

- Once Germany was defeated, the Soviet Union would join the war against Japan.
- A United Nations Organisation would be set up to keep peace after the war.
- As east European countries were liberated from Nazi occupation, they would hold free elections to set up democratic governments.

The main area of dispute was Poland. Stalin wanted to keep the parts of Poland that he had won in the Nazi–Soviet Pact of 1939. He also wanted Poland expanded westwards by giving it parts of Germany. That would make Germany weaker and put a buffer zone between Germany and the Soviet Union. Germany had invaded the Soviet Union twice in 30 years, and Stalin wanted to make sure it did not happen again. He also wanted to make sure that Poland had a pro-Soviet government.

Stalin already had a government in exile (the Lublin Poles) ready to take over. But Roosevelt and Churchill supported another group, the strongly anti-communist ‘London Poles’. These Poles had helped organise the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, aiming to gain part of Poland before Stalin’s Red Army took full control of the country. The uprising was defeated by the Nazis and nearly 300,000 Poles were killed. The Red Army was ordered not to help in the uprising. Stalin wanted to make sure that when his army cleared the Germans out of Poland, the Lublin Poles would have complete control. By January 1945 this had happened.

The Yalta Conference

In February 1945, Franklin Roosevelt of the USA, Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union and Winston Churchill of Britain met at Yalta in the Soviet Union. The war in Europe was drawing to a conclusion and decisions had to be made about how Europe was to be organised after the war. It was decided that:

- Germany should be divided into ‘zones of occupation’, one controlled by the USSR, one by the USA, one by Britain and one by France. Since the German capital, Berlin, would be in the Soviet zone, it would also be divided into four similar sections.

SOURCE B



SOURCE C

I didn't say it was good, I said it was the best I could do.

President Roosevelt commenting on the Yalta Agreement to one of his advisers.

Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in discussion at Yalta.

SOURCE D

So far there has been a worrying lack of progress made in the carrying out of the decisions we made in the conference, particularly those relating to Poland. I am frankly puzzled as to why this should be and must tell you that I do not fully understand the attitude of your government.

President Roosevelt writing to Stalin in April 1945.

But Roosevelt and Churchill did not want Stalin to have a free hand in Poland. At Yalta they made him agree that some of the London Poles would be included in the government and that there would be free elections for a new government 'as soon as possible'.

The Yalta Conference appeared to be successful, with agreements on how eastern Europe and Germany would be organised. But in reality, things were different. The London Poles had hardly any say in their government. As for elections, Stalin's idea of 'democratic government' was an elected pro-communist government. This was not what Churchill and Roosevelt had meant, and Roosevelt wrote to Stalin expressing his unhappiness (see Source D).

