

## SOURCE K

The Marshall Plan was seen in the Soviet Union as the Americans wanting to impose their influence over the countries to which they gave Marshall Aid. It was seen as an aggressive act on behalf of the Americans. This is why it was never accepted by our country.

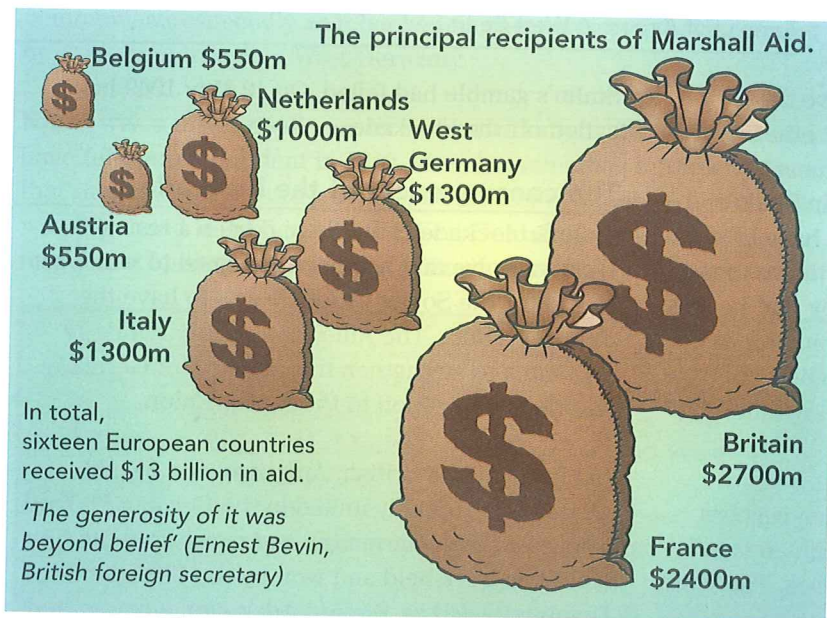
Dimitri Sukhanov, a senior Soviet politician in 1947, commenting in 1988 on the Marshall Plan.

powers did not want to restore Germany's military power, but the only way to end poverty and suffering in the country was to rebuild its industries and restore the economy. Therefore the western part of Germany was included in the Marshall Plan. Not surprisingly, Stalin refused to allow the Soviet zone to receive aid.

In 1947 the British and American zones of Germany had been combined to form 'Bizonia'. Britain and the USA then decided to introduce a new currency, the Deutschmark. Stalin was worried that a prosperous western Germany would be a threat to the Soviet Union's security. He wanted all the occupied zones to remain undeveloped. He was also concerned at the prospect of a wealthy western Germany beside a poor, Soviet-controlled eastern Germany.

## What were the causes of the Berlin blockade?

Stalin's refusal to allow communist countries to apply for Marshall Aid had a significant effect on events in Germany. After the Second World War, Germany's economy was in ruins. The western



## QUESTIONS

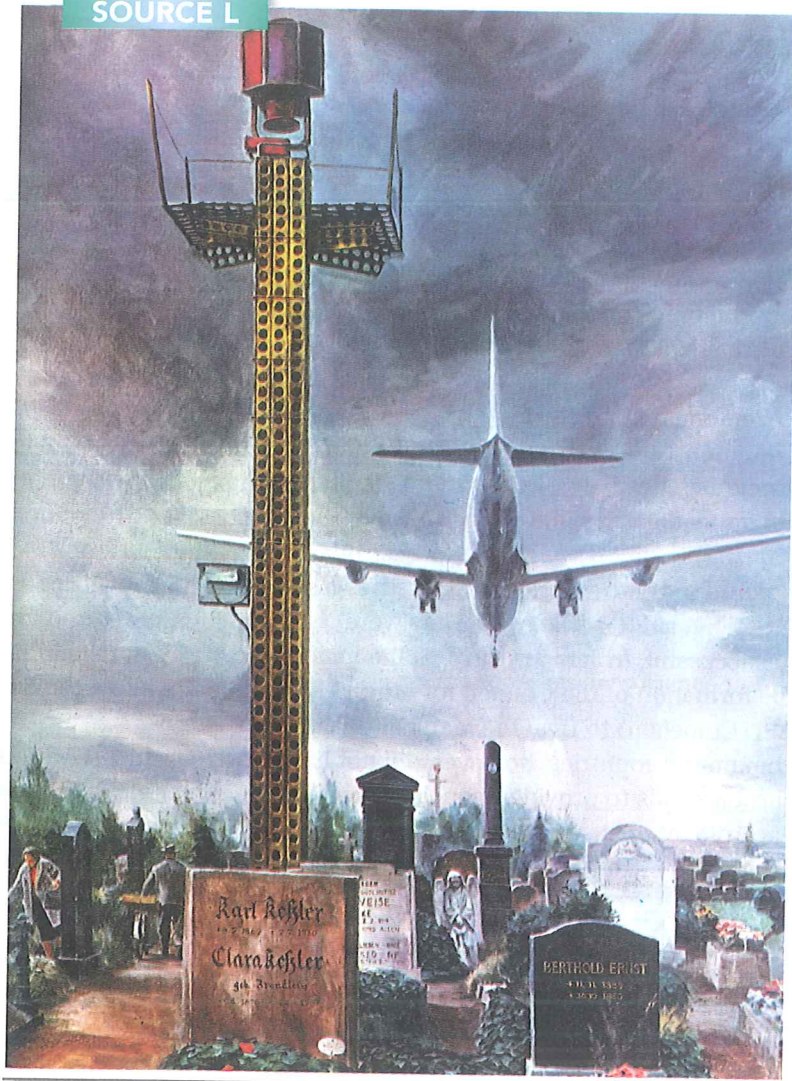
- 1 What was the purpose of  
a the Truman Doctrine  
b the Marshall Plan?
- 2 How were such plans viewed in the Soviet Union?
- 3 'There would not have been a Cold War if the USA had not introduced the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.' Do you agree?



Stalin decided to try to stop the economic development of western Germany, by taking steps against West Berlin. Berlin was divided in the same way as Germany was, which meant that 2 million Germans in the British, American and French zones lived in the middle of the Soviet zone, but not under Soviet rule. On 24 June 1948, Stalin decided to blockade West Berlin by cutting off road and rail links. To break the blockade, the Allies would have to send tanks to smash through the road and rail blocks. Such action would be an act of war and Stalin doubted that the western powers would go that far. He thought that they were much more likely to abandon their zones and leave the whole of Berlin in Soviet hands.

But the British, French and Americans saw West Berlin as a test case. If they backed down, then Stalin would be encouraged to make other demands, elsewhere. So they decided to send supplies to West Berlin to keep it going. These would not be sent by road or rail, but would be flown from air bases in western Germany into three bases in West Berlin. This was a considerable task as it would require almost non-stop flights to move the enormous quantities of food, fuel and other necessities into West Berlin. What it meant, however, was that the ball was back in Stalin's court. To stop the supplies, he would have to shoot down planes that carried no military threat to the Soviet Union. This would show clearly that he was the aggressor. To further encourage him not to do so, the Americans stationed B-29 bombers in Britain, thus putting the Soviet Union within range of atomic bombs if war broke out.

Over the next eleven months, the three western allies made 275,000 trips to West Berlin and delivered over 2 million tons of supplies. The West had shown its commitment to West Berlin and



A painting by an American artist showing US planes landing supplies at Tempelhof Airport in West Berlin.

Stalin's gamble had failed. On 12 May 1949 he called off the blockade.

### **The consequences of the blockade**

Stalin's blockade of Berlin had been a test of the West's resolve and had been designed to win West Berlin for the Soviet Union. It was to have the opposite effect. The Allies stood firm, taking measures to strengthen their control of Germany and their opposition to the Soviet Union.

In May 1949 the British, American and French zones were formally united in the German Federal Republic (West Germany). In August 1949 the first elections were held and won by the Christian Democrats, led by Konrad Adenauer, a committed



## SOURCE M



Aid being unloaded from American planes at Tempelhof Airport in June 1948.

opponent of communism. Part of this new country was West Berlin, where the three Allied zones also combined to form a West German oasis in the middle of East Germany, as the Soviet zone was renamed in October 1949.

Perhaps even more worrying for Stalin was the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). This was a military alliance of the European powers plus Canada and the USA. It was a defensive alliance in which the members agreed to offer help if any of them was attacked. It was the first time the USA had signed a military alliance in peacetime and showed its commitment to containing communism, especially as it backed up the signing of the agreement by stationing troops in West Germany.

NATO was a direct challenge to the Soviet Union, although Stalin may have felt more confident in 1949 when his scientists informed him that they had successfully developed an atomic bomb. When NATO was expanded in 1955 to include West Germany, the Soviet Union responded by setting up its own military alliance, the Warsaw Pact.

### The two alliances

- **NATO:** USA, Britain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Portugal. Greece and Turkey joined in 1952 and West Germany in 1955.
- **The Warsaw Pact:** Soviet Union, Albania (expelled 1968), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania.

## SOURCE N

Planes were taking off every thirty seconds, soldiers were loading trucks, the maintenance shops were a beehive of activity, and the mess halls and clubs were open. It was a 24-hour operation. The commanding officer stood in the control tower with his stop watch, checking the timing of the planes. To most people it seemed an impossible task to meet the needs of two million people by airlift. But except for water, Berlin was supplied with everything by air.

An American stationed at a base in the American zone of Germany describes the frenzied activity of the Berlin airlift.