

Cold war assignment

[History](#)



By far, the biggest contributor to the formation of the Cold War was the fact that both sides believed the communist Soviet Union and the capitalist west ideologies were incompatible with each other. The essence of the Cold War was seen as the opposition of communism and capitalism (Skylarks, Geary, and O'Brien 874). This belief was present as soon as 1946, when Winston Churchill gave a speech characterizing the Soviet Union as a government that was capable of trying to “enforce totalitarian systems upon the free democratic world” (Churchill 303). He also contrasted the Soviet

Union as a state where control was “enforced upon the common people by... Police governments,” while the US and Great Britain embodied “the great principles of freedom and the rights of man” (Churchill 303). This belief did not abate as the Cold War dragged on, and caused even more animosity between the two blocs. Even as late as 1961, Khrushchev's address to the Communist Party Congress still proclaimed the main driving force of the Soviet Union to be the “competition of the two world social systems, the socialist and the capitalist” (Khrushchev 307).

This perceived ideological incompatibility also contributed to the formation of alliances in the East and West blocs. These alliances in turn prolonged the Cold War. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was first formed in 1949 as protection of capitalist countries from the USSR, and it was still bringing countries into its membership all the way up until Spain's entrance in 1982. The Soviets responded to this with yet another alliance group in Eastern Europe, the Warsaw Pact (Skylarks, Geary, and O'Brien 876).

Former colonies were also forced to choose an allegiance with either the capitalist or communist camps (Skylarks, Geary, and O'Brien 877). This expanded the reach of the Cold War to the entire world, instead of just Western Europe and the U. S. And the USSR. Many of the economic tensions that contributed to the start of the Cold War were in fact caused by the ideological differences of the East and West. The partition of Germany serves as a prime example of how the differing economic policies of the East and West led to the Cold War.

As a capitalist system, the United States wanted to use American capital to invest in Germany and create a stronger economy within the country. On the other hand, the Soviet Union sought to rebuild their own country through the use of German resources (Skylarks, Geary, and O'Brien 874). These two competing theories on the future of the German economy were the primary reason for the Berlin blockade and the eventual split of the country between capitalist West Germany and Communist East Germany.

With the capitalist economy of West Berlin being administered by the US, France, and Great Britain, the Soviet Union enacted the blockade as a protection of their German economic policies. This blockade and subsequent division served as literal example of the separation between the East and West that had taken place and became the Cold War. The different economic paths taken by the East and West also served to create conditions that prolonged the Cold War.

To the West of the Iron Curtain, consumerism came to be the driving force of the economy. Over the years following WI, the economy in the West began

to flourish and grow much faster than in the Soviet Union. In fact, the prosperity of West Berlin was so enticing to East Berliners, that in 1961 the soviet government built the Berlin Wall to stem the extreme rate of immigration of their workers to West Berlin (Skylarks, Geary, and Cobber 900). This wall served to further cement the animosity between the East and West.

In the USSR, consumerism was forsaken for the sustained growth of heavy industry. There Was even an example Of the emphasis placed On this economic plan in Khrushchev 1961 Report to the Communist Party Congress. In his address, Khrushchev expressed the wish that the economy of the USSR focus primarily on “ power engineering, machine building, metallurgy, and fuel industry’ with the only funding for consumer goods to mom from “ funds that accumulate as a result of overindulgent of industrial output” (Khrushchev 309).

The post WI recovery plans both powers established for Europe as a whole also served to reinforce the West as capitalist and the East as communist for the entire post-war period. The Marshall plan enacted by the U. S. Was contingent upon the integration of the West European capitalist markets (Skylarks, Geary, and O’Brien 884). This plan eventually led to the creation of the European Economic Community in 1957, which excluded and competed with the East European communist economies.