

"A City Divided: Life and Death in the Shadow of the Wall"

Mr. Neil C. Carmichael, Jr., NDC

In 2011, the National Declassification Center of the National Archives and Records Administration and the Historical Collections Division of the Central Intelligence Agency marked the 50th anniversary of the political crisis that resulted in the erection of the Berlin Wall that divided the German city for 28 years. In 2013, the National Archives and the Central Intelligence Agency are again collaborating, this time to tell the story of the people of East Berlin and their struggle for freedom. We have gathered on the DVD just under 2,400 newly declassified documents on various topics and activities on Berlin from 1962-1986. An additional 2,100 documents are available at the National Archives at College Park. The publication covers the period between two of the most famous speeches by the visiting American Presidents Kennedy and Reagan. With his iconic speech on June 26, 1963, President John F. Kennedy united the citizens of Berlin with the United States by his statement that "he too was a Berliner." Twenty-four years later when visiting Berlin, President Ronald Reagan declared in his speech that "...Yet I do not come here to lament. For I find in Berlin a message of hope, even in the shadow of this wall, a message of triumph." The newly published and released declassified documents reveal the struggle for life and death in the shadow of the wall, focusing on the resolve of the human spirit for freedom and equality.

Telling the Story...

The first joint publication in 2011 chronicled the events surrounding and leading up to the erecting of the series of fences, barricades, and barbed wire that would be known as the Berlin Wall. In this 2013 edition, capturing the political or military significance over the next 26 years was a much more difficult story to tell. Berlin became the iconic symbol of the Cold War; however, other regions around the world would become pawns in the forefront of the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union. During the next few years, as old imperial colonies emerged and gained their independence as nations, the struggle between East and West found new battlegrounds in Southeast Asia, Africa, South and Central America that dominated the attention of the world. Life and death in Berlin played out a different type struggle for the people of East and West Berlin.

To establish a theme for this publication and release event, we began by gathering the documents we hoped would add to the historic record. The story of Berlin over the 26 year period is not so much about the national political, military, and economic stories but a struggle and triumph of the human spirit. The story unfolded in thousands of pages from memorandums, summaries and estimates; Department of the Army documents and summaries; documents from historical collections of NATO, SHAPE, and the US Departments of State, Energy, and Defense; along with materials from the Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan Presidential Libraries, US Army Heritage and Education Center, and the US Army Center of Military History.

Highlights of *A City Divided: Life and Death in the Shadow of the Wall*

The newly released documents in this publication showcase the struggle for freedom from 1962 through 1988. *"Flight to the West"* is a photo essay commissioned by the NATO public relations office during the beginning of the crises that was to chronicle the events of 1961 before the Berlin Wall was fully established. NATO never published the essay and accompanying photos, which are being published for the first time in our publication. Although we have edited the essay for inclusion here, the full version is available on the DVD. The photo essay captures a very tense period during the crises.

Highlighted in two vignettes, *"Ich Bin ein Berliner"* and *"...there is no East, no West... Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Visits Cold War Berlin,"* American visionaries President Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited Berlin and spoke before huge excited crowds. Neither man would live to see his vision realized. When President Kennedy united the citizens of Berlin with his statement that *"Ich bin ein Berliner,"* he connected with the citizens of both East and West. Shortly after President Kennedy's death in November 1963, the square where he had made his famous speech was renamed the John F. Kennedy Platz. A street in Berlin was named in honor of Dr. King after his assassination in 1968. Our other short vignettes contained within *A City Divided*, detail the creative uses of balloons, *"The Use of Balloons in the Cold War,"* the politics of the time, *"Exfiltration and US Policy,"* and the risks of *"Escapes..."* during the exfiltration of German citizens to the West.;

In *"Getting Clobbered - United States Military Liaison Mission Incidents,"* military liaisons on each side played antagonizing cat and mouse games, to gain short-term advantage over the other. *"~~Allied Convoys and Convoys!~~ Allied Access to Berlin,"* details the harassment of American forces traveling the corridor between Helmstedt–Marienborn and the Berlin suburb of Dreilinden by East German and Soviet soldiers. As described in *"The Berlin Wall,"* the East strengthened the original Wall to a permanent structure, tightening its hold with bunkers, towers, death strips, lights, and concrete and further restricting the freedom and movement of its people. The period had its lighter moments too, and *"The Spy Camera and Détente"* shows these less intense discussions between the two powers. These are only a sample of the newly declassified and released documents. The higher and stronger the wall; so grew the desire for freedom by those in the East. The documents fill in the rest of the story.

Context for this Release

Since 1995, the US government has reviewed 1.4 billion pages of classified information, exempting millions of pages that original classification authorities believe need further protection. On the occasion of our City Divided Symposium, the NDC will release over 5,500 documents and over 14,800 pages of material.

The release of these newly declassified documents provides a detailed snapshot of life and death in the shadow of the Wall, and furthers our understanding of critical events in the life of those living during the Cold War. The Berlin Wall would stand for another 28 years before the people of East Germany would peacefully rise up and regain their freedom.

