How It All Goes Down

The Yooks and the Zooks are divided. Over what, you ask? Which side of the bread gets buttered. We know, we know. But just go with it. After all, the buttering schism leads to an arms race for increasingly sophisticated and powerful weaponry until at last the Yooks and Zooks find themselves in a stalemate of potential mutual annihilation. Gadzooks.

Why Should I Care?

*The Butter Battle Book* deals with some scary stuff. Sure, it was published during the [Reagan era](http://www.shmoop.com/reagan-era/) while [Cold War](http://www.shmoop.com/causes-of-cold-war/%20) tensions were still high, but the young Yook faces the same questions that we do today in a world where nuclear weapons are a reality.

Yes, the [Berlin Wall](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/11/09/world/europe/20091109-berlinwallthennow.htm) is long gone, and the United States and the Russia no longer threaten each other with mutual annihilation, but a quick look at the news tells us that ultimate weapons are still a threat. *The Butter Battle Book* helps us process these frightening events, and with a cliffhanger ending, forces us to think for ourselves.

In A Nutshell

Get ready for battle, it's Yook versus Zook,  
That's what goes down in ***The Butter Battle Book***.

Which side should you spread when you butter your bread?  
For Yooks it's the top; Zooks, the bottom instead.  
Between the two lands, they build a big wall,  
That soars over everyone—the big and the small.

The issue, to us, isn't that big a deal,  
But to these ooky fellas, it feels very real.

The Yooks cook up new weapons each night,  
Bring them to the wall, and stand in Zook sight.

But each gadget made by the Yookeroo nation,  
Is topped by a scarier Zookish creation  
And so, Dr. Shmeuss fans, the arms race begins.  
Yook betters Zook, and Zook trumps once again.

The Top Secret, deadly Big-Boy Boomeroo,  
Is the final big bomb—they've both got one, too.  
And there the tale ends with no way to see:  
"Who's going to drop it?/ Will *you...*? Or will *he...*?"

*The Battle Book* was published in ol' 84  
During that time that we call the [Cold War](http://www.shmoop.com/causes-of-cold-war/).  
West vs. East, the war wasn't small,  
How do we know? Think the Berlin Wall.

Now the war's ended and the wall's fallen down,  
But the Yook and Zook lesson will always resound.

***The Butter Battle Book*** Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss) published *The Butter Battle Book* in 1984. Shortly after its publication, the book was banned from many public libraries. Hmmm…

1. What is the basis of the conflict between the Yooks and the Zooks?
2. Who do you think the Chief Yookeroo represents?
3. There are a number of examples of propaganda in the story. Identify at least two.
4. What are the themes of the book? (there are more than one)
5. How is the story a satire? (What is it ridiculing and how?)
6. Why do you think this book was banned from public libraries in the early 1980s?
7. What does this book seem to make an argument for? (There are a number of possibilities, they may even seem to contradict each other). What makes you say this?