



NANYANG JUNIOR COLLEGE

Year Two Preliminary Examination 2025

HISTORY

Paper 1 The Cold War and the Modern World (1945–2000)

8838/01

15 September 2025

3 hours

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name and civics tutorial group on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
You may use an HB pencil for any diagrams, graphs or rough working.
Do not use staples, paper clips, glue or correction fluid.
DO **NOT** WRITE IN ANY BARCODES.

Section A

Answer **Question 1**.

Section B

Answer **two** questions.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

At the end of the examination, slot in any additional answer booklets into the original 12-page booklet.

Hand in your answer booklets for each section **separately**.

Section A

You **must** answer Question 1.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE USSR

1 Read the sources and then answer the questions which follow.

Source A

When Reagan took office in 1980, the world had existed for decades under the threat of nuclear holocaust between communism and democracy. The two superpowers had steadily growing atomic arsenals of incredible destructive power. Early on in his presidency, Reagan moved to hone the nation's defenses to razor edge. That military buildup, together with spending billions on the so-called "Star Wars" defense program, forced the Soviets into a more heated effort to stay ahead of the United States in the arms race. Reagan's continuing military buildup sowed the seeds of the ultimate end of communism in the Soviet Union and the Cold War. As it turned out, Russia lost, bankrupting itself in the process. The spending exposed the cracks in the Soviet Union's monolithic tyranny and led ultimately to its total collapse. Was it worth it? Of course.

Extract from a pro-Reagan newspaper in the USA, August 1992.

Source B

Gorbachev's reforms – while yet to remedy existing problems – have caused new challenges to surface. Having seen the quality of life stagnate under Gorbachev, Soviet citizens are becoming increasingly skeptical of reform, seeing it more and more as a threat to the secure existence they recall they enjoyed under Brezhnev.

Over the past two years, incidents of political unrest in the USSR, ranging from small gatherings to major acts of political violence, have sharply escalated. Under the banner of glasnost, Soviet citizens are organising groups that could form the basis of a political opposition and are advancing a wide range of demands that challenge central authority. The most dangerous of these are the nationalist movements that have blossomed in many republics, unleashing forces that could threaten to tear the system apart.

From an American intelligence report, April 1989.

[Turn over

Source C



Gorbatschows Aufgabe (1986)

Political cartoon by a Dutch cartoonist in 1986.

* The man in the bottom left is Gorbachev.

Source D

This country was suffocating in the shackles of the bureaucratic command system. Doomed to cater to ideology and suffer and carry the heavy burden of the arms race, it found itself at the breaking point. All the half-hearted reforms, and there have been a lot of them, fell through, one after another. This country was going nowhere, and we couldn't possibly live the way we did. We had to change everything radically. It is for this reason that I have never had any regrets. I did not use the capacity of General-Secretary just to reign in this country for several years. I was aware that to embark on reform of this calibre and in a society like ours was an extremely

difficult and even risky undertaking. But even now, I am convinced that the democratic reform that we launched in the spring of 1985 was correct.

An excerpt from Gorbachev's speech on 25 Dec 1991.

[Turn over

Source E

Few observers in the West predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. This was certainly the case with the Soviet Union under Gorbachev. The Soviet Union was not at the point of collapse when Gorbachev assumed power in 1985; it began to disintegrate as a result of his policies. One of Gorbachev's greatest weaknesses was his failure to understand the revolutionary potential of the nationalist issue. In 1988 and 1989 Armenians demanded separation from Azerbaijan, Georgia demanded independence from central control and the three Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia called for independence. Gorbachev was willing to grant greater autonomy to the republics, but his conservative opponents were concerned that his reforming policies would lead to the break-up of the Soviet Union and that was the main reason for the coup against him in August 1991.

An account by an American historian, 1997.

Now answer the following questions:

- (a) Compare and contrast the evidence in Sources A and B about the state of the communist system in the USSR. [10]
- (b) How far do Sources A-E support the assertion that Gorbachev's actions led to the collapse of the USSR? [30]

[Turn over

Section B

You must answer **two** questions from this section.

EITHER

- 2** 'The breakdown in relations between the Soviet Union and China was a result of security interests.' Discuss. [30]

OR

- 3** How far would you agree that the evolution of US-Japan relations between 1952 and 1991 were driven by economic concerns above all? [30]

AND EITHER

- 4** "The fear of communism was a major concern driving ASEAN cooperation during the Cold War". Discuss. [30]

OR

- 5** To what extent was Singapore's foreign policy from 1965 to 1991 shaped by developments in the Cold War? [30]