

# THE GATES OF HELL

The Soviet Union was a state that existed between the years 1922 and 1991. During that period, it consolidated itself as the largest country in the world by land area. The Soviet Union was composed of several republics with the same ideology that had joined together to form a single country.

In this way, Soviet influence grew steadily. At one point in its history, they made a pact with Germany during the time of the Second World War, but after being attacked by them, they joined the Allies, along with other countries like the United Kingdom, France, and the United States.

After Germany's defeat, the world was divided into two major blocs: the United States (the West) and the Soviet Union (the East). But as both sides possessed nuclear bombs, there was no direct confrontation between them.

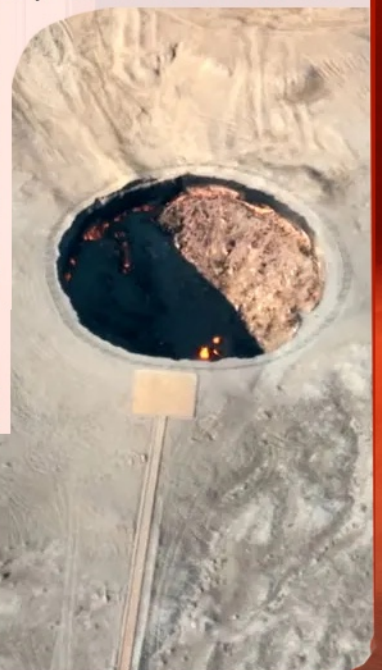
However, both superpowers embarked on grand achievements to demonstrate superiority over their rival. Among them was the space race, which left significant milestones in both camps, such as sending the first woman into space (1963), Valentina Tereshkova, or the American moon landing (1969).

In addition to that, the Soviets also carried out major megaprojects that had a significant impact on the territories under their influence. The Chernobyl nuclear accident, the drying up of the Aral Sea, and the opening of "the Gates of Hell" are well-known examples.

The Gates of Hell, also known as the Darvaza Gas Crater, is a burning natural gas crater in the Karakum Desert in Turkmenistan. The story behind this phenomenon dates back to the 1970s.

In 1971, a group of Soviet geologists was conducting explorations in the area when they accidentally drilled into an underground natural gas deposit. The ground collapsed, forming a large crater about 70 meters in diameter and 20 meters deep. To prevent the gas from spreading, the geologists decided to burn it, thinking it would extinguish in a few days. However, the gas continues to burn to this day, over 50 years later.

The flames of the Darvaza Gas Crater have turned the place into a unique and fascinating tourist attraction, attracting visitors from all over the world.



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Imágenes:  
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# COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. During what period did the Soviet Union exist?

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2. What achievements did each power accomplish during the space race?

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3. Which sea did the Soviets dry up?

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4. What did the scientists do to try to end the gas leak in the crater?

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