

Berlin - Historical overview.

Early history:

- Central city in Brandenburg since the olden days.
- In 1685 a lot of French speaking Huguenots were allowed to settle in Berlin.
- Capitol of **Prussia** after Frederick I 1701.
- Frederick the Great 1740 - 1786 made Berlin an important European capitol. Enlightenment and businesses were brought to the city.
- Industrialization transforms Berlin. Working class districts. Berlin a strong hold for socialist ideas.
- In 1871 Berlin becomes capitol of the German Empire. Wilhelm I King of Prussia and Kaiser of Germany.

World War 1.

- Social democracy is strong in the city.
- Demonstrations against the war.

1919 - 1933.

- The Republic is pronounced by Scheidemann from the Balcony of the Reichtag.
- On the same day, 9th November, Karl Liebknecht pronounce his socialist republic from a window at the Castle.
- Ebert sits at the Reich-Chancellery (Old one, next to Hitlers new one.) and hears all this.
- Spartacist rebellion in Berlin January 1919. Led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Steel Helmet Frei Korps and other right wing groups try to prevent this. Liebknecht and Luxembourg are caught and murdered in Tiergarten.
- The Early Nazi movement is located to Munich and plays no bigger role in Berlin.

1933 - 39.

- Hitler appointed Reichkansler 30 January 1933 by President Hindenburg.
- 27 February the Reichtag Haus is set on fire.
- Kroll Opera on the opposite side is used as parliamentary building the first months.
- April 1933 Nazi book burnings close to the Humboldt University.
- One of the first concentration camps is set up in Oranienburg in spring 1933, will later move to Sachsenhausen in 1936.
- The Jews in Berlin owned many of the bigger shops that were confiscated by the Nazis. Around Potsdamer Platz and Kurfursten Damm.
- During the Kristall Nacht 1938, the Synagogue on Oranienburger Strasse was saved by a single police officer.

World War II.

- Bombed from 43 and onwards, most intensive from the winter 44/45.
- Hitler's plan for a new Capitol "Germania".
- The Soviet Red Army, occupies Berlin by the end of April 1945. The encirclement starts in February 45.

Berlin during the Cold War.

- Divided in four occupation zones. Even if it was the Soviet Army that occupied the city.
- No walls or hinder to travel through the different zones.
- The Marshall Plan June 47 the first step towards real problems in Berlin.
- Soviet blockade West Berlin June 48. Airlift is the answer. A new currency in the western sector starts the entire situation.
- In May 1949 the blockade is lifted. The Soviets have lost a prestige loss.
- In response West Germany BRD is founded in May 1949, as a response East Germany DDR is founded in October 49. Berlin is still an occupied city and NOT a part of West Germany. In 1955 West Germany becomes a free independent country, and members of NATO.
- June 17 1953 a giant strike among the workers of East Berlin took place. around 40 000 protesters marched that day. The leaders of DDR fled to the Soviet HQ in Karlshorst. It was suppressed by soviet tanks, 20 000 men and tanks. "106 people were executed under martial law or later condemned to death, 1,838 injured, and 5,100 arrested, 1,200 of these later being sentenced to a total of 6,000 years in penal camps. It was also alleged that 17 or 18 Soviet soldiers were executed for refusing to shoot demonstrating workers" (Wikipedia). "The search for a new people"
- During the 60's Republikflucht, Fleeing the republic, a big problem.
- 1961 night between 12 and 13 August the first wall is built. At this time it mostly consists of barbed wire and bricks. Fleeing to the west is punished by death.
- In October 61 there is a stand-off between Soviet and US tanks at Checkpoint Charlie.
- After the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 62 a status quo is accepted in Berlin.
- In June 1963 president Kennedy makes his famous "Ich bin ein Berliner"-speech.
- USA get deployed in Vietnam and West and East Germany tries to harmonize their relationship during the 60's and 70's. USSR and China becomes enemies and US gets involved more and more in the Vietnam War.
- In 1971 the DDR Dictator Walter Ulbricht is replaced by Erich Honecker.
- In June 1987 president Reagan delivers his famous words "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!**" in front of the Brandenburger Thor.
- In October 1989 the celebration of DDR 40 years takes place, protesters with the slogan "We are the People" all over the city. Gorbachev is cheered and Honecker is booed at.
- On the evening of November 9 at a press conference the East German regime announced that citizens are allowed to travel to the western side without a special permit. The Wall is OPENED.
- On October 3, 1990 Germany is Reunified.