

Introduction

Material A

The second day I was in Berlin, Herr Berg took me to Tempelhof Airport to see the American planes in action. We joined a crowd gathered on the low hills encircling the airfield, which was loud with the droning whine of airplane engines. I craned my head back, and in flew a fat-bellied white plane with an American star and red and white stripes painted on its side. It swooped onto the runway, gliding to a stop. American soldiers dressed in green jumped out and began unloading box after box, a mountain of brown and white boxes, as the crowd on the hills cheered. Less than five minutes later, another plane shot in, pulling up parallel to the first. More soldiers jumped out; there were more boxes of food and more cheers. A few minutes later, another plane arrived. And another. Every five to ten minutes, a new plane landed and another one left. "Without the Americans, we would all die," said Herr Berg.

"That's right," a man standing beside us said. "First they destroyed us. Now they are keeping us alive." "They did what they had to do to win the war," said Herr Berg. "They stopped Hitler. They saved us from him. I don't blame them for that. They don't need to be doing this now, bringing us food like this. This is what I admire them for." As we rode the tram back to Herr Berg's apartment, I thought about what he had said and decided that I was even more determined, if that were possible, to live in America, a land that would reach out to save the lives of millions of people in a city of its enemies an ocean away.

(source: Schulze Tilli & Lorna Collier, Tilli's Story. My thoughts are free, 2005, 191.)

Material B



One of the pilots: Gail Halvorsen 1948 and some 35 years later.

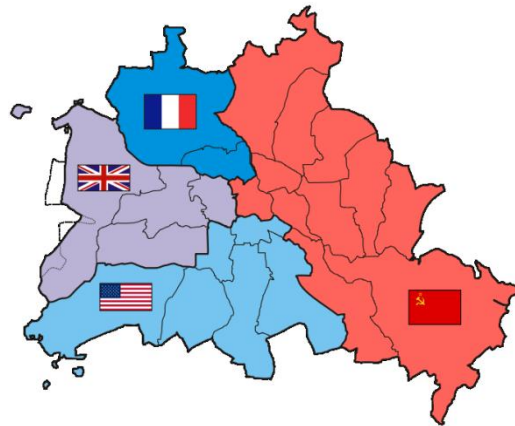
¹ Last flight.

The Berlin Airlift

Material C



Germany divided in four zones.



Berlin divided in four zones.

Material D

RUSSIAN EFFORTS TO DRIVE WESTERN POWERS FROM BERLIN *Berlin 73*
ARE A CRUCIAL CHALLENGE TO AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY SURRENDER
WOULD DELIVER TO RUSSIAN VENGEANCE TWO MILLION GERMANS WHO
HAVE DEFIED COMMUNIST TOTALITARIANISM. THERE ARE DISTURBING
RUMORS OF PLANS TO EVACUATE BERLIN BECAUSE OF RUSSIAN
BLOCKADE AGAINST GERMAN CIVILIAN SUPPLIES ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES
FOR THE GERMAN POPULATION CAN BE DELIVERED BY AIR AND IF
NECESSARY MUST BE AT WHATEVER COST. WE URGE YOU TO MAKE THIS
COUNTRY'S POSITION UNMISTAKABLE BY DECLARING THAT UNDER ALL
CIRCUMSTANCES SHORT OF WAR WE WILL REMAIN IN BERLIN AND
MAINTAIN SUPPLIES FOR THE CIVILIAN POPULATION NOTHING LESS
CAN ADEQUATELY REASSURE DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN GERMANY AND
ELSEWHERE THAT THIS COUNTRY WILL NOT DESERT THEM

Telegram of Alfred M. Bingham to Harry S. Truman on June 25, 1948.



1 Harry S. Truman describes the Russian blockade of Berlin - 1,46 min.mp3

Material E:

Material F:



Three air corridors for Operation Vittles.

August 1948, Berlin Airlift planes at Tempelhof Airport.



Soldiers loading bottles of milk into a plane.

Consequences of the Berlin Airlift

Material G



Sources:

Giangreco D.M. and Rorbert E. Griffin, *Airbridge to Berlin - The Berlin Crisis of 1948, its Origins and Aftermath*, 1988.

Rea, Tony and John Wright, *International Relations, 1914-1995*.

Roger G. Miller: *To Save a City: The Berlin Airlift 1948–1949*.

Schulze, Tilli and Lorna Collier, *Tilli's Story, My thoughts are free*, 2005.

Williamson, David, *Europe and the Cold War, 1945-91*.

www.trumanlibrary.org

WORKSHEET: The Berlin Airlift, 24th June 1948 – 12th May 1949 (27th August 1949²)

Introduction

- ✈ Describe what Tilli observes at Tempelhof (material A).
- ✈ According to Herr Berg, what was the reason for this kind of American help (material A)?
- ✈ How does this little scene influence Tilli's (she is about 14 years old) opinion on America (material A)?
- ✈ Look at material B: This is one of the pilots flying tons of material into West Berlin. What sort of impression do you get of this man?

The Berlin Airlift

- ✈ Look at the maps (material C) and work out what the problem of West Berlin's geographical situation was.

- ✈ Read the following excerpt and try to explain what all the steps taken in June 1948 meant for the Western zones and for West Berlin in particular.

Stalin and Truman saw Germany in a completely different light. Stalin wanted a weak Germany from which he took many reparations to rebuild his own country. For Truman, a strong Germany was important to rebuild Europe and to make it strong against the Soviet Union.

In June 1948 the Western Allies (USA, Britain, France) allowed the West Germans to work out their own democratic constitution for a West German state. In order to ensure a fast development of the economy the Western powers initiated a new currency, the Deutschmark, for the Western Zones, including West Berlin.

In response to the Western Deutschmark and fearing a powerful Germany once again, Stalin also introduced a new currency in his zones, the East Mark, and more importantly, at midnight on the 23rd of June he started to blockade all road, canal and train traffic to West Berlin as well as the electricity supply from the East to the West.

(sources: Williamson, David, Europe and the Cold War, 1945-91, and Rea, Tony and John Wright, International Relations 1914-1995.)

² Last flight.

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- ✈ According to a telegram dated June 25, 1948 (material D) from the chairman of the American Association for a Democratic Germany, Alfred M. Bingham, what does this blockade mean for the USA and for the Germans living in West Berlin? What measure is recommended?

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- ✈ Listen to Harry S. Truman (material E, 1.46min) commenting on the Russian blockade of Berlin. How would you describe Truman's feelings towards the Soviets?

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- ✈ Look at the map and material F and find out how the Allies managed to transport goods for more than two million people into West Berlin eleven months in a row.

➔ When Stalin saw that the airlift was successful and that the Allies would never give up West Berlin, the blockade was lifted in May 1949.

Consequences of the Berlin Airlift

- ✈ Looking at material G, what do you think the consequences of the successful Berlin Airlift were?

Extra material

- ✈ Watch interesting material on the Berlin Airlift.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2ej9vdm--4&NR=1> (1948 newsreel on the Berlin Airlift, 4:17 minutes)

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/films/1945to1951/filmpage_ba.htm (1949, information for the British on the Berlin Airlift, 10:13 minutes)

- ✈ Find out more about Gail Halvorsen, the “chocolate flyer”.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2d7eOF8-4gw&feature=player_embedded#at=14 (ABC World News, Friday, July 25, 2008, 3:54 minutes)

http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/BERLIN_A/CHOCOLAT.HTM (chapter on the chocolate flyer in: Giangreco D.M. and Robert E. Griffin, Airbridge to Berlin - The Berlin Crisis of 1948, its Origins and Aftermath, 1988.

<http://www.berliner-mauer.de/quicktimevideo/candybomber.htm> (2005 short interview with Gail Halvorsen, at the Berlin Wall Watchtower)

Anmerkung: die vorgestellte Unterrichtseinheit kann von den Schülern in Eigenarbeit, im Unterrichtsgespräch, in Gruppenarbeit oder in Expertengruppen mit anschließendem Austausch der Informationen bearbeitet werden. Die angegebenen Antworten sind Vorschläge, die natürlich jederzeit durch weiteres eigenes Material ergänzt werden können.

Das angegebene Material kann den Schülern entweder in Kopie ausgeteilt werden oder in Form von Folien der gesamten Klasse gezeigt werden.

Introduction

- ✈ Describe what Tilli observes at Tempelhof (material A).
(crowd of cheering people watches US airplanes dropping boxes of food)
- ✈ According to Herr Berg, what was the reason for this kind of American help (material A)?
(good will of the Americans, otherwise people would starve to death)
- ✈ How does this little scene influence Tilli's (she is about 14 years old) opinion on America (material A)?
she is even more certain that the USA must be a great place to live because the Americans were willing and able to help their former enemies. NOTE: she lives in the Soviet part of Germany at that time)
- ✈ Look at material B: This is one of the pilots flying tons of material into West Berlin. What sort of impression do you get of this man?
(individual answers)

The Berlin Airlift

- ✈ Look at the maps (material C) and work out what the problem of West Berlin's geographical situation was.
(West Berlin was in the middle of the Soviet zone, everything had to be transported - by road, by train, by air, by water - through the Eastern zone controlled by the Soviet Union)
- ✈ Read the following excerpt and try to explain what all the steps taken in June 1948 meant for the Western zones and for West Berlin in particular.

Stalin and Truman saw Germany in a completely different light. Stalin wanted a weak Germany from which he took many reparations to rebuild his own country. For Truman a strong Germany was important to rebuild Europe and to make it strong against the Soviet Union.

In June 1948 the Western Allies (USA, Britain, France) allowed the West Germans to work out their own democratic constitution for a West German state. In order to ensure a fast development of the economy the Western powers initiated a new currency, the Deutschmark, for the Western Zones, including West Berlin.

³ Last flight.

In response to the Western Deutschmark and fearing a powerful Germany once again, Stalin also introduced a new currency in his zones, the East Mark, and more importantly, at midnight on the 23rd of June he started to blockade all road, canal and train traffic to West Berlin as well as the electricity supply from the East to the West.

(sources: Williamson, David, Europe and the Cold War, 1945-91, and Rea, Tony and John Wright, International Relations 1914-1995.)

(two German states (one democratic, one communist) began to take shape; more than two million Berliners were cut off from food and energy)

- ✈ According to a telegram dated June 25, 1948 (material D) from the chairman of the American Association for a Democratic Germany, Alfred M. Bingham, what does this blockade mean for the USA and for the Germans living in West Berlin? What measure is recommended?

(it is a provocation for the USA: if nothing happens, West Berlin will fall to the Soviets; it is recommended to supply the population by air at all costs in order to keep West Berlin on its democratic path)

- ✈ Listen to Harry S. Truman (material E, 1.46min) commenting on the Russian blockade of Berlin. How would you describe Truman's feelings towards the Soviets?
(individual answers)

- ✈ Look at the map and material F and find out how the Allies managed to transport goods for more than two million people into West Berlin eleven months in a row.
(system: three corridors, two for flying goods into West Berlin, one for returning; ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: the planes flew at five different altitudes, each plane had only one try to make a safe landing - if this wasn't possible it had to return without landing; they only had about 30 minutes to unload a plane; in this way they could land a plane every 3-5 minutes; they mostly brought coal (about 1.6 million tons), food (about 540 thousand tons) and medicine; all in all they made 277,569 flights)

➔ When Stalin saw that the airlift was successful and that the Allies would never give up West Berlin the blockade was lifted in May 1949.

Consequences of the Berlin Airlift

- ✈ Looking at material G, what do you think were the consequences of the successful Berlin Airlift?
(the West Berliners loved the former enemy now: people cheered at planes, the airlift was honoured by a stamp, a girl is happy about chocolate from the Chocolate Flyer [see extra material]); NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation] was formed to secure the safety of western Europe against expansionist acts by the Soviet Union; Germany was divided into two nations [in May 1949 the Federal Republic of Germany was formed from the western zones and in October 1949 the German Democratic Republic was formed from the eastern zone])
REFER back to material A: Gail Halvorsen – the Candy Bomber preparing tiny chocolate parachutes and Tilli Schulze's absolutely positive opinion on the USA