

WARM UP

- 1** What do you know about the Cold War?
Who was it between?
Which nations were involved?

THE COLD WAR AND MCCARTHYISM

Berlin – a city divided between East and West

One place which can be said to represent the division between East and West, communism and democracy, the stand-off between the USA and the USSR with their atomic weapons, is the city of Berlin during the Cold War.

At the end of World War II, Berlin was divided into four zones and the Russians, Americans, British and French each controlled one zone. Allies during the war because of necessity, the Communist Soviet Union had little in common with the other three countries and these differences soon led to the Russians blocking road, rail and waterway access to Berlin in an attempt to assume control over the city and force the Allies to leave. The response from the Allies was to start organising airlifts to keep

their sectors supplied with food and fuel. The blockade by the Russians lasted from 24th June 1948 until 11th May 1949. West Berlin then became part of the German Federal Republic, and East Berlin part of the German Democratic Republic.

Over the next decade tensions increased and to stop the increasing numbers of East Germans escaping to the West, in the early hours of 13th August 1961 East German and Russian workers started to build a wall, first of wire and then of concrete, which completely separated West Berlin from the rest of the city. The Berlin Wall, about 4 m high and 111 kms long, was to symbolise this separation and distance between the two superpowers, East and West, for nearly 30 years until its fall in 1989 and the end of the Cold War.



MORE ABOUT...

In the middle of the Cold War, on 24th June 1963, US President John F. Kennedy visited West Berlin and gave his famous 'Ich bin ein Berliner' speech, giving a message of solidarity to the city and its inhabitants. Hundreds of thousands of people greeted the President on his arrival and listened to the speech, in which, according to some, Kennedy actually said he was a jam doughnut instead of a Berliner.



READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the text and answer these questions.

- 1 What was the situation in Berlin at the end of the Second World War?
- 2 Why did the Russians organise a blockade?
- 3 What was the Allies' reaction?
- 4 When was the Berlin Wall constructed?
- 5 What did it represent?
- 6 When did it collapse?



Joseph McCarthy and McCarthyism

Even before the Second World War, there had been a lot of suspicion and paranoia of communism within the United States. During the Cold War this growing fear of communist infiltration in American society was exploited by US Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy, who accused everyone from trade union members to Hollywood stars of carrying out un-American activities or being communist agents.

Joseph McCarthy, born in Wisconsin in 1908, was elected to the US Senate for the first time in 1946. In 1950 he gave a speech during which he showed the audience a piece of paper with a list of the names of 205 supposed active communists working in the State Department. Hearing about these accusations, the American public was anxious for these communists to be identified and removed from power. McCarthyism, taken from the Senator's surname, is the term commonly applied to the anti-communist crusade which McCarthy started.

When McCarthy became the chairman of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, he had greater possibilities for his investigations. He used controversial techniques to identify and question alleged communist activists or sympathisers and often made accusations with

little evidence. Many of the accused were government employees, trade union activists and people in the entertainment industry like Hollywood actors and directors who, given that they were named publicly, had their careers and reputations ruined. Because it was legal to be a member of the Communist Party of the United States, McCarthy had to accuse people of subversion and while there were no convictions for subversion during McCarthy's investigations, many years later some of the people he questioned were actually identified as Communist agents.

McCarthy's downfall came when he made accusations against officers of the US Army. The hearings were televised between April and June 1954 and the general public was able to see McCarthy's brutal interrogation methods. Support for McCarthy quickly diminished and he was censured by the Senate for having abused his power as a senator. He was allowed to remain a Senator but no longer had any power or influence. McCarthy died at the age of 48 of hepatitis, probably caused by his alcoholism.

READING COMPREHENSION

3 Read the text and answer these questions.

- 1 Who was Joseph McCarthy?
- 2 What were his politics?
- 3 What were the first accusations he made?
- 4 Why do you think the American public believed him?
- 5 What other people did he go on to accuse? What were the foundations for his accusations?
- 6 How and why did the reaction of the American public change?