

A missed opportunity for peace

Source: CVCE.

Copyright: (c) CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/a_missed_opportunity_for_peace-en-6946a559-aea9-4a3d-9e38-9coe644af574.html

Last updated: 07/07/2016



A missed opportunity for peace

The Second World War completely changed the face of the world. The toll in both human and material terms was the heaviest that mankind had ever known. Europe was on its knees; it was in ruins and reduced to total confusion: factories and transport links had been destroyed, traditional trade links had been cut off and shortages in raw materials and foodstuffs were prevalent.

Even before the Axis countries surrendered, the three Great Powers — the United States, the British and the Russians — got together to address the question of how to organise the world after the war. The Teheran Conference that ran from 28 November to 2 December 1943 was the first summit meeting between Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Franklin D. Roosevelt. It set out the major guidelines for post-war international politics. The leaders discussed the Normandy invasion, which at that point was scheduled to take place on 1 May 1944, as well as the fate of Germany and its possible dismemberment and how the world should be organised after the conflict. They decided to entrust the study of the German question to a European Consultative Commission. Two other Allied conferences were subsequently held, one in Yalta (from 4 to 11 February 1945) and the other in Potsdam (from 17 July to 2 August 1945).

However, the close wartime alliance soon gave way to a climate of mistrust. At the peace conferences, the three Great Powers quickly realised that the Western and Soviet spheres were divided by increasingly divergent views. Age-old antagonisms that had been buried during the war resurfaced, and the Allied powers were unable to reach agreement on a peace treaty.