

How to answer...

How Far Do You Agree

16
Marks +
4 SPaG

Question:

'The main reason for increased tensions between USA and USSR in the years 1945-49 was the Berlin Blockade.'

How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. (16 marks + 4 SPaG)

Answer:

Firstly, it can be argued that the Berlin Blockade was the main reason for increased tensions between the USA and USSR in the years 1945 to 1949. On 24th June 1948 Stalin cut all land access to Berlin for the Allies. This meant that Berlin could only be accessed by air, resulting in a restriction to travel out of Berlin for all Germans. The Allies responded with the Berlin airlift, which lasted for 11 months. By May 1949, it became clear that the Allies would not surrender Berlin, and Stalin lifted the blockade. This increased tensions between the USA and USSR, as Stalin had been humiliated after the blockade was unsuccessful, and the USA demonstrated their commitment to the stopping of the spread of Soviet influence in Europe.

However, there were other factors that also contributed to the increased tensions between the USA and USSR in the years 1945 to 1949. In July 1945, the USA successfully tested its first atomic bomb. Stalin was concerned about America's nuclear advantage over the USSR – he could not risk conflict with a state with an atomic bomb at its disposal. On 6th August 1945, the USA dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima in Japan, killing 140,000 people. This increased tensions between the USA and USSR greatly, as Stalin became more paranoid and knew he could not compete with the USA in a war until the USSR also had atomic bombs at their disposal.

Finally, Truman Doctrine was also a factor in the increased tensions between the USA and USSR. In 1947, President Truman announced that the USA would provide any democratic nation with economic, military, and political aid if they were threatened by communist forces. This was a big shift in US foreign policy as the USA had not typically intervened in regional conflicts, but was now offering to get involved in European politics. The USSR perceived this as interference in their sphere of influence, and it marked a significant deterioration in relations.

Overall, the main reason for increased tensions between the USA and the USSR in the years 1945 to 1949 was the Berlin Blockade. Although other factors including the atom bomb and Truman Doctrine played a role, the Berlin Blockade was a key event that led to the creation of NATO, and solidified the ongoing Cold War.

Feedback:

This answer would get 16/16 marks because the pupil has explained the given point, and two counter points (atomic bomb and Truman Doctrine) in depth using historical information, and directly linked to the question throughout. The pupil has also included a judgement at the end, explaining which point was more important and why.

