

GCSE History: The Cold War

Topic 1: Origins of the Cold War



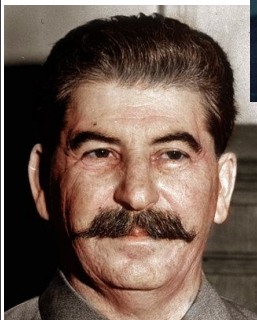
Summary

The Cold War began as World War II was ending. The USA and USSR had allied with each other to defeat Nazi Germany even though they strongly disagreed with the other side's way of thinking. In the Potsdam Conference of 1945, the USSR, USA, Britain and France all agreed to split both Germany and the city of Berlin into 4. However, disagreements between East and West were clear, and Stalin began ensuring that East European countries like East Germany became communist too. In response, President Truman created his Truman Doctrine, promising help to fight communism. By this point, the Cold War was set in place. The first major conflict was the Berlin Blockade, where Stalin blocked roads and railways for 11 months, trying to starve West Berliners into joining the East. A defensive alliance in the West was set up (NATO), followed later by an Eastern version (the Warsaw Pact). When Stalin died in 1953, Khrushchev's new ideas seemed to improve relations. However, his invasion of Hungary in 1956 to keep it strictly communist ruined any chance of ending the Cold War early.

Harry Truman
1945-53



Dwight Eisenhower
1953-61



Joseph Stalin
1924-53



Nikita Khrushchev
1953-64

Key Figures

Joseph Stalin	Soviet leader from 1924-1953. Known as the 'Man of Steel', Stalin used brutal tactics to turn countries communist.
Harry S	US President from 1945-1953. Helped shape the early years of the Cold War with the Truman Doctrine and Berlin Airlift.
Winston	UK Prime Minister during World War II. His 'Iron Curtain' speech in 1946 raised fears and led to the Truman Doctrine.
Nikita Khrushchev	Soviet leader from 1953-1964. To begin with, he improved relations with the West, but he would be responsible for the Berlin Wall and Cuban Missiles Crisis (covered in Topic 2).
Mátyás Rákosi	Leader of Hungary from 1948-1956. Rakosi described himself as 'Stalin's greatest disciple/follower', and used repressive tactics to crush any opposition to communism.
Imre Nagy	Leader during the Hungarian Uprising after Rakosi was forced to step down. He could be described as a 'soft' communist. For example, he wanted other parties to be allowed in elections. He was arrested after the Uprising, and executed in Moscow.
János Kádár	Took over from Nagy as leader of Hungary from 1956-1988. He brutally repressed people that took part in the Uprising, but by the 1970s he had brought in <i>some</i> free speech and capitalism!

Other Resources

GCSEPod: <https://members.gcsepod.com/shared/podcasts/title/10646/65369>

BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z3h9mnb/revision/1>

St Ivo lessons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

1941 USSR joins Grand Alliance against Germany

1945 - Yalta/Potsdam conferences decide fate of Germany - USA uses atomic bombs on Japan

1945-1948 'Salami Tactics' turn Eastern European countries communist

1947 Truman Doctrine promises to help against communism

1948-9 Berlin Blockade and Airlift

1949 - NATO set up. - USSR tests its first atomic bomb

1953 Stalin dies; Khrushchev becomes leader

1955 Warsaw Pact set up

1956 Hungary is invaded by Warsaw Pact countries

TIMELINE

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The Cold War has often been described as ‘**the East**’ versus ‘**the West**’, with Europe (and Germany) being split down the middle. By 1955, this division was made official with **NATO** and the **Warsaw Pact** made up of West vs East countries. Our course focuses on Europe, but countless other countries were forced to choose sides, and the USA/USSR both intervened in wars across the world.

Challenge

Was a Cold War between the USA and USSR inevitable?

Stalin was a paranoid ruler of the USSR. Knowing this, were the West incorrect to act so strongly against communism in the early years?

Kennan advised in the Long Telegram that the USSR would back down against a show of force. How could the USA have done this?

Was ‘Peaceful Co-Existence’ a lie, a dream, or just badly carried out?

How far was Stalin responsible for the Hungarian Uprising 1956?



SCAN ME

Key Vocabulary

Cold War	A war in which countries don’t <i>directly</i> fight each other. Instead they compete in different ways, or fight in other ‘proxy’ wars.
propaganda	False or misleading information to boost your support.
censorship	Banning the spread of information that you dislike/disagree with.
The West	Normally refers to USA, Canada, and West European countries like Britain, France and Italy.
capitalism	An economy where businesses can be run by individual for his/her own profit.
democracy	A type of government which is chosen by the people in elections.
Soviet Union (or the USSR)	The correct name for Russia in this period. The USSR combined 15 countries such as Russia, Estonia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.
The East	Normally refers to the USSR, and East European countries like Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.
communism	An economy and a type of government. Communist countries do not allow proper elections, and run businesses for ‘the people’.
dictatorship	A leadership where other views/political parties are forbidden.
repression	Reducing opposition with intimidation, arrests, or murder.
Conference	Meetings/summits between world leaders to discuss issues.
Iron Curtain Speech	In 1946, ex-Prime Minister Winston Churchill warned of the need to stop Europe being divided in two by Stalin/communism.
Truman Doctrine	USA’s promise to ‘contain’ the spread of communism, with military force if needed. Used by presidents throughout the Cold War.
Marshall Plan	USA sent \$17 billion to help rebuild Europe after WW2.
Cominform	Stalin forced East European countries to follow USSR directions.
Comecon	Communist countries had to produce certain economic goods.
arms race	Sides compete to have the biggest/most destructive weapons.
De-Stalinisation	In 1956, Khrushchev criticised Stalin’s tactics. This made people think that Khrushchev would allow large changes to communism.