

Hostility between the usa and the soviet union



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The USA and USSR both have very different ideologies. The USA believed in a capitalist economy and a democratic system of government. This meant that the citizens of America could vote in their President and Congress in free elections. But, in the USSR they believed in communism. This meant that people could vote in elections, but could only vote for members of the communist party. Before they even started working together, there was already something that they disagreed on. Both countries were considered as superpowers after the war, but their citizens' wealth was also different.

The USA was the wealthiest country in the world at that point, but the distribution of that wealth wasn't equal, and the contrasts between rich and poor were great. The USSR believed in equality throughout the country, and the rights of individuals were seen as less important. But in the real world, the wealth wasn't as equally spread as they said it would be. This created tension as both countries had very different ways of running things. The only reason why they became allies was because they both wanted to defeat Hitler.

This meant that once they had defeated Hitler, there was no reason for them to be allies anymore. This created more tension between the two countries, as they now could admit their differences. At Potsdam, we can see these differences. For example, Stalin wanted to cripple Germany. Truman knew that Stalin was wrong, and didn't want to repeat the mistakes of the Treaty of Versailles. Stalin didn't understand why they wanted to help Germany so much, and thought that they were trying to get Germany strong again so they could defeat him.

Also at the meeting, Truman informed Stalin that America had successfully tested their atomic bomb. Truman wanted to scare Stalin and wanted him to know that they were just as strong as he was. Truman only really told Stalin, as he feared the soviet expansion and that Stalin was getting very strong. The USA realised that the USSR's communist ideologies were spreading and were influencing the governments across Eastern Europe. Stalin wanted to take control of Western Europe, and this is what Truman feared. The USA had always had the policy of isolationism, but helped in the war because they wanted to defeat Hitler.

When America understood that Greece was under threat of being taken over by the communists, they knew that they had to do something. This is where the Marshall plan came from. Truman and Marshall took the idea of helping Western Europe's economy to Congress. This would mean that if America helped get the countries back on their feet again and gave them money, they were less likely to be taken over by the communists. At first Congress rejected the idea and many of the Americans didn't approve, but after the communist takeover in Czechoslovakia, they knew that if they didn't help, Stalin would soon have control of the whole of Europe.