Teacher Fellowship Programme 2017: The Cold War in the Classroom

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Teacher Fellow Resource: Foundations of the Cold War

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Introducing the themes of the Cold War

Introduction
This resource uses the stories of some interesting figures involved in the Cold War to introduce GCSE students to an overview of the conflict and to structure their wider understanding of its underlying principles.

Context and purpose
- This resource was inspired by discussions in the HA Cold War Teacher Fellowship programme about how difficult it is to define the Cold War as a phenomenon, but has since grown beyond this.
- The diffuse nature of the conflict means that students benefit from a conceptual framework (in this case, some organising principles) to structure their understanding of the Cold War.
- By using some defined 'foundations' of the Cold War, students will hopefully be able to work out how the Cold War became established, and then how the importance of these foundations fluctuated over time. These can be revisited to deepen both their understanding of the links between the events of the Cold War and also their understanding of the 'foundations' themselves.

The background and how it developed
To try to capture the complexity of the Cold War for students embarking on the topic, stories seemed the most appropriate vehicle. It was then a case of choosing stories that represented some of the key foundations of the Cold War, and which would be interesting and accessible to students. The foundations were chosen first and then key figures (some of whom were encountered for the first time during reading for the Fellowship programme) who illustrated these afterwards. The stories were also chosen to, in some way, challenge the dominant narratives of the Cold War and illustrate the varied experiences of those involved.

Using it in teaching
This resource is targeted at GCSE students at the start of their Cold War topic. It should provide a broad overview of the topic and introduce students to some of the key terms they need. The 'foundations' introduced and explored during this lesson sequence provide the framework for exploring the causes of the flashpoints in the Cold War and also their consequences: which of the foundations was most important at different times? How far did their importance decrease as a result of events? A good example of this might be the arms race foundation and the Cuban Missile Crisis, which interact in interesting ways. This should add depth to students' analysis and encourage an ability to make strong links. It will then equip the students to undertake a thorough analysis of the end of the Cold War by considering which foundations, when removed, would have the biggest impact on its ending. The metaphor can be revisited and form the basis of some counter-factual discussions. The overall learning, showing the change in each foundation over time, can be summarised using a colour-coded graph to show their fluctuation.

Variations
There is no reason why this sequence couldn't be used at Key Stage 5, probably by shortening the teaching time allotted to it. It could also be made more global through a different choice of key figures (e.g. Kim Il Sung, General MacArthur, Deng Xiaoping) or could focus more on the end of the conflict (Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher). It would also be an interesting exercise, if time were available, to revisit the stories at the end of the unit, to see whether it tackled any generalisations or misconceptions that students had picked up.

How to use it
The first lesson taught will depend upon the level of your students' background knowledge – the key terms and concepts that they will need to have a good understanding of to access these lessons are:
communism, capitalism, democracy, dictatorship, ideology, arms race

If you feel confident of your students' understanding of these then begin with the first lesson, probably just with a preparatory homework (perhaps an introductory video) about the Cold War. If they are less confident then you will need to start with a general overview lesson, introducing and outlining these terms.

The lessons

Lesson 1: The main focus here is to be able to identify the key foundations of the Cold War and begin to describe some of their features.

- Introduce the concept of a foundation – explain the link between a physical foundation (holding up a building) and a metaphorical foundation (something that sustains an historical phenomenon). Give the concrete example of a school and explore the value of this metaphor by considering how it can help us think about importance – what would happen if each of these foundations were weakened or removed? What does this tell us about which is most important?

- Then introduce the idea of using stories – these can help us identify what the foundations might be by picking them out of individual stories and then comparing them to reach more general conclusions. This is particularly helpful with a big and complex event like the Cold War.

- Put the students into mixed ability groups – consider reading age and prior attainment. The key individuals on the board are in order of ascending difficulty to help you further differentiate.

- Give each student in the group a number from one to five; one is the easiest and five is the hardest.

- The numbers correspond to the headings on Slide 8. Instruct the students to work in silence and underline the relevant evidence in their story for their headings on the board. They should then re-read what they've underlined to check that it is relevant to a foundation of the Cold War.

- Use Slide 10 to match up the description of what they've underlined to a name for their foundation.

- This should then lead on to a discussion in their group about which foundation was most important in creating or sustaining the Cold War from the perspective of their character. Each person in the group should be able to contribute, as they have each focused on a different foundation. The outcome of the task will be a ranked list of the foundations, with at least one sentence of overall justification (if students are working well, they can justify the importance of each ranking).

- Plenary: Groups share their initial judgements, with justification.

Lesson 2: This lesson focuses on comparing the information from the different stories to reach some initial conclusions about the foundations and the Cold War in general.

- Recap the names of the foundations using the recap quiz on the board – answers on Slide 2.
- Students then quickly re-read their stories to remind them of their justifications.
- They should then be put into mixed groups – these should have one person from each of the key figures' groups but be of mixed ability.
- Students then need to discuss each of the foundations in turn and debate their relative importance. This should result in a clear written judgement for each one – model the first one from the front (give students a copy to stick in their books) and question the students in order to write a class answer for the second. This could be printed out and given out next lesson to avoid copying time.
- The final three should then be written by students in their groups. This should provide a stronger overall picture of the different people involved in the Cold War and how the foundations might interact.
- Plenary: Link the lesson forward to how they're going to judge the changing nature of the Cold War. Then ask them to use what they've learned so far to write their own definition of the Cold War in bullet-point form, using the cues on the board. This can be marked or used as an exit ticket to see whether any re-teaching is needed in the following lesson.

Dean Acheson

Dean Acheson trained as a lawyer and worked for the US government during the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War. He helped to decide a lot of the USA's reactions to the USSR and played an important role in increasing tensions between the two countries. He came to strongly believe that the USSR were trying to gain world domination, and this influenced his views on communism for the rest of his life.

During the Second World War:

Acheson came from a wealthy family – attending private school and Yale University, where he achieved good grades despite having a reputation for partying. He qualified as a lawyer before joining the US Treasury Department in 1941. Here, he helped lend money to the UK during the war and to decide on some important international agreements. During this time, he was focused on defeating Nazi Germany, and was clearly quite supportive of the USSR. He agreed to the USA funding the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which gave a lot of money to countries under communist influence. In 1946, he also wrote a report that suggested that America should give up its nuclear weapons and that all nuclear material should be controlled by an international organisation.

Turning against communism:

After 1946, however, Acheson's views on communism began to change. The USSR, under Stalin's leadership, began to take over more territory in Eastern Europe and Asia, and Acheson believed that this was a sign that the USSR wanted to control the world. This would be a threat to the USA's political interests, as the USA would have more enemies, but communism also went against the ideas of capitalism – Acheson saw this as a threat similar to the Nazis. Acheson therefore began to advise President Truman that he needed to stand up to communism.

The Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan:

In 1947, Acheson wrote a speech for President Truman that persuaded the US Congress (parliament) that the USSR were attempting to expand into Europe, Africa and Asia, and that the USA needed to invest money and resources to 'support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation (control)'. This made it clear to the USSR that the USA was willing to use force to stop them from expanding – making the tone of their relationship much more aggressive. This was followed by the Marshall Plan – designed by Acheson – which gave US money to countries to help them rebuild after the Second World War. The way that it was organised made it very difficult for communist countries to access the money, further damaging relations with the USSR.

NATO, China and the atomic bomb:

In 1949, Acheson signed a new military treaty between the USA and European countries to protect against Soviet expansion – this was called the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and it

helped to clearly define the two sides in the Cold War. Despite this new treaty, America suffered some major setbacks in 1949: China, the country with the largest population on earth, became communist, and the USSR successfully tested its first nuclear weapon. This led to major criticism of Acheson by other politicians – mainly Joseph McCarthy, who called Acheson 'a pompous diplomat in striped pants' and said that he was soft on communism. This was made worse when communist North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950, leading to the USA having to send troops in. In 1953, President Truman stepped down from the presidency and Acheson lost his job.

Later influence:

After losing his government job, Acheson went back to working as a lawyer, but continued to advise presidents behind the scenes. He advised President Kennedy when the USSR sent nuclear missiles to Cuba, and President Johnson about the Vietnam War – in both cases advising the most extreme response against the USSR. He died in 1971 of a stroke.

Rudi Dutschke

Rudi Dutschke was an unusual figure in the Cold War – he grew up in East Germany and moved to the West, but disagreed with – and protested against – both systems. He generally believed that the people of a country should have more power and influence over their governments, which he felt were using the excuse of the Cold War to take more power for themselves.

Changing opinions:

Dutschke was born in 1940, and grew up in communist East Germany (the GDR) after the Second World War. He had a communist education and became a member of various communist youth organisations – these were supposed to turn the population into loyal communists. However, in 1956, something happened that changed Rudi's views: the USSR sent troops into Hungary, another communist country, and used violence to crush an uprising there. Ordinary people who resisted were shot. The USSR had taken over Hungary after the Second World War partly because they were afraid of being invaded from Europe by Britain and America, but also – they said – to improve life there. The protests and the Soviet response proved that the Soviets were involved more for selfish reasons. As a result of this, countries in the West criticised the USSR, and Rudi began to campaign for more democracy in the GDR.

Student activism:

Dutschke continued in his education in the GDR, where university and training was free: he gained his first degree and became an apprentice industrial clerk. However, when he refused to join the East German army (and convinced other students to refuse as well), he was stopped by the government from going back to university to get a further degree.

Move to the West:

In 1961, Dutschke decided to escape the troubles of the East by moving to West Berlin, and was lucky to make his escape the day before the Berlin Wall was built. This was built between East and West Berlin to stop people moving to the West to escape the bad living conditions under communism. After his move, Rudi began to study sociology and philosophy at the Free University of Berlin, but he decided that he did not fully agree with the capitalist system in the West either. He therefore joined a socialist student group, the SDS, in 1965, and began to campaign against the Vietnam War – they said that capitalist countries were using the Cold War as an excuse to attack less-developed nations and expand their empires.

Growing anger:

By 1967, Rudi had decided that the students in West Germany should join with people from around the world who had recently become independent from European empires, and create fairness and equality by spreading communism and democracy. They believed that tensions in the Cold War could be reduced if the USSR and USA stopped trying to control other countries around

the world. The students were also worried that democracy wouldn't survive in Germany because of the presence of former Nazis in their government and because of a proposed new law that could give the government special powers in an emergency. The protests that he and his fellow students were involved in caused a strong backlash from the German police: in 1967, one of his fellow students, Benno Ohnesorg, was killed. Some students began to use terrorist bombings and shootings to gain revenge; however, Dutschke preferred to challenge the problem over the long term by getting students into positions of power in Germany society. He called this the 'long march through the institutions'.

Leaving Germany:

In 1968, while Dutschke was involved in an anti-government protest in Berlin, he was shot in the head by an anti-communist protestor, Joseph Bachmann. Bachmann was angry about Dutschke's communist beliefs, which he believed were betraying West Germany and their American and British allies. This demonstrates the splits in society at the time and the difficulty of getting people to respect the view of the other side in the Cold War. Dutschke survived the shooting and escaped to Britain with his wife and children, and was granted a place at the University of Cambridge in 1969 to finish his degree. However, in 1971, the Conservative government decided that Dutschke was a dangerous influence in Britain and expelled him from the country. He was granted a job at a university in Denmark, where he worked as a lecturer.

Revolutionary activity and death:

During his time working in Denmark, Dutschke continued his revolutionary activities, but this time on a larger scale. He supported protests against the building of nuclear power plants in Germany (a lot of his ideas eventually became the basis of the German Green Party), and worked with revolutionaries in Eastern Europe who were trying to overthrow Soviet control there. This made the Soviets work harder to use force to keep control over Eastern Europe, which was supposed to protect them from invasion. Dutschke died as a result of the brain damage that he suffered when he was shot in the head, which caused him to develop epilepsy. In 1979, he had an epileptic fit in the bath and drowned.

Joseph McCarthy

Joseph McCarthy was an American politician who was elected to the US Senate in 1947. During the early years of the Cold War, he became famous for accusing US government officials of being communists. By putting these people on trial, he created a strong sense of fear and paranoia, known as 'McCarthyism'.

Background:

Joseph McCarthy was born to a Catholic farming family in Wisconsin in 1908. He left school at 14, but returned to education to qualify as a lawyer, eventually becoming the youngest state circuit judge in Wisconsin.

The Second World War – secrets and lies:

When the USA entered the Second World War in 1941, McCarthy was quick to join up, becoming a Marine in 1942. Despite being an officer with a desk job, he volunteered to fly 12 combat missions as a tail-gunner. However, these actions were undermined by the lies he told about them afterwards, which he seems to have done to help his political career. McCarthy later said that he had flown 32 missions so that he could get the Distinguished Flying Cross medal; he also received a letter of commendation from his commander, but he did this by hiding it in a pile of paperwork for his superior to sign! He also broke his leg during the war, claiming that it was a war wound from a plane crash – actually, it was the result of getting drunk and falling over during a party on board a ship!

Election to the Senate:

When McCarthy returned from the war, he started a political career to become elected to the US Senate (part of the US parliament – Congress). Here, he lied about his war record, calling himself 'Tail-Gunner Joe' and accusing his opponent of avoiding fighting in the war and making profits from the war whilst other men were off fighting. He narrowly won the election but did not have a very big impact during his first term as a Senator; he was voted by the press as the 'Worst US Senator' in 1950. McCarthy was up for re-election in 1952 and, because he was so worried about losing the election, he needed to do something to gain publicity.

Fear and paranoia:

By 1950, many Americans felt that the Cold War was going badly. In 1949, the Soviets had tested their first nuclear weapon, giving them equal firepower to the USA. In the same year, China became communist – the country with the largest population in the world. This was followed in 1950 with the invasion of South Korea by communist North Korea, with the forces of the South almost being completely defeated until the US military became involved. To many people it looked like there was an organised worldwide communist takeover, and that America was losing the Cold War. This helped McCarthy in two ways: the first was that the Director of the FBI, J Edgar Hoover,

was angry with President Truman, who had refused to arrest communist suspects in America at the outbreak of the Korean War. This led Hoover to look for someone who could increase fear of communism in the USA, to put pressure on Truman. The second way it helped McCarthy was that people were looking for an explanation as to why the USA had gone from being more powerful to less powerful than the USSR.

Making accusations:

In February 1950, McCarthy made a speech to a women's club in West Virginia, in which he claimed that the US government had been infiltrated by communists – 205 of them. This number was actually taken from a report published in 1946, and most of these people had already been dealt with. However, it gained McCarthy massive publicity – but why were the American people so easily convinced? Aside from the worries about a worldwide communist takeover, there had also been two high-profile cases of spies inside the US government: one was Alger Hiss, accused of being a Soviet spy, and the other was the Rosenbergs – a husband and wife who gave information from the US nuclear weapons programme to the Soviets. McCarthy was called to give a speech to the Senate – he spoke for five hours and targeted 81 people whom he thought were of particular concern.

McCarthyism:

Over the next four years, McCarthy's accusations had a significant impact on politics in America: he helped to run the Tydings committee, which was set up to investigate suspected communists; he criticised President Truman for being soft on communists; and he gained Republican party supporters. Many people's careers were ruined after being accused of being communists, and paranoia grew in America that there would be a communist takeover. However, in 1953, McCarthy's aggressive tactics and decision to investigate the army led to a backlash, in both the media and the government. In 1954, he was sacked from his position on his committee and the Senate voted to 'censure' him – to criticise his methods.

McCarthy's impact and death:

Whilst McCarthy lost his position of power and influence after 1954, he had a big impact on American politics at home and abroad. At home he made many more Americans strongly anti-communist. Abroad, America's allies became afraid that their extreme attitude towards communism might make war more likely and the USSR became more afraid of American attacks – this made the Cold War worse. McCarthy himself struggled with alcoholism and died in 1957.

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov

Molotov was a leading Soviet politician from 1921 and played a key role in the lead-up to the Second World War, its key events and its outcome. He was deeply suspicious of the Western countries and therefore wanted to put Soviet interests first. He played an important role in the beginning of the Cold War, until Stalin turned against him in 1949. The Molotov cocktail is named after him.

Molotov and the revolution:

Molotov was born in 1890 and was part of the communist revolution in Russia of 1917, as a member of the Bolshevik party. The revolution led to the creation of a communist dictatorship, creating an empire called the USSR (United Soviet of Socialist Republics). During these years, Molotov developed a very negative attitude towards the Western capitalist countries. A key reason for his anger was because they sent armies to Russia after 1917 to try to crush the communist revolution there; people in the West were shocked and scared by the revolution, as they didn't like the ideas of communism – especially the equal sharing out of property. This got relations between the USSR and the West off to a very bad start.

Molotov and Stalin:

When Stalin became leader of the USSR after 1924, Molotov, as his friend, gained much more power. He assisted Stalin with the murder of millions of Soviets whom Stalin believed were plotting against him. However, his main role was in foreign affairs. By 1939, tension in Europe was high: Hitler was expanding and Stalin believed that Britain and France could not be relied upon to stop him. Molotov was put in charge of the USSR's relations with other countries in 1939. One of his first acts was to negotiate an agreement with Hitler – the Nazi–Soviet Pact (or Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact). This agreed that the USSR and Germany should not go to war with each other, with a secret part of the pact agreeing to split Poland between them. This gave Hitler the confidence to invade Poland, triggering the Second World War. Many people across Europe therefore placed some of the blame for the Second World War on Soviet foreign policy.

Alliance with the West:

When Hitler betrayed the Soviets in June 1941, by invading the USSR, it was Molotov who made the radio broadcast to the Soviet people, telling them what had happened. He also took a risky flight to the UK to negotiate an alliance with Britain, which was followed by an alliance with the USA in 1942. Towards the end of the Second World War, Stalin and Molotov became increasingly frustrated by what they saw as their new allies' unwillingness to actually fight against the Nazis in Europe, whilst the Soviets were losing millions of soldiers due to the Nazi invasion of the USSR.

The end of the Second World War:

As it became clear that the Allies were going to win the Second World War, decisions had to be made about what was going to happen after the war. Molotov was vitally important in this – he attended important conferences (meetings between the leaders) at places like Tehran (1943), Yalta (1945) and Potsdam (1945). He was a strong believer both in maintaining Soviet security and that communism was a better system than capitalism. Consequently, he strongly criticised the US after the Second World War, saying that they were trying to take over Europe. He also increased Soviet control over Eastern Europe to protect it from invasion.

Loss of influence:

After 1949, Stalin began to turn against Molotov, and he lost his position of influence. It looked like he might regain power after Stalin's death, but he was defeated in a power struggle by Khrushchev and went into semi-retirement.

Andrei Sakharov

Andrei Sakharov was an award-winning nuclear physicist from the USSR. He was part of the Soviet team who built their hydrogen bomb (a very powerful nuclear weapon) so that they could match the USA. By the 1960s, Sakharov turned against the idea of nuclear weapons and wanted the USA and USSR to work together to bring peace – his actions made him a criminal in the USSR, although he was also granted the Nobel Peace Prize.

Developing as a physicist:

From an early age, Sakharov was seen as a strong student. His education was disrupted during the Second World War, when he helped the war effort by spending time as a forester and then working in a factory, trying to fix machinery and increase efficiency. After the war, he began to write scientific papers, which brought him to the attention of the Soviet government. He was recruited into the team created by Stalin to develop nuclear weapons in 1948.

Building the bomb:

To begin with, Sakharov supported the building of nuclear weapons. His country had been devastated during the Second World War – over 20 million people died (more than the British Empire, Germany, France and America combined). The Soviet people were therefore desperate to avoid another war and thought that nuclear weapons would help this. The Soviets came to see America as their biggest threat, partly because they already had nuclear weapons; if the Soviets had them too then neither side would attack because they wouldn't want to risk a devastating nuclear war. Sakharov also believed that the ideas of equality, democracy and collaboration in communism were the best for the future of the world. He therefore helped the USSR to test their first bomb in 1949. The USA were shocked and angered by this development. Sakharov's role in creating the bomb, as well as other work developing nuclear reactors, led him to win many awards in the USSR and be given lots of privileges by the government.

Changing opinions:

Knowing that the USA were developing more powerful nuclear weapons to try to outmatch the USSR, Sakharov moved on to developing more powerful hydrogen bombs in the 1950s. However, as it became clear that the testing of nuclear weapons caused dangerous radiation, Sakharov, in an article written in 1958, called the USSR and USA to stop testing. He also became angry with his own country when the number of people who had been killed under the Soviet leader Stalin became publicised. However, in 1961, he was persuaded by Khrushchev, the new, less harsh Soviet leader, to support the testing of the largest bomb ever detonated in world history – the Tsar bomb. After the test, it became clear to Sakharov that Khrushchev had tested the bomb mainly to put political pressure on the USA, rather than for scientific reasons. This helped to turn Sakharov even further against nuclear weapons and to lead him to support a nuclear Test Ban Treaty that was signed between the USA and USSR in 1963.

Opposing the Soviet government:

During the 1960s, Sakharov became more and more public in his criticism of the Soviet government and the Cold War. In 1968, he wrote an article called 'Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom', which strongly attacked the Cold War. Sakharov felt that the race to build more nuclear weapons was a massive waste of resources, and that capitalism and communism should come together to avoid war and create a more peaceful world. For a hero of the Soviet nuclear weapons programme to criticise the Soviet government was massively embarrassing. He lost his awards and privileges and was removed from his roles in the weapons programmes.

Political opposition:

By the 1970s, Sakharov turned completely against communism – his treatment by the government made him realise the violence and repression that was part of the USSR. He wrote articles calling for human rights for the Soviet people and, despite being attacked by the Soviet media, was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975. In 1979, the Soviet government invaded Afghanistan, which made Sakharov very angry, causing him to protest. This was the final straw for the Soviet government, who arrested him and exiled him to a remote part of Russia with his wife. Here, he was kept away from friends and family, spied on and intimidated – the Soviet secret police confiscated three drafts of his autobiography, meaning that he had to rewrite the 1,000 pages from scratch three times!

The end of the USSR:

In 1985, a new leader came to power in the USSR: Mikhail Gorbachev. He wanted to stop using force and propaganda against the Soviet people and, in 1987, allowed Sakharov to return from exile. Here, Sakharov became the leader of the opposition in the newly formed Soviet parliament, calling for an end to communist party control. Unfortunately, he died in December 1989, just weeks before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

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