Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge O Level

HISTORY **2147/22**

Paper 2 **October/November 2023**

2 hours

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** the questions on **one** option only.
  - Option A: Nineteenth century topic
  - Option B: Twentieth century topic
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

This document has **16** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Option A: Nineteenth century topic

WHY DID BRITAIN GO TO WAR WITH GERMANY IN 1914?

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

Background Information

Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914. The reasons for this have long been debated by historians. At the time the British government claimed it was because of the Treaty of London of 1839, which required Belgium to remain neutral and committed Britain and a number of other European powers to defend that neutrality in the event of an invasion. In other words, Britain was acting honourably in keeping an international commitment. However, some historians have argued that rivalry with Germany and a desire to defend France and to keep the balance of power in Europe were more important reasons. They claim the British government used the Treaty of London as an excuse to go to war and as a device to win over British public opinion.

Why did Britain declare war on Germany?

SOURCE A

If you are faced with war on two fronts and have not got the resources to fight both wars, what should you do? The German answer was to get in one blow first and eliminate one enemy. Their answer was to defeat France first. One essential part of the plan was to go through Belgium. This was a central part of the plan and not dependent on Britain's attitudes. The other essential part was that there could be no delay between mobilisation and war, because if there was delay Russia would catch up. So, the decision for mobilisation which Germany made on 29 July was a decision for a general European war.

The British government asserted that it had given no promises. In secret the British had already arranged to take the British army to the left flank of the French army but this had been concealed from the British public. Assertions were made constantly by the government that no commitment had been made. This was very awkward because the French had been told over and over, 'Yes, we shall stand by you if you are threatened by Germany.' Then came the news that Germany had demanded the right to go through Belgium. The British government had known these plans for a long time. However, it came as a great surprise to most British people. Britain it seemed went to war, not to play a part in the balance of power, not to aid France or destroy Germany, but to 'fulfil its obligations to Belgium and in the defence of small nations'. This persuaded Parliament and British public opinion. However, the treaty of 1839 only gave Britain the right to intervene to defend the neutrality of Belgium. There was no treaty obligation for Britain to do so. This was invented for the sake of British public opinion.

From a history book published in 1977.

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SOURCE B

The German army did not believe that they could conquer decisively if they had to fight on two fronts. Therefore, they had long planned to knock out France before Russia could mobilise. It has often been said that 'mobilisation meant war'. This was not true. Most of the major powers could mobilise and yet go on with diplomacy. For the Germans, however, mobilisation and war were the same because the Russian decision to mobilise upset their plan. Either Germany had to stop Russian mobilisation by threat of war or it had to start the war with France. Germany tried to stop Russian mobilisation but Russia refused. On 31 July Bethmann Hollweg asked Moltke, 'Is Germany in danger?' Moltke answered, 'Yes'. On 1 August Germany declared war on Russia and two days later on France. The First World War had begun, not quite as Germany had expected.

Britain had no plan. Its indecisiveness may have given Germany the idea that it intended to remain neutral and this encouraged Germany to act. Britain's eventual decision to join the war was about more than upholding the 1839 treaty. The British government felt it could not stand by and watch France defeated if it meant German dominance of Europe. Belgium did provide a good legal basis for intervention and one that was popular with the British public. However, in practice, the calculation about the balance of power in Europe was the more important one.

From a recent history book. Bethmann Hollweg was head of the German government and Moltke was head of the German army.

SOURCE C

From a poster published in Britain in 1915.

SOURCE D

We have had a long-standing friendship with France. I know this friendship involves obligations. I give an assurance that if the German fleet threatens the French coast, the British fleet will give all the protection in its power. And there is the more serious consideration of the neutrality of Belgium. Germany has offered Belgium friendly relations on condition that it allowed German troops to pass through Belgium. We were asked by Germany last week whether we would be satisfied if a guarantee were given that, after the war, Belgian independence would be preserved. We replied that we could not bargain away the treaty obligations we had over Belgian neutrality.

From the point of view of British interests, consider what might be at stake. If France is defeated, and if Belgium falls under the same dominating influence, and then Holland and then Denmark, we cannot stay neutral. We have made a commitment to France and we have got the consideration of Belgium which prevents us from being neutral.

From a speech to Parliament by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, 3 August 1914.

SOURCE E

The truth is the British government is responsible for this greatest of all wars. Up to this summer British statesmen have assured their Parliament that no treaty existed limiting Britain's independence of action. Should a war break out, Britain was free to decide whether it would participate in a European war or not. There was no treaty obligation, or threat to Britain, which forced the British statesmen to start a war. The British government allowed this monstrous world war, because they thought it was an opportunity to destroy the strength of its greatest European competitors in the markets of the world.

The Belgian neutrality, which Britain pretended it was bound to defend, is a mask. On 2 August, 7.00 pm, we informed Brussels that France's plan of campaign forced us, for reasons of self-preservation, to march through Belgium. But as early as the afternoon of the same day, before anything was known of this step, the British Government promised unconditional aid to France in case the German navy attacked the French coastline. Not a word was said of Belgian neutrality. This fact is established by the declaration made by Sir Edward Grey in Parliament on 3 August.

From a speech by Bethmann Hollweg to the Reichstag, December 1914.

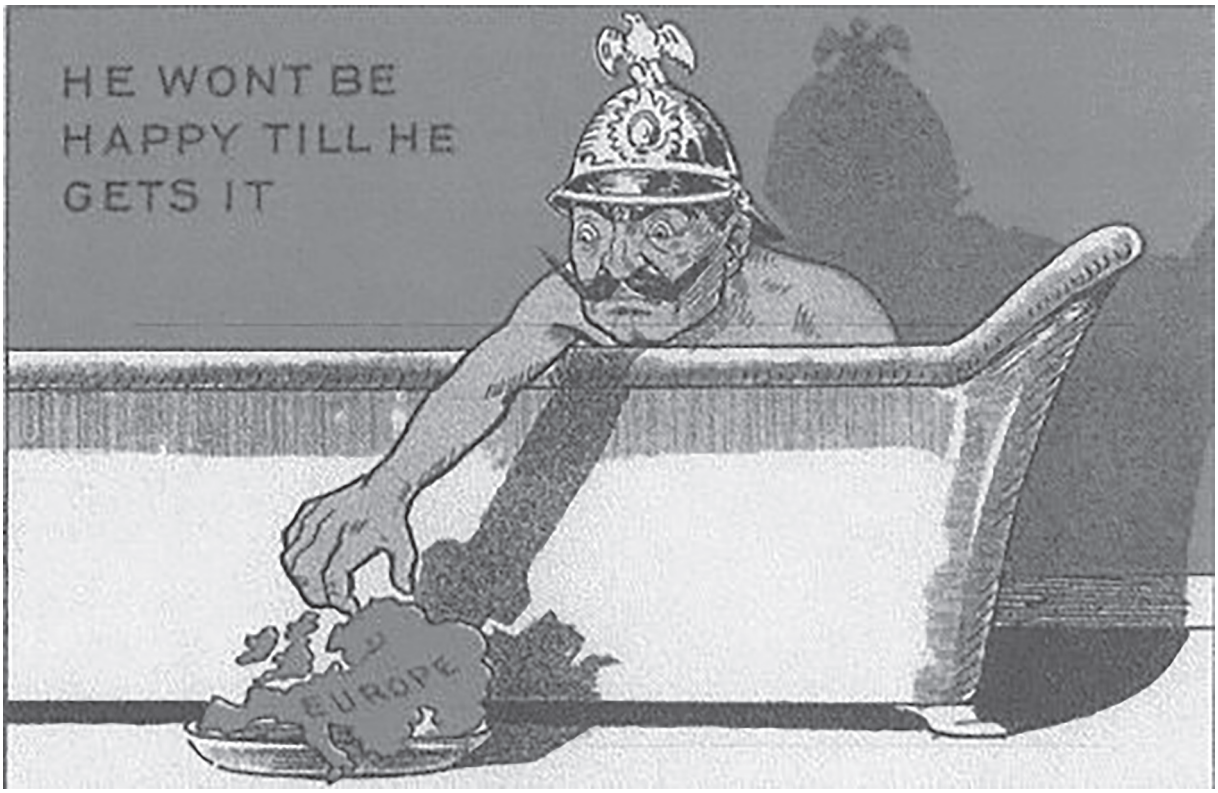
SOURCE F

Cambon said if we would only declare definitely on the side of Russia and France, it would decide the German attitude in favour of peace.

I said to Cambon that Britain could not give any promise of support at the present time. We do not feel that any treaties or obligations of this country are involved. Further developments might alter this situation. The preservation of the neutrality of Belgium might be an important factor in determining our attitude. Cambon expressed great disappointment at my reply. He repeated his question of whether we would help France if Germany attacked. I said that as far as things had gone at present, we could not take any action.

Grey writing to Sir Francis Bertie, British Ambassador in Paris, 31 July 1914.
Cambon was the French Ambassador in London.

SOURCE G



A postcard published in Britain, 1914.

Now answer **all** the following questions. You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources which 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 Study Sources A and B.

How far do these two sources agree? Explain your answer using details of the sources. [7]

2 Study Source C.

How useful is this source to a historian studying why Britain went to war? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [8]

3 Study Sources D and E.

Does Source E prove that Grey was lying in Source D? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

4 Study Source F.

Are you surprised by Source F? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [8]

5 Study Source G.

Why was this postcard published in 1914? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [7]

6 Study **all** the sources.

How far do these sources provide convincing evidence that Britain went to war to keep its commitment to Belgium? Use the sources to explain your answer. [12]

Option B: Twentieth century topic

WAS THE BERLIN WALL CONSTRUCTED TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF EAST BERLIN?

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

Background Information

At the end of the Second World War Germany was divided into four zones. The eastern part of the country went to the Soviet Union while the western part was divided between the USA, Britain and France. Although Berlin was located in the Soviet zone, it was also divided into four zones. Thus, a capitalist West Berlin existed deep within communist East Germany. On 13 August 1961 the government of East Germany began to build a barbed wire and concrete wall between East and West Berlin. This made it nearly impossible for people to move between East and West Berlin.

Why did the East Germans build the Wall? They claimed they were trying to protect the people of East Berlin and stop Western spies entering East Berlin and undermining the socialist state. However, other reasons have been suggested such as the communists' desire to stop young skilled workers moving from East Berlin to West Berlin.

Was the wall constructed to help the people of East Berlin?

SOURCE A

The Soviets' relationship with other communist powers was the crucial factor in Khrushchev's decision making in 1961. He was desperate for socialism to triumph over capitalism in Germany. The East Germans thought they could use this for their own benefit and solve the problem of their citizens fleeing to West Berlin. Khrushchev also needed the support of East Germany because of his split with China.

Ulbricht had long wanted to close the border in Berlin. He blamed the Soviets for his country's economic problems because of the Soviet post-war reparations policy when the Soviet Union had stolen much of East Germany's wealth. Khrushchev, however, did not want to close the border in Berlin because it would make Cold War tensions worse and make communism look bad.

In 1961 pressure from Ulbricht to close the border increased. He was desperate to reduce the problem of East German citizens fleeing to West Berlin because they had skills East Germany badly needed and he believed they were being mistreated in the West. Khrushchev reluctantly agreed in June, knowing that it would save the East German regime, limit Ulbricht's influence in Eastern Europe, and show the Chinese and communist leaders in the Eastern bloc that he could stand up to the West. A start was made to the wall on 13 August 1961.

From a recent history book. Ulbricht was leader of the East German government.

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SOURCE B

Between 1949 and 1961 about 2.7 million people left East Germany and East Berlin, causing serious problems for Ulbricht. This represented a brain drain, leaving East Germany on the brink of social and economic collapse. Ulbricht claimed that West Germany was stealing East Germany's wealth and owed it 17 billion dollars in compensation. He also claimed that innocent East German citizens were being lured to the West, only to be exploited. However, as late as 15 June 1961 Ulbricht claimed that he had no intention of building a wall or closing the border. It is significant that this was the first public use of the term 'wall'. On 13 August coils of barbed wire were strung along the border with West Berlin. This action was directed at East Germany's own population, who were now trapped in East Berlin.

Khrushchev was originally not keen on building a wall, but on 1 August 1961, in a telephone call with Ulbricht, he took the initiative and suggested a wall should be constructed. He had become more confident about the wall because of Kennedy's inexperience. In June 1961 Kennedy had made the mistake of admitting that the USA would not actively oppose the building of a wall. However, the crucial decision was made by Ulbricht who signed the order to close the border and build a wall. For him, the loss of the young and the educated had become so damaging to the political and economic credibility of East Germany that securing the border had become essential.

From a recent history book.

SOURCE C

A cartoon published in an East German magazine in August 1961, just before the building of the Berlin Wall. 'Honig' means 'Honey'. The cartoon shows an East German worker flying to West Berlin, while the two on the left have arrived. The two East Germans on the right have stayed in East Germany.

SOURCE D

A cartoon published in an American newspaper in 1961 soon after the construction of the Berlin Wall. The figure at the top represents Khrushchev.

SOURCE E

A cartoon published in an American newspaper, 30 August 1961.

SOURCE F

TOP SECRET

The proposals for the establishment of border security between East Berlin and West Berlin are politically unacceptable. You should meet with Ulbricht and tactfully explain the following.

These measures would place under suspicion the sincerity of the governments of the Soviet Union and East Germany, which consistently speak out for German unification and the conclusion of a peace treaty, and would bring serious harm to our political successes in West Germany. These measures would break down the order in city life, bring disorganisation to the city economy, and would negatively affect the interests of the inhabitants of East and West Berlin, causing anger toward the East German government and the Soviet authorities in Germany.

It should also be kept in mind that the establishment of border security along the border of East Berlin would worsen the Soviet Union's relations with the USA, Britain and France, which would be a definite disadvantage to the countries in the camp of peace and democracy.

Instructions from the Soviet Government to Soviet diplomats in East Germany in September 1953.

SOURCE G

The establishment of border control in 1961 straightened things out at once. Discipline in East Germany increased. Factories began working better. So did collective farms. Comrade Ulbricht informed us that there were immediate improvements in the economy of East Germany. The population of West Berlin had been shopping for food in East Berlin, taking advantage of lower prices there. Thus, the West Berliners had been devaluing the East German mark, placing a heavy burden on the shoulders of East German peasants and workers, and therefore extracting political as well as economic gains from the situation. Once we established border control, we put an end to this.

From Khrushchev's memoirs, published in 1971.

SOURCE H

FRONTIER SEQUENCE

Germany today. Barbed wire running like a scar across the land, dividing East from West. Mr Khrushchev's threat to change the status of Berlin is a threat to free people everywhere. These East German watch towers are not watching the West – they are watching for East Germans who would quit their country. Two thousand refugees a day risked everything to reach West Berlin. The frightened East Germans reacted by sealing off East Berlin in an attempt to keep by force those who would not stay by choice.

REFUGEE SEQUENCE

What kind of people are they, these refugees? These are not refugees from hunger or poverty – they are reasonably well fed and clothed. They are fleeing from oppression of the mind. They long to say what they think; to vote freely. Most are young. Nearly three million have left East Germany for the West in the last twelve years – and the great majority come through the gateway to freedom in West Germany and to a new life.

An extract from the commentary of a film called 'Outpost of Freedom – The Meaning of Berlin Today', produced by the British Government in 1962.

Now answer **all** the following questions. You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources which 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 Study Sources A and B.

How far do these two sources agree? Explain your answer using details of the sources. [7]

2 Study Source C.

Why was this cartoon published in August 1961? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [8]

3 Study Sources D and E.

How far do these two cartoonists agree? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

4 Study Sources F and G.

How far does Source F make Source G surprising? Explain your answer using details of the sources and your knowledge. [8]

5 Study Source H.

How useful is this source to a historian studying the Berlin Wall? Explain your answer using details of the source and your knowledge. [7]

6 Study **all** the sources.

How far do these sources provide convincing evidence that the Berlin Wall was built to protect East Germans? Use the sources to explain your answer. [12]

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