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CHAPTER 15



The Big Chill

The Cold War Begins

By 1945 Europe was emerging from the most intense period of social dislocation since the Thirty Years' War of the seventeenth century. The decade and a half from 1930 to 1945 had been one of economic depression, military destruction, mass murder, and the collapse of social and political order. Altogether it is estimated that more than 60 million people died in World War II. The great bulk of them were from the Soviet Union, upwards of 26 million. Perhaps as many as 15 million Chinese died, 6.5 million Germans, 6 million Jews, 4 million Poles, over 2 million Japanese, and almost 2 million Yugoslavs. France lost 600,000, Britain about 400,000, mostly soldiers, and the United States about 405,000.

The war had created a new bipolar world, with the USSR the strongest single military power on the European continent. Many of its historic goals had been or seemed about to be realized. The interwar cordon sanitaire against Bolshevism was gone, and Russia had ended its isolation in Eastern Europe. Now the Soviets could build their own buffer zone of friendly, dependent states along their western border. Dominant in the Balkans and ready to flex its muscles in the Middle East against Turkey and Iran, the Soviet Union was threatened only by the United States with its newly acquired atomic weapons. Despite its evident weakness and need to rebuild itself, the Soviet Union with its large armed forces was the only power that stood in the way of American global hegemony.

The international Left, particularly the Communists, were given a new lease on life by the Soviet victory, the prestige gained by the antifascist resistance, and the apparent acceptance of the USSR into the councils of the Great Powers. The capitalist economy was in shambles in Europe and Asia, and no one could predict how long Europe's recovery would take. The war had been preceded by the Great Depression, and many thought that the war's end would bring back the economic troubles of the 1930s. Some in the West anticipated that social revolution and the breakup of the world capitalist system were on the horizon. Conservative and rightist parties had been discredited for their collaboration with fascism. Yet within a few years the recovery of Europe would be underway; the Soviet Union

would be isolated behind the "Iron Curtain"; the Left in Europe would be divided, and the Communists once again under attack; and the United States would be the major economic player in most of Europe and Asia and the keystone of an Atlantic alliance directed against the USSR.

HISTORIANS LOOK AT THE COLD WAR

Debate about the Cold War has raged since the mid-1940s. Why did the Grand Alliance of the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and China, with its enormous promise for a peaceful and united world, break down into rival nuclear blocs staring each other down over a divided Europe? Were the long years of the arms race necessary or avoidable? Was the USSR largely to blame for the frustrating and futile conflicts of the late 1940s and 1950s, or should blame be shared by both East and West? Two great schools of thought have been shaped in this debate: the "orthodox" and the "revisionist."

The orthodox (sometimes referred to as the liberal) view sees the Cold War as largely caused by Soviet expansionism. The United States was forced by the international danger posed by the USSR to shoulder an unwanted burden and become the reluctant leader of the Free World. Given the global ambitions and aggressive behavior of the Soviet Union, the United States had no policy alternative but containment of the USSR. Only the formation of NATO, the generosity of the Marshall Plan, and the determination of American military might prevented further territorial gains by the Soviet Union. In historian Arthur Schlesinger's words, the Cold War was "the brave and essential response of free men to communist aggression." For orthodox historians of the Cold War, the two sides were hardly equivalent. On one side was Soviet aggression, on the other the American defensive response.

The revisionist historians have elaborated the view that the Cold War was the product of mutual suspicion on both sides and that neither side can be singled out for blame. They argue that the USSR, rather than being aggressive and expansionist after World War II, was actually cautious and conservative. Because the country had endured four years of war and Nazi occupation, it was weak and wanted nothing more than aid from and cooperation with the West. Most revisionists see Stalin as coldly rational and cautious rather than paranoid, expansionist, or revolutionary. A few historians, who might be called "hard revisionists," turn the orthodox view upside down and contend that the blame for the Cold War lay with the United States, an expansionist capitalist economy that required the breaking down of trade barriers everywhere in the world. Whereas the "soft revisionists" see the Cold War as a failure of American statesmanship, the hard revisionists go further and argue that the need for capitalism to expand required the creation of an "open world." When the Soviet Union refused to concur in American ambitions and to restrict access to its own economy and Eastern Europe, American leaders saw the USSR as a hostile force.

In the 1990s, as the archives of the formerly Communist states were opened to historians, researchers found evidence of much more confusion and hesitation in Stalin's foreign policies and behavior than many had anticipated. Rather than

possessing a blueprint for world conquest or expansion across Europe or the fomenting of foreign revolutions, Stalin's behavior was marked by a cold realism and pragmatism, the subordination of ideology to state interests, which was enforced by brutal and cynical methods. Stalin based his policies on an appreciation of the weakness of the USSR, a fear that the West would try to take advantage of that weakness, and a desire to ensure the continuance of the Grand Alliance and material aid from the West. But at the same time Stalin wanted recognition of a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. This did not necessarily mean the Sovietization of the countries along the USSR's western border, but it did mean that no potentially hostile government would be permitted in that region. As reflected in his actions and directives to Communist leaders abroad, Stalin was conservative and cautious, not particularly interested in promoting revolution in the early postwar years and at times positively counterrevolutionary. He was prepared to allow the West a free hand in Western Europe, Greece, and Japan if he were permitted the same in Eastern Europe. Stalin's dilemma, however, was that the United States would not agree to maintaining the Grand Alliance and giving aid to the Soviet Union if Stalin insisted on his foothold in Eastern Europe.

The United States, on the other hand, feared the spread of Soviet and Communist influence, was anxious about the rising forces on the Left, including the Social Democrats, and wanted to reintegrate as much of Europe as possible into a revived capitalist world economy. This included dislodging the Soviet Union from Eastern Europe, a task for which the United States had neither the power nor the will. American actions created new suspicions in Stalin's mind, encouraged him to tighten his grip on the governments and societies in his zone of occupation, and eventually, as the Grand Alliance disintegrated, convinced him to install obedient Communist regimes.

Soviet policy during the Cold War can usefully be divided into two phases. The first phase, 1945–47, was a time of flux and missed opportunities, when Stalin was much more flexible and moderate in his dealings with Eastern Europe. The second phase, 1947–53, was marked by a steady elimination of opposition within the countries of Eastern Europe, the coming to power of Communist parties, and, after 1948, even the destruction of "national communist" alternatives and the full coordination of policy in the region through the use of Soviet police agents.

DIPLOMACY AND THE WAR EFFORT

The Grand Alliance began to take shape shortly after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Prime Minister of Great Britain Winston Churchill told an associate, "If Hitler invaded Hell, I would make at least a favorable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons." In the summer of 1941 President Roosevelt's trusted aide, Harry Hopkins, traveled to Russia and reported to the President and to Churchill that, contrary to the prevailing opinion at the time, the USSR would be able to hold out against the Germans. But a bitter debate raged in the United States, which was not yet at war, about sending Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union.

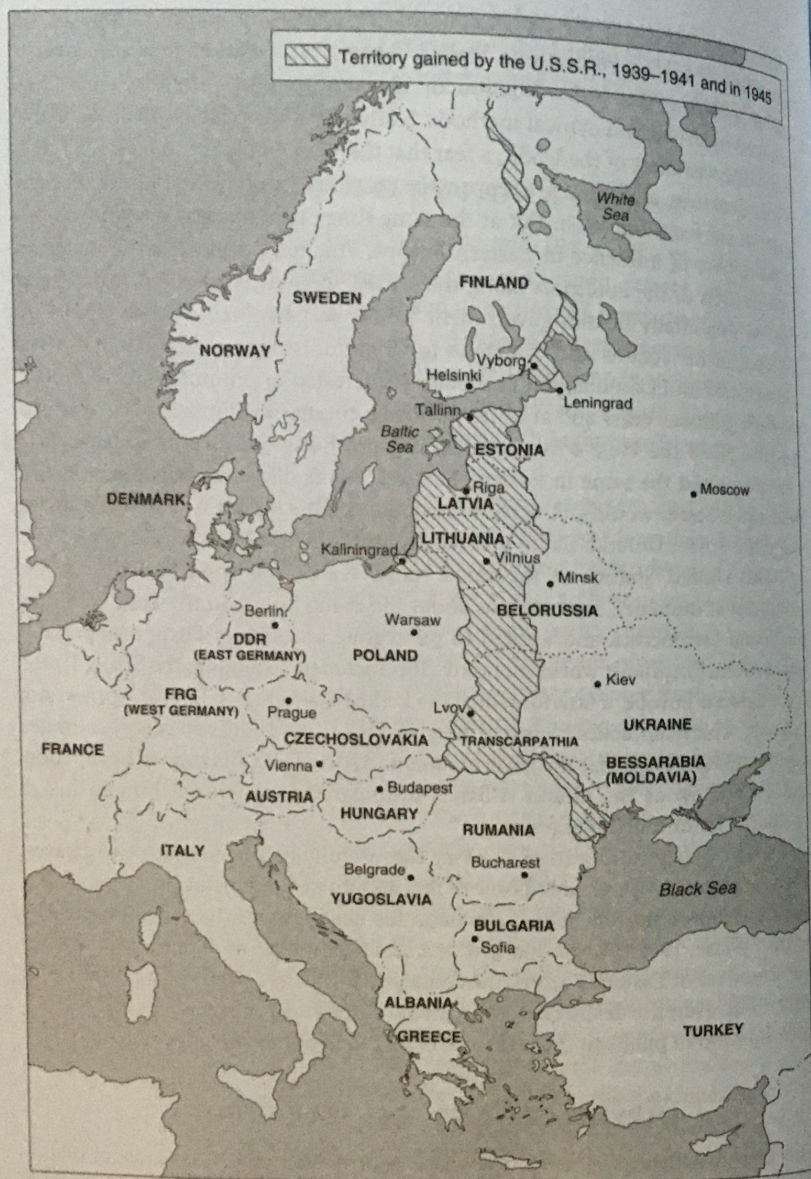


Figure 15.1 The USSR and Europe at the end of World War II.

The then-senator from Missouri, Harry S. Truman, calculated, "If we see that Germany is winning the war, we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible." Eventually aid was sent, and it proved very important in the early days of the war, both materially and psychologically.

The Big Three were allies of convenience, bound together by their determination to defeat the Axis powers. They signed no treaty of alliance and never managed to develop the degree of trust and mutual long-term interest that sustainable alliances require. Even during wartime the alliance suffered many strains. Stalin's principal request of the West was that they open a second front in Europe and draw German troops from the Eastern Front, but in this he was to be bitterly disappointed. Churchill preferred a pinprick strategy against Germany, which involved an invasion of North Africa, knocking Italy out of the war, and the Mediterranean before launching the invasion of France. But later when Churchill suggested an invasion of the Balkans, the Americans pushed harder for the second front in the West. Still, the West did not launch its cross-channel invasion into France until June 1944, by which time the Soviets were already advancing into East-Central Europe.

With the Soviet victory at Kursk in the summer of 1943, it was clear that the time had come for the Allied leaders to concentrate on the political problems that would shape the postwar world. The Soviet ambassador to London told the British foreign minister, Anthony Eden, at the very end of August that "there were two possible ways of trying to organize Europe after the war." Either the USSR and the West "could agree each to have a sphere of interest" or they could "admit the right of the other to an interest in all parts of Europe." The Soviets preferred the latter solution, but the British favored a spheres-of-influence policy, and Great Britain signaled the Soviets in the early fall of 1943 that they recognized Russia's interest in moving its borders westward and its historic interests in Eastern Europe. On principle the United States was opposed to spheres of influence, though it vigorously defended the historic American sphere in the Western Hemisphere. The United States refused even to accept the Soviet Union's 1941 borders, which included parts of prewar Poland and the formerly independent states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In November 1943 Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt met for the first time together in Teheran. Roosevelt was still unwilling to sanction Soviet borders, but he privately agreed with Stalin that the Soviet-Polish frontier should run along the "Curzon Line," which roughly approximated the border between ethnically Polish and non-Polish territories. All three agreed that Germany should be dismembered after the war, and the West promised once again to launch an invasion of France. Stalin agreed to join the war against Japan once Germany had been defeated.

As Soviet forces moved relentlessly westward and it became evident that they would be the principal power in East-Central Europe after the retreat of the Germans, the nature of the relationship between the small countries on the USSR's borders and Moscow had to be worked out. In December 1943 Edvard Beneš, head of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile, came to Moscow and negotiated a treaty of alliance with the Soviets. He agreed to check all important international

questions with the Kremlin before taking action. Stalin saw this treaty as a model for Soviet relations with their other Western neighbors—independent, friendly governments, who posed no security threat to the USSR.

World War II had begun over Poland, and the Cold War as well would center on that strategically important country. Much of Poland had been part of the Russian Empire from the late eighteenth century until the revolution of 1917, and tsarist rule had left a powerful legacy of anti-Russian feeling in Polish nationalism. At the end of the 1930s Stalin wiped out many of the leaders of the Polish Communist Party and forced the party to dissolve itself just before the Soviets invaded eastern Poland and took back the ethnically Belorussian and Ukrainian lands they had lost in 1920. Relations between the Polish government-in-exile in London and the Soviet Union collapsed in 1943, and Stalin soon formed his own Polish Army, resurrected the Polish Communist Party and established a committee that would form the embryo of a pro-Soviet Polish government to rival London. He offered to negotiate the frontier issue with the London Poles if they accepted several pro-Soviet Poles into the exile government. The London Poles refused, hoping that the Americans would support restoration of Poland in its prewar frontiers. The Czech foreign minister, Jan Masaryk, mused at the time that he “had never seen a group of politicians who could by their every act commit suicide with such professional thoroughness.” Churchill warned the Polish prime minister, Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, that “Great Britain and the United States would not go to war to defend the eastern frontiers of Poland.” Stalin tried to reassure the London Poles that he was not interested in imposing a Communist government on them. “Communism,” he told Mikolajczyk, “does not fit the Poles. They are too individualistic, too nationalistic. . . . Poland will be a capitalist state.” But when the London government again refused to accept the Curzon Line, Stalin installed a pro-Soviet government, the Lublin Committee, in Warsaw.

The Soviets also advanced in the summer and fall of 1944 into the Balkans, where they quickly established friendly pro-Soviet coalition governments. Fearing that Britain would be excluded from influence in the Balkans, Churchill flew to Moscow in October to bargain with Stalin. In his memoirs Churchill remembered how the famous “percentages agreement” was made:

The moment was apt for business so I said, “Let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans. Your armies are in Rumania and Bulgaria. We have interests, missions, and agents there. Don’t let us get at cross-purposes in small ways. So far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have 90% predominance in Rumania, for us to have 90% of the say in Greece and go 50-50 about Yugoslavia?” While this was being translated I wrote out on a half-sheet of paper: Rumania—Russia 90%; the others 10%; Greece—Great Britain 90% (in accord with USA); Russia 10%; Yugoslavia—50-50%; Hungary—50-50%; Bulgaria—Russia 75%; the others 25%.

I pushed this across to Stalin, who had by then heard the translation. There was a slight pause. Then he took his blue pencil and made a large tick upon it, and passed it back to us. It was all settled in no more time than it takes to set down. . . .

After this there was a long silence. The penciled paper lay in the centre of the table. At length I said, “Might it not be thought rather cynical if it seemed we had disposed of these issues, so fateful to millions of people, in such an offhand manner? Let us burn the paper.” “No, you keep it,” said Stalin.

The “percentages agreement,” made so callously by two world leaders as if they were real estate brokers, was in fact an explicit acknowledgment of Soviet hegemony in much of the Balkans, with Britain dominating in Greece. The United States did not participate and would later protest the arrangement, but the Soviets abided by the agreement faithfully. When the British occupied Greece in December 1944 and used military force to quell any pretensions of the Left to power in Greece, the Soviets sat silently by as their supporters were shot down or imprisoned.

YALTA AND ITS AFTERMATH

Roosevelt and Churchill flew to Yalta in the Crimea in early February 1945 to meet with Stalin and deal with the most vexing questions of the postwar settlement. Germany, it was agreed, would emerge from the war far weaker than it had been. Officially the communiqué from the conference spoke of the “complete disarmament, demilitarization, and dismemberment of Germany,” but in fact Britain and the United States were already convinced that a strong Germany was needed to balance Soviet power. Stalin asked for \$10 billion in reparations from Germany.



Figure 15.2 (front row, right to left) Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill at Yalta, February 1945 (RIA Novosti).

but Britain balked, and in the end only a vague agreement as to reparations in kind was made. On Poland, the conference agreed that Stalin's Lublin government would form the core of a new Polish government to which would be added émigré Poles, but free elections were to determine the final shape of postwar Poland. The eastern frontier would generally follow the Curzon Line, and Poland would be compensated by significant former German territories in the west.

Stalin also obtained significant agreements from Britain and the United States concerning the war and the peace in Asia. The status quo would be maintained in Mongolia, where the Soviets dominated a Communist government. The USSR would be given long-term leases on the port of Dairen and a naval base at Port Arthur in China, reversing losses suffered in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05. Southern Sakhalin Island would be returned to the USSR by the Japanese, and the Soviet Union would annex the Kurile Islands. The Soviet Union committed its army to join the war against Japan, taking on the land forces in Manchuria, within three months of the ending of the war in Europe.

Yalta marked the peak of the Grand Alliance. As Harry Hopkins wrote, "We really believed in our hearts that this was the dawn of the new day we had all been praying for and talking about for so many years." Even the fierce old anti-Bolshevik Churchill now could say without embarrassment that "Stalin's life [was] most precious to the hopes and hearts of all of us." The Soviets had gained much at the conference, but they had given up much as well. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius said, "The record of the Conference shows clearly that the Soviet Union made greater concessions at Yalta to the United States and Great Britain than were made to the Soviets." But within a month disagreements, particularly over Poland, soured the Yalta mood. The Soviets arrested leading Polish politicians and Resistance leaders and dragged their feet on reconstituting the Lublin government. In the midst of these quarrels, on April 12, President Roosevelt died suddenly of a brain hemorrhage and was succeeded by Harry S. Truman, who was much more suspicious of Soviet intentions. Stalin, upset at Roosevelt's death and the uncertainties it promised, sent Molotov to the United States to speak to the new president and attend the founding meeting of the United Nations. Truman berated Molotov for Soviet actions. The foreign minister protested, "I have never been talked to like that in my life." "Carry out your agreements," Truman replied, "and you won't get talked to like that."

Truman's policies did not in essence differ from those of Roosevelt's, though the brusque style of "give-'em-hell" Harry convinced Stalin and Molotov that the new president was hostile to Soviet interests. More willing than Roosevelt to apply pressure on the Soviets to make concessions in East-Central Europe, Truman abruptly cut off Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union on May 8, the very day that the war in Europe ended. Ships were turned around at sea. Yet the door was left open for negotiations, and after a mission to Moscow by Hopkins, Stalin agreed to a broader Polish government, which received Western approval in June. At this point Stalin was willing to allow Poland to be independent but not outside the Soviet sphere of influence.

At the Potsdam Conference in July–August 1945, Truman tried to push Stalin to make changes in the Rumanian and Bulgarian governments and allow free elections. Stalin was annoyed and told his colleagues that "he had been hurt by the American demand. . . . He was not meddling in Greek affairs and it was unjust of them [to meddle in Rumania and Bulgaria]." A few days later, after receiving news that American scientists had successfully exploded the first atomic bomb in Alamogordo, New Mexico, Truman casually mentioned to Stalin that the United States had just developed a new weapon of unusual force. Stalin seemed disinterested, but in fact he had been informed by spies that the Americans were experimenting with an atomic bomb. The conference ended indecisively, with few agreements, and Stalin left disappointed that he had not been able to convince his allies to fix a definite amount for reparations from Germany.

Within a few days of the end of the Potsdam Conference, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, killing about 145,000 people through the blast and radiation effects. Stalin had underestimated the importance of this new weapon, and only after Hiroshima did he agree to accelerate the Soviet atomic bomb program. Two days later, on August 8, the Soviet Union carried out its promise to fight the Japanese and informed the Japanese that they would be in a state of war the next day. Stalin had announced as early as April 5, 1945, that the USSR would not renew its neutrality pact with Japan, and in the months after the European war ended half a million troops had been moved from the Western fronts to eastern Siberia. When the Japanese tried through back channels to feel out the Soviets about brokering a peace, the Soviets were cool and evasive. Stalin did not want Japan to surrender before the Soviet Union had entered the war in Asia. After a second U.S. bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, killing another 70,000 people, Japan decided to surrender. Stalin tried to convince Truman to allow the Red Army to land on Japan's northernmost island, Hokkaido, but the President refused. Some of his advisors pushed him to go ahead anyway, but Stalin backed down "to avoid the creation of conflicts and misunderstanding with respect to the allies." With the physical presence in northern China of 1.5 million Soviet soldiers, facing the defeated Japanese army, the Nationalist Chinese government signed a Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with the USSR, agreeing to the concessions in China granted to Stalin at Yalta.

ATOMIC DIPLOMACY

Stalin was dismayed that after all the Soviet sacrifices in the war to defeat Germany the American bomb had radically transformed the balance of world power. At a single stroke the huge Soviet conventional army was rendered far less powerful. "No doubt Washington and London are hoping we won't be able to develop the bomb ourselves for sometime," Stalin told his subordinates. And meanwhile, using America's monopoly, . . . they want to force us to accept their plans on questions affecting Europe and the world. Well, that's not going to happen." After Hiroshima he called in the physicist Igor Kurchatov, who before the war had been doing

research on atomic weapons, and told him, "Provide us with atomic weapons in the shortest possible time. You know that Hiroshima has shaken the whole world. The balance has been destroyed. Provide the bomb—it will remove a great danger from us." The bomb project was given the highest priority and was placed under the direct supervision of the chief of the secret police, Lavrentii Beria. Aided by information received from Klaus Fuchs and other Soviet spies in the West, Soviet scientists saved about a year or two in their rush to build a bomb.

Ironically, the powerful new weapon in the hands of the United States, which had altered the global balance of power, did not convince Stalin to be more conciliatory to the West. Instead, it resulted in greater intransigence on both sides. The Soviets believed that they had to demonstrate how tough they were, that they could not be pushed around, and so they repeatedly turned up the heat on the West. Atomic weapons were largely symbolic, and in the years of the Cold War they would never be used. Yet they were powerful signs of great power, and at times American officials considered brandishing the bomb to gain points in international diplomacy. When the Allied foreign ministers gathered in London in September 1945 to thrash out the outstanding differences between their countries, the new secretary of state, James Byrnes, joked with Molotov, "If you don't cut out all this stalling and let us get down to work, I'm going to pull an atomic bomb out of my hip pocket and let you have it." Later Byrnes complained that the Russians were "stubborn, obstinate, and they don't scare," and he told an aide, "Well, pardner, I think we pushed these babies about as far as they will go and I think that we better start thinking about a compromise." Later in December Byrnes met privately with Stalin and made a proposal on his own, a Big Power guarantee against German resurgence in exchange for a reduction of Soviet influence over East-Central Europe. Stalin was cautious but interested. When Byrnes returned to Washington, however, Truman castigated him for negotiating with Stalin without keeping the White House informed. Truman told his secretary of state, "Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another war was in the making. . . . I do not think we should play compromise any longer. I am tired of babying the Soviets." Though Byrnes's ill-fated attempt to deal with Stalin had landed him in hot water, it showed that negotiation with the Soviets was possible. But the mood in Washington was shifting rapidly toward a much more intransigently anti-Soviet stance, while in Moscow Stalin was ever more reluctant to give up his positions in the Balkans and Poland for vague promises of aid and reparations.

A NEW WORLD ORDER

The balance of power in the world in 1945 was quite unbalanced. The United States emerged from World War II as the strongest economic power on the globe. Though it had been preeminent among the Great Powers since the early part of the century, thanks to the two world wars her rivals—Great Britain, France, Japan, Germany, and the USSR—had fallen even further behind. In 1945 the United States held

75 percent of the world's gold reserves. Its gross national product (GNP) had grown by 63 percent during the war, and its standard of living had risen by 11 percent. When compared to the much smaller Soviet economy, then still emerging from the rubble of the war, the gap between the two leading world powers was enormous. Formerly a reluctant Great Power with strong isolationist tendencies, the United States reconceived its interests to include the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific, taking over where the now-defunct British and Japanese empires had retreated. American political leaders began developing a consensus on the need for American international leadership in the postwar world. From Truman down American leaders believed that peace and prosperity had to march together, that a stable peace required a stable international economy, and that poverty and dissatisfaction would lead to war, revolution, and communism. Leading economists and politicians feared a revival of the depression and believed that prosperity depended on healthy world trade. But states that controlled their country's foreign trade, like the Soviet Union, privileged trading systems, like the British Sterling bloc, and colonial empires stood in the way of global free trade. Truman expressed the new confidence of the American leadership in 1945 when he stated that "America should take the lead in running the world in the way the world ought to be run."

The "Communist menace" was a psychological reality for the West at the end of the war, but it was based on both a misreading of Soviet intentions and an overestimation of the USSR's military and economic capabilities. The Soviets had steadily demobilized their vast wartime army, from over 11 million in 1945 to 2,874,000 in 1948. In Europe, outside the USSR, the Soviets had about 800,000 troops, roughly equivalent to Western occupation forces. Though the Soviets reported these demobilizations, the Western press played down their significance and failed to note that only one-third of their 175 divisions were full strength; another third was partial strength; and the final third were essentially paper units. The higher Western estimates of Soviet strength allowed speculation that the Soviet units were able and willing to consider an invasion of Western Europe. But in fact the Soviet Army was in poor shape after the war. As late as 1950 half of their military transport was horsedrawn. Morale was low, desertion rates high. The army in Europe was used primarily for occupation, repressing anti-Soviet activity, and dismantling factories for reparations. And the rear was not secure. Anti-Communist rebels were active in western Ukraine and the Baltic republics, not to mention Poland. Most bridges, rail lines, and roads had been destroyed in the western parts of the USSR and were slowly being repaired, often by German prisoners of war. The Soviet army was incapable of launching an effective invasion of Western Europe in the postwar years. Yet even though the Central Intelligence Agency and many in government knew the true dimensions of Soviet capabilities, politicians and journalists believed in a Soviet threat and saw their every action as proof of aggressive intentions. Convinced of Soviet superiority in conventional weapons and forces, American politicians proposed strategic air power using atomic weapons.

THE LEFT IN EUROPE

The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union gave Communist parties in Europe and Asia a new lease on life. Ideologically the moribund popular front was broadened into a "national front" against fascism, and the war became a "national patriotic war." Stalinist Communists, whose loyalty to the Soviet Union was nearly unshakable, took leading roles in the resistance movements against fascist occupation. These were supposed to be liberationist movements to restore democracy, not to promote socialist revolution. But very often underground Communist parties in occupied Europe did not restrain their radical impulses. Though Dimitrov sent a secret message from Moscow to the Yugoslav Communist leader, Tito, saying "Keep in mind that in the present stage the issue is liberation from fascist oppression and not socialist revolution," it hardly deterred the Yugoslav partisans from combining liberation with revolution. Many of the newly recruited Communists did not treat directives from the Comintern as holy writ; interpretation was varied and nuanced and differed from party to party and within parties between leadership, middle-level cadres, and the rank and file. The very goal of creating a broad national front required a loosening of control from the top and a responsiveness to specific national contexts.

The success of the national front policy was already apparent by 1944–45. The prestige of the Soviet Army, the major force in the defeat of Nazism, was high; the conservative and status quo parties of Europe were discredited; a yearning for unification of the workers' movement was palpable; and many of the antifascist fighters in Europe and Asia regarded socialism, not restored capitalism, as the preferred alternative to defeated fascism. When the war ended, Communist parties officially went only as far as calling for social reforms and did not place socialism on the agenda. Given that American power was intact in Western Europe, liberation movements were forced to recognize that only a democratic, not an anticapitalist, transformation was possible at the time.

The moderate tactics of Communists on the ground conformed to the overall strategy of Stalin not to antagonize the Western powers and to secure their agreement to Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. At first this cautious and measured policy garnered concrete results. The French Communist Party grew to nearly a million members in 1945, while the Italian Communist Party reached 1,770,000. In Eastern Europe Communists fared unevenly but emerged as a far more potent force than they had been between the wars. In Czechoslovakia the Communists polled 38 percent of the vote in May 1946, becoming the largest party in the country, but in another relatively free election in Hungary, in November 1945, Communists received a mere 17 percent vote. In Poland oppressive methods created a contrived majority in January 1947 for the "anti-fascist bloc." In Rumania and Bulgaria Communist-dominated fronts were installed as governments through Soviet pressure. In Yugoslavia and Albania Communist-led partisans swept to power without Soviet assistance, while in Greece a broad-based, Communist-led guerrilla movement was challenged by the military intervention of the British.

In Asia Communist-led national liberation movements emerged as the most powerful political forces in China, Vietnam, and North Korea.

Communist parties in the early Cold War years were an odd hybrid. They remained in the hands of hardened, Stalinized leaders and factions were not permitted, but at the same time the parties had become mass organizations, having recruited thousands of new members during and immediately after the war. In the context of Soviet economic weakness, the atomic monopoly of the United States, and the desire of local Communists to win support among the peasants and workers, the Soviet policy of "national roads" to an ultimate socialist future was eminently practical. Even the most Stalinist of Communists were enthusiastic about their national reform programs. Klement Gottwald, the Czech leader, told the Yugoslav Communist Milovan Djilas, "The Soviet Union is still undeveloped. We are developed, we have strong democratic traditions, and socialism here is going to be different." As each party took its own path, the Yugoslavs pushed for a more aggressively anticapitalist, anti-Western policy and urged the Soviet leaders to adopt a more coordinated strategy. With the Comintern dissolved, East European Communists consulted bilaterally with one another without directly involving the Soviets. Though all were unquestioningly loyal to the Soviet Union and Stalin, the years of war had loosened ties between Moscow and the underground parties in occupied Europe and Asia. For some time Stalin did not pronounce on many questions and tolerated an unusual degree of autonomy, as long as Soviet interests did not seem threatened. But the independence and diversity of the foreign Communists soon went too far for the Soviet dictator. When the American Communist leader Earl Browder called for transformation of the American Communist Party into a "political association," the limit was reached. Communist parties were to remain Leninist in organization, and the French Communist Jacques Duclos, who was evidently speaking for Stalin, blasted Browder's idea. This response signaled that the euphoric period of national communism would soon end, and in 1947–48 the Soviets began systematically to discipline Europe's Communists.

THE SOVIETS IN EASTERN EUROPE

With the old ruling classes either having been killed off or dispersed and Soviet officers and officials the most powerful actors in the region, the real question was not *whether* the Soviet Union would dominate East-Central Europe—that was a foregone conclusion given military realities and Soviet notions of security—but rather *how* Stalin would dominate his borderlands. Would it be through "friendly governments," as in Finland, or through allied but autonomous Communist-led states, as in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, or through fully Stalinized, Soviet-controlled police regimes as were finally established in the years 1949 to 1953?

In the initial postwar period, from 1945–47, the Soviet government agreed to the formation of coalition governments of democratic, socialist, and Communist parties. As early as September 1944 a pro-Soviet Communist-dominated coalition,

called the Fatherland Front, came to power in Bulgaria. In March 1945 coalition governments, with Communists and socialists as members, were formed in Czechoslovakia and Rumania. On June 28, 1945, the Polish government based on the Lublin Committee was reconstituted. Now led by a socialist, it included the peasant party leader Mikolajczyk as deputy prime minister. In Hungary national elections resulted in a Peasant Party majority, but the Communists and Social Democrats, each receiving 17 percent of the vote, were included in a coalition government.

East-Central Europe was ripe for social change. Though the region was basically agricultural, it experienced near famine in 1944–45. As the most backward part of Europe, it still maintained semifeudal structures in some places. One of the first tasks of the new Soviet-backed governments was land reform. In Hungary, for example, where less than 1 percent of the population owned 48 percent of the land, the Soviet Army ordered the “abolition of feudalism,” and, against the resistance of the Catholic church, which alone held 17 percent of the land, it confiscated and distributed over 3 million hectares to 663,000 peasants, many of whom had been landless. In September 1944, 1 million hectares of large Polish estates were redistributed to peasants. Later 5.5 million Poles were resettled on former German lands in the west from which Germans were expelled. Rumania distributed over 1 million hectares to individual landholders. Through the land reform the left-leaning governments and the Soviet occupiers gained some sympathy and support from a generally hostile population.

Rather than spontaneous change arising from below, Communists preferred governmental initiative. In many places workers and students favored radical reforms, but the Communists in government worked with other parties to quash the revolutionary workers’ councils and liberation committees that had arisen at the end of the war. They agreed to outlawing strikes and promoting social order rather than revolution. They pushed for nationalization of industry, particularly foreign and German-owned companies. In late 1945 and early 1946 Czechoslovakia and Poland nationalized most of their industry, to the protests of the United States.

Eastern Europe quickly became the major bone of contention between the United States and the Soviet Union. Truman opposed the Soviets building a sphere of influence there and was concerned about the economic isolation of the region as well as the violations of democratic norms. The Americans had very little direct economic interest in Eastern Europe; their holdings amounted to just over a half a billion dollars, only 4 percent of U.S. investments abroad. Nevertheless, the American minister to Hungary feared that that country would soon “become an economic colony of [the] USSR from which western trade will be excluded and in which western investments will be totally lost.” For most American officials, however, the damage to these investments and to trade was less worrisome than the threat to its goal of unrestricted world trade and the elimination of economic and political spheres of influence. The Soviets, on the other hand, were primarily concerned with state security. Stalin was comfortable with a sphere-of-influence policy in which the Soviets would have the dominant political say, but he was willing to

have the West trade and invest in Eastern Europe. For the first few postwar years no economic Iron Curtain cut Eastern Europe off from the West. The Soviet Union, too poor, underdeveloped, and devastated by the war to supply East-Central Europe’s economic needs, wanted trade, loans, and investment from the West to develop the area but stopped short of allowing its neighbors to be integrated into a Western economic bloc.

From 1943 on, the Soviet government made it clear that it hoped to be granted a large American loan, perhaps \$1 billion, at low interest to aid the USSR in its postwar reconstruction. As the war wound down, Molotov made a formal request for a postwar loan. Roosevelt delayed deciding on the loan, and no mention was made of such a credit at the Yalta Conference. When Soviet-American relations cooled after Roosevelt’s death, the probability of a loan like the one granted to Great Britain in early 1946 faded fast. In March 1946 the State Department announced that the Russian loan request had been “lost” since August of the previous year. The United States told the Soviets that it would be willing to discuss a loan of a billion dollars but that such a discussion would require examination of Soviet relations with Eastern Europe and the promise of the USSR to join the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and adopt their rules in international commerce. The Soviets found such terms impossible. They argued that complete free trade as advocated by the United States would result in a reproduction of the prewar economic division of Europe into an advanced, industrialized Western Europe and a backward, agrarian Eastern Europe. Protectionism, they contended, was necessary to develop industry in Eastern Europe, which Stalin wanted to develop in cooperation with the Soviet Union. The USSR concluded bilateral trade treaties with its neighbors and began setting up joint-stock companies that combined the interests of East European and Soviet firms. These agreements heavily favored the Soviet economy. The Soviet sphere of influence in East-Central Europe was to be both political and economic.

PERCEPTIONS AND MISPERCEPTIONS

Three important statements in early 1946 shaped the coming Cold War decisively: Stalin’s so-called pre-election speech, George F. Kennan’s “Long Telegram,” and Winston Churchill’s “Iron Curtain speech” in Fulton, Missouri. On February 9, 1946, Stalin spoke to a packed house at the Bolshoi Theater in central Moscow. Stalin characterized the recent war as originating in the conflicts between monopoly-capitalist states over raw materials and markets, which had led to the formation of two hostile capitalist camps. Both world wars had been imperialist wars bred by a great crisis in capitalism, but the Second World War differed from the First in that the fascist powers were antidemocratic, terroristic, and expansionist. World War II, therefore, had the character of an antifascist war of liberation with the task of reestablishing democratic freedoms. Freedom-loving countries, like the USSR, the United Kingdom, and the United States formed an antifascist coalition to destroy the armed might of the Axis Powers. Though the speech was a fairly

conventional statement of the Soviet interpretation of the causes of war, it was read by many in the West as an aggressive statement of Soviet hostility to the West. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas called the speech the "declaration of World War III."

A few weeks later George F. Kennan, the U.S. chargé d'affaires in the Moscow embassy, sent his famous "Long Telegram" to the State Department. This memo, with its clear and forceful presentation of Soviet ideological premises, was extraordinarily influential on the subsequent American thinking on policy toward the USSR. Kennan began by noting that the Soviets were concerned about "capitalist encirclement," which he saw as "not based on any objective analysis of [the] situation beyond Russia's borders" but arising "mainly from basic inner-Russian necessities which existed before [the] recent war and exist today."

At bottom of [the] Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs is [the] traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity. . . . Basically this is only the steady advance of uneasy Russian nationalism, a centuries old movement in which conceptions of offense and defense are inextricably confused.

For Kennan Soviet thinking could be explained as a kind of "self-hypnosis," with no belief in objective truth. The Soviets were "impervious to the logic of reason" and "highly sensitive to the logic of force." Soviet policy was aimed at increasing its own power and weakening that of the capitalist powers.

We have here a political force committed fanatically to the belief that with [the] US there can be no permanent *modus vivendi*, that it is desirable and necessary that the internal harmony of our society be disrupted, our traditional way of life be destroyed, the international authority of our state be broken, if Soviet power is to be secure.

In contrast to the United States and its values, Kennan concluded, "world communism is like [a] malignant parasite which feeds only on diseased tissue."

On March 5, 1946, former British prime minister Winston Churchill addressed students and faculty at the small Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. He had been invited by President Truman, who sat on the stage. Though at the time no country then occupied by Soviet troops had a purely Communist government and in many there would be years of relatively free elections ahead, Churchill intoned dramatically that Eastern Europe had been lost to the West:

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in the Soviet sphere and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens alone, with its immortal glories, is free to decide its future at an election under British American, and French observation.

Besides the disagreements over Eastern Europe in 1946, the West was also nervous about Soviet intentions in the northern Middle East. Soviet troops were

occupying northern Iran in line with a Soviet-Iranian treaty, but at the same time Azerbaijani radicals were being encouraged to create their own autonomous state in the region. The USSR also made territorial claims on Turkey, first on the behalf of Armenia and later of Georgia, and demanded a base in the Dardanelles. Stalin's muscle-flexing in Iran and Turkey only drove the governments of those countries into the Western camp and confirmed the West's demonic vision of the Soviet Union as a state with an insatiable appetite for expansion. In March 1946 the Soviet Union agreed, under Western pressure, to withdraw troops from Iran and ceased pushing the claims to Kars and Ardahan in eastern Anatolia. But the image of the Soviets as expansionist was by this time indelibly etched into the minds of Western policymakers. In a long memorandum to the president in September, a key advisor wrote, "The language of military power is the only language which disciples of power politics understand." More ominously, he went on, "In order to maintain our strength at a level which will be effective in restraining the Soviet Union, the United States must be prepared to wage atomic and biological warfare." When Truman read the memo, he told his advisor that it was too hot to be circulated and locked it away in his office safe.

Soviet views on the United States were in many ways ideological mirror images that reflected back the same distorted images of Soviet aggression and expansionism that were becoming fixed in American minds. The Soviet ambassador to the United States sent his own "long telegram" to Moscow, in which he accused American "monopolistic capital" of "striving for world supremacy." Truman was seen as "a politically unstable person but with certain conservative tendencies." The ambassador's greatest fear was that hundreds of U.S. bases were to be built around the globe, demonstrating the "offensive nature of [American military's] strategic concepts" and the "plans for world dominance by the United States."

THE DIVISION OF EUROPE

On March 12, 1947, President Truman spoke before Congress for a brief eighteen minutes about international affairs and dramatically changed the direction of American foreign policy for decades to come. He talked of "the gravity of the situation which confronts the world today" and of the need for the United States to aid Greece as a "democratic" and "free" state. Turkey, which was not spoken of as democratic, nevertheless needed to have its "integrity" defended.

We shall not realize our objectives . . . unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. . . .

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure.

Truman's speech marked the end of American retreat and isolation and the acceptance of what it considered its global responsibility. The president accentuated

the anti-Communist tone in his speech in order to assure passage of his aid program to Greece and Turkey through Congress, which it did by lopsided majorities. A Gallup poll showed that three-quarters of Americans favored Truman's new policy. The Soviet response to Truman's speech was cautious. Molotov told his ambassador in Washington that "the President is trying to intimidate us, to turn us at a stroke into obedient little boys. But we don't give a damn." Yet within a few months Soviet policy toward the West, and East-Central Europe, began to harden, in part in response to a bold new initiative on the economic front by the United States.

On June 5, 1947, Secretary of State Marshall announced at Harvard University that the United States was willing to offer grants to European states if they worked out plans for economic integration. American policymakers were concerned that European poverty made Western Europe both a poor trading partner for the United States and a potential target for the Left. Desperate to trade its postwar surpluses, the United States through the Marshall Plan could establish stable, viable trading partners in democratic states. The offer seemed to be open to the USSR as well as other East European states, though there was divided opinion among American leaders about the wisdom of including the Soviets. A very influential group around George Kennan was convinced that the West must form its own bloc, which would include Western-occupied zones in Germany. Three weeks later the foreign ministers of the Great Powers met in Paris to discuss a joint proposal for American aid. Molotov wanted the aid to be given without preconditions, but the Western ministers agreed with the American advisors that a coordinated plan for the entire European economy should be drawn up. The Soviet Union was unwilling to integrate their state economy into an international capitalist system, and Molotov claimed that the American conditions would allow foreign interference into the internal affairs of states.

Molotov left the conference without an agreement, convinced that the Marshall Plan would subordinate the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to Western capitalism, but Foreign Trade Minister Mikoyan tried to convince Stalin of the advantages of joining the Plan. As he remembered in his memoirs,

His only reaction was: "We shall be dependent on the West." In vain I argued that we were independent enough politically, and that with the aid from the USA we would be able to restore the economy of the European part of the country, which was in ruins, much faster and on a new technological level. Which would have made us more independent! But Stalin, a clever man able to understand economic issues when one explained them to him, could be also stubborn as a donkey, to the extent of being a fool.

Once Stalin had made up his mind, the Soviets forced their East European allies, including the Czechoslovaks, who were particularly anxious to receive Marshall Plan aid, to reject the American offer. Stalin warned Jan Masaryk, "If you take part in the conference you will prove by that act that you allow yourselves to be used as a tool against the Soviet Union." By August the East European states were coordinating their own mutual trade ties as a separate trade bloc. The "Molotov Plan" was adopted, and Europe split into two antagonistic economic blocs.

From that point on, an even closer political and economic integration of Eastern Europe with the USSR became inevitable.

In late September 1947 leading Communists met at Szklarska-Poreba in Poland to work out a common strategy in the Cold War world. Stalin's principal representative was Andrei Zhdanov, who mapped out the division of the world into two major camps: the anti-imperialist and democratic camp versus the anti-democratic and imperialist. He stressed, as Stalin had, that war between the two was not inevitable. But his major aim was to stiffen the back of European Communists for a more militant struggle ahead. He attacked the French and Italian Communist parties for their mild and conciliatory policies and praised the Yugoslavs as the most militant and revolutionary party. The meeting ended with the formation of a Communist Information Bureau, or Cominform, which included the parties of the East-Central European states (with the exception of Greece) plus the French and Italian parties. The Cominform conference marked as clearly as any event the turn of the Communist movement toward a more militant strategy.

Despite Stalin's overwhelming authority, the Soviet Union did not have a single, consistent foreign policy in the Cold War years. Stalin had no blueprint for Eastern Europe and up to 1947 played with various possible arrangements for the countries in the region. But in the last years of the decade he tightened his grip on the neighboring regimes, and the options narrowed rapidly. Calculating that Truman was a weak leader and that anti-American sentiments were growing in Europe, the Soviets overreacted in 1947, underestimated the power of the American economy, and adopted a new defensive policy that consolidated the division of Europe.

POLAND

Stalin was determined to have a Poland that presented no threat or hostility toward the Soviet Union. He attempted to use the resurrected Polish Communist Party as a wedge into Polish politics. Under Soviet patronage and in an atmosphere of enthusiasm for social renewal, the party grew rapidly, from a few hundred members in 1943 to eight thousand in 1944 to a million in 1948. The Communists toned down their rhetoric, appealed to Polish nationalism, and spoke of a "Polish road" to socialism. Even so the Polish Communists were too independent and radical for Stalin, who hoped to enlist the more conservative Polish parties in the common cause of reconstructing Poland and creating a friendly state on the Soviet Union's most vulnerable border.

The Soviet Union became the guarantor of the new borders of Poland. In moving its frontiers to the west, Poland lost agricultural lands in the east but gained a highly-developed German industrial and transportation complex in the west. Stalin forced the new government to accept the new frontiers in the east and north. On January 3, 1946, Poland nationalized all industries employing over fifty workers. A virtual civil war raged in the country between 1945 and 1948,

with nationalist Poles and Communists ambushing and killing each other by the thousands. The Communists gained support from the reforms they carried out but were not above using force and violence against their political enemies. After consulting with Stalin, the Communists and Socialists, formed a government bloc of five parties to contest the January 1947 elections against the Polish Peasant Party. The Democratic Bloc won 9 million votes to the Peasant Party's 1 million, but the elections were marked by pressure on voters and the stuffing of ballot boxes. The West protested, and Peasant Party members resigned from the government. But in February the new Communist-led parliament elected a Communist president of Poland, and within months a new constitution and economic laws transformed Poland into a partially socialized economy. With their political range severely circumscribed, the Peasant Party carried on as an opposition party until the fall of 1947. In October, fearing that he would soon be arrested, its leader Mikolajczyk, fled to the West.

The Communists dominated Poland from the summer of 1947. Stalin turned from restraining the Polish Communists to promoting those who wanted to move toward socialism rapidly. Poland was defined as a "people's democracy," a transitional political form on the road from capitalist to socialist democracy, and government policy was closely coordinated with Moscow. The Socialist Party merged with the Communists in December 1948, and the former socialist Joseph Cyrankewicz served as prime minister from 1948 to 1972. By the early 1950s Poland was completely subordinated to the Soviet Union, a state dominated by a submissive Communist elite who listened attentively to the orders of Soviet police agents.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In contrast to Polish-Soviet relations, Czechoslovak-Soviet relations were quite cordial. Czechs and Slovaks shared a latent pro-Russian feeling of Slavic solidarity with the Russians, and they were aware that the USSR had been prepared to fight for Czechoslovakia at the time of the Munich agreement. As the war came to an end, President Beneš spoke of Czechoslovakia as a bridge linking East and West in Europe. In March 1945 he agreed secretly to allow the Soviet Union to mine uranium ore and ship it to the USSR, not understanding the new importance that uranium had in the world balance of power. As in Poland, the Communists in Czechoslovakia were in a moderate phase; they emphasized the idea of national roads to socialism and reacted to Stalin's private musings that in certain instances it was possible to achieve socialism without the dictatorship of the proletariat. In June the new coalition government expelled most of the Germans and Hungarians in the country, accusing them of collaboration, and Beneš made an extraordinary concession to Stalin: he agreed to cede Ruthenia, the easternmost part of his country, which was inhabited by people close to the Ukrainians, to the USSR. In exchange the Czechs were permitted to keep Teschen, which the Poles had annexed after Munich. In late October the president ordered the nationalization of

most industry. By December both the Americans and the Soviets had withdrawn their troops from Czechoslovakia, and Beneš's policy of bridging East and West seemed to be paying off.

The major beneficiary of the popular reforms and the good will toward the Soviet Union was the Communist Party, which by spring of 1946 could claim over 1 million members. After the party's victory in the elections of May 1946, the Communist leader, Klement Gottwald, became prime minister of a coalition government. The government intended to deal with both the Soviet Union and the West, but the Americans soon began to treat Czechoslovakia as if it were already a Soviet satellite. When Stalin forbade Czechoslovakia to participate in the Marshall Plan, the policy of bridging East and West collapsed. A political crisis exploded in Prague when in February 1948 the National Socialists, suspicious that the Communists were preparing a coup d'état, tried to bring down the government and force new elections by resigning. Mass meetings were held in the Old Town Square, where crowds cheered Gottwald, who accused the departing ministers of having formed a "reactionary bloc" to obstruct further reforms. Given the popularity of the Communists and the growing dependence of Czechoslovakia on Soviet aid and good will, Beneš had little choice but to agree to appoint a new coalition government that was more firmly in Communist hands. These events, which were soon characterized as "the Czech coup," in fact were legal and constitutional. But within a few weeks, the non-Communist foreign minister, Jan Masaryk, was mysteriously killed, either by murder or suicide. In May a new constitution was adopted and elections overwhelmingly supported the new government. On June 7 Beneš resigned and Gottwald succeeded him as president. From 1948 until 1989 Czechoslovakia was dominated by the Communist Party.

YUGOSLAVIA

The most leftist of the Communist parties in Eastern Europe was the Yugoslav party led by Josef Broz, known as Tito, an ardent Stalinist and the battle-hardened leader of the antifascist partisans. The Communists came out of the mountains determined to abolish the prewar monarchy, which Stalin did not want them to do, and carry out militant policies toward the political opposition and the church. They came to power on their own, with little Soviet help, and their policies were more radical than their Soviet mentors. But the Yugoslav Communists believed themselves to be loyal to Stalin. A leading party member said, "I would have taken poison if Stalin had offered it." Yet after years as partisans waging their own antifascist struggle Tito and his comrades had gained in self-assurance and independence and became the spokesmen for "national roads to socialism." Tito publicly announced in May 1945 that "our goal is that everyone be the master in his own house."

The Soviets proved to be difficult comrades for the Yugoslav Communists. The Yugoslavs expected more economic aid from the USSR than they received and were appalled by the unfair terms of trade agreements and joint-stock companies

established by the Soviets. Though he spoke highly of Tito, Stalin maintained his own agents among the Yugoslav party members. Stalin was prepared to have Yugoslavia "swallow" Albania, where local Communist partisans under Enver Hoxha had come to power with Yugoslav assistance, but when Tito pressed for unification with Albania and Albanian leaders resisted, Stalin's suspicions increased. He feared that Yugoslavia was becoming a regional Communist center and might dominate the proposed federation of Balkan states. The Yugoslav Communists were the principal supporters of the Greek Communist Party in its civil war against British-backed monarchists. Early in 1948 Stalin told Tito that the revolution in Greece should be "folded up." Underlying the estrangement between Moscow and Belgrade was Yugoslav reluctance to subordinate their country to the USSR.

On March 27 Stalin and Molotov sent a letter to the Yugoslav leaders claiming that their Central Committee was not Marxist-Leninist. Tito quickly rallied his party, convened the Yugoslav Central Committee, which had not met since 1940, and arrested pro-Soviet party members, the so-called Cominformists. The Cominform met in June and condemned Yugoslavia. Stalin believed that he could wiggle his little finger and Tito would fall, but his effort to pressure Yugoslavia failed. While the other Communist parties turned against Tito, Soviet troops sent specialists and munitions to his allies in Eastern Europe in preparation for an invasion. The attack never came, but Yugoslavia was driven from the Soviet bloc. By 1949 Stalin had leading "Titoists" in the parties under his control in Eastern Europe arrested and executed. National Communism was buried for several decades. Meanwhile, Tito developed his own non-Soviet brand of socialism. The Communist Party maintained its monopoly on political power, but workers' councils were given increased power in factories and plants. Yugoslavia drew somewhat closer to the West and received weapons from both Britain and the United States, though it played a leading role in the emerging movement of "nonaligned" countries.

THE FINNISH EXCEPTION

By 1944 Finland was a defeated former ally of Nazi Germany. Forced to give up territory and pay reparations of \$300 million to the USSR, the country's very independence seemed threatened. Soviet forces set up a base in Porkkala, thirty minutes driving time from Helsinki, but Soviet troops did not occupy Finland. After free elections in March 1945, a coalition government was formed, based on a program of cooperation with the USSR and the maintenance of a democratic, capitalist system. Communists eventually joined the government, but here as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union supported a non-Communist as head of government.

In 1947, when the Soviet leadership took a harder line toward its neighbors, Moscow instructed the Finnish Communists to stiffen up their policy. Workers marched in protest against the ending of food rationing, and rumors ran rampant

that the Communists were about to seize power by force. The Socialists pushed the Communists out of government. As the crisis heated up, Stalin proposed a mutual assistance pact like that concluded with Rumania and Hungary, but Finland held out for a quite different relationship with the Soviet Union: it remained an independent parliamentary democracy with a capitalist system, but its foreign policy was carefully coordinated with the interests and desires of its mammoth neighbor to the east. It agreed not to participate in the Marshall Plan, rather than antagonize the USSR, but at the same time it was able to receive aid from the West. This position of formal independence and sovereignty with full autonomy in domestic policy but nonantagonistic foreign policy became known as "Finlandization." At a dinner party late in 1947 Stalin remarked that it had been a mistake not to occupy Finland. "We were too concerned about the Americans, and they wouldn't have lifted a finger." "Ah, Finland!" Molotov added, "That is a peanut." For Stalin, at least in this case, independence along with foreign policy coordination was an acceptable solution to the national security insecurities of the Soviet Union.

At the beginning of 1947 Communists held a monopoly of power only in Yugoslavia and Albania, where they had come to power without direct Soviet help but as the leaders of national partisan movements. Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland all had coalition governments. Soviet control was formalized through bilateral treaties signed with the Communist governments of Eastern Europe, the first with Rumania on February 4, 1948. Two weeks later a similar treaty was signed with Hungary and a month later with Bulgaria. Stalin's earlier tolerance of diversity in Eastern Europe turned quickly into backing the takeover of governments by the Communist parties. By mid-1948 all of the countries of Eastern Europe, with the exception of Finland and Greece, had Communist governments.

THE GERMAN QUESTION

For the Soviet Union prevention of a third war launched from Germany through Poland was paramount in their strategic thinking. As Soviet leaders contemplated the future in Europe, they might have considered five possible solutions, at least in theory, to the problem of how to deal with their defeated enemy, Germany. The first hypothetical solution was a four-power agreement on a harsh, Carthaginian peace, with annexation of German territory, demilitarization, and a limit placed on future German industrial growth. Though Stalin and France's Charles de Gaulle liked the idea and Roosevelt had supported it, Churchill opposed it and convinced the president that it would leave the USSR too powerful on the continent. A second possible solution was a four-power agreement on a neutralized, united Germany, the same solution that would be applied to Austria in 1955. The USSR favored such an arrangement, but many in the West feared a united neutral Germany because the strength of the Left in eastern Germany might have led to a pro-Soviet Germany. The third solution would be Soviet domination of all of Germany, but the West was determined to prevent this. And the fourth solution was Western domination of

all of Germany, and the Soviet Union was opposed to that. Thus, the only solution left was what eventually occurred: the partition of Germany.

After the Yalta Conference Stalin committed himself to securing a united Germany, but he could not secure agreement from the West. Fundamental reforms were delayed, awaiting the outcome of discussions with the West, but by early 1946 the occupation authorities had expropriated and nationalized nearly all large industries in the Soviet zone. They carried out land reform that, though economically a disaster because there was not enough land for those who wanted it and yields fell rapidly, was politically a success. The old social order in the countryside was destroyed, and the former ruling class of Prussia, the aristocratic Junkers, was eliminated. But as quickly as the German Communists revived economic institutions, the Soviets dismantled them and removed them to the USSR as prizes of war. Stalin's first priority was Soviet recovery and only later was he concerned with efforts to aid an allied Germany. Moreover, the Soviets believed that the more radical tendencies among local social groups had to be curbed. Even as the Communists weakened the capitalists and the landlords, they limited the independent power of workers in factory councils, who believed that socialism meant that workers ought to control the means of production. When the Communist Party lost momentum and support in the fall of 1945, the Soviets, along with the trade unions, pressured the increasingly popular Social Democrats to join the Communists in a united party, the Socialist Unity Party (SED), which formed in April 1946.

Soviet and SED policy was geared toward creating a "people's democracy" that could prevent a return to fascism. But the greater social changes in eastern Germany, as well as the merger of the Left into a single party, made the Soviet zone distinctly different from the western zones. The United States was upset that the Soviet Union had failed to implement the all-German economic policies that had been agreed to at Potsdam. In July 1946 Secretary Byrnes authorized the merger of the British and American zones and created "Bizonia," and within a month France moved closer to joining its zone to that of the British and Americans. German partition was becoming a reality.

By the beginning of 1948 Stalin realized that there would be separate East and West German states. He told delegations from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia that "the West will make West Germany their own, and we shall turn Eastern Germany into our own state." However, he wanted the city of Berlin, which was also occupied by the four powers, to be entirely in the new East Germany. On March 6 the Western powers announced that a separate West German government would be formed. The Soviets protested the plan, which they considered a violation of the Potsdam agreements by walking out of the Allied Control Council in Germany. On April 1 the Soviet authorities restricted Western military traffic into Berlin, and the Americans responded with a "little airlift," bringing in supplies by plane. Two months later, on June 1, the United States and Britain agreed to introduce a separate currency, the Deutschmark, in their zones of occupation, replacing the all-German Reichsmark. The Soviets replied by introducing their own currency in

their zone and attempted to include all of Berlin. The West retaliated by extending its currency into its Berlin zones. On June 24 the Soviet authorities shut off all surface access from the West through their zone to Berlin. The Berlin Blockade had begun.

The West responded with a massive airlift of supplies for West Berlin, landing planes at the rate of one a minute. For almost a year the airlift "to preserve freedom" continued, and Berlin was transformed from the capital of a defeated fascist power into a symbol of courageous resistance to totalitarianism, in the words of President John F. Kennedy in 1961 "a showcase of liberty, a symbol, an isle of freedom in a communist sea." As anti-Communist rhetoric shaped (and simplified) people's perceptions of complex diplomatic questions, the Soviet Union was steadily reimagined as the heir of Nazism, a "Red Fascist" state engaged in an enterprise of world conquest similar to Hitler's. The only appropriate response to such an aggressor was resistance, not concessions that would appear to be appeasement. One American officer spoke of his adversaries as "Communist rats who walked like bears," and once the Soviets were depicted as vicious enemies who only understood power, recourse to negotiation became increasingly constrained. During the crisis the United States sent B-29 bombers to Britain to signal that it was prepared to defend Western Europe with nuclear weapons if necessary.

Stalin increased pressure on the West in Berlin to show strength, but he carefully limited the degree of pressure and never interfered with the airlift. He did not want the Soviet Union to be humiliated, nor did he want to precipitate a war, and he apparently was convinced that the United States would not use nuclear weapons to resolve the crisis. Finally, in January 1949, after months of tension, the Soviets hinted that they were prepared to shift their position on Berlin and suggested that the whole question of German unity be reopened. Though some American policymakers, such as George Kennan, were interested in ending the division of Germany and Europe, U.S. officials decided that it was more important to link Allied-controlled Germany to the West than to unify the whole country. On May 5 the four occupying powers signed an agreement that brought the yearlong crisis to an end. But no agreement was reached on unification. Secretary of State Dean Acheson noted joyfully that the Soviets "are back on the defensive.... They are visibly concerned and afraid of the fact that they have lost Germany."

Stalin lost his gamble in Berlin. Two separate Germanys were created, and the West moved rapidly toward rearmament and the formation of a military alliance directed against the USSR. In 1949 the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic were created, and in April the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed. The lesson learned in the West from the Berlin crisis was that force, especially air power, was the most reliable weapon against Communism. The lesson Stalin learned was that intransigence and aggressive bluffing, within limits, were tools he could use in an increasingly dangerous world. International politics took on aspects of a global morality play, one in which both sides would soon have the option of using atomic weapons.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Cold War historiography is divided into the competing orthodox and revisionist schools. For the orthodox view, see Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton, NJ, 1957); Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Origins of the Cold War," *Foreign Affairs*, 47 (October 1967): 22–51; and Winston Churchill, *The Grand Alliance* (Boston, 1950), and *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston, 1953). For the revisionist view, see Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy* (New York, 1965); Thomas J. Paterson, *Soviet-American Confrontation: Postwar Reconstruction and the Origins of the Cold War* (Baltimore, 1973); Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941–1949*, rev. ed. (Chicago, 1970); Diane Shaver Clemens, *Yalta* (New York, 1970); Gabriel Kolko and Joyce Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945–1954* (New York, 1972); Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–2002* (New York, 2002); and Barton J. Bernstein, "American Foreign Policy and the Origins of the Cold War," in his (ed.), *Politics and Policies of the Truman Administration* (New York, 1970), pp. 15–77.

Important works have built on this controversy and tried to move beyond it. See, for example, John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941–1947* (New York, 1972); his *Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States: An Interpretive History* (New York, 1978); Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA, 1992); and Fraser J. Harbutt, *The Iron Curtain: Churchill, America, and the Origins of the Cold War* (New York, 1986). On Stalin's foreign policy, see Marshall Shulman, *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised* (Cambridge, MA, 1963); Adam Ulam, *The Rivals: America and Russia Since World War II* (New York, 1971); William Taubman, *Stalin's American Policy* (New York, 1982); Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, MA, 1995); David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939–1956* (New Haven, CT, 1994); Vladislav M. Zubok and Constantine V. Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA, 1995); Vojtech Mastny, *The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years* (Oxford, 1996); and Matthew Evangelista, "Stalin's Postwar Army Reappraised," *International Security*, 7, no. 3 (Winter/1982–83): 110–38. For important Cold War documents, see Kenneth M. Jensen (ed.), *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts "Long Telegrams" of 1946* (Washington, DC, 1991).

Among the most interesting books to benefit from the opening of the Soviet archives and a post-Cold War perspective are Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, 2005); Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), *The Cold War: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts* (Oxford, 2003); Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947–1956* (Ithaca, NY, 2000); and Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Princeton, NJ, 2001). Two autobiographies, one from each major adversary, are worth reading: Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, 1969); and Victor Israelyan, *On the Battlefields of the Cold War: A Soviet Ambassador's Confession* (University Park, PA, 2003).

CHAPTER 16

Late Stalinism
at Home and Abroad

FROM UNDER THE RUBBLE

World War II represented not only a mammoth military effort by the Soviet people but also a colossal social upheaval. The European part of the Soviet Union was a landscape of ruin and devastation by war's end, far more vulnerable than many in the West suspected. Social, state, and party institutions had broken down and needed to be rebuilt, and Stalin soon made it clear that he intended to restore, not only the economy, but the autocratic political structure that he had built in the 1930s. The population had diminished by more than 26 million from its prewar number of 190 million. Huge movements of population had occurred. In 1939–40 populations were exchanged between the German and Soviet-held parts of Poland; Baltic Germans and Germans living in the Soviet zone were transferred to German-held territory, and Ukrainians and Belorussians and Russians were expelled to the USSR. Over four hundred thousand Finns and Karelians were expelled to Finnish territory. Some 880,000 people, most from the annexed regions of Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Baltic states, were deported to special settlements and labor camps in 1940–41; of those only about half were released before the end of the war. During the war Stalin moved whole peoples from their homelands within the USSR to Central Asia and Siberia, ostensibly out of fear that they might collaborate with the invading Germans. In 1943–44 Stalin ordered the deportation of Crimean Tatars, Chechens, Ingushi, Karachai, Balkars, Kalmyks, Meskhetian Turks, and others, about a million people in all, from their homelands to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Rounded up by Beria's NKVD, accused of collaboration with the enemy, and sent into exile in boxcars and Studebaker trucks (part of Lend-Lease), hundreds of thousands of North Caucasians and others perished on the way.

During the war the Germans occupied territory in which 85 million Soviet citizens had lived before the war. Some 12 to 15 million were evacuated or fled