



THE COLD WAR

James Bond, 007, is a fictional British secret agent created by Ian Fleming in the 1950s. His first appearance was in the novel "Casino Royale", published in 1953.

All of Fleming's books and many of the films are set during a time known as The Cold War. This was a period of about forty years after the end of the Second World War when the biggest threat to Western civilisation was considered to be Communism. It was known as the "cold" war because there was no direct military conflict, only the threat of it.

During this period, Western countries, such as the USA and Britain, feared the expansion of communist regimes such as the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Similarly, Russia and its allies considered their enemy to be the West.

Stalin, and later Soviet leaders, felt threatened by America's superiority in nuclear weapons, and so Russia began to develop its own weapons of mass destruction. Soviet advances in rocket technology were clearly demonstrated when, in April 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first man to be launched into space.

America and her allies in NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) relied heavily on nuclear superiority, and, worried by Soviet progress, responded to the Russian space programme by landing men on the moon in 1969. This became known as the "Space Race".

The first James Bond film, Dr No, was released in 1962, the same year that the world teetered on the brink of a full-scale nuclear war in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Russia was building nuclear missile bases in Communist Cuba, very close to the USA, and subsequently America demanded that they withdraw. Eventually Russia climbed down and war was averted.

Nearly all countries have a Secret Service. Some are a form of internal police force, and some exist to protect the country from military or terrorist threat. The people who work for these services are known as "agents". They often work undercover in foreign countries in order to gain and pass on information.

There were many people in the West who believed in Communist ideals and were sympathetic to Russia. A few became spies, passing on atomic and military secrets. In some notable cases, British agents were also working for the Russians. Donald Maclean was a diplomat and MI6 agent, but was also working for the Soviet secret service, the KGB. He fled to Russia in 1952, and identified a large number of Western agents, who were hunted down and executed.

The differences between the ideals of the liberal capitalist West and the repressive Communist East were seen most clearly in Berlin, which was divided into Eastern and Western sections in 1945. In 1961, this division became even more sinister when the East German authorities began building a wall across the city. It became a symbol of Communist repression, and its destruction in 1989 heralded the end of the Cold War.



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