

Preparing for a Victory Parade (c. June 1945)

Abstract

In the middle of April 1945, the Red Army launched a massive offensive against the German capital of Berlin. Starting on April 25, the city was sealed off. On May 2, 1945, after the suicide of Adolf Hitler, the city surrendered unconditionally. The Germans sought to sign a separate peace with the Americans and the British but to continue fighting the Soviets. The Allies did not agree to this, however; they continued to insist on the unconditional surrender of the entire German Reich. This followed May 7-8, 1945.

The portraits of American President Harry S. Truman, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on display on Berlin's famous east-west axis symbolized Allied unity, which held until the end of the war. Starting on July 17, 1945, the Big Three met for negotiations at Potsdam, where they sought to devise an approach to dealing with the defeated German Reich and establishing a new European postwar order. These negotiations, however, were overshadowed by massive political differences between, on the one hand, the Americans and the British (with the Labour Party's Clement Attlee replacing the Conservative Party's Winston Churchill in the midst of the conference) and the Soviets on the other. In subsequent months, these differences would only intensify.

Source



Source: Decoration for a victory parade with portraits of Truman, Stalin and Churchill. Erected on the east-west axis by Soviet soldiers. Photo: Nina von Jaanson.

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