

NEW WORLD, NEW FIGHT

After the Second World War ended in 1945, Canada's location put it smack between the United States and the Soviet Union. The two superpowers were on the same side during the war. But now they mistrusted, feared and opposed each other. The result was the Cold War, which divided much of the world.



The Bolshevik, by David Jagers, 1918, shows an angry Russian during the revolution.

Rise of the Soviet Union

A revolution in Russia in 1917 got rid of its rulers. In 1922, the new communist country of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R., also known as the Soviet Union) took shape. It made many other countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia into its republics. Although there were many different nationalities in the U.S.S.R., people there were often still called Russians.

The way the Soviet Union set up **COMMUNISM**, the government owned almost everything — farms, factories, stores, transportation. The goal was to share money and things more equally, and life did improve for many after the fall of the old Russian empire. But some government leaders and others in the U.S.S.R. always seemed to end up richer, while ordinary people had barely enough space to live or food to eat. There were no free elections, so people had no way to change anything. The Soviet government ruled through fear and arrested anyone who disagreed. It wanted to prove to the rest of the world that it was the best system.

After the Second World War, the German city of Berlin was divided. The Soviets controlled East Berlin. West Berlin was controlled by France, the United States and the United Kingdom. East Germany, backed by the Soviet Union, built a wall between the two parts so people couldn't leave for a better life in West Germany.



Building the Berlin Wall to divide East and West Berlin, Germany, 1961.



Non-communist, capitalist countries were often called “the West.” This includes western European countries such as France and the U.K. along with Canada and the U.S. Many countries in Eastern Europe that the Soviet Union had occupied during the Second World War joined a group controlled by the Soviets. By 1946, East and West were said to be divided by the Iron Curtain.



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Children at the Berlin Wall, about 1964.