

What exactly was the cold war?

The Cold War was a state of geopolitical tension after World War II between powers in the Eastern Bloc (the Soviet Union and its satellite states) and powers in the Western Bloc (the United States, its NATO allies and others)

Who were the Stasi?

The term "Stasi" is an abbreviation for "Staatssicherheit" (state security). That is what the East Germans called the Ministry of State Security, which was officially abbreviated "MfS". The Stasi had two functions: It worked as both a secret service and a secret police. Many countries have a secret service agency. They are responsible for detecting threats to the country from abroad. Secret police usually only exist in dictatorships. They have the task of controlling their own citizens and eliminating any danger to the ruling regime. They are accountable only to the rulers and circumvent the laws that normal police must obey.

What was the Berlin Wall?

During the early years of the Cold War, West Berlin was a geographical loophole through which thousands of East Germans fled to the democratic West. In response, the Communist East German authorities built a wall that totally encircled West Berlin. It was thrown up overnight, on 13 August 1961

What was communism?

Though the term "communism" can refer to specific political parties, at its core, communism is an ideology of economic equality through the elimination of private property. The beliefs of communism, most famously expressed by Karl Marx, center on the idea that inequality and suffering result from capitalism.

What was the iron curtain?

The Iron Curtain was the name for the boundary dividing Europe into two separate areas from the end of World War II in 1945 until the end of the Cold War in 1991. The term symbolizes the efforts by the Soviet Union to block itself and its satellite states from open contact with the West and non-Soviet-controlled areas. On the east side of the Iron Curtain were the countries that were connected to or influenced by the Soviet Union.

What was life like in East Germany?

There were no bananas. You could only get them once or twice a year, and you'd only be notified of their availability by word of mouth. So you'd have to rush to the veggie store (not a veggie store as we know it — just cabbages, potatoes...anything grown locally) and stand in line to get your one banana per person in your household. To stretch the rations, her mum would quarter the banana, slice it thinly and serve it on bread to her and her sister.

You could only watch one of a few state channels, but radio waves know no walls (well, except maybe lead ones), so those close to the border were able to pick up signals from the West.

Find images of communist regimes



Find images of East Germany in 1980s.

