A2: The origins and course of the First World War, 1905–18

This question is about the deadlock on the Western Front. Study Sources A, B, C and D and then answer all the questions that follow.

Source A: A British painting showing an attack by British troops on German trenches at Neuve Chapelle, March 1915.

Source B: An eye witness account of a British attack on the German trenches on 1 July 1916.

The 1st Rifle Brigade advanced in perfect order. Everything was working smoothly, not a shot being fired. We had nearly reached the German front line, when all at once machine-guns opened up all along our front with a murderous fire. We were caught in the open, with no shelter. Men were falling all around us. I tripped over dead bodies and fell headlong into a shell hole. Bodies were strung out on the barbed wire.

Source C: A description of a British attack during the Somme offensive.

Hundreds of dead were strung out on the barbed wire. Quite as many died on the enemy wire as on the ground. It was clear that there was no gap in the wire at the time of the attack. The Germans must have been reinforcing the wire for months. How did the planners imagine that the British soldiers would survive the machine gun fire and the barbed wire?
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A3: Russia in Revolution, 1914–24

This question is about the Civil War of 1918–21. Study Sources A, B, C and D and then answer all the questions that follow.

Source A: A Bolshevik poster of 1919. The three dogs represent leading White commanders.

Source B: From a history of the USSR written by a Soviet historian in 1981.
The Communist Party sent its members to join the Red Army. By the end of 1918 the Red Army numbered 1,700,000. It was a strong force. Even so, on every battlefront Red Army units had to fight against an enemy who was better equipped, better trained and who outnumbered them.

Source C: From a modern history of the Russian Civil War.
From the winter of 1918–19 even the White commanders, Kolchak and Denikin, faced a struggle against great odds. The Bolsheviks had all of 1918 to strengthen their position. They controlled most of the resources of old Russia. They had more popular support, and their forces greatly outnumbered those of the Whites.

Study Source A.
(a) What can you learn from Source A about fighting on the Western Front during the First World War? (3)

Study Sources B and C.
(b) How far does Source C support the evidence of Source B about the reasons for the failure of the British attacks at the Somme in July 1916? Explain your answer. (7)

Study Sources A, B, C and D, and use your own knowledge.
(c) ‘The main cause of the deadlock on the Western Front was the tactics of the commanders on both sides.’

Use the sources, and your own knowledge, to explain whether you agree with this view. (15)

(Total for Question A2 = 25 marks)

Source D: From a modern history textbook.
The commanders on both sides had little or no idea about trench warfare and the tactics necessary to break the deadlock. Many of the senior British generals had very out-of-date ideas. They still believed that the cavalry would win wars. They persisted for over three years with the belief that numbers of infantry soldiers would achieve a breakthrough against machine-guns and barbed wire.