

Chapter 4 sample Cambridge IGCSE questions with sample answers

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Cambridge IGCSE History 0470/01 Paper 1 Q7 a, b & c November 2008



NEIGHBOURS

“Come on, Sam! It’s up to us again.”

- a) What was agreed at the Yalta Conference of February 1945? (4)

The Yalta Conference, which featured the leaders of the USA, Great Britain and the USSR resulted in several areas of agreement. The first major agreement was that Germany would be divided into zones of occupation after the war. Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin agreed to divide Germany, and Berlin, into four zones, with each of the three main powers, and France being responsible for one zone each.

Furthermore, the three leaders agreed that USSR would join in the war against Japan, 90 days after Germany had been defeated. In return, Stalin obtained a promise that Mongolia would become independent of nationalist China.

The "Big Three" also agreed that free elections would be held throughout Europe after the war, and that most of the pre-war governments of Europe would be allowed to return. Stalin even agreed to hold free elections in Poland, even though he had clearly stated it was in his sphere of influence.

b) Why did the USA introduce the Marshall Plan? (6)

The Marshall Plan was the most far-reaching economic aid programme in history, when it was announced in 1947. The most important reason why the USA introduced the Plan was to help the countries of western Europe recover from the effects of the Second World War. The economies of these countries had been badly damaged during the war, with roads, railways and factories being destroyed as a result of German occupation or bombing. High unemployment also became a problem as most countries disarmed quickly. The Plan gave \$13 billion in aid to help these countries recover.

The USA also introduced the Plan to prevent the spread of communism throughout western Europe. Truman was worried about the increase in popularity of the French and Italian communist parties, who appeared to have benefited from the economic crisis after the war. He believed that by helping to tackle Europe's economic problems, the Marshall Plan would help prevent communist parties coming to power. It was therefore an important strand of his containment policy.

A final reason why the Plan was introduced was to help America export more goods to Europe. Few countries could afford to buy US goods after the war, but Marshall Aid meant that European countries could import food and materials which would not only help them recover, but also provide a new market for American goods.

c) How far was the Cold War caused by Truman's hostility towards the Soviet Union? (10)

Truman's hostility towards the Soviet Union was a major factor in the start of the Cold War. Truman had succeeded FDR as President, and his approach to the USSR differed considerably to that of FDR. Whereas FDR had managed to secure agreements with Stalin at Yalta, Truman adopted a confrontational attitude towards the Soviet leader, resulting in few areas of agreement being established at Potsdam in July/August 1945.

Truman was also to blame because his policy of containment was targeted directly at the USSR and communism. His Truman Doctrine said that the USA would defend any country threatened by communism, whilst the Marshall Plan was deliberately offered to the countries of eastern as well as western Europe in order to isolate the USSR.

However, Stalin was also to blame for the start of the Cold War as he created a large communist empire in eastern Europe, where opposition to the communist party was banned, and several of his policies such as supporting communist parties in France and Italy, and blockading West Berlin, suggest he wanted to expand his empire westwards.

In conclusion, Stalin was more to blame for starting the Cold War because of his expansionist policies. Truman's hostility was only a reaction to the aggressive policies of the USSR.

Exam-style questions with model answers

Why did differences in ideology lead to the start of the Cold War? (6)

Differences in ideology were a major factor in starting the Cold War. The United States was a capitalist democracy, whilst the Soviet Union was a communist state. Some historians believe the Cold War was always likely to take place because each ideology was expansionist and needed to expand into other countries in order to survive. After the October 1917 Russian Revolution, the USA sent troops to fight the communists in the Russian Civil War, and this suggested to the Soviet leadership that the USA wanted to destroy communism.

After the defeat of Germany in 1945, differences in ideology were also significant in the start of the Cold War as the USSR imposed a communist one-party state in each of the countries it liberated at the end of the war. The USA believed that this went against the agreements made at Yalta to hold free elections throughout Europe after the war.

Truman's response to the Soviet occupation of eastern Europe also illustrates how ideology helped start the Cold War. His famous Truman Doctrine, 1947, claimed that there were two ways of life in the world, and one of them, communism, was aggressive and a threat to peace. His promise to defend any state threatened by communism was seen as very aggressive by Stalin. Ultimately, differences in ideology helped contribute to the start of the Cold War because the two superpowers had very different ideas on how society should be structured and what the post-war world should look like.

What methods did Stalin use to take over Eastern Europe during the period 1945–48? (4)

Stalin's occupation of Eastern Europe took place gradually between 1945–48, using similar methods in each country, an approach known as using "salami tactics". His first stage was to form coalition governments with fascist parties. The communists would frequently hold key positions in the government which allowed them to control the police force, and have political opponents arrested. For example, in Poland approximately 50,000 opponents were deported to Siberia between 1945 and 1947.

The second method involved the communists removing rival parties, either by merging socialist and communist parties as they did in their eastern German zone to create the Socialist Unity Party, or by banning rival parties.

The third method of taking over Eastern Europe was to replace local communist leaders with communists who had been approved by Moscow. For example, Rakosi was sent to lead the communist party in Hungary, and create a Stalinist state there.

What was the Truman Doctrine?

(4)

The Truman Doctrine was announced by US President Harry Truman in March 1947. Its main feature was a promise to assist any state which was threatened by internal or external aggressors. This was the start of the policy of containment, which was created to stop the spread of communism.

As part of the Truman Doctrine, he also promised to give \$400,000,000 to both Greece and Turkey, who were both threatened by communist aggression in 1947. At that time, Great Britain had just announced that she could no longer afford to support the Greek monarch in her civil war against communist rebels.

Finally, the Doctrine warned of the dangers of allowing countries such as Greece to succumb to communism, arguing that neighbouring states would then be threatened and risk falling like dominoes.

Why did the USA introduce the Marshall Plan?

(6)

The Marshall Plan was introduced by US Secretary of Defense George Marshall in June 1947. The main reason it was introduced was to provide immediate help to the economies of Europe, who were struggling to deal with the effects of World War Two and the mass unemployment caused by men returning from the war. \$17 billion of aid was provided between 1948 and 1952.

The second reason it was introduced was because the USA feared that serious economic problems would lead to the spread of communism in these countries. In particular, Truman was worried that communist parties would come to power in Italy and France in 1947, which explains why they sent more aid than any country apart from Great Britain.

The final reason was to help the US economy after the war. Truman realised that European countries would not be able to afford US goods unless they were given financial help. If they couldn't afford to buy US goods, then it ran the risk of suffering a depression like in the 1930s.

Do it yourself: how could each of the following responses be improved?

Why was NATO formed in 1949?

(6)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was formed in 1949 by many European powers, the USA and Canada. It was formed to stop the Soviet Union getting any more land in Europe, as they had been very aggressive after the Second World War.

How could this response be improved?

This response is very brief and provides a simplistic explanation for the creation of NATO. You should try to provide three separate, well-explained reasons for this type of question. These could include the following.

1. The Soviet takeover of eastern Europe, the Greek Civil War, and the Berlin Blockade frightened western political leaders. They feared the further spread of communism throughout Europe.

2. European leaders wanted to commit the USA to an alliance against the Soviet Union as they could not defend Europe against a Soviet attack without US support.
3. NATO was formed to guarantee collective security in Europe, as its members agreed that an attack upon one state would be regarded as an attack upon all member states. Other members would, therefore, provide whatever help was necessary to preserve security in the area covered by the alliance.

“Stalin blockaded West Berlin because he was afraid the western powers wanted to push him out of Germany”. How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. (10)

Stalin launched his blockade of West Berlin in 1948 because he wanted to push the western powers out of Berlin, and probably out of Germany as a whole.

Another reason he did so was because he didn't like the fact that France, Great Britain and the USA had introduced a separate currency into the western zones of Germany, which he thought broke the agreement made at Potsdam.

The final reason was that he was worried about Germany uniting under the influence of the USA.

There were many reasons why he blockaded West Berlin.

How could this response be improved?

This answer has a good *range* of reasons for Stalin's decision to blockade Berlin, but it does not *explain* them fully. Furthermore, the conclusion is too brief, and does not attempt to identify the most important reason for the blockade. A better response would explain why Stalin wanted the western powers out of Germany, for example, because he wanted to expand communism in Europe. The second paragraph is better developed, but could have made reference to the date that the western powers introduced the new currency. After all, this was the event which triggered the blockade. The final reason is a good one, but there is no attempt to explain *why* Stalin feared a united Germany allied to the USA. No reference is made to his fear of another invasion from the west, which would be the third since 1914. All questions of this type require a developed conclusion where you provide a clear judgement on the issues involved in the question.