The beginnings of the Cold War: 1945–1949

Who was to blame?

FOCUS

In May 1945 American troops entered Berlin from the west, as Russian troops moved in from the east. They met and celebrated victory together. Yet three years later these former allies were engaging over Berlin and the war between them seemed a real possibility. What had gone wrong?

In the chapter you will consider:

- the wartime alliance between the USA and the USSR broke down
- the Soviet Union gained control over Eastern Europe and how the USA responded
- the consequences of the Berlin Blockade in 1948.

Finally, you will make up your own mind as to whether the USA or the USSR was more to blame for the outbreak of the Cold War.

Timeline

This timeline summarises the key events you will be looking at in this chapter. As you study the chapter, add details to your own copy of the timeline.

The Yalta Conference, February 1945

In February 1945 it was clear that Germany was losing the European war, so the Allied leaders met at Yalta in the Ukraine to plan what would happen to Europe after Germany's defeat. The Yalta Conference was held. Despite their differences, the Big Three—Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill—agreed on some important matters.

- Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan once Germany had surrendered.
- They agreed that Germany would be divided into four zones. America, Britain, France, and Soviet. Since the German capital, Berlin, was deep in the Soviet zone, it was agreed that Berlin itself would also be divided into four zones.

SOURCE 1


1. Choose two points of agreement from the list and explain why they were significant for the future peace of Europe.

- Stalin's agreement to enter the war against Japan once Germany had surrendered.
- The agreement to divide Germany into four zones, with Berlin divided also, which had significant consequences for future developments in Europe.

- They agreed that as countries were liberated, they would be placed under Soviet control. The German army they would be allowed to hold for as long as the government they wanted.
- The Big Three agreed to join the newly formed United Nations Organisation, which would aim to keep peace in the future.
- The Soviet Union had had its fill of war. It had lost 20 million Soviet people in the war. Stalin was therefore concerned about the future security of the USSR. The Big Three agreed that Eastern Europe should be seen as a 'sphere of influence'.
FOCUS TASK
What was going on behind the scenes at Yalta?

The war against Hitler had ended. Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill met at the Yalta Conference. They appeared to get on well, but what was going on behind the scenes? Source 2 will help you decide.

1. Use a table like this to analyse the sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence for disagreement</th>
<th>Evidence for agreement</th>
<th>Reasons why the source is reliable or unreliable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Source 2: 
"Stalin, crooked and unscrupulous, made a close alliance of these three (Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill) in the Yalta Conference."

Source 3: 
"Perhaps you think that just because we are the allies of the British we have forgotten who they are and who Churchill is. There's nothing they like better than to think their allies...

During the First World War they cut their throats to England and the French. And Churchill? Churchill is the kind of man who will kick your packed bags at the feet of the Kaiser."

Source 4: 
"A few weeks after the Yalta Conference, Stalin opened a Kolkhoz to a Yalta Conference."

Source 5: 
"Over the years, Stalin asked Kolkhoz to send him the results of the sale. Stalin wanted the results to be sold in Germany before the armies of democracy.

Source 6: 
"The Soviet Union has become a danger to the free world. A new threat must be checked against its second coming."

Source 7: 
"A Soviet soldier."

ACTIVITY
Work in pairs.

Pair 1 could use Source 2 and Source 4 to make a friendly impression on the Soviet leaders or a friendly impression on Stalin and Churchill. Although they did not like them.

Minow Edlén comments in 1948 on Stalin's assessment of Churchill's action.


Pair 2 could use Source 2 and Source 3-4 to exaggerate their friendship with Stalin and Churchill.

Written by Soviet historian Sergei Kupriyanov after the war.

Pair 3 could use Source 2 and Source 5 to summarize what each of the leaders thought of each other.

Pair 4 could tell to other pairs which sources Stalin and Churchill really felt about each other. Explain your answer.

Pair 5 could use Sources 2-4 to summarize what the Yalta Conference meant to each leader. Explain your answer.

Write these sentences to summarize what each leader thought of each other:

1. Stalin thought of Churchill as a

2. Churchill thought of Stalin as a

3. Roosevelt thought of Stalin as a

4. Roosevelt thought of Churchill as a

5. Roosevelt thought of himself as a

6. Stalin thought of himself as a

7. Stalin thought of Churchill as a

8. Churchill thought of Stalin as a

9. Stalin thought of Roosevelt as a

10. Churchill thought of Roosevelt as a

11. Roosevelt thought of Churchill as a

12. Roosevelt thought of Stalin as a