

0. POST-WAR BERLIN - Story Preface

1. A CHANGE IN LEADERS

2. POTSDAM SHOCK - CHURCHILL VOTED OUT

3. HITLER GETS KNOWN

4. A NEW LEADER IN BERLIN

5. TERROR ACROSS EUROPE

6. LAND and AIR WAR in BERLIN

7. BERLIN FALLS

8. TO POTSDAM

9. POST-WAR BERLIN

10. DECISIONS and CONSEQUENCES

11. A DIVIDED CITY

12. TEAR DOWN THIS WALL!



Sgt. A. Wilkes, from the UK's No 5 Army Film & Photographic Unit, took this picture on the 3rd of July, 1945. At the time, Berlin was under Allied occupation. The Imperial War Museum describes this photo as follows: "German women doing their washing at a cold water hydrant in a Berlin street, a knocked out German scout car stands beside them." Imperial War Museum photo BU 8609. Copyright expired; Public Domain.

Stalin, meanwhile, was nowhere to be seen.

Since the conference was scheduled to begin on the 16th of July, Churchill (who had once rhetorically asked "What kind of a people do they [the Axis Powers] think we are?!") and Truman (who was new at his job) independently used their extra time to inspect Berlin.

What they found, two months after the final battle for Europe's fourth-largest city, was - to use words from Truman's diary - an "absolute ruin."

- With Secretary of State James Byrnes and Fleet Admiral William Leahy, Truman sees the remains of Hitler's Chancellory.

- During the same tour, he and his entourage pass through Wilhelmstrasse (Wilhelm Street).

Saddened by what he saw, the President wrote (scroll down 25%):

Never did I see a more sorrowful sight, nor witness retribution to the nth degree. . . It is the Golden Rule in reverse - and it is not an uplifting sight. What a pity that the human animal is not able to put his moral thinking into practice! . . . I hope for some sort of peace - but I fear that machines are ahead of morals by some centuries and when morals catch up perhaps there'll be no reason for any of it.

The *Log of the President's Trip to the Berlin Conference* contains information about the people he saw during his tour of the devastated city:

But much more distressing than the ruined buildings was the long, never-ending procession of old men, women and children along the autobahn and the country roads. Wandering aimlessly and probably without hope, they clutter the roads carrying their small children and pushing or pulling their slender belongings. In this two hour drive we saw evidence of a great world tragedy - the beginning of the disintegration of a highly cultured and proud people. (President's Log, 16 July 1945 entry.)

The following day, unannounced, Stalin showed up. In his diary, Truman noted:

...I looked up from the desk and there stood Stalin in the doorway.

The President liked "Mr. Russia" (as he called him privately). He thought they could work together. Later, he observed a few different things about the man (the English translation of the poster is "Beloved Stalin - The People's Happiness") whom Roosevelt called "Uncle Joe."

Discussions about Germany's future - and that of the surrounding countries - began in earnest. Truman believed he could trust the Soviet leader, but the man born Josif Vissarionovich Djugashvili didn't change his name to Stalin - meaning "the Man of Steel" - without good reason. He liked living up to expectations.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/POST-WAR-BERLIN-Victory-in-Europe-End-of-WWII>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/POST-WAR-BERLIN-Victory-in-Europe-End-of-WWII>

Questions 2 Ponder

What Kind of People Do They Think We Are?

At the beginning of WWII, Winston Churchill famously asked a rhetorical question about the Axis countries and their leaders: "What kind of people do they think we are?"

Churchill's question applies to many situations, across the globe and throughout history. What makes leaders misjudge both people in their own country and in other nations?

If leaders had more insight into the way people actually are, would the world have fewer wars and conflicts? Explain your answer.

Media Stream



Remains of Hitler's Chancellory in Berlin

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Remains-of-Hitler-s-Chancellory-in-Berlin>



Wilhelmstrasse - WWII Damage in Berlin

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Wilhelmstrasse-WWII-Damage-in-Berlin>



Stalin Joins the Conference

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Stalin-Joins-the-Conference>



Truman and Stalin at Potsdam

The image depicted above, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Truman-and-Stalin-at-Potsdam>



Soviet Poster of Stalin

Image online, courtesy the History Help blog site.

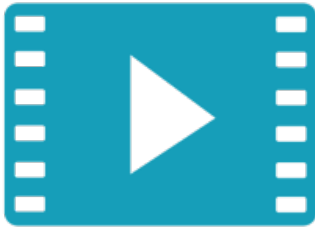
PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Soviet-Poster-of-Stalin>



POST-WAR BERLIN

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/POST-WAR-BERLIN>



Churchill: "What Kind of a People Do They Think We Are?"

December 26, 1941 speech of Winston Churchill to a joint session of the U.S. Congress. Clip online, courtesy Library of Congress.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Churchill-What-Kind-of-a-People-Do-They-Think-We-Are->