

## The Cold War Was More Than Just About The Wall

If you're about 40ish (like I am) you can probably remember the Olympic Games in 1976 and 1980. It was an international competition with two countries that stood out, East and West Germany.

Being very young, you might not have understood the politics between the two countries. Heck, you probably grew up not thinking they were never anything but two separate places.

Little did we youngsters know what was going on was in essence the Cold War, a phrase coined by George Orwell in October 1945.

But, it wasn't always the case. You might also remember it wasn't a "war" in the traditional sense. And while it was a "military conflict," it was also political.

It also made for some great spy movies coming out of Hollywood throughout the years of the Cold War's existence (1947-1991). What? I'm not trying to be funny here, but art reflects the time, right? Some would call it propaganda.

The Cold War started after [World War II](#) when the Soviets and the "West" (being the UK and US) divided a losing Germany. The Communist Soviets built themselves a "buffer" of other satellite Communist states between them (including Hungary, Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Lithuania). It was known as the Eastern Bloc.

They also sliced up the capital city of [Berlin](#) into four zones, governed by the French, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviets.

Stalin wanted the Western Powers out of Berlin; and he did what he could to make life difficult. In the late 1940's he instigated the Berlin Blockade keeping much needed food and supplies from those in the western section of the city for almost an entire year.

The Western Powers didn't take this lying down. They airlifted food, medicine, and even candy to the children hurt by the Soviet's stance.

One of the worst incidents of the Cold War took place in October 1961, when the Soviets stood at Checkpoint Charlie against the United States. It's known as the Berlin Crisis.

By the way, Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie that stands today isn't the real one — but an interesting tourist spot nonetheless.

There was a loophole between what was under Soviet and Western control, so many people crossed from the repressive Soviet side to the liberal, democratic western side. The Soviet Union

didn't like it, tried to stop it (unsuccessfully), and eventually built a wall.

Yes, that's right, the infamous [Berlin Wall](#). It was a long, barbed fence that divided a city in a divided nation for decades. It finally came down in 1989; and for the first time since that God-awful wall was built, Berliners could cross freely. It was the most auspicious of days, I can tell you that.

The Cold War wasn't limited to Germany only, though. The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), the Korean War, and the Vietnam War were other conflicts that stemmed from it.

The United States and USSR weren't just limited to "fighting" over sports or geography. Nope, the race to space was in full-swing by the late 1960's, with the United States reaching the moon first in 1969.

The Cold War finally "warmed up" officially at the Malta Summit in December 1989. It took a little while longer for the fall of the USSR, which came on Christmas Day 1991; this left only the United States remaining as a world Superpower, which still maintains a large military presence within Germany. But, not in the sense that it did when it occupied the country after World War II.

It appears that when United States President, Ronald Regan said to Mikhail Gorbachev (the Soviet General Secretary), "Tear down this wall," did anyone know it would tear down so much more than that.

And no longer will anyone sit to watch the Olympics (the news, or anything else) hearing about East or West Germany, they're happily together again.