Cold War, Revolution and Decolonization: 1945 - 1968

Overview: Creation of Cold War and Demands for Decolonization
Cold War & Decolonization

From Allies to Enemies:

- ‘Big Three’ (Truman, US; Churchill/Atlee, UK; Stalin, Soviet Union) met at Potsdam July 17- August 2 1945
[see ‘Potsdam Conference’, “Resources”]

- purpose: to discuss reconstruction of Europe

- war continued in Pacific but already lack of common enemy in Europe led to difficulties

- main disagreement: reparations for Germany
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Atlee, Truman, Stalin at Potsdam (1945)
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- Stalin wanted high payments, half to Soviet Union

- Truman (unlike predecessor Roosevelt): argued for ‘mitigation’, believed post-WWI reparations led to rise Nazis

- British (and major ally France) exhausted by war: power lay with US and Soviet Union

- agreement reached on division Germany into ‘zones’ managed by Allies but little else
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Germany: Zones of Occupation 1946
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Apparent that Soviet Union was ‘Winner’:

- although Stalin did not achieve all he wished in Potsdam, clear that Soviet Union gained most from war

- in move West to take Berlin: had re-established control over much Eastern Europe – ‘liberated’ territories from Fascism, offered them Soviet ‘socialist’ assistance

- in coming year solidified control
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Differences Between former Allies: Economic and Political

Capitalism-Socialism: opposing concepts of how economy should function

- ‘West’ looked to market (supply-demand) to shape economy

- 1944 Bretton Woods: established International World Monetary system based on US$ -- fixed exchange rate, backed by International Monetary Fund and World Bank.
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**Soviet Union ‘courted’ by US**: seen as counterweight to Germany and potential trading partner

- spoke to concerns that this was ‘capitalist’ more than ‘internationalist’ enterprise

- delegates signed Bretton Woods agreement but in 1945 Stalin refused to join IMF: feared control by US, now recognized as ascendant power (vis-à-vis Britain)

- established closed monetary system for Soviet Union and communist allies
Differences Between former Allies: Economic and Political

Democracy-Communism: opposing concepts of how government should function

- ‘West’ (including Britain, European allies) followed forms of elected government

- systems differed (e.g. US Presidential, ‘Social Democracy’)

- tending to forms of welfare state, reflecting post-war destruction and poverty in Europe)
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- ‘East’ : Communism as developed by authoritarian leadership (e.g. Stalinist Soviet Union, Maoist China)

- Soviet Union just beginning experience of Empire in central Europe: ‘buffer states’ to be managed from Moscow

- had acknowledged 1941 Atlantic Charter (US,Britain) laying out post-war goals of ‘democracy’ and ‘self-determination’ [see below, ‘Decolonization’] *but had no intention of participating*

- [Atlantic Charter, in “Add’l Rdgs”]
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“The Rescue of Europe and The Rise of Capitalism”
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‘The Iron Curtain’: ideological boundary dividing Europe

-even as war in Pacific ending, clear that America’s economic, political vision for the post-war world was in direct conflict a with the Soviet Union’s

- six months later Churchill (recently defeated as Prime Minister) characterized Europe as facing a new challenge: the symbolic emergence of an ‘iron curtain’ dividing the West from the East:
"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 what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow."

Sir Winston Churchill (Missouri, USA – Mar. 6, 1946)
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Churchill’s ‘Iron Curtain’ speech
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The Marshall Plan: rebuilding Western Europe

-1948: US congress approved plan to fund rebuilding Europe over coming years [amounts vary from 12 to 20 billion USD]

- reflected fear of Communist aggression into and attraction for, decimated countries European countries, including Germany

- not only failed by Fascism but also by Democracy: vulnerable
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Plan initially discussed including Soviet Union, Eastern Europe: problematic

- Soviet Union suspicious of US motives

- US worried that Congress would not approve $$ if Soviets involved; in the end: plan delivered solely to ‘allies’

- as Soviets predicted: used as ‘tool’ to attract newly Communist regimes

- *intended as ‘protection’, acted as ‘provocation’ in shaping Cold War*
On June 5, 1947, speaking to the graduating class at Harvard University, Secretary of State George C. Marshall laid the foundation, in the aftermath of World War

U.S. wheat is unloaded in The Netherlands assistance to the countries of Europe. At a time when great cities lay in ruins and national economies were devastated, Marshall called on America to "do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace."

Label placed on all Marshal Plan Aid packages
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Marshall Plan Aid to Western Europe 1948-52
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‘Cold War in Europe’ Spreads: Korean War


-US, Canada, UK, Belgium, France and several western European countries: agreed to consider ‘attack against one an attack against all’ [another provocation to Soviet Union]

- called into play shortly after formation in Korea
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**Korean War:**
- Korea victim Japanese imperialism 1910-45: Soviet Union and US drove out Japanese troops, divided former colony (north/south, respectively) between them

- post war danger: rise Mao’s Communist China, weakened Japan in context of rapidly developing non-declared ‘war’ (cold war)

- clear neither Korean ally would allow it to reunify
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**Korean War:**
- 1950: north saw south as weak (US forces had withdrawn)
- invaded: almost took back whole peninsula
- United Nations (formed 1944) condemned invasion
- NATO forces called upon

- *first ‘real war’ of Cold War: ended in 1953 with ‘truce’ leaving division (still existing) in place*
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MASH Unit [a real one...]
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Cold War Continues:

- Concern about stability in Korea: had led to plan similar to Marshal Plan for Japan late 1940s

- 1950-51: reparations forgiven, agreement signed allowing for US military troops to be based in islands

- Japan important ally, strategic role in Asian-Pacific for US containment Soviet interests
Cold War: NATO vs Warsaw Pact
[see ‘NATO, 1949’ and ‘Warsaw Pact’, “Resources”]

-in Europe: Marshal Plan helped Greece, Turkey – admitted to NATO 1952

-1955: recovering Germany also became member

-clear ‘bolstering’ of US political, military position

- Soviet Union responded with Warsaw Treaty Organization: bound Soviet Union and Eastern/Central European allies in defensive ‘Pact’ comparable to NATO
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‘Non-Alignment’: search for neutrality

- ‘cold war’ discussion suggests overwhelming dominance of ‘Super Powers’

- non-alignment movement grew beyond this bi-polar world: in part challenge, in part escape

- given formal legitimacy at Bandung Conference, 1955

- meeting of Asian and African former colonies, spoke for those still seeking independence especially in Africa
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Bandung Conference:
- goal to establish path forward that reduced dependence on former colonial powers and new ‘super powers’: concept of ‘Third World’
- called for: promotion economic, cultural cooperation
  protection human rights
  principle of self-determination
  end to racial discrimination
  importance of peaceful coexistence
- origin of formal Non-Aligned Movement (1961)
  [see ‘Bandung Conference’, “Add’l Rdgs”]
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Regarded with suspicion by US:

- many colonies still fighting for independence (several in Africa) supported by Soviet Union: non-aligned movement seen as ‘leaning left’

- underscored fact that US also involved: supporting colonial forces because it needed them as part of NATO, bulwark against Soviet Union

- statements about ‘racial equality’: sensitive issue in 1950s US – Civil Rights movement
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Concept of Non-Alignment: ideology or exigency?

- Has been argued that there was very little ideological orientation

- really about ‘manipulating the superpowers’ to achieve goals – playing one off against the other for financial, development, military support while claiming to be ‘aligned’ to neither
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Non-Alignment: ideology or exigency?

- But: cannot ignore reality of Colonialism: exercised by Dutch, British, French, Portuguese

- after WWI: well-educated generation began looking at alternatives to ‘capitalism and democracy’ as they experienced it under colonialism

- developing their own ideas about forms of socialism, non-racialist societies
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‘Ideological’ commitment of many Asian, African leaders at Bandung was real:

- shared and developed by those engaged in struggles for independence through 1950s, 1960s, 1970s

- formal creation NAM (1961) gave voice to those seeking a ‘middle road’ in the Cold War: India's Nehru; Burma's U Nu; Indonesia's Sukarno; Egypt’s Abdel Nasser; Ghana’s Nkrumah; Yugoslavia’s Tito
Jawaharlal Nehru

1946

The Discovery of India

1934

Glimpses of World History
Kwame Nkrumah

1961
I SPEAK OF FREEDOM

1963
Africa Must Unite

1968
the struggle continues
Gamal Abdel Nasser
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Decolonization ‘now’: why?

- war-time promises of Colonial Powers: Atlantic Charter 1941, Brazzaville Conference 1944

- establishment of The United Nations 1945: ‘decolonization’ agenda

-- International movement of Pan-Africanism: became ‘anti-colonialism’ Manchester Conference 1946

[see ‘C.L.R. James on Pan-African Liberation’, Textbook p. 976]
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Decolonization ‘now’: why?

- impact WWII on Colonial Troops (Africa, Asia, Europe)

- impact WWII on Civilians; extent of Civilian contributions

- nationalism: impact of war, promises, on well-developed local nationalist movements
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Promises of Colonial Powers: 1941 and 1946

- Atlantic Charter: 1941 [see also “Add’l Rdgs”]

The Atlantic Charter

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

1. Their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other.
2. They desire to see an end to armed forces everywhere.
3. They believe that the free expression of the will of the peoples is the basis of genuine and free governments.
4. They believe that all peoples have the right to choose their own form of government.
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The President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, recognize the importance of the Atlantic Charter.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Winston S. Churchill

August 14, 1941
Cold War & Decolonization

Agreement between Churchill and Roosevelt: signed during early years of WWII setting out ‘goals’

- Article Three:

“They [President of the United States, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom] respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them...”
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Formation of The United Nations 1945:
[see Textbook pp.958,9]

- 50 nations met San Francisco: immediate goal to create international organization to ensure peace maintained in some kind of ‘world order’

- ‘observers’ in tense situations, peace-keeping military forces

- Intended to replace the League of Nations (formed post WWI) which had been largely ineffectual (especially because the US did not join)
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**Formation of The United Nations 1945:**
- In immediate post-war era, impact greatest in supporting cause of decolonization and subsequent 'development'

- Charter: defended right to self-determination forum for Liberation Movements platform for denouncing colonialist powers

See Chapter XI (Articles 73-74) [*UN Charter, “Add’l Rdgs*]

- 1960: 18 new African nations held seats, strengthening commitment to decolonization, ‘3rd World’ development
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Impact Returning Troops, Combat Experience:

- both British and French used African troops in Europe, Asia

- Africans were fighting in Burma, as well as France, Germany

- North Africa: French, Italian, Egyptian Africans drawn into battles on both sides (‘Vichy French’ Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Italian Libya with Axis powers; Egyptians with Allies)
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Fifth Pan-African Congress (Manchester, 1945):
- strongly reflected post-war politics, emphasis on ‘freedom and democracy’
- pronounced that armed struggle could be justified to overthrow colonialism
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Brazzaville Conference, French Equatorial Africa
- 1944: ‘improvements to colonialism’

Congolese Leader
Felix Eboue, de Gaulle

1974 commemorative stamp
Cold War and Decolonization

Key Passage:

“.. the colonizing work of France makes it impossible to accept any idea of autonomy for the colonies, or any possibility of development outside of the French empire. Even at a distant date, there will be no self-government in the colonies.”

- this qualifier tended to be lost in the overall post-war enthusiasm for ‘Allied Victory’
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French West Africa:

- part of collaborative Vichy regime until 1942 when Allies took North Africa

- thereafter, supported “Free French” effort

‘Free French’ Flag
Cold War & Decolonization

French West Africa
French Equatorial Africa
Cold War & Decolonization

**French Equatorial Africa**:

- supported ‘government in exile’: “Free French” under General Charles de Gaulle

- Chad critical in preventing Axis base in Africa

- 15,000 Chadian soldiers joined war effort
Cold War & Decolonization

African Troops in WWII: map does not show full range of North African Vichy engagement

‘Free French’ area comprises majority French West and French Equatorial Africa

Source: Fighting for Britain: African Soldiers in the Second World War, Spring 2010
Cold War & Decolonization

Impact On, Contributions of Civilians: inestimable

- areas actively involved in battles: demands for food, hosting; ‘civilian casualties’

- colonies in general: forced labour demands

- shortages of imported goods (food, cloth, manufactured goods/equipment)

- localized hunger as food diverted to ‘war effort’; extra taxes
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Poem references part of perceived impact:

“The European merchant is my shepherd,
    And I am in want;
He maketh me to lie down in cocoa farms,
He leadeth me beside the waters of great need;
The general managers & profiteers frighten me.
    Thou preparedst a reduction in my salary
    In the presence of my creditors.
    Thou anointest my income with taxes;
My expense runs over my income
    And I will dwell in a rented house forever!”

[The ‘African Morning Post’ of Accra, as submitted by Gold Coast (West Africa) serviceman, c.1944]
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1945: Nigerian serviceman writing to Nigerian Nationalist leader Herbert Macaulay --

“We all overseas soldiers are coming back home with new ideas. We have been told what we fought for. That is ‘freedom’.

We want freedom. Nothing but freedom”

[see also ‘Atlantic Charter’, Resources]
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Clear that both British and French ex-servicemen had expectations of markedly different post war world than their Colonial Masters:

- expected jobs, employment
- conditions equal to European co-workers
- pension payments

“freedom and democracy“
Cold War & Decolonization

Independence of India:

- over 2 million Indian soldiers fought in WWII: most felt they were fighting for India, not for Empire

- Gandhi had launched ‘Quit India’ campaign: British promised to do so when war ended

- 1947: Britain reluctantly accepted to grant independence to partitioned India – Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan
  
  [see Lecture ‘Jewel in the Crown’]
Cold War & Decolonization

Impact:

- elsewhere, consequences of partition less significant than Independence of India itself: if India ‘Jewel of British Empire’ was no longer a colony, why should anyone else remain under Colonial Rule?

- impact most acute in Africa where nationalist movements strong and increasingly radical following WWII
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Process of Decolonization: intertwined with Cold War

-in some instances, colonial powers resisted nationalist demands (e.g. settler colonies in Africa – British, French, Portuguese*; Indo-China – French): led to wars, often long

- US generally supported ‘ally’, sometimes with military equipment, troops

-Soviet Union sometimes supported nationalists who were often Communist or Socialist

* [see Lecture ‘Racism Defeated?’]
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No matter how ‘independence’ gained (negotiation or battle): new states became ‘potential prizes’ in competition between US and Soviet Union

- US in particular seeking to gain economic and political footholds in former British and French colonies

- ‘backing’ of decolonization not necessarily about assuring ‘democracy and freedom’!