

COLD WAR NOTES

HOW DID THE COLD WAR START:

The Cold War started after the Second World War when it became obvious that the United States and the Soviet Union would be able to partner with each other. Mainly because they presented different doctrines, contrary beliefs and had different economic and political systems; with United States supporting democracy and capitalism and the USSR supporting totalitarianism and communism.

These cracks first started to show during the **Yalta** and **Potsdam** conferences where they struggled to agree on the future of post war Europe and only grew more obvious after Stalin established communist governments in some of the European countries.

The United States was worried that communism would spread to more countries so it offered economic and military aid to countries threatened by communist influence.

One important event was the Berlin Blockade, which lasted from 1948 to 1949. The Soviet Union blocked land routes to West Berlin. In response, the Western Allies organized the Berlin Airlift and delivered food and other supplies by plane.

WESTERN AND EASTERN BLOC:

Some of the previous events led to the formation of two military alliances: NATO in the West and the Warsaw Pact in the East. **These developments** strengthened the division between the two sides and eventually led to the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

Everything west of the Berlin wall was considered western and everything east of it was considered eastern. This division has later been named The Iron Curtain.

Western Europe was mainly connected with the United States. These countries generally had democratic governments and capitalist economies. They were also economically richer than pretty much all of the countries in the Eastern Bloc.

Eastern Europe was under strong Soviet influence. Most countries in this bloc had communist governments and limited political freedom.

Although the United States and the Soviet Union did not fight a direct, full-scale war against each other, the conflict was still very dangerous. Both sides had nuclear weapons, so a direct confrontation could have led to a nuclear war.

ARMS RACE:

One of the most important parts of the Cold War was the arms race. The constant threat of military conflict pushed the United States and the Soviet Union to develop increasingly advanced weapons.

Both countries built large nuclear arsenals, believing that military strength would prevent attacks. However, this competition also increased the risk of nuclear war.

The arms race led to major technological developments. For example, the United States created the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird, an extremely fast reconnaissance aircraft, and the F-117 Nighthawk, designed to avoid radar detection. The Soviet Union developed the Duga radar system, while the American KH-9 HEXAGON satellite collected intelligence from space.

These examples show that the Cold War was also a period of technological progress. However, the arms race came at an enormous economic cost, especially for the Soviet Union, which struggled to keep up with American military technology. This contributed to its economic problems and eventual collapse in 1991, marking the end of the Cold War.

TECHNOLOGICAL RACE WITH THE USSR:

During the cold war, the US and the Soviet Union were trying to one up each other in technological advancement relating to space exploration, for example satellites, rockets, and rovers

USSR sent the first dog (Laika) and the first person (Yuri Gagarin) 1961 to space, claiming to have won the space race

The US sent the first people directly to the moon (Apollo 11 mission) 1969, they walked on the lunar surface for 2.5 hours, collected lunar rocks, planted the US flag and placed a light reflector on the moon to measure the speed of light (Michael Collins was part of the Apollo 11 crew but he did not land on the moon)

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT:

Segregation: special separation between people of different races, popularized by the Jim Crow Laws in the southern United States that mandated segregation in all public establishments

Disenfranchisement: restriction of the right to vote for certain groups (women, Afro-Americans)

Montgomery Bus Protest: meant to abolish racial segregation in public transport, Started by Rosa Parks refusing to give up her bus seat to a white person (Montgomery is a city in Alabama)

The Sit-In movement: a massive wave of sit-ins started in 1960 inspired by the strategies used by Mahatma Gandhi in India, it was sparked by the Greensboro Sit-Ins but eventually across 4 years more than 70000 people joined the protests