

COLD WAR - The Yalta Conference

Source 1



A British cartoon published in the Daily Mail July 16th 1945

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Source 2



Big Three at Potsdam (Imperial War Museum)

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Source 3

We are going to do what we can to make Germany over into a decent nation, so that it may eventually work its way from the economic chaos it has brought upon itself back into a place in the civilised world.

The economic action taken against Germany at the Berlin Conference included another most important item - reparations.

We do not intend again to make the mistake of exacting reparations in money and then lending Germany the money with which to pay. Reparations this time are to be paid in physical assets from those resources of Germany which are not required for her peace time substance.

The first purpose of reparations is to take out of Germany everything with which she can prepare for another war. Its second purpose is to help the devastated countries to bring about their own recovery by means of the equipment and material taken from Germany.

Therefore it was decided to divide the property by percentages of the total amount available. We still generally agreed that Russia should get approximately half of the total for herself and Poland, and that the remainder should be divided among all the other nations entitled to reparations.

Under our agreement at Berlin, the reparation claims of the Soviet Union and Poland are to be met from the property located in the zone of Germany occupied by the Soviet Union, and from the German assets in Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Rumania and Eastern Austria. The reparations claims of all the other countries are to be met from property located in the western zones of occupation in Germany, and from the German assets in all other countries. The Soviet waives all claim to gold captured by the Allied troops in Germany.

This formula of taking reparations by zones will lead to less friction among the Allies than the tentative basis originally proposed for study at Yalta.

The difficulty with this formula, however, is that the industrial capital equipment not necessary for the German peace economy is not evenly divided among the zones of occupation. The Western zones have a much higher percentage than the Eastern zone, which is mostly devoted to agriculture and to the production of raw materials. In order to equalise the distribution and give Russia and Poland their fair share of approximately 50 per cent it was decided that they should receive, without any reimbursement 10 per cent of the capital equipment in the Western zones available for reparations.

Extract from a speech by President Truman on the Potsdam Conference, August 1945. This extract covers the issue of reparations from Germany.

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Source 4

Having found the bomb, we have used it. We have used it against those who attacked us without warning at Pearl Harbour, against those who have starved and beaten and executed American prisoners of war, against those who have abandoned all pretence of obeying international laws of warfare. We have used it in order to shorten the agony of the war, in order to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans.

We shall continue to use it until we completely destroy Japan's power to make war. Only a Japanese surrender will stop us.

The atomic bomb is too dangerous to be loose in a law-less world. That is why great Britain and the United States, who have the secret of its production, do not intend to reveal the secret until means have been found to control the bomb so as to protect ourselves and the rest of the world from the danger of total destruction.

As far back as last May, Secretary of War Stimson, at my suggestion, appointed a committee upon which Secretary of State Byrnes served as my personal representative to prepare plans for the future control of this bomb. I shall ask the Congress to co-operate to the end that its production and use be controlled, and that its power be made an overwhelming influence toward world peace.

We must constitute ourselves trustees of this new force - to prevent its misuse and to turn it into the channels of service to mankind.

It is an awful responsibility which has come to us.

We thank God that it has come to us, instead of to our enemies; and we pray that He may guide us to use it in His ways and for His purposes.

Extract from a speech by President Truman on the Potsdam Conference, August 1945. This extract concerns the use of the atomic bomb.

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Source 5

'I MUST GET SOME INDIGESTION TABLETS — MY HUSBY
READ ONE OF THOSE POTSDAM MENUS RATHER QUICKLY'



A British cartoon commenting on the Potsdam Conference published in the Daily Mail July 19th 1945

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Source 6

There is, of course, no prospect of Russian agreement to any such course. But if we know it to be right, must Russian opposition condemn us to silent acquiescence in a course we know to be ruinous? Better by far to have the matter out now than to enter a miserable course of endless quarrels over the enforcement of the unenforceable and the justification of the unjust. The Russians' determination to loot Germany may not be unconnected with their failure to obtain reconstruction credits in the Western countries. Every possible means should be tried of getting them to change their attitude. But if they will not, then the pursuit of truth and justice is a surer guide than any calculations of future alliances. We may not be able to alter what happens in the Russian zone, but we can at least disclaim responsibility for it. And we can follow our own convictions in the West, where what is left of Germany can be given the prospect, in the fullness of time, of achieving liberty, equality and prosperity within a Western Europe that is conscious of its political and economic unity. There is no other

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Extract from an article in the British journal The Economist, August 11th 1945