

THE BERLIN AIRLIFT



1948: American, British, and French sectors of Berlin created Deutsche Mark to be used in place of the Reichsmark Hitler and the Nazis had established during the WWII.



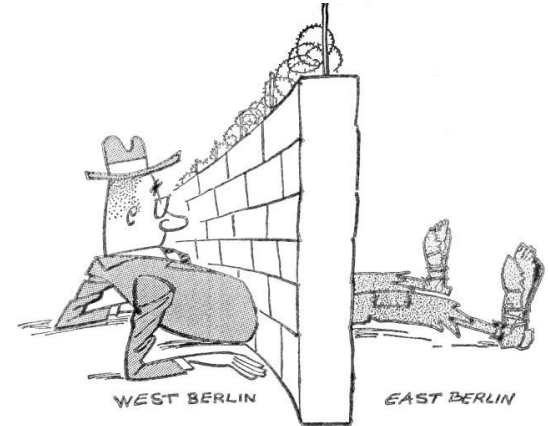
This change was one important factor that led the Soviet Union to close off the city of Berlin to western aid, food, supplies, electricity, etc.



1948: Soviet Union sought to force allied forces controlling Berlin to surrender to Soviet forces

- Berlin was completely in the Soviet Zone
- Soviets closed all rails and highways into the city
- Threatened to starve the city into submission

- Truman found himself in a difficult position:
 - To allow the Soviets to control the city of Berlin would destroy the Truman Doctrine and policy of containment
 - To use American military force to open the city might start World War III
- Soviets could not close the airways leading from West Germany to the Soviet Zone in East Germany
 - Allies could then fly supplies into Berlin
 - Truman viewed this as the only way to keep the city in Allied hands without sparking a major military conflict with the Soviets





“Operation Vittles”

- Operation Vittles
 - U.S. code name for the airlift
 - American & British pilots flew c. 277,000 flights
 - At time one every 1 to 3 minutes
 - Famous for dropping candy of crowds of children
 - German children called the flights
 - Rosinenbombers
 - “Raisin bombers”
 - “Friendly” cargo

- The Berlin Airlift ultimately proved to the Soviet Union it could not force Berlin into submission
 - Soviets eventually reopened the roads and railways into the city
 - This served as a victory for the West over the Soviet East
 - Also led many East Germans who viewed Americans with suspicion and hatred to now see them as friends and saviors