's actions in the Berlin Crisis? Explain your answer. [6]
- (d) Study Source E.
Is the cartoonist a supporter of Soviet policy in Berlin? Explain your answer. [5]
- (e) Study all the sources.
"Responsibility for the Berlin Blockade lies solely with the USSR." How far do the sources support this view? Use the sources and your knowledge to explain your answer. [8]

The Berlin Crisis of 1948

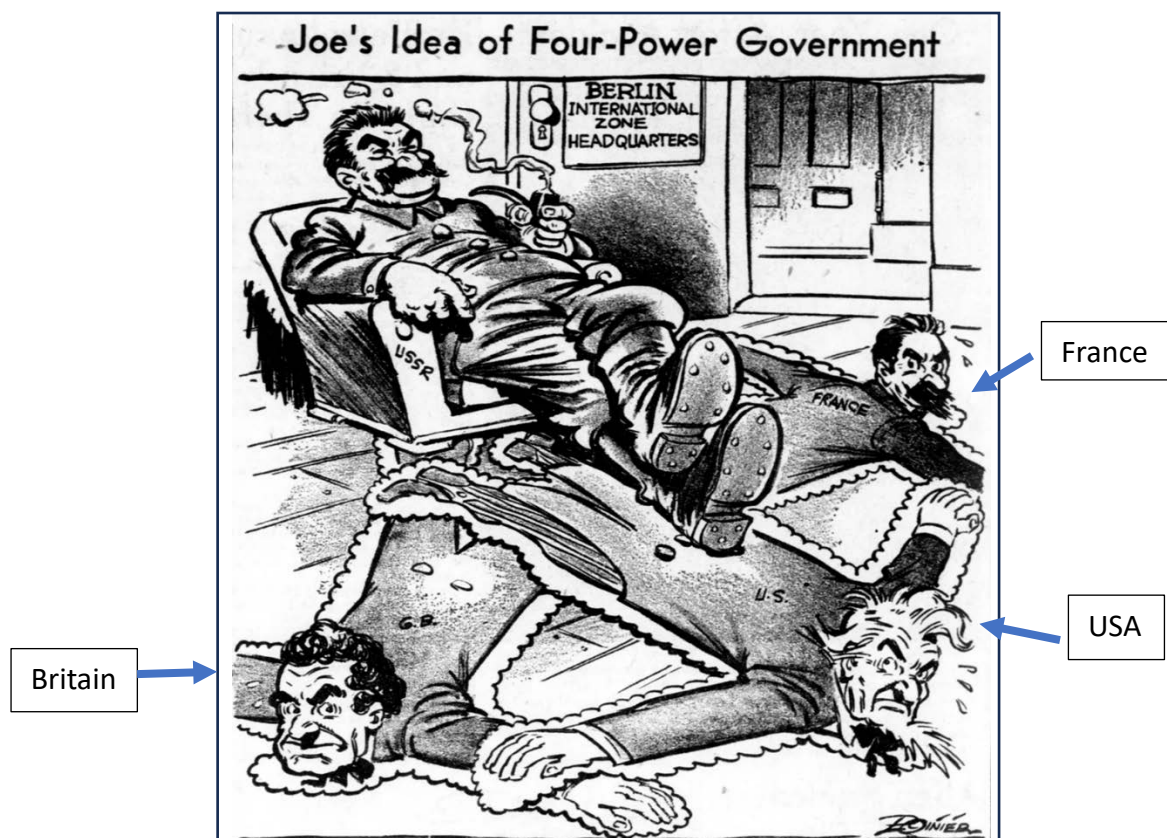
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Read this carefully. It may help you to answer some of the questions.

In the early Cold War, the United States pursued a policy of containment to stop the spread of communism using economic, diplomatic, and military tools. This approach was put to the test during the Berlin Crisis of 1948–1949. As the Western Allies—namely the U.S., Britain, and France—moved to unite their zones of Germany and introduced a new currency in West Berlin, tensions rose sharply. These moves signalled the West's intention to rebuild and integrate West Germany, which the Soviet Union saw as a direct threat to its influence and a breach of earlier agreements. In response, the Soviets blocked all land and rail routes to West Berlin on 24 June 1948, effectively cutting the city off to pressure the Allies into withdrawing.

This confrontation marked a turning point in Cold War hostilities and raised a crucial question: who was truly responsible for the Berlin Blockade—the Western Allies or the Soviet Union?

Source A: *An American cartoon published at the beginning of the Berlin Crisis on June 29, 1948.*



Source B: *A Soviet commentary on the Berlin Crisis, published in 1949 by the TASS (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union), which was the primary source of official news in the USSR.*

The crisis was planned in Washington behind a smokescreen of anti-Soviet propaganda. In 1948 there was danger of war. The conduct of the Western powers risked bloody incidents. The self-blockade of the Western powers hit the West Berlin population with harshness. The people were freezing and starving. In the Spring of 1949, the USA was forced to yield... their war plans had come to nothing because of the conduct of the USSR.

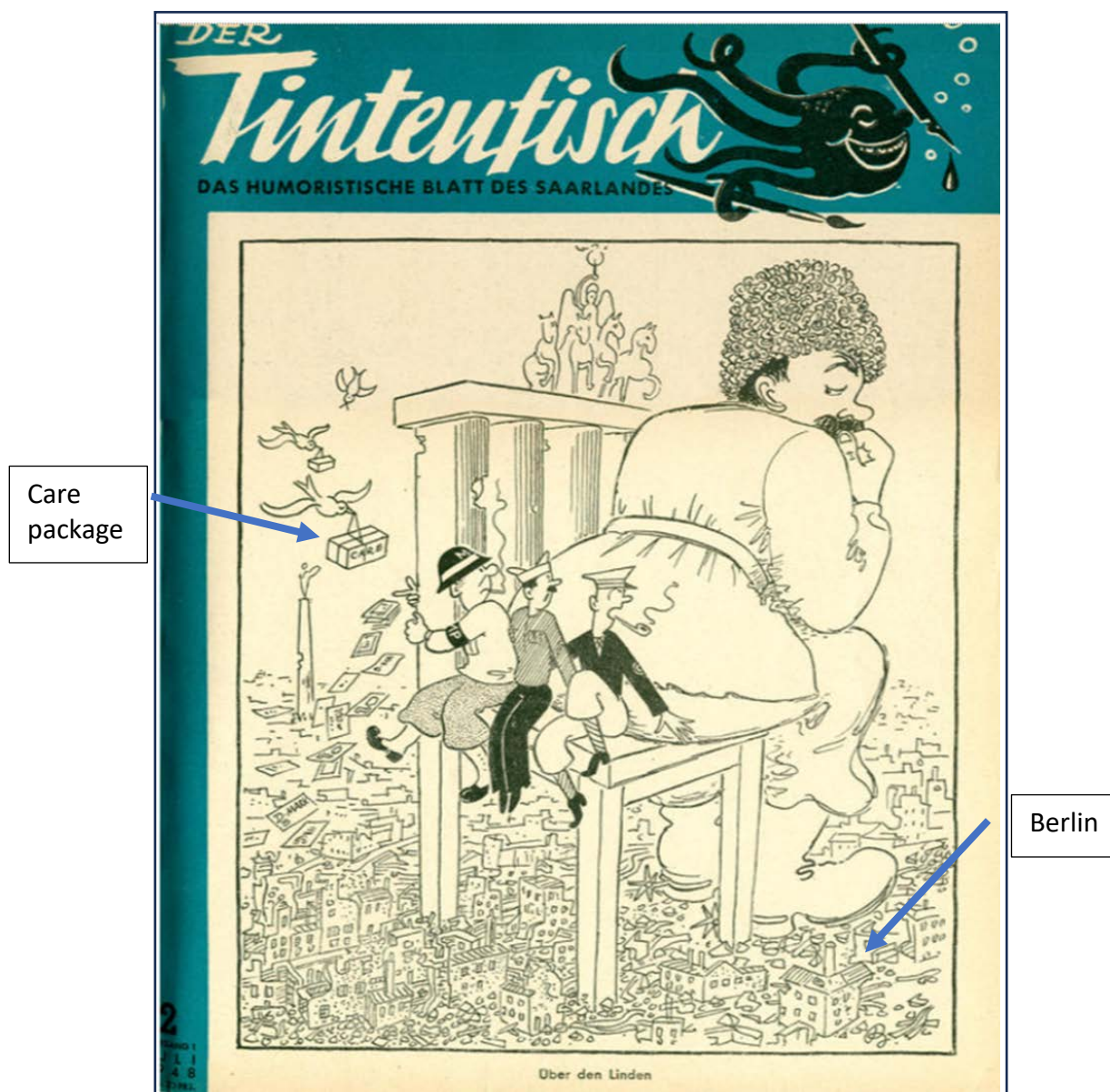
Source C: *The perspective of a British historian, published in his book, 'Europe and the Cold War' in 2001.*

The Western allies were resolved in forming a separate West German state and the Soviets were confronted with a major challenge... Stalin, however, believed that he could force the Western allies to reconsider the whole German question by applying pressure to their position in West Berlin. The introduction of the Deutschmark by the Western allies first into the Western zones and then into West Berlin on 23 June provided the Soviets with the necessary excuse to begin the full blockade of West Berlin. They argued that it was a defensive measure to stop the Soviet zone from being swamped with the devalued Reichsmarks, which the new Deutschmark was replacing.

Source D: *An extract from an American newspaper, 12th September 1948.*

The activities of Russia in Berlin will convince any sensible person that Moscow is trying to drive the Western Allies to a declaration of war, in which they will be branded the aggressors. The longer the Western Allies remain in Berlin as targets of constant humiliation by the Soviet power, the greater the danger of plunging Europe into another war. The Western Allies can pull out of Berlin with dignity and get back to their own zones on the excellent grounds that co-operation with Russia is no longer possible.

Source E: In July 1948 the West German satirical magazine *Der Tintenfisch* portrays the policy of the Soviet Union in Berlin with the Western Allies on their cover page entitled 'Over the lime (Linden) trees¹'.



Source F: An extract from a brochure, "Berlin Airlift Turns 75", published by the German-American Heritage Museum of the USA in 2024.

The blockade was not a complete surprise as relations between the Allies had been plagued by growing tensions, and a failed joint attempt to establish a new currency, which would wrest economic control of the city from the Soviets, allow the flow of Marshall Plan aid, and end the widespread black market, proved to be the final straw for Moscow. The inhabitants of the still war-torn city now faced economic ruin and starvation. The Western allies did not want to engage militarily, but not acting would mean abandoning the city to the Soviets.

¹ 'Over the lime (Linden) trees' is a reference to Unter den Linden, a grand boulevard in central Berlin that runs toward the Brandenburg Gate—a symbolic site of Berlin's political and historical significance.

Section B: Essays

Answer **two** questions.

- 2** 'The Lend-Lease support offered by America was the most important reason for the defeat of the Germans in World War Two.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 3** 'South Vietnam was unstable between 1954-1960 because of Diem's unpopular leadership.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
- 4** 'Economic factors were mainly responsible for the end of the Cold War.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

Copyright Acknowledgements:

Source A	'Detroit Free Press' June 29, 1948
Source B	Chandler Oz Consultants, "Berlin 1948: Spring Crises, Midsummer Madness, Blockades & Airlifts" (2018)
Source C	David Williamson, 'Europe and the Cold War 1945-91', Hodder & Stoughton Educational, 2001.
Source D	Polyzoides, "West Can Pull Out of Berlin Proudly," Los Angeles Times, September 12, 1948.
Source E	Der Tintenfisch. Das humoristische Blatt des Saarlandes. Herausgeber Koppelkamm, Bruno. Juli 1948, Nr. 2, Jahrgang 1. Saarbrücken: Presse-Verlag GmbH. "Über den Linden", p. 1.
Source F	"Berlin Airlift Turns 75", German-American Heritage Museum of the USA, 2024 @ https://gahmusa.org/