

# Berlin Crisis 2: 1958-63



**Aim:** To understand why there was another Berlin crisis, how it was dealt with and how it affected international relations

## What was the refugee problem in Berlin, 1958?

- Thanks to Marshall Aid, West Germany became very prosperous where most people enjoyed a high standard of living with cheaper consumer goods
- East Germany received much less aid from Comecon leading to a much lower standard of living and shortages of basic goods.
- Communism was becoming increasingly unpopular especially with the restrictions on what citizens in the East could say and do.
- Citizens were constantly monitored by the secret police
- 1953 – A riot took place, put down by Soviet force



**It was very easy to move West, you just went to West Berlin then you could travel to anywhere in West Germany.**

**By 1958 – 4 million (out of c.17 million) East Germans had crossed to the West, significantly undermining communism...**



## Who went and why?

# Engineers

Better pay

Better opportunities

# Intelligencia

Better opportunities

*Entire Maths department from  
Leipzig University on 1 day!*

*Students*



# Teachers

Better pay

# Craftsmen

Better pay

Better opportunities

# Technicians

Better pay

Better opportunities



What the was the significance of these types of people leaving East Berlin / Germany?

- Khrushchev tried to persuade the West to just leave Berlin accusing them of using it as a base for espionage!
- He viewed Berlin as a "fishbone in his throat"
- Every person that moved West was a propaganda disaster for communism

## Khrushchev's Berlin Ultimatum



November 1958, Khrushchev demanded the Western countries officially recognise East Germany as an independent country – they refused

He then demanded on 27 November:

- Berlin should be demilitarised and Western troops withdrawn
- Berlin should become a free city (independent government but controlled by Soviets)

The West were given 6 months otherwise Khrushchev would hand over control of all routes into Berlin to the East German government.

Khrushchev knew this would force the West to have to communicate with the East German government, therefore accepting they were legitimate!

## What was the impact of Berlin Ultimatum on International Relations?

### The West's view:

- The West was outraged by Khrushchev's demands seeing it as ANOTHER attempt by the Soviet Union trying to spread communism
- West didn't want this to lead to war

### The East's view:

- Khrushchev saw it as essential to stop the flood of skilled citizens leaving from East Germany
- East didn't want this to lead to war

How much were both sides spending on Arms in 1958?

To avoid war, there were a series of summits to hopefully solve the problem...

Look at pages 43 - 44

Write a report for each meeting, your report should include:

- What went well
- What did not go well
- Outcome of the summit
- What might have made the summit more successful

<b>Summit / Date</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Impact on US- USSR relations</b>
			Success rating 1-5:	
			Success rating 1-5:	
			Success rating 1-5:	
			Success rating 1-5:	

# Consequences of the Berlin Ultimatum ... 3 Summit meetings 1959-61

## 1. Geneva, May 1959

- Held in neutral Switzerland
- Both sides put forward proposals for how Berlin should be governed
- No agreement was reached
- Eisenhower invited Khrushchev to USA for further talks

Success rating: 1 – Great success > 5 – Disaster for international relations

## 2. Camp David, September 1959

- Eisenhower & Khrushchev met face to face for the first time
- Still no agreement about a way forward
- Soviets did agree to withdraw the Berlin Ultimatum
- Appeared to establish better relations
- Further talks would be held in Paris in a years time

Success rating: 1 – Great success > 5 – Disaster for international relations

## 3. Paris, May 1960

- As they prepared for the Paris summit, Soviets announced that they had shot down an American U-2 Spy-plane as it flew over the Soviet Union
- Eisenhower claimed it was a weather plane blown off course
- Soviets interrogated the pilot who admitted to being on a spy mission
- Eisenhower refused to apologise saying spying was unavoidable
- Khrushchev walked out ending the summit with no decisions being made

Success rating: 1 – Great success > 5 – Disaster for international relations



## January 1961

- JFK became President of USA
- Was young and inexperienced
- Re-asserted the **Truman Doctrine** in his inauguration speech
- Continued a policy of building up US military forces
- Hoped to resolve difficulties with Soviet Union through diplomacy



What are your thoughts about this incredible photograph?

# Consequences of the Berlin Ultimatum ... 3 Summit meetings 1959-61

## 4. Vienna, June 1961

- Khrushchev thought he could take advantage of JFK's limited experience in foreign affairs
- Kennedy was reeling from the failed Bay of Pigs invasion
- Khrushchev renewed the Berlin Ultimatum of 1958
- Kennedy was determined not to appear weak, he refused to make any concessions
- Meeting ended with no final decision being made on Berlin
- Personal relationship between Khrushchev and JFK became very strained
- Kennedy decided to increase spending on US armed forces by \$3.5 billion, the message was USA would fight for Berlin
- Khrushchev increased Soviet spending by more than 30%

Success rating: 1 – Great success > 5 – Disaster for international relations

*We cannot and will not permit the communists to drive us out of Berlin, either gradually or by force. There is peace in Berlin today. The source of trouble and tension is Moscow, not Berlin. We seek peace but we shall not surrender!*



*If your troops try to force their way to Berlin, we will oppose them by force. War is bound to go thermonuclear, and though you and I may survive, all your European allies will be completely destroyed!*

To German press who he thought were hissing and booing him upon announcing the cancellation of the Paris summit  
*You fascist bastards are the kind we did not finish off at Stalingrad. We hit you so hard that we put you 10 feet under right away. If you boo us and attack us again, look out! We will hit you so hard there wont be a squeal out of you!*



What can you learn about JFK from this quote?  
What can you learn about Khrushchev from these quotes?  
What can you learn about tensions from these quotes?