

While the  
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ideologies, both ...

[War](#), [Cold War](#)



While the protagonists in the Cold War sought to promote global ideology both sides were challenged by nationalist forces. Do you agree or disagree?

## 1. Introduction

Instead of battles over control of lands or seas the Cold War was a battle of rhetoric which was also the major factor of the internal nationalist tensions within the USA and the USSR. Ironically the ideology both nations claimed as their intent was anti-Imperialism. Within each nation nationalistic controversies heated up the rhetoric. Although the internal problems turned Russians against Russians and Americans against Americans the way the tensions played out were very dissimilar.

Both the United States and the USSR faced internal tensions during the Cold War that were fueled by nationalist and patriotic fever. The USA was experiencing the rise of McCarthyism and teaching citizens how to recognize Communists. The USSR was dealing with the far ranging dynamics from the consequences of the Bolshevik coup. This essay explores the history in each country and tries to determine whether the nationalistic movements inside the USSR and the USA were strong enough to affect the national ideologies the countries were trying to promote internationally.

## 2. Inside the USSR

Hinds and Windt (1991, p. 5) point to the ideology of the Bolshevik Revolution which was “ case-hardened into a formal stultifying rhetoric under Stalin.” The USA viewed the czars as dangerous and repressive. When the USA entered WWI in April, 1917 the USSR was considered an ally and the Bolshevik Revolution was at first viewed as a great success for the people of Russia. That is until peace was agreed upon and German soldiers were

released from Russian prisoner of war camps. The terrible condition of the German soldiers' outraged the American's sensibilities and they started using even more hateful rhetoric than had been used towards the czars (Hinds and Windt, p. 36).

D'Encausse (1992, pp. 12-14) explains the beginning of the debate which laid the foundation for the ongoing tensions within the USSR during the Cold War. The two major group divisions can be delineated between Western Marxists who defined their politics in terms of the class struggle and the Eastern Marxists who defined their politics in terms of national minorities.

D'Encausse (1992, p. 12) explains, ". . . the " Eastern Marxists" recognized the growing significance and potential of nationalist aspirations." The Bolsheviks were part of the Eastern Marxists along with Austrian-Hungarian Empire Marxist. For about 100 years the Russian minority-intelligentsia had been debating the nationalist " problem" without any reference to Marxism or other economic policy. The thinking of the new generation of minority-intelligentsia took up the discussion again in the late 1800s and the early 1900s. Therefore Bolsheviks had two views to debate; the " socialist Marxists" and the intellectuals who didn't regard Marxism as a useful consideration in the very real problem of minority rights.

Lenin favored secession of minority nations but had constant arguments from, for example, the Polish Bolshevik-left who felt that only a minority under colonial control should secede. Another major problem for Lenin was using Stalin as his ' messenger' of the policy. Also contradictions arose as in this example which demonstrates the complexities of the difficulties.

" At the Second Congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Lenin clearly

affirmed the subordination of the Ukrainian party to the Bolshevik Party. In addition, to preclude the appearance of autonomist tendencies, he placed his followers in leadership positions in the organizations of the Ukrainian party. However, these efforts did not suffice to ensure a consistent or continuous policy. The difference between Russian and Ukrainian jurisdiction was not defined, nor was the role of parties in the two states made clear. As a result, Russian-Ukrainian clashes occurred repeatedly. Lenin's pressure on the Ukraine continued and resulted in rancor and considerable confusion” (D'Encausse, p. 83).

Even with his skills at diplomacy Lenin was unable to construct a workable compromise. These complex choices and decisions are important to understand because it is their lack of solution which grew from the early 1900s and highly impacted the inner nationalistic tensions during the Cold War which the Soviet Union was trying to deal with at the same time as fighting the ideological war of words with the USA.

### 3. Inside the USA

#### **In the USA the national conflicts within the country were more powerful later in the century.**

During the Great Depression Franklin D. Roosevelt presidency helped people get money in their pockets to spend in order to give the economy a boost and get the economy running again. The election of Truman indicated a turn away from the “ New Deal” in order to address economic problems with more capitalistic appropriate solutions (USA Embassy, p. 1).

That turned into a sometimes violent battle against workers, labor unions and labor union organizers. Unfortunately this national, internal ideology

became linked with the national ideology of hatred of the Soviet Union and anyone indicating support of workers' rights became labeled a Communist. When McCarthy successfully received the attention of the whole nation in proclaiming that every citizen should be fearful and vigilant against Communism with public hearings; not only were people urged to vilify anyone who had ever been a member of the Communist Party but the hatred transferred to workers was encouraged.

Another tension was between the military and the civilian government leadership. General MacArthur became outspoken in his desire to bomb China and become militarily involved in Asia (USA Embassy, p. 1). He was not supposed to do this because he was a military officer. He was overstepping his job description and moving into the area of politicians. This inner-nation conflict was small compared to the impact of the eventual war in Vietnam and the conflicts which arose in the United States between those for and against the war. This battle became based between the two ideologies and the ability to reasonably debate the facts became impossible. In the 1950s "Communists" and the popularity of the McCarthy movement ignited a fear that was devastating to people who became branded as "Commies." On the other hand, as advisor to McCarthy, Nixon became more visible in a political role and his rise to the Presidency was helped to some extent by his involvement so his involvement was positive to his career. The tensions in the USA in some ways boiled down to this type of "winners and losers" score card making the finding of a middle road impossible.

4. Conclusion. At the beginning of the essay we were asked, "While the protagonists in the Cold War sought to promote global ideology both sides

were challenged by nationalist forces. Do you agree or disagree?"

I agree that the inner struggles and tension of both the USSR and the USA were a challenge to the governments as they tried to promote their own "anti-imperialist" stance to the international community. Meanwhile their citizens had a variety of ideas about imperialism as well as how important the Cold War should be on the national agendas.

But finally those discussions didn't matter because the rhetoric of the Cold War took on a life of its own. Without any battles on land, air or sea a dangerous war took place between the two nations that was fortunately resolved peacefully.

## References

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