

# INTERPRETATIONS

## Why did the USA and USSR become rivals?

**This revision activity works best if you do it with a friend, and talk about it as you do it.**

Choose a who-to-blame thesis. Imagine you are a historian who supports this thesis. Cut out the 'event cards' and construct a timeline which includes *only* the events which support your thesis. Describe your choices to a friend, and explain how they fit the thesis and appear to prove the blame.

Which thesis best fits the facts?

### WHO-TO-BLAME THESIS:

**Soviet expansionism**

### WHO-TO-BLAME THESIS:

**American fears, lies and double-dealing**

### WHO-TO-BLAME THESIS:

**Mutual misunderstanding**

#### 1941–1944

Britain and America ignore Stalin's appeals to open up a second front; in fact they delay D-Day for two years

#### October 1944

Percentages Agreement: Churchill agrees to a Soviet 'sphere of influence' in Eastern Europe after the war

#### February 1945

**Yalta Conference:** The Allies agree to admit Russia into the United Nations, try Nazi war criminals, and divide Germany into four 'zones'.

But there is tension over the *Declaration of Liberated Europe* and reparations

#### July 1945

**Potsdam Conference:** The Allies ratify the agreements made at Yalta, but there are open disagreements over reparations. (Russia is allowed to take 10% of industrial equipment in the Western zones)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>August 1945</b></p> <p><b>Hiroshima:</b> The USA drops the atomic bomb on Japan</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1945–1949</b></p> <p>Stalinists take power in Albania and Bulgaria (1945); and Poland, Romania and Hungary (1947) bit by bit, 'like slicing salami'</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>22 February 1946</b></p> <p>The <b>long telegram</b> by George Kennan, American embassy official in Moscow, claims that the Soviets are trying to expand and have to be stopped</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>5 March 1946</b></p> <p>The <b>Fulton Speech</b> by Winston Churchill claims that Eastern Europe is cut off by 'an iron curtain', and under Stalin's tyranny</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>12 March 1947</b></p> <p><b>Truman Doctrine:</b> Truman sends American troops to Greece, telling Congress it was America's duty to preserve freedom and democracy in Europe by 'containing' Soviet communism</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>October 1947</b></p> <p>Stalin set up Cominform, a meeting of Communist Eastern European states</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 1948</b></p> <p>Hard-line Stalinists take power in Czechoslovakia after the non-Communist chief minister, Masaryk, 'falls' from a window</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>March 1948</b></p> <p><b>Marshall Aid:</b> Congress votes \$17 billion aid to Europe</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>April 1948</b></p> <p><b>Trizonia:</b> To restore Germany's economy, the British and Americans join their two zones together with the French zone</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>23 June 1948</b></p> <p>Britain and America introduce a new currency into Trizonia</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>24 June 1948–12 May 1949</b></p> <p><b>Berlin blockade:</b> Stalin stops all road and rail traffic into Berlin – for 318 days the Americans supply West Berlin by air (275,000 flights carried 1.5 million tonnes of supplies)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>April 1949</b></p> <p>The Western Allies set up the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) against Russia</p>