

The Berlin Crisis



Aim:

To evaluate how the Berlin Crisis mad relations between USA & USSR worse and its consequences.

Europe was now clearly two POLITICAL and ECONOMIC camps



As agreed at Potsdam, Berlin, as well as Germany, would be divided into 4 zones



Figure 1.3 The post-war division of Germany into four parts: the Soviet, French, British and American sectors.

- Division was meant to be temporary but ended up lasting for years
- Split between Britain, France, USA and Berlin
- There were soldiers on the streets in Berlin
- Military checkpoints between each zone
- Soviet troops began holding up and searching road and rail into West Berlin



1945



1948



What has happened between 1945 and 1948

What did the leaders want to do with Germany?



- Wanted to help rebuild Germany and improve its economy which had been devastated by WW2
- Wanted a strong Germany to resist communist expansion West
- Wanted to remain Berlin to try and observe what was going on behind the 'Iron Curtain'



- Wanted to take as much material as possible back to help rebuild Soviet Union after WW2
- Wanted Germany to remain weak to avoid further German aggression
- Was worried that East Berlin would see the affluent lifestyles of Capitalism on the West



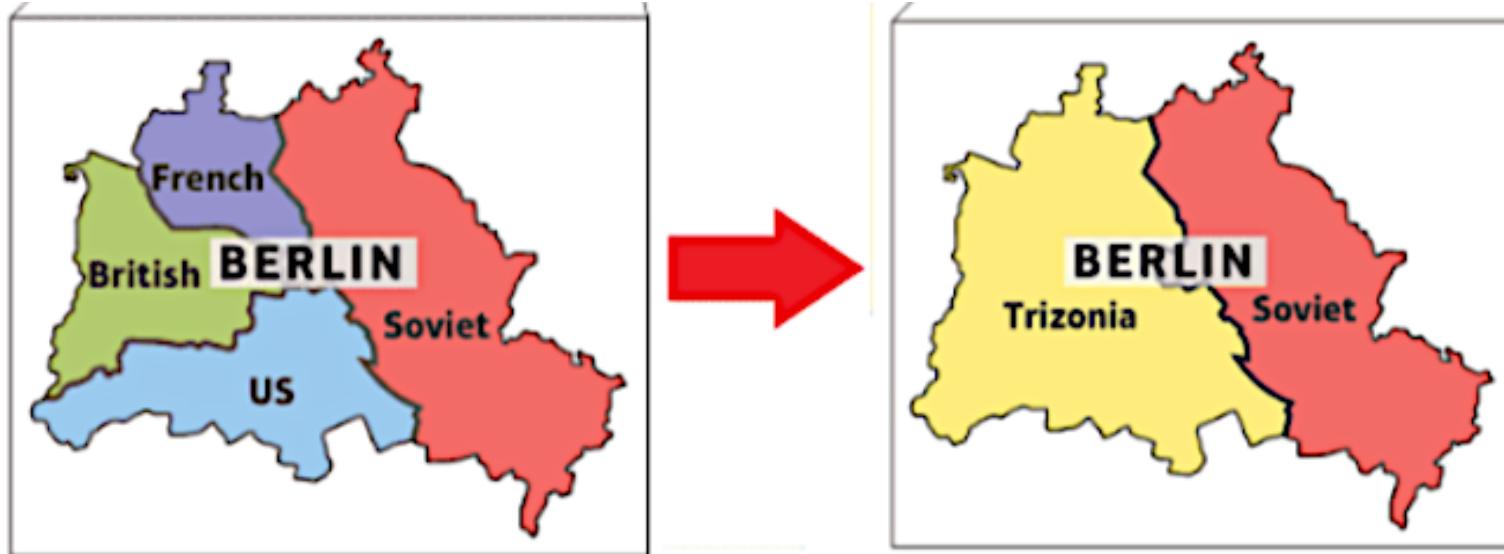
In December 1947, talks between the foreign ministers of each power broke down...

Soviet minister stormed out of the meeting!

The West unites:

- With the USSR no longer cooperating, the Western allies had to decide how to run their part of Germany
 - The British and USA had already combined their zones in 1947 into 'Bizonia'
-
- March 1948, French added their zone leading to 'Trizonia'
 - Western Zones received large quantities of Marshall aid

The West unites: The same happened in Berlin too!



- June 1948 – Trizonia created its own currency, the Deutschmark
- Stalin was furious because:
 - This new currency created a separate economic unit from the East, they'd agreed at Potsdam that the economy would be run as a whole
 - It had set up two Germanys – West and East

It has never been more clear, the West are ganging up on me and the Soviet Union. You disgust me, we agreed at Potsdam what would happen!

I know what you're thinking, the three of you together can develop "West" Germany and force the "East" into poverty

Mark my words, I won't just roll over, you want a fight, you got a fight! I will make all of Germany communist, you will see!



The Western Zones of Berlin are entirely surrounded by my Soviet Zone of Germany, this will be useful to me!

There just 2 agreed land routes and 2 air routes across the Soviet zone of Germany to Western-occupied Berlin

What is Stalin thinking? What advice would you give Stalin at this point to help him fight back?

Berlin Blockade!



Cold War Crisis 1: The Berlin Blockade

- June 1948 Stalin shut off the land routes across Soviet controlled Germany into Berlin



Why might Stalin think this was a good idea?

III show them a divided Germany won't work,
Trizonia won't be able to communicate with
Berlin (the capital) and the Berliners will soon
run out of food.

This will result in a massive propaganda win
against the West and they will have to give up all
of their zones in Berlin and I will control it all!



You are crazy Stalin, you know I have just
delivered my speech on defending the world
from Communism and I meant it! This is a
direct challenge and we're not backing down!





This really is a bit of a dilemma, I can talk a big talk, but I also know if we force supplies to Berlin along the closed *land* and rail routes it could be seen as an act of war which could lead to direct military confrontation, now he's showing signs of developing the bomb, maybe need to think more carefully?

What do you think USA should do?



Great idea, we can fly supplies into our zones in Berlin, the only way they could stop us is if they shot our planes out of the sky!

That would make him the aggressor which would be good for our propaganda against Communism, the evil animals we'd call them! I doubt Stalin would go that far, but, well, you never know!

Summarise in your books what the problem was and what Truman's solution was

You are an advisor to the Western Powers, consider what we know and create a mini report / memo on the options available.

| Options | Withdraw from Berlin | Supply Berlin by air | Drive through the blockade |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Advantages | | | |
| Disadvantages | | | |



The Berlin Airlift:



- Truman sent B-29 bombers to Britain (they could carry nuclear bombs). USSR was now within US firing range
- The airlift lasted 10 months; Coal, food and other necessities were flown into West Berlin.
- There was a real risk as no one knew if Stalin would shoot the planes down. USSR put weather balloons in awkward positions as well as flying planes across the air corridors.
- The West Berliners and Western troops built a new runway at the old airport, Berlin Tempelhof.
- Citizens helped unload the planes and hand out essential supplies
- 1000 tonnes of supplies flown in every day. British achieved a similar rate. January 1949 saw 170,000 tonnes of supplies sent
- Stalin offered West Berliners the chance to move to East Berlin, only 3% took up the offer.



West 1 – 0 East

12 May 1949, nearly a year later, the Soviets gave in and lifted the blockade. Berliners danced the night away in the streets

The airlift had worked with no Allied casualties (military or civilian)

West Berlin had survived

Stalin's attempt to win a propaganda victory over the Allies had backfired

The West had responded in a peaceful way to what now looked like an unwise and aggressive act by Stalin

After the Berlin blockade, it was clear that the division of Germany would now continue, the Western Allies moved quickly to create a separate West Germany

Write a mini narrative using the above information

Remember the linking words and the process words



Consequences...

What were the consequences of the Berlin Blockade?

West Germany: FRG (Federal Republic of Germany)



- 23 May 1949 – Just 3 days after the blockade, Trizonia becomes West Germany
- 14 August 1949 – West Germans were allowed to elect their own parliament called the Bundestag
- 15 September 1949 – First chancellor of the FRG elected (Konrad Adenauer)
- FRG's new capital was Bonn
- Three western zones of Berlin became known as West Berlin



East Germany: GDR (German Democratic Republic)



- October 1949 – GDR created
- Only communist bloc countries recognised it as a nation
- FRG (West Germany) refused to recognise it as a separate country until 1970s



Each German regarded their own state as the only real one!



NATO

North Atlantic Treaty
Organisation
April 1949

- **Stalin's threat to Berlin and the communist takeover in Czechoslovakia persuaded the West they needed a formal military alliance to protect them from the Soviet Union**
- **They also wanted to send Stalin a clear message they were determined to stand firm against communism**
- **Britain, France and 9 other Western countries joined NATO**

Agreements:

- If **any** member was attacked, **ALL** members would come to its assistance
- British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin encouraged US involvement saying Europe would welcome American influence and involvement.
- USA may get involved in direct defence of Western Europe and Truman Doctrine clearly offered assistance, this military alliance was well beyond that
- American military presence committed in Europe well into the future



Warsaw Pact

1955

- When FRG (West Germany) joined NATO in 1955, Stalin's fears increased. There was now an armed and powerful Germany on the borders of Soviet controlled Eastern Europe.
- An equivalent communist military alliance was formed – Warsaw Pact
- Members were the “Eastern Bloc” - Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and the GDR (East Germany).
- Leadership was entirely USSR

There was now NO doubt that Europe was TWO EUROPES. One protected by USA and one led by USSR.

Cold War has officially started

Berlin Blockade videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZidBq8QS-g>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akMRIgFOhDE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cH-GVf9flo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jy3TKF4wSg>

Good Documentary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_nHdB1vJNsg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWw20-LbOmE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bs-ovbMt_Xo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEVTh32CNWM>

Exam-style question, Section A

Explain **two** of the following:

- the importance of the Truman Doctrine for the development of the Cold War in the years 1947–55
- the importance of the Berlin Blockade for the future of Germany
- the importance of the formation of NATO for relations between the USA and the Soviet Union.

16 marks

Exam tip

Remember that this question is not asking for a description of an event or policy. It is asking why that event or policy was important. What difference did it make? Also, remember to focus on the second part of each bullet point. So, for the second bullet point, focus on the 'future of Germany'. Don't waste time discussing, for example, how the Berlin Blockade affected relations between the USA and the Soviet Union.

Summary

- In the Truman Doctrine, Truman promised to defend democratic countries against communism.
- George Marshall, the US secretary of state, promised massive aid to Europe, launching the Marshall Plan.
- Western European countries welcomed the Marshall Plan, but Soviet-controlled countries were not allowed to accept aid. The Soviet Union set up Cominform and Comecon as rivals to the Marshall Plan.
- West Berlin was blockaded by the Soviet Union, Britain and the USA organised a successful airlift to rescue the city.
- The USA agreed to keep their troops in Europe and, with Britain's encouragement, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was formed.
- The Western-controlled areas of Germany were merged to form Trizonia, which eventually became the Federal Republic of Germany. The Soviet zone became the German Democratic Republic.
- The Soviet Union created a defensive military alliance for the communist countries of Eastern Europe, the Warsaw Pact, in May 1955.

Checkpoint

Strengthen

S1 What was the Truman Doctrine?

S2 What was the role of Comecon?

S3 Describe the events of the Berlin Airlift.

Challenge

C1 How did the Marshall Plan support the ideas of the Truman Doctrine?

C2 Why did Stalin create Cominform and Comecon?

C3 In what way was the USA's signing of the NATO treaty a significant break with the past?

How confident do you feel about your answers to these questions? If you feel unsure, re-read the section then try again.