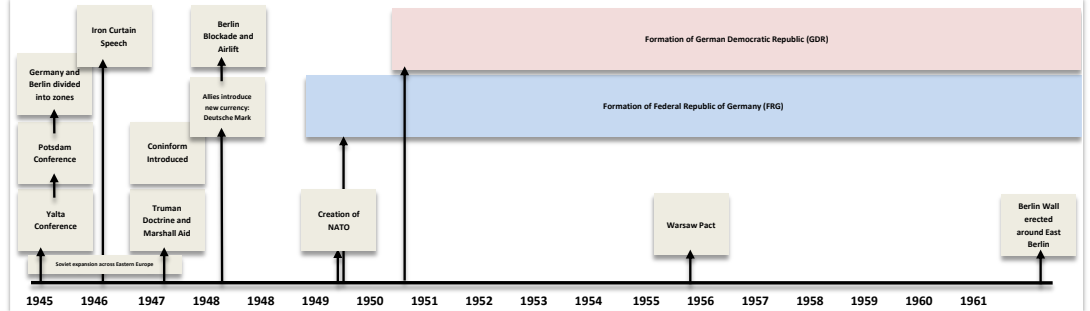


Knowledge Map: Germany Cold War 1945 - 1961 (Division of Europe)

Summary:

This part of the course looks at what happens post-Nazi Germany and the Second World War. The situation sees the Grand Alliance of the Allies collapse and Europe become divided by a metaphorical "Iron Curtain". This split between a USSR led Eastern Europe and a US and British backed Western Europe would see the provide the origins of the Cold War that would accelerate and maintain the division of Europe for the next fifty years, particularly the division of Germany.



End of the Grand Alliance

Summary

The Second World War saw the countries of the USA, the USSR (Soviet Union) and Britain come together to fight a common enemy: Nazi Germany. This alliance though was fragile and only held together by the one common cause of defeating Hitler. Once the war ended, so did the alliance and you see the key differences between the 'allies' come to the fore.

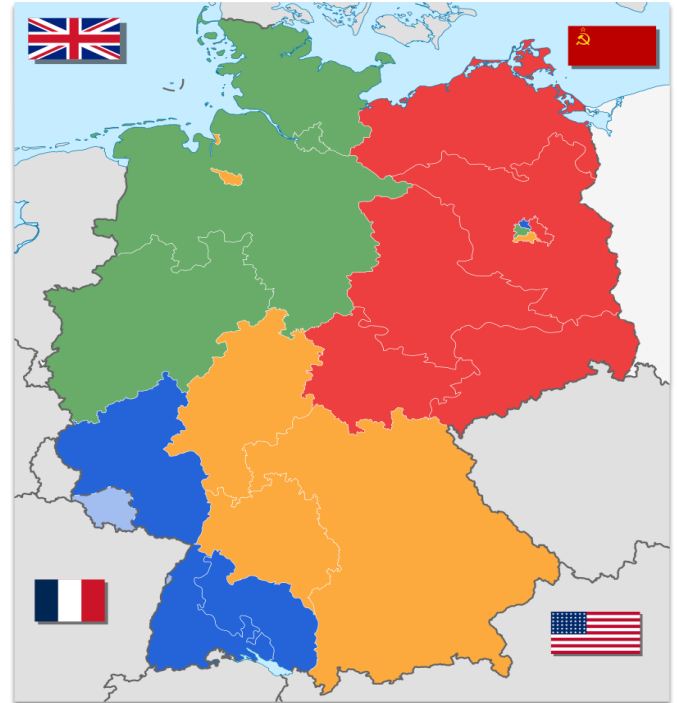
Key Knowledge

1	Grand Alliance	The Alliance the US, USSR and Britain formed during the Second World War was referred to as the Grand Alliance. Whilst these countries came together to fight the common enemy in Nazi Germany, the reality was they had very little in common and were in fact very different in how they believed countries should be governed.
2	Yalta Conference (Feb 1945)	With a successful outcome to the war looking inevitable for the Allies, the leaders of the US, the USSR and Britain met to decide what should happen post-war. The leaders were Winston Churchill (GB), Franklin D. Roosevelt (US) and Joseph Stalin (USSR). They agreed that Germany (and Berlin) would be divided into four occupied zones run by the US, the British and French (the West), and the East to be run by USSR (see map). They also agreed to create new borders for Poland but could not agree the details.
3	End of the Second World War (May 1945)	In May 1945, Soviet troops entered Berlin marking the end of Nazi Germany and the Second World War.
4	Development of the Atomic Bomb (July 1945)	Throughout the Second World War, the US had been developing various new, more powerful weapons. In July 1945, they successfully tested the Atomic Bomb - the most powerful weapon the world had yet seen. The testing is said to have been planned to coincide with the upcoming Potsdam Conference as a show of force against the USSR.
5	Potsdam Conference (Jul-Aug 1945)	The Potsdam Conference was very different to the Yalta Conference for a number of reasons: the threat of atomic weapons, the USSR's reluctance to hold free elections in Eastern Europe, and a western fear of Communism meant there was a lack of trust between leaders. The western leaders had also changed from Yalta: Clement Attlee (GB), Harry Truman (US), whilst Joseph Stalin remained. They fundamentally disagreed over reparations from Germany, how Germany should recover and what to do with Eastern Europe. The Allies were now very much divided.
6	Division of Germany and Berlin	The outcome of the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences was a divided Germany. Divided into zones, each of Britain, France, the US and the USSR would have responsibility for one zone. Special arrangements were made for the capital, Berlin. It was divided into four zones similar to the rest of Germany but access had to be agreed due to Berlin being situated in the Soviet zone in the East.

Map of Germany and Berlin, 1945

Summary

Below is a map of how Germany, and Berlin, were divided into occupied zones at the Yalta Conference of February 1945.



Start of the Cold War: Division of Europe (1945-61)

Summary

The collapse of the Grand Alliance, and the mistrust of each other at Yalta, saw Europe become divided into two sides. The Eastern side was dominated by the Soviet Union, under Stalin's rule, and was predominately communist in its outlook. The Western side was much more democratic and supported by the US and Britain in retaining its capitalist outlook. Nowhere would the open hostility between the US and the USSR become more symbolic than in Germany which became, at first, divided and then ultimately, separated into two distinct countries: East and West Germany. All this open hostility and division is the Cold War and provides the background to what happens to Germany for the next 45 years.

Key Knowledge

7	Soviet Expansion in Eastern Europe	In order to defeat Nazi Germany, the USSR had to 'liberate' eastern European countries between itself and Germany such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. This meant that these countries had a Soviet army presence even before the end of the war. It would come to be that these countries would come under Soviet control through either annexation (forced), rigged elections or murder of key political opponents. There was little the US and Britain could do to prevent it at the time.
8	Iron Curtain Speech (1946)	Winston Churchill referred to Europe being divided into East and West by a metaphorical "Iron Curtain". What he meant was that Europe was divided into an East controlled by the Soviets and a democratic, free West. The Iron Curtain refers to the idea that a curtain had been drawn across Europe in which it was hard to see into the Soviet controlled areas.
9	Truman Doctrine and Marshall Aid (Mar 1947)	To combat the growing threat of Communism spreading from Eastern European into Western Countries such as Britain, France, and more immediate threats such as Greece, Truman announced that the US would not allow the spread of Communism, no matter the cost. His policy of containment (containing Communism to just Eastern Europe) would become the US policy in dealing with the USSR. It signalled that the countries were fully opposed to each other. Marshall Aid was the US to prevent communism spreading by providing countries recovering from war with US money.
10	Cominform introduced (Sept 1947)	As a direct response to Marshall Aid, the USSR collectivised the Eastern European countries they controlled and created a group called Cominform that would coordinate all communist activity across the countries. Its first act would be for all the Soviet controlled countries to refuse Marshall Aid.
11	Deutsche Mark introduced (June 1948)	In June 1948, the US and British decided to combine their two zones of Germany to create Bizonia. They also introduced a new currency called the Deutsche Mark in an attempt to revive the German economy. Stalin saw this as a direct threat to the USSR and as breaking the agreements made at Potsdam.
12	Berlin Blockade (June 1948 - Jan 1949)	Stalin's response to the creation of Bizonia was to blockade Berlin which was situated in the Soviet occupied zone of Germany. He ordered the closure of all access routes in a bid to starve West Berlin and force the US and Britain to give up their control of Berlin. This is a significant moment as it arguably the first potential direct conflict between the US and the USSR.

Key Knowledge

13	Berlin Airlift (June 1948 - Jan 1949)	The US and British response to the Berlin Blockade was not to give up on West Berlin which had quickly become a symbol of containing Communism. They flew supplies in for months in a bid to keep West Berliners alive. The whole operation cost over \$200 million. Stalin was unable and unwilling to shoot down any planes because of the threat of the US using the atomic bomb on them. Eventually, Stalin would have to concede and reopen the access routes.
14	Creation of Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) (1949)	In 1949, following the Berlin Blockade, the US, Britain and France decided to create a country out of their combined zones. In 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was created. It was felt that a strong, economically revived Germany would be a good barrier against the spread of communism. More details about the FRG can be found on the West and East Germany Knowledge Map.
15	Creation of NATO (1949)	Following the Berlin Blockade, the decision was made to form a military alliance amongst the western powers in a bid to protect each other from potential Soviet/Communist invasion. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was the result and all nations agreed to come to each other's aid should one be attacked.
16	Creation of German Democratic Republic (GDR) (1950)	Following the creation of the FRG, Stalin formally created the German Democratic Republic (GDR) out of its zone. It was set up as a one-party communist state. More details about the GDR can be found on the West and East Germany Knowledge Map.
17	Warsaw Pact (1955)	In response to the creation of NATO, the USSR and all Soviet controlled countries in Eastern Europe formed a military alliance called the Warsaw Pact.
18	Berlin Wall erected (Aug 1961)	From 1945, West Berlin had become a symbol of opposition to communism. Throughout the 1950s, the US had spent a lot of money making West Berlin a symbol of the success of capitalism. Its higher living standards and the "economic miracle" experienced by West Germany had seen many East Berliners defect to West Berlin. In a bid to stop this, the GDR made crossing to West Germany illegal, yet it had no real effect. The solution was the Berlin Wall, a wall built by the Soviets stopping their citizens escaping to the West. This would be the most obvious symbol of the Cold War the division of Germany. It would last until 1989 when it would be torn down by Berliners.