

Enjoy the war the  
peace will be terrible  
history essay



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This ominous prophecy did not realize immediately, but over several years marked by immense human suffering caused by clashes between political ideologies and economic realities combined with the world's deadliest arms race. It began with the proverbial Iron Curtain being raised around the city of Berlin- the once grand capital of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich.

The ' foundation stone" of what was to become the Berlin Wall, the sole tangible monument of nearly five decades of the invisible Iron Curtain, was laid on April 16, 1945, when the Soviet Red Army launched a brutal attack against Berlin, where Hitler resided during his last days. The Soviet onslaught included some 20 army divisions, more than 6, 000 assorted tanks and nearly 8, 500 warplanes and aimed at overwhelming the fierce resistance by Germans defending Berlin.

Unwilling to be drawn into street battles due to obvious risks, the Western allies- US, Britain and France- allowed the Soviets to advance into Berlin , turning a blind eye to atrocities committed by the Red Army on Berliners.

On April 24, 1945, the Soviets overran Berlin even as Hitler committed suicide, thus ending the Fuehrer's dream of a Thousand Years Reich, or a republic that would live for a thousand years.

### **The Nazis surrender: Seeds of Cold War Sown:**

On May 5, 1945, Generalfeldmarschall ( Field Marshal General) Wilhelm Bodewin Johann Gustav Keitel, who headed the Oberkommando Der Wehrmacht (Supreme Command of the German Armed Forces ) and other senior officials of the brief, post-Hitler Flensburg government, signed an instrument of surrender in Berlin, heralding an end to hostilities in Europe.

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The Instrument of Surrender was signed on May 5, 1945 at the headquarters of the Allied commander General Dwight W. Eisenhower of the US and inked on behalf of USSR by General Ivan Susloparov. Eisenhower acted in his capacity as the commander of all Allies, which was unacceptable to the Soviets- sowing seeds of a discord which would escalate into the Cold War and the world's biggest arms race lasting till 1991.

The Soviets insisted that another formal surrender between the Germans and allies be signed at the offices of Marshal Georgy Zhukhov, the Soviet commander who had led the Berlin assault, arguing, General Susloparov did not have the authority to sign on behalf of the USSR.

In accordance with Soviet wishes, the Allies arranged for another surrender ceremony on May 8, 1945 at Zhukhov's headquarters, where it was agreed that Berlin would be controlled jointly by the four victors- US, UK, France and the Soviet Union.

Hence began the ordeal of the Berliners and those residing in eastern parts of Germany that were now fully under control of the Red Army. Berlin was carved up into four occupation zones. While the three zones held by the Western allies were administered uniformly, the Soviets imposed their brand of iron-fisted rule upon East Berliners- which was further consolidated with the construction of the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961- almost 16 years since armed hostilities had ended, giving birth to a silent but what could have been a deadlier Cold War.

Immediately after the World War-II, two major superpowers- the US and the USSR- emerged in a world that was hitherto dominated by colonial countries such as Great Britain, France, Spain, the Netherlands and others.

These colonial powers had suffered incalculable losses and could no longer retain foreign territories after the World War-II, leaving a power vacuum worldwide, giving rise to a new world order, where the West was led by the US and the non-colonial nations such as Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and others were led by the USSR.

The US and Western powers grouped later as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on one side and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) with its vassal states, or the Eastern Bloc, on the other.

The Berlin Wall, which was constructed from August 13, 1961 onwards, was to become a symbol, a living testimony of this great divide among two new superpowers.

The Berlin Wall marked the construction and later, the collapse this new world order. It was a wall which thousands tried to cross to get to the ' free' Western world while fleeing the Iron Curtain when the Cold War was at its peak.

The US State Department describes the Berlin Wall in these words: " The Berlin problem was an accident, the result of bad planning and cold war tensions. On the wrong side of the Iron Curtain and a victim of the inability of the East and West to agree on German unification, Berlin was caught in a recurring cycle of crisis and resolution, pitting the legality of Western rights

against the reality of Soviet power. In fact, the history of Berlin—the Berlin Blockade, the East Berlin uprising, the Berlin Quadripartite Agreement, and the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall—reflects the history of the Cold War itself.

### **The first bricks of the Berlin Wall:**

The first “bricks” of the Berlin Wall were laid the moment the Nazis capitulated. The US emerged from World War II as the West’s strongest economic, political, and military power. Wartime production pulled the economy out of depression and propelled it to great profits.

In the interest of avoiding another global war, for the first time the United States began to use economic assistance as a strategic element of its foreign policy and offered significant assistance to countries in Europe and Asia struggling to rebuild their shattered economies.

The US also took an active interest in the fate of the colonies the European powers were having difficulty maintaining. In addition to these challenges, the United States faced increasing resistance from the Soviet Union which had rescinded on a number of wartime promises.

As the Soviets demonstrated a keen interest in dominating Eastern Europe, the US took the lead in forming a Western alliance to counterbalance the communist superpower to contain the spread of communism.

The Soviets wanted to use Berlin as an model of communism, given the strategic location of the city, in the heart of Europe. The US and its allies had other plans and wanted Berlin to become an icon of democracy and the free world.

**Potsdam Conference: [www. history. state. gov](http://www.history.state.gov) (US government history website) and [www. bundesarchiv. de](http://www.bundesarchiv.de) (german national history website)**

Capitulated Germany, once was a powerful industrial and arms force in Europe, now, was prostrate and prone to exploitation once again. In one of the early moves on treating Germany after the surrender, the victorious Western powers came up with the - the Morgenthau Plan.

What did the plan? It proposed “ pastoralization” of Germany that is to de-industrialise Germany and convert its industrial economy into agricultural economy.

Apparently, the plan was shelved due to public opposition. Instead, a directive by the Joint Chiefs of Staff directive 1067 (JCS 1067) was issued, in the spring of 1945. It stated: to take no steps in looking towards the economic rehabilitation of Germany or no steps to maintain or strengthen the German economy.

On the lines of the directive, the Allied Control Council made up of the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain and later France set a limit to Germany’s growth. They capped the German steel production, brought it down to 25%, and car production to 10%, of pre-war production level. Besides abolishing the German armed forces, arms manufacturing companies and civilian industries, they also broke down the manufacturing capabilities of ship and aircraft industry.

## **Two Superpowers**

Post World War II, US and the USSR emerged as the superpowers of the world. Much like you cannot have two swords in one sheath, you do not have two superpowers occupy number one position.

Thus, in what could turn out to be a more obvious situation, the growing political and military tension between the superpowers finally broke out into a Cold War in 1947.

The Cold War had its own warmth and with changing times, say, within two years, the dynamics of the war and the Western policies towards West Germany began to change.

In July 1947, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directive 1067 (JCS 1067), to take no steps in looking towards the economic rehabilitation of Germany..., was later replaced by JCS 1779 that states “ an orderly prosperous Europe requires the economic contributions of a stable and productive Germany.”

With this directive, many of the limitations on German industrial levels were lifted, except arm manufacturing.

Look at it this way: in case the industries of West Germany are restored, the economy will pick up, and in turn will work out well for the whole of European economy. But then, there was more to it.

Say, one stone, two birds. In the name of recovery, the US planned to rearm West Germany and build an ally against Soviet Union.

US President Truman's administration came up with Marshall Plan which was the official European Recovery Program, the ERP. Marshall Plan was about giving monetary support to help rebuild European economies.

And it could only be put into action, after it received a green signal from Britain, France and Benelux countries, in the beginning of April 1948.

The Soviets, however, did not pick the bait, one super-power taking financial help from another? No way!

## **While in Russia**

Following the World War II, Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin also headed a union of nations on the Western border of Russia. These nations include a part of Germany that later came to be known as East Germany and neighbouring countries like Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

As per Stalin's calculation, the US would withdraw its troops in a year or two, and later would undermine the British. Once this happens, he would have a Communist Germany.

What next? He planned to introduce Marxism-Leninism doctrines as a compulsory part of school education. And also to create a political police apparatus that would keep a close watch on people.

## **Berlin Blockade**

In 1948 that Stalin's intentions became more apparent, it was when he disagreed over reconstruction of Germany and a new German currency. Not



only that, he also provoked the first major international crises of the Cold War by instituting the Berlin Blockade, in June 1948.

The idea was to block Western Allies' access to railway, roadway and canal to the western sector of Berlin.

Once the accessibility was blocked, the food and fuel supplies from Western powers would stop. This in return would practically give the Soviets control over the entire city.

Apparently, the blockades weren't high enough to reach the sky. The Western Powers took the air route and began a massive " Berlin airlift" supply.

Three hundred thousand Berliners gathered and demonstrated in favour of the international airlift supplies. Succumbing to that, Stalin finally, lifted the blockade, in May 1949, thereby allowing the Western powers to resume with their supplies to Berlin.

In a secret treaty, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs took administrative authority of the East German state. They entered the Eastern bloc and took full control over its administrative, military and secret police structures.

## **Two Germanys GDR & FDR**

On 7th October 1949, the Soviets declared their part of occupied Germany as the German Democratic Republic.

A couple of months earlier, the German territory occupied by the Western powers established the Federal Republic of Germany.

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Thus, that year, an “ Iron Curtain” ran through the middle of the former Reich Germany and divided Germany in two, the East Germany and the West Germany.

Further in the heart of Soviet occupied-Germany, the German capital Berlin was divided into East Berlin and West Berlin.

The division would become more prominent once the iron curtains were drawn, but the death of Stalin in 1953 deferred things for a few years.

On one hand, where East Germany under the Communist Soviets was established as a socialist state, the other hand, under the flag of Western Powers, West Germany was developed into a Western Capitalist state, with a democratic parliamentary government.

## **On the Other side of the Wall**

People living in the Eastern Bloc occupied by the Soviets disliked being under the Communist rule, they wanted the Soviets to leave. But Soviets were not here to leave, hence the prevailing thinking in the Eastern bloc was more like ‘ either you go or let me go’.

Taking advantage of border points, hundreds and thousands of GDR citizens moved to West Germany.

To get things in to perspective, the numbers of emigrants increased from 187, 000 in 1950 to 331, 000 in 1953. The East Germans left the Eastern Bloc in the fear of Stalin’s paranoid actions and Sovietization. However moving to other side was easy, until 1952.

The rise in the number of people migrating to the West Germany became a major concern to the East German leaders; they took up this matter to Stalin.

In discussion, Stalin's foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov proposed to introduce a system of passes for the residents of West Germany.

Upset with the situation, Stalin said it is "intolerable" and advised the East German leaders to build up their border fences.

Although traffic between the Eastern bloc and West Germany was somewhat restricted, the border between East and West Berlin still remained open. Even as there were high security deployed at inner German borders, Berlin continued to be the epicentre of major action.

### **Major Concern – Brain Drain**

The line that divided East Berlin and West Berlin had nine border crossings, out of which Checkpoint Charlie was the most sensitive one as it was open to the Germans and non-German.

If you look at the map, the checkpoint or border crossing was open only for the West Berliners or West Germans, who could transit to the East on work or to meet relatives.

For East Germans it was almost impossible to sneak through and get into West so they would try death defying ways and means to get to the other side. Bothered by huge migration from Eastern bloc, the East Germans, on 11th December 1957 introduced a new passport law.

In case you are wondering now what? How will the East Germans escape? Well, it wasn't easy, but wasn't difficult either. As there were no physical barriers till then and the subway train was still accessible, the border crossing system had loopholes.

The increase in the numbers of people migrating to the West was not about a whole lot of people going to the other side for a walk. These emigrants were mostly well-educated youth; so what looked like a-walk-to-the-other-side-of-the-fence was in reality “ brain drain.”

There was a HUGE manpower loss, professionals like teachers, engineers, technicians, physician, lawyers and skilled workers, they moved to West Germany for better prospects.

By 1960, the East German population of working age was down to 61 per cent, compared to 70. 5 per cent before the war.

These disturbing figures peeved the East German party leader Walter Ulbricht. He claimed for \$17 billion in compensation from West Germany. Such brain drain of professionals hardly left East Germany with any political credibility and economic viability.

### **Ulbricht said “ Mauer”**

Even before the wall could be built or spoken about, it was tension that was building faster and thicker on the border of East and West Berlin.

In such situation, on 15th June 1961, at an international press conference, Walter Ulbricht, the First Secretary of Socialist Unity Party (SED) and the

chairman of GDR State Council, makes this statement: “ Niemand hat die Absicht, eine Mauer zu errichten!”

Its literal translation was “ No one has the intention of erecting a wall!”

In Ulbricht’s words, the unspoken intention came out loud and clear. It was for the first time the word “ Mauer” German word for Wall was spoken of in public by a figure of authority. Ulbricht made frequent visits to Moscow, in 1961.

He was constantly in touch with authorities in Moscow discussing the sensitivity of the situation at the border.

It was only in the early August of 1961, in a telephonic conversation between Ulbricht and Nikita Khrushchev, the Premier of USSR, the suggestion for construction of wall was made.

It is said that the suggestion of wall came from Khrushchev, although he was wary about reaction from the West. On the other hand, Ulbricht for quite some time was pushing for the wall arguing it was for the betterment of East Germany.

Khrushchev’s virtual wall and Ulbricht’s bricks of intention was soon cemented by tacit indication from John F. Kennedy. The US President in closed words said that it would not actively oppose this action.

One thing led to another and the next thing you know, on Saturday, 12th of August 1961, the leaders of the GDR attended a garden party at a

government guesthouse in Döllnsee, in north of East Berlin. Here, Ulbricht signed the order to close the border and built a wall.

## **The Line Turns into a Wall**

It is said that pen is mightier than sword, ironically and contextually here pen drew out the mighty sword. No sooner the orders were signed, tankers and army personnel were moved in to the border that divides Berlin into East and West.

The news was out on the RIAS (Radio In American Sector), the only radio station that had the most powerful transmitter in Europe. Despite jamming and interference from the Eastern bloc, it was clear enough to keep Berliners updated.

The East German transport police closed down the ticket hall, trains to West were banned, underground railway - U-Bahn, fast trains -S-Bahn and the entire transit route to West was closed down and the border was being sealed.

At the crack of dawn, on a fine Sunday, 13th of August 1961 aka Barbed-Wire Sunday, Berliners woke up to the sound of construction brigades and army tanks to find their fears come true. What earlier existed virtually was now made real; barbed wire wall was being erected by the East German soldiers.

The barbed wire fence was the blue prints of what was soon going to follow, a wide concrete wall that ran 156 kilometre around three western sectors

(American, British and French) and 43 kilometres that divided West and East Berlin.

Fear, panic and uncertainty always walk in a file. In a bid to escape the Sovietisation, East Berliner continued to sneak out. Stricter means were deployed to curb sneaking out; there were instances where people would try escaping by jumping off the windows of building close to the border.

But in 1962, the Stasi (state security) relocated families living in buildings close to the border and razed the buildings.

## **The Wall Stood Tall**

In the beginning the wall stood two meter tall and was topped by barbed-wires. Very close to the wall were the watchtowers. The area nearing the wall was strategically designed. A belt ran parallel to the wall; it was called the Death Strip.

The idea behind the Death Strip was to make it difficult to break or cross the wall. The belt was covered with raked sand or gravel, to make it difficult for one to run and easy for the soldiers to shoot the ones trying to escape.

There were concreted obstacles built within the strip to block vehicles from running into them.

Lot of thinking went behind the wall. The East Germans played safe; they built the barrier on the inside of East Berlin or East German territory to ensure it was more about the wall and not about encroachment.

Four days later, on the seventeenth of August, concrete elements and large blocks were assembled at the border. Things began to get more sensitive. People on the either side could now only see each other from a distance.

## **Two Sides of the Same Wall**

The East German government claimed that the Wall was an, “ Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart.” And some of their explanations to the Wall were: the neighbouring West Germany has not been fully de-Nazified.

They claimed that the West Berliners come here to buy state-subsidized goods in East Berlin. Even as East German government has its own reasons to explain Wall, the West Berlin government referred to it as, “ a Wall of Shame.”

More than the strength of the concrete, it was the stubbornness of power-obsessed leaders that made the Wall bigger than it was.

An important reason as to why the West Berlin border could not be closed earlier was the railway route that went in and out of West Berlin. But now with the construction of new railway in 1961, it became easier to close the border.

## **This Close to the World War III**

At one point of time, in the October 0f 1961, an American diplomat, Colonel Johns was denied the access to East at Charlie Check point, which ideally was inappropriate. As according to the Four Power Agreement, the Allies have the right to cross the border whenever they want to.



One thing led to another, and in short time a US military convoy with 276 men, sixty trucks and trailers stacked with high-explosive ammunition entered East Berlin.

The entry sparked immediate attention of rank of military officers in the Russian and East German squad. Luckily, the convoy entered East Berlin took a short drive and came out.

The situation on both the sides of the border mirrored each other. The artillery barrages were manned, powerful tankers, army trucks and jeeps were stationed close to the wall, guns and tanks were aimed at each other, and Vopos the East German national police, armed personnel and officers were on high alert.

Clouds of tension hovered all over the border; all it would take was only a sound of pin fall and BOOM. Whether it was accidentally, intentionally or unintentionally, the whole of Berlin would have been engulfed in flames and it would have been the World War III.

Somewhere neither Khrushchev nor Kennedy wanted a war, but it was Ulbricht who was pushing things to the wall.

## **Writing on the Wall**

Wall to the Berliners was more than a barrier. Youngsters who grew up in West Berlin and schooled in the East or the other way round, adults who lived in West and worked in East or the other way round were broken by the wall.

Many families were split, while many who worked in the West Berlin lost their jobs. And most Berliners had a piece of their heart on the other side of the fence. It was either their spouse, lover, parents, brother, sister or their children, the separated them from their loved ones.

Mainly for the West Berliners, it was more like being canned into a place. Finally, it was in Willy Brandt, the Mayor of West Berlin, did they find their voice. It was Brandt who first said that they do not need the wall.

## **I AM A BERLINER**

The good thing about tough times is that they don't last forever. On 26th June 1963, John F. Kennedy visited Berlin. Kennedy's visit was the most important thing to happen at that point of time.

Through his famous speech, "Ich bin ein Berliner" (I am a Berliner) he underlined the support of the United States for West Berlin and West Germany.

The speech came in at time when the West Berliners who lived in an exclave deep inside East Germany and feared a possible occupation of the East Germans.

Kennedy's words given out from Rathaus Schöneberg to an audience of 450,000 gave a moral boost to West Berliners and lit up their dampened spirits.

## **Crossing Permit**

As far as day-to-day lives are concerned, a Berliner knew that he had to live with the wall and get used to it. However, things began to loosen up with the

autumn of 1963; a crossing-permit agreement (Passierscheinabkommen) was signed; now West Berliners were granted temporary permits to visit their close relatives for Christmas and New Year. Once the holidays were over, it was back to reality.

A crossing-permit for short period visit mainly for year end, especially Christmas time was agreed upon for the following years 1964 up to 1966.

The Stasi, an official state security of the East Germany in its report had stated that such concessions of permitting the border crossing would be looked upon by the West as ' a successful penetration of Wall.'

In 1971, with Four Power Agreement on Berlin, it was agreed upon to allow West Berliners to apply for visas to enter East Berlin and East Germany on a regular basis, unlike the earlier time stipulated visa.

Things were now getting better, over the years there were exceptions made, earlier East Berliners and East Germans who were not allowed to travel to the West Berlin or West Germany now could do so unless they fall under the parameter set.

Exceptions were made for elderly pensioners, visits of relatives for important family events and people like artists, truck drivers, musicians, writers, could travel to the West over job reasons.

## **The Chapter after Ulbricht**

Erich Honecker led the GDR after the death of Ulbricht in June 1973. With Honecker, the Wall was reinforced more strongly. Automatic guns were mounted and minefield was laid.

Ever since the wall was fortified from a wire fence in 1961 to an improved wire fence in (1962-65) it evolved with time. Later it was turned in to a Concrete Wall (1965-1975) and then in to the last version Grenzmauer 75 ( Border Wall 1975). The last generation of wall stood tall till the 1989.

If the earlier versions of the wall weren't strong enough, then the fourth generation wall officially known as " Stützwandelement UL 12. 11" topped it all. It was the final and most sophisticated version of the wall.

The newer Wall was constructed out of sections each section was a reinforced concrete 3. 6 meters (12 ft.) high and 1. 2 meters (3. 9 ft) wide. In all 45, 000 such sections were erected, and its cost was about US\$ 3, 68, 000.

The added feature of the wall was it was built in L shape that would make it impossible for vehicles to run into, or cross over to make an escape.

In 1980, West Berliners wanting to visit the East, to meet their relatives or on work purpose had to exchange at least Deutschmark (DM) 25 to get into East.

On return, in case they had some DMs on them, they had to leave it at the border. And can collect it on future visits, as it was not allowed to export East German currency outside the border.

Also, the visitors from East Berlin had to pay DM 5 for visa, whereas the West Berliners could cross without paying. In spite of visas, the officials at the checkpoint would make it difficult for the East Berliners to cross the border.

### **While Making It to the Other Side of the Wall**

During the years of the Wall, around 5000 people escaped successfully. But there were hundreds killed or punished for trying to sneak out.

Alexandra Hildebrandt, the Director of the Checkpoint Charlie Museum and widow of the Museum's founder estimated the number of deaths to be above 200. However, the figures of a Historic Research Group at the Center for Contemporary Historical Research (ZZF) in Potsdam say 136 deaths.

To break the code WALL was never easy, but that could not stop the defectors from trying to escape.

They tried all possible methods to get to the other side of the wall. Right from: digging long tunnels under the wall, ramming vehicles into the wall, using ladders, hot air balloons, sliding along aerial wires, to flying ultralights and also escaping through the sewers.

## **To the Other Side of the Wall – Some Made it, Some didn't**

One of the early endeavours of escaping was the escape of Ida Siekmann who jumped to her death out of her third floor apartment at 48 Bernauer Strasse.

As the building was located close to the borders of the wall, its windows became a point of escape, but soon was emptied and demolished. Siekmann was the first casualty at the wall.

A twenty-four year old tailor, Günter Litfin on 24th August 1961 attempted to swim across the Spree Canal to West Germany.

The East German police had received orders shoot-to-kill defectors of the wall and as the first case of being shot for escaping, Günter got the bullet. History is made of stories written in blood with essence of pain and at a price of life, lives and failures.

A defector is a defector, even if he is a civilian who works for Nationale Volksarmee, the East Germans' National People Army. Wolfgang Engels, a 19-year old civilian employee in his attempt to escape stole a Soviet armoured personnel carrier from a base where he was put up.

His idea of escaping was to ram the APC into the wall, but was fired at and badly wounded by the border guards.

In another desperate method to get on to the other side of the border, Thomas Krüger took the aerial route. He landed a Zin Z42M light aircraft of

the Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik, an East German youth military training organisation, at Royal Air Force Gatow.

After reaching the west side of the border, he dismantled the light aircraft and sent it to the East Germans by road.

There were many who lived to tell their story and some to have their tombstone speak. The shooting and killing of fugitives became a regular thing, but it was the death of eighteen year old Peter Fechter that left a distasteful visual worldwide.

In the view of the western media he was shot and bled to death. Reactions from every corner of the world began to pour in and the East Germans were condemned for such ghastly act.

## **TEAR DOWN THE WALL**

In a speech at the Brandenburg Gate on the 12th of July 1987 when the crowds had gathered to commemorate the 750th anniversary of Berlin, Ronald Regan made a powerful statement that sent a strong message to both the sides of the border.

He challenged Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the wall.

Ronald Regan's speech

We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace. There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and

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peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

Here, Ronald Regan was in favour of breaking down the wall, there, the Soviet leader Gorbachev was introducing reforms to liberalise communism through Perestrokia (restricting) and Glasnot (openess).

Things began to look positive; however, it was Honecker who was rigid about the Wall.

## **The Curtain Raiser Event**

Trouble began to build up in August 1989 when Hungary did away with the ‘Iron Curtain’ and opened its border with Austria. Several thousand East Germans fled to Hungary in the hope of getting in to West Germany via Austria.

As per the 1969 treaty, the Hungarian government should have ideally sent East Germans home, but in a weeks’ time they relented.

While several thousand East Germans trying to get into the West Germany by way of Czechoslovakia, headed straight for the West German Embassy in Prague. Honecker when contacted in tensed situation, played bad.

He asked the officers to force them back to East Germany and strip them from their East German