

Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945–1972

Question 1: Source A is supportive/is critical of _____ How can you tell? Explain your answer using Source A and your contextual knowledge. [4 marks]

How to answer:

- 1 Paragraph – should explain how the source is supportive/ critical of the topic in the question
- Spend 5 minutes
- To get 4 marks you must mention:
 - Analysis of what the source shows
 - Analysis of what the message of the source is
 - Some of your own evidence to support your analysis
 - Analysis of the provenance

Example Answer: Source A is critical of communism. How can you tell? Explain your answer using Source A and your contextual knowledge.

**Source A: An American Cartoon,
published in 1948**



THE RIVAL BUSES

Source A is critical of communism because it shows communism in a negative light. In the source Stalin and Truman are getting people, which represent the countries of Eastern Europe, onto buses that are metaphors for capitalism and communism. Stalin is aggressively pushing people onto his bus which is critical of communism as the message is that Stalin was using strength and aggression to force the countries of Eastern Europe into his sphere of influence. This is supported by the fact that Stalin did use aggression to build up his Eastern Bloc, for example in Bulgaria 1945, after the communists formed a coalition government all non-communist political leaders were executed in order for the communists to take complete control. Additionally, the source was made in the USA, which suggests it will be critical of communism because it was likely made by someone who followed the capitalist ideology and therefore would be against the actions of the communist USSR.

Question 2: How useful are sources B and C to an historian wanting to find out about _____ Explain your answer using sources B and C and your contextual knowledge [12 marks]

How to answer:

- 3 PEE paragraphs
 - 1 – Content of source B
 - 2 – Content of source C
 - 3 – Provenance of both
- Paragraph structure
 - POINT
 - EVIDENCE FROM THE SOURCE
 - EVIDENCE FROM OWN KNOWLEDGE
 - EXPLANATION
- For top marks evaluate the relationship between the sources (how useful are they when considered as a pair). This has been underlined in the model answer.
- A source can be useful for lots of reasons. Some are listed here:
 - Key information about an event
 - What a key person/group did
 - Attitudes of a person/group
 - Methods use to influence others
 - The reasons for an event/point of view
 - Living or working conditions
 - The effects of something
 - Opinions of key individual
 - Government priorities
 - Message given to the public
 - Private thoughts of a person
- Spend about 15 minutes

Example Answer: *How useful are Sources B and C to an historian studying the reasons for increased tension between East and West at the Potsdam Conference, 1945? Explain using sources B and C and your contextual knowledge*

Source B

Adapted from a description of the conference, written in 1945 by Walter Monckton, a member of the British delegation at Potsdam

Truman would come prepared on each subject, with a short, firm statement of US policy, and he kept repeating it. Stalin spoke quietly and in brief sentences. Stalin was often humorous, never offensive; direct and uncompromising. He had a trick of looking up when he was thinking or speaking, and much of the time he would be smoking a Russian cigarette

Source C

A cartoon by the British Cartoonist David Low, published in the London Evening Standard, 30 October 1945



Source B is useful because it shows us the terrible relationship between Truman and Stalin. The content of the source suggests there was not much communication between the leaders as Stalin's speech was "brief...direct and uncompromising" whereas Truman was just "repeating...US policy." This suggests the two leaders had a poor relationship, which is true as Truman was very anti-communist and was much more hostile to the USSR than Roosevelt had been. This showed itself at Potsdam in July 1945 where the leaders disagreed about the amount of reparations Germany was to pay as well as Stalin's policy in Eastern Europe (the west wanting free elections, but the

USSR preferred communist leadership), which makes the source useful as it shows events put strain on the relationship between Truman and Stalin.

Likewise, source C is useful because it shows us methods used to influence others. The source shows president Truman holding the atomic bomb and using it to force Attlee and Stalin into agreeing to his terms. The caption, "Why can't we work together in mutual trust and confidence" is ironic as the power imbalance created by the US's possession of the bomb made this near-on impossible. This is supported by the fact that the bomb did increase mistrust between the superpowers. The Manhattan project was conducted by the USA and was done in complete secrecy from the USSR. Additionally, when the USA successfully tested the bomb July 16th 1945 during the Trinity Tests, they did not inform the USSR of the result, which led to distrust. This makes the source useful as it shows how the bomb contributed to increasing distrust between the superpowers.

The provenance of source B is useful as it gives us the private thoughts of a key person. It was written by a member of the British delegation at the conference who probably had a high level of access to the events of the conference. This gives us an inside view as to what occurred during the conference and provides an insight into why the superpower relationship broke down. The source's purpose is to describe what was going on at the conference for future generations so it's useful as the author had no reason to lie. Source C's provenance also makes it useful as it was created in October 1945, after the bombs had been dropped and the Potsdam conference had ended. The source shows the US possession of the bomb had a noticeable effect on the conference and made negotiations between the superpowers much more difficult. Overall, taken together the sources are incredibly useful as the content of source C suggests the power imbalance caused by the atomic bomb could have been a key reason why there was a lack of communication between the two leaders.

Question 3: Write an Account of How [event] led to _____ . [8 marks]

How to answer:

- 2 PEE paragraphs, written in chronological order (Over your paragraphs you need to mention what led to the event in the question, what happened during the event, how it ended and what that consequences were)
- Make sure you DO NOT just tell the story, you need to explain how each part of the event links to the focus of the question. For every point you make, check you have also included an effect or result that links directly to the focus of the question: in the example question below, it is increased tensions (underlined in the model answer)
- Spend 10 minutes

Example Answer: *Write an account of how the Prague Spring in 1968 led to increased tensions between the USSR and the West. [8 marks]*

The Prague Spring increased tension as it suggested people were unhappy with communism. By the end of the 1960s Czechoslovakians were complaining about the lack of freedom, and the poor performance of their economy. This led to unrest among the people so Moscow replaced the unpopular leader Novotny with the more liberal Alexander Dubcek who they believed would calm the situation. Instead, Dubcek began to introduce major reforms. In April 1968, his government announced an Action Plan for 'a new model of socialism', which removed state controls over industry, allowed freedom of speech, brought in free elections and planned for increased trade in the west. This increased tension as it was clear communism was unpopular in Czechoslovakia and people wanted change. This was supported by the USA, which would have angered the USSR, making their relationship worse.

Events of 1968 also increased tension as the Soviet invasion showed they were willing to use force to keep control. On 20 August 1968, 200,000 Soviet and 300,000 Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia with 2000 tanks to stop Dubcek's reforms. He chose this plan of action out of fear of the liberal changes in Czechoslovakia might spread to other communist countries – and additionally due to pressure from other members of the Warsaw Pact who wanted to prevent their own people from fighting against communism. Although the crisis was relatively nonviolent, the Prague Spring still increased tension as it led to Brezhnev announcing the Brezhnev Doctrine, which was his promise that the USSR would act to protect communism in any country where it was under threat. This increased tension as it showed the invasion was not a one-off and that Brezhnev was determined to keep control of Eastern Europe and was willing to use force to uphold communism.

Question 4: '[Event] was the most important reason for [increased tension/worsening relations] during the years _____' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer

[16 marks + 4 SPAG]

How to answer:

- 3 extended PEEL paragraphs + conclusion
 - Paragraph 1 – event in the question
 - Paragraph 2 – a second event that took place within the years stated in the question
 - Paragraph 3 – a third event that took place within the years stated in the question
 - Conclusion
- You must talk about events that took place within the years given in the question, if you write about events outside the time period you will not get any marks
- Include lots of specific knowledge in each of your paragraphs
- Include an explanation of 2 different points per paragraph and use the words of the question in your explanation to make it clear you are directly answering the question (underlined in example answer 1)
- Use correct **S**pelling, **P**unctuation and **G**rammar (SPAG) as 4 marks are available for this
- For top marks, you must link your paragraphs OR have a sustained argument. This is most easily done by setting out your argument in a short introduction and then referring back to this at the end of each of your paragraphs (underlined in example answer 2).
- Spend around 20 minutes on this question – if you struggle with managing your time I would do this question first as it is worth the most marks

Example Answer 1 (this would get you 12 marks)

The U2 crisis increased tension in the 60s as the shooting down of the American spy plane led to increased mistrust and therefore tension. On May 1 1960, Gary Powers U2 spy plane was shot down over Soviet airspace. Soviet soldiers discovered camera technology among the wreckage, which made it clear the USA had been spying on the USSR. This event happened at a time when tensions had been decreasing between the superpowers as Khrushchev had stated he wanted peaceful co-existence and the two powers had planned to meet in Paris in 1960 to discuss reducing tension. However, the spy plane proved the USA did not trust the USSR and led to increased tension as Khrushchev decided to abandon the Paris Peace summit. This meant a chance to reduce tension had been lost. Also Eisenhower's failure to admit it was a spy plane worsened relations and damaged America's image in the international community.

Another key reason for an increase in superpower tension during the 60s was the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Berlin had been a problem ever since its was divided in 1945 at the Yalta Conference. In 1961, the city again became a focus of tension when Khrushchev ordered the construction of a wall separating East and West Berlin. The motivation of the wall was to stop 'the brain drain' where East Germans were defecting to the West in large numbers e.g. in 1961 207,000 people left East Berlin for West Berlin. This mass migration increased tension as it showed when given a choice people would choose capitalism over communism, therefore damaging the image of the USSR. The wall was also a way to stop East Berliners from seeing the difference in the standard of living in the two halves of the city and led to increased tension as the Soviets did not consult with America before building the wall and constructed it late at night (US time) preventing them from responding immediately. This again led to distrust between the superpowers which made relations' worse.

A final key factor in the increase in tension was the Cuban Missile Crisis as this almost led to nuclear war. In 1962 Khrushchev sent missiles to Cuba and ordered the building of launch sites on the Island only 90 miles away from mainland USA. Khrushchev's decision massively increased tension as the USA was now directly threatened by powerful Soviet weaponry and was worried that the island could potentially be used as a base for the USSR to invade. This increased tension as it went against the idea of separate spheres of influence for capitalism and communism and greatly increased mutual suspicion. The crisis was the closest the world has ever come to nuclear war as JFK's decision to place a naval quarantine around the island and Khrushchev's refusal to back down led to a situation where events could quickly have gotten out of hand. For example, had Khrushchev not accepted JFK's proposal to

remove the missiles in a swap deal, nukes may have been launched. This event led to tension as it was the highest point of tension in the Cold War and the superpowers came very close to nuclear war.

In conclusion, I agree with the statement that the U2 crisis was the main reason for the increase in tension during the 1960s to a small extent as the main reason for tension was the Cuban Missile Crisis. While the shooting down of the spy plane caused tensions, it was largely a missed opportunity for de-escalation rather than a lasting crisis. The construction of the Berlin Wall was also a clear moment of tension but the USA's measured response meant that things did not escalate. During the Cuban Missile, however, tensions were so high that there were moments when events were way beyond the control of the two leaders.

Example Answer 2 (this answer would get you 16 marks): 'The shooting down of the U2 spy plane was the main reason for an increase in tension between East and West during the 1960s.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

The most important reason for tension during the 1960s was two leaders' response to the U2 crisis was as it set an aggressive tone for the remainder of the decade.

The shooting down of Gary Powers U2 spy plane and his subsequent trial came at a time of improving relations between the two superpowers. Eisenhower hoped to end his presidency by beginning a new age of cooperation and Khrushchev had stated he wanted peaceful co-existence. The two powers had planned to meet in Paris to discuss de-escalation of the Cold War. However, the existence of the spy plane proved that far from trusting the USSR, the USA was in fact spying on its rival. The wreckage and Powers himself were shown on Soviet television and the sophisticated reconnaissance technology found in the plane made it clear that he had been spying on the USSR, which led to increased mistrust and therefore tension. Whilst the shooting down of the plane was a shock to the public, the USSR's leadership already knew the USA was spying on them so it can be argued that it was the reaction of the leaders that led to increased tension. Eisenhower's failure to admit it was a spy plane soured relations and damaged America's image in the international community. Likewise, Khrushchev's decision to abandon the proposed peace summit in Paris meant a chance to reduce tension had been lost. In this way it was the leaders actions that increased tension between them.

Another key reason for an increase in superpower tension during the 60s was the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Berlin had been an area of contention ever since its division in 1945 at the Yalta Conference and in 1961, the city again became a focus of Cold War tension when Khrushchev ordered the construction of a wall separating East and West Berlin. The real motivation of the wall was to stop 'the brain drain' where East Germans were defecting to the West in large numbers e.g. in 1961 207,000 people left East Berlin for West Berlin. The wall was also a way to stop East Berliners from seeing the difference in the standard of living in the two halves of the city. The wall increased tension as the Soviets did not consult with America before building the wall and constructed it late at night (US time) preventing them from responding immediately. Again however, we can see the leaders' confrontational response to the U2 crisis as having an impact on events in Berlin. In 1963 JFK went to Berlin and made a speech in front of the wall that criticised Soviet actions. With this speech, the president was sending a clear message to Khrushchev: the thaw that had been damaged by the U2 crisis had now been completely destroyed by the creation of the wall.

A final key factor in the increase in tension was the issue of Cuba. The rise of Castro greatly concerned the USA due to his nationalisation of US owned businesses (particularly in the oil industry) and the USA's attempt to overthrow Castro during the Bay of Pigs invasion 1961 angered the communist world. The real tension, however, developed over the issue of missiles. Khrushchev's decision to station missiles on Cuba (only 90 miles away from mainland USA) massively increased tension as the USA was now directly threatened by powerful Soviet weaponry and moreover was worried that the island could potentially be used as a launch pad from which the USSR could launch an invasion. This increased tension as it went against the idea of separate spheres of influence for capitalism and communism and

greatly increased mutual suspicion. Once again however, the aggressive stance that began during the U2 crisis of 1960 continued during the Cuban Missile Crisis and can be seen to be the main reason for increasing tension. JFK's decision to place a naval quarantine around the island and Khrushchev's refusal to back down to this led to the highest point of tension in the Cold War and the superpowers came very close to nuclear war.

In conclusion, it is clear that the shooting down of the U2 spy plane was a moment of tension in the old War, but the main reason for the increase in tension during the 1960s was the aggressive stance taken by the leaders of the USA and USSR after the U2 crisis of 1960. While the shooting down of Powers' plane caused tensions, it was largely a missed opportunity for de-escalation rather than a lasting crisis. The construction of the Berlin Wall was also a clear moment of tension but the USA's measured response meant that things did not escalate. During the Cuban Missile, however, tensions were so high that there were moments when events were way beyond the control of the two leaders. This high level of tension was a result of the confrontational political stance of the superpower leaders taken since the U2 crisis of 1960.