

# WHO WAS TO BLAME FOR THE COLD WAR?

## BACKGROUND: why did the USA and USSR start to mistrust each other?

The 2 sides were enemies long before they were allies in WWII. Relations had been bad since 1917 as Russia had become communist and the West had interfered to try and stop it. Russia had also not been allowed to join the League of Nations in the 1920s and things had got worse in the 1930s.

## What was the Soviet View?

- In 1945, Stalin was determined to build a buffer zone against further German attacks. Germany had invaded Russia twice in the twentieth century, in 1914 and 1941. In WWII, the Russians suffered terribly and 28 million people died. Stalin was determined that this should never happen again.
- Stalin did not trust the West. He remembered that the Western Allies had intervened in the Russian Civil War in 1918-19 and he suspected that they had encouraged Hitler in the 1930s. They had not agreed to an alliance with Russia in the 30s
- The Allies had ignored all of Stalin's appeals for a Second Front in 1942 and 1943, and had delayed invading France until 1944. This made Stalin very suspicious. He believed that they had wanted to destroy Russia by fighting Germany on its own.



## What was the Western view?

- The Allies had spent 6 years fighting a dictator. They did not want to see another simply take his place. Churchill had urged Roosevelt to 'shake hands with the Russians as far East as possible'
- Churchill believed that the Allied armies should advance as far East in Europe as possible and liberate as many countries as they could from Nazi control. He was afraid that the Red Army would not leave the countries of Eastern Europe that it liberated from the Nazis.
- Churchill based his fears on the Soviet treatment of Poland. In 1944, the Russians had not helped the Poles in the Warsaw Uprising. Instead, they had set up a pro-communist gov't and ignored the Polish gov't.
- Churchill was also suspicious that Stalin had not declared war on Japan until the very last moment.



## What is a Cold War?

The Cold War was the war between the USSR and the USA which never actually came to direct fighting. Both tried to impose their ideologies on other countries - communism and capitalism - and gain superiority by the use of propaganda, espionage and the vast stores of weapons.

## What was agreed at Yalta?



- Germany to be divided into 4 zones
- Berlin would also be divided into 4 zones
- Poland's boundaries would be altered. They would be given land from the West - which would be taken from Germany - and would lose land in the East which would be given to the USSR.
- The USSR would declare war on Japan 3 months after the end of the war with Germany
- Stalin promised to allow free elections in the countries of Eastern Europe that he had liberated from the Nazis.

## Why did relation worsen after Yalta?

- Stalin was going back on his promises, this was clear in Poland.
- Roosevelt died and was replaced by Truman. He took a much tougher line with Stalin.
- America and Britain had been developing their atom bomb and they had not shared this information with Stalin. Why? Did they intend to use it on Russia?

## What was agreed at Potsdam?

- Germany was divided into 4 zones and Berlin was divided into 4 sectors.
- Each zone would be occupied by one of the four allies - Britain, France America and Russia.
- Decisions on Germany would be taken jointly and would be reunited in the future.
- The Nazis would be made illegal and war criminals prosecuted.
- There would be free elections in Germany, freedom of speech and freedom of press.
- Germany to pay reparations. Most would go to Russia.
- All 3 allies agreed to take part in the United Nations.



## Disagreements at Potsdam

- When Britain and the USA referred to Stalin's actions in Poland, he simply referred to theirs in Greece.
- The British were supporting the anti-communist gov't and only pulled out in 1947 when they ran out of money. This led directly to the Truman Doctrine.
- Stalin was angry that Truman had not told him about the atom bomb until the very last minute. Stalin believed the bomb was dropped as a warning to him.

## What were the differences between the East and the West?

- The major difference occurred over *Germany*. The West wanted *Germany* to be kept weak to avoid any future war. The West wanted *Germany* to recover economically, they remembered the lessons of WWI and they did not want to make the same mistakes.
- This meant that the zones in *Germany* received very different treatment from the occupying forces. The Russian zone was stripped and resources given to Russia while the Western zones were rebuilt and reorganized.
- To the West, Stalin was a merciless predator. To Stalin, the West appeared to be laying the foundations for a strong *Germany* - something that he feared more than anything else.
- This was made worse in 1946 when Western zones merged for economic purposes. In Jan 1947, Bizonia was created. This was the first step on the road to recovery.
- Russia was furious. They had not consulted the Soviet Union before doing this.

## THE IRON CURTAIN

- Most of the countries of Eastern Europe fell under Soviet influence after WWII, because they had been liberated by the Red Army.
- At first, the Soviet authorities tried to gain majorities at elections by persuading political parties to join with the communists.
- The first countries to fall under Soviet control were Romania and Bulgaria, which had both been German allies in WWII. (March and Nov 1945)
- Albania became communist in 1946.
- In Czechoslovakia, the communists had to resort to more brutal methods. The Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, died mysteriously in a fall and the President, Benes, resigned in June. This handed control to the communists.
- In Hungary, the communists did not take real control until May 1949 after a general election gave complete victory to the communists.



## US ACTIONS, 1947-49

### *The Truman Doctrine -*

- The policy of 'containment', Truman's attempt to stop the spread of communism.
- Offered \$400million in aid to the Greek gov't in its civil war against the communists. (GB pulled out)
- March 1947, Truman offered to help any government that was being threatened by a communist takeover.



### *Why introduced? -*

- To help Europe recover from the ravages of WWII
- To stop countries from becoming communist by helping them
- Send a message to Stalin that he would not let him get away with any more attempts to increase communist influence in Europe.

## US ACTIONS, 1947-49

### *The Marshall Plan -*

- Marshall Aid was offered as part of the Marshall Plan which was an attempt to rebuild Europe after WWII. Named after the US Secretary of State, George Marshall.



### *How did Marshall Aid work? -*

- In June 1947, Truman offered money to all countries of Europe but only Western countries accepted. This was because there were strings attached in terms of how the money would be spent. (in ways to develop capitalism) Stalin introduced COMECON as an Eastern equivalent.
- Italy received \$601 million and Spain received \$62.5 million. Total was \$17billion
- The money was granted by American Congress after events in Czechoslovakia saw a pro-American Minister murdered.

### Dollar Diplomacy -

Using your enormous wealth to influence other countries politics.

This was evident in the Marshall Plan.

## Key Words

### Containment -

Stopping the spread of communist ideas. A policy introduced by Truman in America from 1947, after events in Czechoslovakia.



# THE BERLIN BLOCKADE

## WHY?

- Marshall Aid had a massive impact on Western Berlin and it began to recover quickly - unlike the East. This made the Eastern zone look bad.
- This was also helped by the introduction of a new currency - the Deutschmark - which kick started the German economy again. Prosperity began to return.
- Travel between the 4 sectors of Berlin was easy so East Berliners could see the improvements that Marshall Aid had on life in the West.
- The Brain Drain. Thousands of highly educated, professional people were flooding into the Western sector of Berlin as a result, threatening the collapse of the Eastern zone.

## WHAT HAPPENED?

- In June 1948, Stalin ordered that all traffic between West Germany and West Berlin should be stopped.
- He was able to close the road, rail and canal routes, but could not prevent supplies being brought in by air.
- From June 1948-May 1949, Allied planes flew around the clock one landing every 90 seconds. This was called Operation Vittles.
- Soviet fighter aircraft did what they could to stop the Operation and 79 pilots lost their lives.
- 8000 tonnes of provisions were brought daily, twice what was needed. Even coal was brought. A total of 227,264 flights were completed.



## CONSEQUENCES?

- As a result of the Blockade, Germany was firmly divided into 2 nations.
- In May 1949, the Western zones became the Federal Republic of Germany (known as West Germany)
- The communist Eastern zone was formed into the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in October 1949.
- Most importantly, the Berlin Blockade set out a pattern for Cold War confrontations.
- During the Berlin Blockade, war between the 2 sides seemed a real possibility. At the height of the crisis, the Western powers met in Washington and signed NATO.



#### Russia was to blame

- Promised to hold free elections in Poland at Yalta and didn't
- Stalin's armies were occupying most of Eastern Europe.
- Stalin possibly had Masaryk murdered in Czechoslovakia to get control of the gov't.
- Stalin blockaded Berlin in an attempt to force the Allies out.

#### America was to blame

- America had a new President, Truman, and he hated communism.
- The Allies were insensitive to Russian needs after the war. They had suffered far more than the West.
- The Allies had tested a new A bomb and not told Stalin.
- Britain and America got involved in Greece to stop the communists coming to power
- Truman Doctrine saw the USA send help to any country, trying to resist communism.
- Marshall Plan. This was seen as America using their economic power to spread capitalism.
- The west set up NATO which was a military alliance and a sign that relations now had totally broken down.

#### 4 Mark Questions -

- What was decided at Yalta?
- What was the Cold War?
- Describe what happened at the Potsdam Conference.
- What decisions were taken about Germany at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences?
- What was the Iron Curtain?
- What did the USSR gain from the Yalta and Potsdam conferences?

#### 6 Mark Questions -

- Explain why Marshall Aid was offered to European countries in 1947.
- Explain why there was a breakdown in relations between the USSR and the West from 1945 to 1946.
- Explain why there were tensions at the Potsdam conference.
- Explain why the Soviet Union blockaded West Berlin in 1948.
- Explain why the USA was hostile to the USSR 1945-1949.
- Explain why the USA-USSR alliance had broken down by 1947.
- Explain why the wartime allies disagreed about Poland in 1945.
- Explain why Berlin was a cause of tension between the East and the West 1945-1949.

#### Typical 10 Mark Questions -

- 'The USA was successful in containing Communism in Europe up to 1949.' How far do you agree with this statement?
- The following were equally to blame for increasing Cold War tension before 1950 i) Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe ii) Truman doctrine and Marshall Plan iii) Berlin Blockade. How far do you agree?