

Year 8 History Unit 4: How did Russia become a superpower in the 20th Century?

How did Stalin control Russia? 1924-53

Purges: Anyone suspected of disloyalty was sent to prison camps or murdered. This became the period of The Great Terror. Some 20 million ordinary Russians were sent to **Gulags**.

NKVD: Stalin's Secret Police. They did not need hard evidence to act against people. An anonymous tip off was sufficient grounds for arrest. They were allowed to torture

Cult of personality: Stalin created a cult of personality around himself with images, statues, songs, poems and books about him. Towns and villages were named after him.



Cuban Missile Crisis 1961

In 1945 the Americans had used the Atomic bomb for the first time. By 1949 the Soviets had also developed their own nuclear weapons. This developed into MAD – the idea that if either of these sides fired then it would cause destruction to both sides.

In 1961 the Russians were spotted putting nuclear missiles on Cuba – close to the USA. A stand off occurred between the USA and Russia, after President Kennedy blockaded the island of Cuba, until an agreement was finally agreed upon.

The Space Race 1960s

In the 1960s there was a race between the USA and the Soviets to see who could be first to land on the moon. The Soviets were the first to get a man in space; Yuri Gagarin was the first man to orbit the earth in 1961. In 1969 the USA managed to land a man on the moon in 1969

Key Words

Stalin – led Russia after Lenin's death

Gulag – Work camps in Siberia

NKVD – Secret Police

Soviet Union – name for Russia after the Revolution

Cold War – a war where no actual fighting took place

MAD – Mutually Assured Destruction

Federal Republic of Germany – West Germany

DDR (German Democratic Republic) – East Germany

Berlin – Capital of Germany

Khrushchev – Leader of the USSR after Stalin

MAD - Mutually Assured Destruction

Cuba – Caribbean Island

Chernobyl – powerplant that exploded in Ukraine in 1986

What was the Cold War?

Although Britain, the USA and Russia had worked together during WWII this quickly fell apart after 1945. The Russians took over the Eastern half of Europe, including East Germany.

The Berlin Wall 1961

Fed up with East German citizens crossing the border in Berlin. **Khrushchev** ordered the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. This was a 165 km concrete wall.

What happened to Germany?

Berlin, the capital of Germany, was in the Eastern half so was divided between the Allies and the USSR. In 1948 Stalin tried to cut off West Berlin to starve it out and force the allies to give it to him. The allies airlifted 1.5 million supplies to West Berlin. In 1949 Germany was officially split into two with the Federal Republic of Germany in the West and the German Democratic Republic (DDR) in the East.



End of Communism 1991

In 1989 the Berlin Wall came down allowing access from East to West. In 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed. Why?

- The Chernobyl disaster had proved to Soviet citizens that they couldn't trust the government
- The Soviets couldn't afford to keep building up the army
- Mikhail Gorbachev, the new president of Russia wanted a new relationship with the west
- The Russian economy was suffering through not being able to make trade deals with the west