



COLD WAR – THE BERLIN WALL

In August 1961, the [German Democratic Republic](#) (GDR, East Germany) built a concrete [Wall](#) that cut off (by land) West Berlin from virtually all of surrounding East Germany and East Berlin until government officials opened it in November 1989. The barrier included guard towers placed along large concrete walls, accompanied by a wide area (later known as the "death strip") that contained anti-vehicle trenches, "fakir beds" and other defenses. The Eastern Bloc portrayed the Wall as protecting its population from fascist elements conspiring to prevent the "will of the people" in building a socialist state in East Germany. It came to symbolize physically the ["Iron Curtain"](#) that separated Western Europe and the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War.