

1 THE SECOND WORLD WAR ENDS

Key Issue

- Who was to blame for the start of the Cold War, 1945–9?

Key Words

Second World War • USSR • USA • communism • capitalism • Stalin • second front • Yalta: four zones, Greece, Poland, war criminals, democracy • Potsdam • Truman • Attlee • atomic bomb

ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

The Second World War left the countries of Europe very poor and weak. There were only two superpowers – the USA (the Americans) and the USSR (the 'Soviets': USSR stands for Union of Soviet Social Republics – 'Russia').

The USSR and the USA hated each other. This hatred went back to 1917, when Russia had a revolution and turned communist.

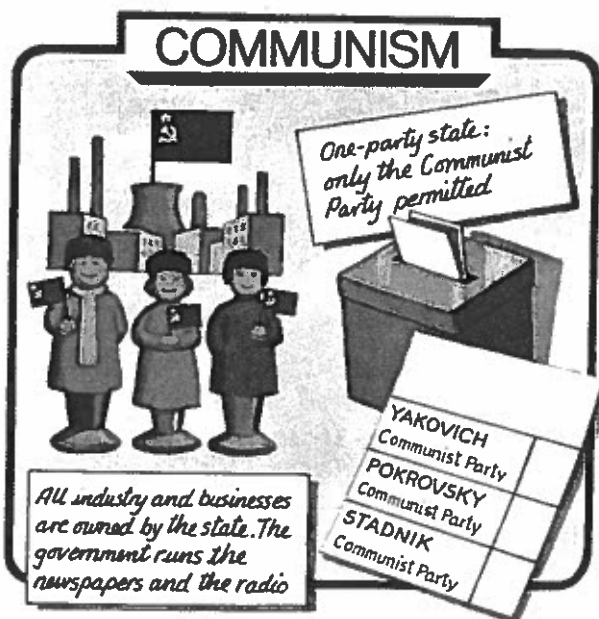
During the war, the two were allies. But after the war, the hatred returned. They did not fight each other ('hot war'), but for 44 years they did everything they could to oppose each other – this was called 'the Cold War'.

The Americans feared and hated the Soviets. They thought Russia wanted to spread communism (and Russia's power) all over the world (even in America).

STALIN'S FEARS

The Soviet leader, Josef Stalin, feared and hated the Americans:

- During the Russian Revolution, America had helped the communists' enemies.
- Russia was the only communist country in the world, and felt in danger.
- Twenty million Russians had died in the Second World War against Nazi Germany. Stalin had kept asking for a 'second front' in western Europe to take some of the pressure off Russia, but America and Britain did not invade France until D-Day, June 1944. Stalin thought they had delayed on purpose so that Germany could do as much damage as possible to Russia and communism.



America and Russia were completely different. This made them fear and hate each other.

As the Russian armies pushed the Nazis back to Berlin, Stalin was determined that Russia would be safe in the future. To do this, he wanted a ring of friendly countries round Russia. They would form a 'buffer zone' against attack. And to be friendly, these countries would have to be communist.

Britain and America could not stop Stalin taking over most of eastern Europe.

YALTA

In February 1945, the 'Big Three' – Churchill (Prime Minister of Britain), Roosevelt (President of America) and Stalin – met at Yalta in the USSR. They met to decide what to do when Hitler was defeated. They disagreed about how to treat Germany. Britain and America wanted to help Germany recover from Nazism. Stalin wanted to take huge reparations to pay for the war, and to put Germans into work-camps and make them work for Russia.

Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt agreed:

- To split Germany into four zones (run by Russia, America, Britain and France).
- To split Berlin into four zones.
- To accept Russian influence in eastern Europe, except in Greece (which would be under British influence).
- Poland would become a separate country.
- Nazi war criminals would be put on trial.
- Countries set free from the Nazis should have free elections and choose their own democratic governments.
- The USSR would join the United Nations.
- The USSR would help America fight Japan.

POTSDAM

In July 1945, the Allies met again, at Potsdam in Germany. A lot had changed since Yalta. Germany had surrendered (on 7 May 1945). Roosevelt had died and had been replaced by Harry Truman (who hated communism and did not trust Stalin). Also, during the conference, Churchill lost an election and was replaced by the new British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee (who also did not trust Stalin).

Most of all, at the conference, Truman knew that America had just successfully tested an atomic bomb. This gave America a military advantage over the rest of the world, and meant that Truman dared to be tougher with Stalin.

Controversy!

'The Soviets were to blame for the Cold War.'

What is your INSTANT REACTION?

A SOURCE

A French cartoon showing Stalin taking over the world.



Questions

- Describe the key decisions made at Yalta, 1945. [6 marks]
- What does Source A tell us about France's fears in the years immediately after 1945? [3 marks]
- How reliable is Source A to an historian studying developments in Europe after 1945? [6 marks]

THE IRON CURTAIN

In March 1946, Churchill gave a speech at a place called Fulton in America. He said that eastern Europe was falling under Russian control, behind what he called 'the Iron Curtain'. He wanted Britain and America to resist the Soviets.

At first, the Americans did not really support this idea. But Churchill's speech made Stalin angry. In some ways, his speech was the start of the Cold War.



Winston Churchill giving his famous 'Iron Curtain' speech.

A SOURCE

Winston Churchill, speaking at Fulton in America.

An Iron Curtain has come down across Europe.

Behind it lie all the capital cities and countries of eastern Europe. All these famous places and their peoples are dominated by Russia, and are under Russian control.

B SOURCE

Joseph Stalin said the following in the Russian newspaper *Pravda* (13 March 1946).

Mr Churchill has declared war on Russia!

During the war, Russia lost more people than Britain and America put together. Why is it so surprising that we want friendly countries round us so that we can be safe in the future?

C SOURCE

This 1946 British cartoon shows Churchill having 'A Peep under the Iron Curtain'.



Questions

- Study Source C. Explain the message of this cartoon. Support your answer by referring to details of the cartoon and your own knowledge. [6 marks]
- Explain why there was tension between Britain and the USSR at this time. [9 marks]
- Explain how the following contributed to tension between the Allies in 1945:
 - The delay in opening the second front
 - Poland
 - The atomic bomb.[10 marks]

"The Iron Curtain"

In February 1945, when it was clear that Germany would be defeated, Allied leaders met at Yalta to decide what should happen when the war ended. The most important decision was what to do with the lands they had captured from Germany.

First, there was Germany itself. The Allies agreed that Germany would be divided into four zones. Each zone would be occupied by one of the Allies: Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Germany's capital, Berlin, was located entirely within the Soviet zone. However, it was decided that the city would also be divided into four sectors.

Then there was Poland. The Soviet army had entered Poland in March 1944. Stalin did not intend to give up the Polish land he had gained by his agreement with Hitler. In return for this territory, Poland was given German land to the west.

Stalin wanted the Germans to pay reparations. The other leaders, remembering the Treaty of Versailles, did not. In the end, Stalin had his way. Machines were stripped from German factories in the Soviet zone and taken to the Soviet Union.

The Allies agreed that each country freed after the war would be able to choose its form of government. However, both Churchill and Roosevelt knew that the eastern European countries would have no choice. The Soviet Union was in a powerful position. Stalin could use his army to force these nations to adopt communism.

The Soviet Union took complete control of the countries of eastern Europe. They became known as Soviet "satellite states." Like satellites that revolve around the Earth, life and government in these countries revolved around the Soviet Union. These countries were ultimately controlled by orders from Moscow, the Soviet capital.

A communist government was set up in each country which Stalin controlled. Soviet advisers moved in. Anti-communists

#1. Which country lost WWII?

#2. What happened to Germany?

#3. After WWII, what could each country decide?

#5. What did the Soviet Union control?

#4. Who was the leader of the Soviet Union?

#6. What is the Soviet capital?

were sent to labour camps. Stalin was creating a buffer zone to protect the Soviet Union. He was determined that it would never again be attacked from the west.

The Soviet satellite nations were sealed off from contact with non-communist countries. Travel was restricted and trade was cut off. News from outside was not allowed to enter these countries. Other nations watched as eastern Europe became communist. Fear grew in the United States, Canada, and western European countries that communism would take over the world, just as Hitler and the Nazis had tried to do.

In 1946, British Prime Minister Churchill gave a speech in the United States. He told Americans that "an **iron curtain** has descended across the continent." On one side were the democratic countries of western Europe. On the other side were the communist countries controlled by Stalin. Of course, there was no real iron curtain. But there were minefields to stop people fleeing to the west. There were armed soldiers ready to shoot anyone attempting to escape. And in 1961, the Communists built the **Berlin Wall**, an actual wall separating the western and communist eastern sections of the city.

#7. How were Soviet "satellite" countries blocked from the world?

#8. What is the iron curtain?