



A CITY DIVIDED

LIFE & DEATH IN THE SHADOW
OF THE WALL

16 OCTOBER 2013

at the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, DC



BERLIN





A CITY DIVIDED

LIFE & DEATH IN THE SHADOW
OF THE WALL

16 OCTOBER 2013

at the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, DC





The Wall, 1962.

table of contents

Partners 4

National Archives and Records Administration - National Declassification Center
Central Intelligence Agency - Information Management Service
Historical Review Program

Featured Speakers and Biographies 6

Timeline 10

Essays

A City Divided: Life & Death in the Shadow of the Wall
Neil C. Carmichael, Jr., National Declassification Center 12

The Berlin Wall
Dr. Donald P. Steury, Central Intelligence Agency
Brewer K. Thompson, National Declassification Center
Susan L. Burrell, Central Intelligence Agency 14

Escapes...
Susan L. Burrell, Central Intelligence Agency
Brewer K. Thompson, National Declassification Center 17

Tunneling to Freedom
Dr. Donald P. Steury, Central Intelligence Agency 21

“Ich Bin Ein Berliner”
Monica Oyola-Coeur, National Declassification Center 26

Convoys! Allied Access to Berlin
Brewer K. Thompson, National Declassification Center
Susan L. Burrell, Central Intelligence Agency 29

“...There is no East, No West...”, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visits Cold War Berlin
Dr. Trichita Chestnut, National Declassification Center 33

The “Spy Camera” and Détente
Sarah Anderson, Presidential Libraries 37

Exfiltration and Policy
Dr. Amanda Weimer, National Declassification Center. 39

The Use of Balloons in the Cold War
Bruce Macmillan, National Declassification Center 41

Getting Clobbered: United States Military Liaison Mission Incidents
Brewer K. Thompson, National Declassification Center 45

The Wall Remained
Dr. Donald P. Steury, Central Intelligence Agency 50

Acronyms and Terms Used in Berlin Documents 55

Acknowledgments 56



National Archives and Records Administration

As the nation's record keeper, it is our vision that all Americans will understand the vital role records play in a democracy, and their own personal stake in the National Archives. Our holdings and diverse programs will be available to more people than ever before through modern technology and dynamic partnerships. The stories of our nation and our people are told in the records and artifacts cared for in NARA facilities around the country. We want all Americans to be inspired to explore the records of their country.

The National Archives and Records Administration serves American democracy by safeguarding and preserving the records of our Government, ensuring that the people can discover, use, and learn from this documentary heritage. We ensure continuing access to the essential documentation of the rights of American citizens and the actions of their government. We support democracy, promote civic education, and facilitate historical understanding of our national experience.



National Declassification Center

The mission of the National Declassification Center (NDC) at the National Archives is to align people, processes, and technologies to advance the declassification and public release of historically valuable permanent records while maintaining national security. Located at the National Archives Building in College Park, MD, the Center was created as part of Executive Order #13526. It aims to be the world's preeminent declassification organization, responsive to all customers, committed to the free flow of information and the requirements of national security. Its current focus is:

- timely and appropriate processing of referrals between agencies for accessioned Federal records and transferred Presidential Records;
- general interagency declassification activities necessary to fulfill the requirements of sections 3.3 and 3.4 of the executive order;
- the exchange among agencies of detailed declassification guidance to support equity recognition;
- the development of effective, transparent, and standard declassification work processes, training, and quality assurance measures;
- the development of solutions to declassification challenges posed by electronic records, special media, and emerging technologies;
- the linkage and effective utilization of existing agency databases and the use of new technologies to support declassification activities under the purview of the Center.



Historical Review Program

The Historical Review Program [HRP] of CIA's Information Management Services is responsible for executing the Agency's Historical Review Program. This program seeks to identify and declassify collections of documents that detail the Agency's analysis and activities relating to historically significant topics and events. HRP's goals include increasing the usability and accessibility of historical collections. HRP also develops release events and partnerships to highlight each collection and make it available to the broadest audience possible.

The mission of the Historical Collections is to:

- Promote an accurate, objective understanding of the information and intelligence that has helped shape major US foreign policy decisions.
- Broaden access to lessons-learned, presenting historical material that gives greater understanding to the scope and context of past actions.
- Improve current decision-making and analysis by facilitating reflection on the impacts and effects arising from past foreign policy decisions.
- Showcase CIA's contributions to national security and provide the American public with valuable insight into the workings of its government.
- Demonstrate the CIA's commitment to the Open Government Initiative and its three core values: Transparency, Participation, and Collaboration.

featured speakers

Ms. Sheryl Shenberger

National Declassification Center

Mr. David S. Ferriero

Archivist of the United States

Mr. Joseph W. Lambert

Central Intelligence Agency

Mr. Neil C. Carmichael

National Declassification Center

Dr. Hope M. Harrison

Associate Professor History and International Affairs
at George Washington University and
Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Dr. Christian F. Ostermann

Director, History and Public Policy Program
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Dr. Donald P. Steury

Central Intelligence Agency

speaker biographies

Neil C. Carmichael is the Director of the Indexing and Declassification Review Division within the National Declassification Center. The Division is responsible for the indexing of referred, exempted and excluded documents and the systematic review of federal records. Neil's previous work includes serving in the United States Army, Department of State, seconded to the North Atlantic Treaty Origination's Archives to work on NATO's declassification and public disclosure program and the Information Security Oversight Office policy directorate. Neil has worked in the declassification of national security information since 1992. Neil holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in History from the University Maryland University College in College Park, Maryland.

David S. Ferriero is the 10th Archivist of the United States and was confirmed as the Archivist on November 6, 2009.

Previously, Mr. Ferriero served as the Andrew W. Mellon Director of the New York Public Libraries (NYPL). He was part of the leadership team responsible for integrating the four research libraries and 87 branch libraries into one seamless service for users, creating the largest public library system in the United States and one of the largest research libraries in the world. Mr. Ferriero was in charge of collection strategy; conservation; digital experience; reference and research services; and education, programming, and exhibitions.

Among his responsibilities at the NYPL was the development of the library's digital strategy, which currently encompasses partnerships with Google and Microsoft, a web site that reaches more than 25 million unique users annually, and a digital library of more than 750,000 images that may be accessed free of charge by any user around the world.

Before joining the NYPL in 2004, Mr. Ferriero served in top positions at two of the nation's major academic libraries, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, MA, and Duke University in Durham, NC. In those positions, he led major initiatives including the expansion of facilities, the adoption of digital technologies, and a reengineering of printing and publications.

Mr. Ferriero earned bachelor's and master's degrees in English literature from Northeastern University in Boston and a master's degree from the Simmons College of Library and Information Science, also in Boston. After serving in the Navy during the Vietnam War, he started in the humanities library at MIT, where he worked for 31 years, rising to associate director for public services and acting co-director of libraries.

Professor Hope M. Harrison is a well respected authority on International history of the Cold War, Russian foreign policy, German foreign policy, the influence of history on policy making in international affairs, the politicization of history, truth and reconciliation, historical justice, transitional justices, the collapse of East Germany and German unification, Germany since reunification, the Caucasus, and the U.S. foreign and security policymaking process.

Her current book project examines how Germans are dealing with the East German communist past. Her work focuses on recent debates about different approaches to depicting the Berlin Wall and other remnants of the division and the former communist regime. She has conducted extensive research in the archives in Moscow and Berlin on the decision to build the Berlin Wall and has published books and articles on this in the US, Germany and elsewhere.

In 2003, she wrote *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet—East German Relations, 1955-1961*. It was published by the Princeton University Press and won the 2004 Marshall Shulman Prize for the “best book on the international relations of the former Soviet bloc” of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. An updated and expanded version of her book was published in Germany in time for the 50th anniversary of the building of the Berlin Wall: *Ulbrichts Mauer. Wie die SED Moskaus Widerstand gegen den Mauerbau Brach* (Propyläen Verlag, 2011). She has appeared on CNN, C-SPAN, the History Channel, Deutschlandradio, and Spiegel TV discussing the Berlin Wall. Her current research focuses on German debates about how to commemorate the Berlin Wall as a site of memory since 1989.

Joseph W. Lambert entered on duty with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1984, serving initially in the Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence and on the support staff of the National Intelligence Council. Subsequently, Mr. Lambert served as the Information Management Officer for both the National Photographic Interpretation Center and later for the Directorate of Intelligence.

Mr. Lambert has served as the Director of Information Management for the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office and since December of 2007, the Central Intelligence Agency. In his current role, Mr. Lambert is responsible for records management, national security classification management and declassification and release programs at the CIA. In addition, Mr. Lambert is the Deputy Privacy and Civil Liberties Officer at the CIA.

Mr. Lambert earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration from Frostburg State College in 1979 and his Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from the George Washington University in 1994. Mr. Lambert is a recipient of a Meritorious Presidential Rank Award and the Intelligence Community’s National Intelligence Certificate of Distinction.

Christian F. Ostermann is director of the History and Public Policy Program (HAPP) as well as the director of European Studies (ES) at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Under his purview as director of HAPP and ES, Dr. Ostermann also oversees the Cold War International History Program (CWIHP), the European Energy Security Initiative (EESI), the North Korea International Documentation Project (NKIDP) and the Nuclear Proliferation International History Project (NPIHP). Additionally, he has chaired the Ion Ratiu Democracy Award since 2006, and currently serves as a co-editor of Cold War History as well as an editor of the CWIHP Bulletin.

Dr. Ostermann also often works as a consultant on many historical documentaries. He is the author of numerous publications including *The Rise and Fall of Détente on the Korean Peninsula*,

1970-1974 (2011), edited with James Person; *Crisis and Confrontation on the Korean Peninsula*, 1968-1969 (2010), edited with James Person; *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia*, 1945-1962(2010), edited with Christopher Goscha; *Inside China’s Cold War* (CWIHP Bulletin 16 (2008/2009)) and *Uprising in East Germany 1953: The Cold War, The German Question, and the First Major Upheaval Behind the Iron Curtain* (2001) with Charlers S. Maier.

Sheryl Shenberger was named as the first director of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) National Declassification Center (NDC) effective June 7, 2010. She comes to the National Archives from the intelligence community where she was most recently with the CIA Declassification Center, responsible for its 25-year review and referral program and for coordinating government-wide review of Presidential Library referrals through the Remote Archives Capture (RAC) program. From 2003 through 2006, she served as branch chief for the CIA declassification efforts at NARA where she was responsible for directing CIA review efforts and collaborating with NARA to improve declassification processes. Prior to working in the declassification field, Ms. Shenberger worked in the CIA Counter Terrorism Center (2001-2003), the CIA Crime and Narcotics Center (2000-2001), and the National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency (previously known as NIMA and NPIC; 1988-2000).

Ms. Shenberger is a graduate of Villanova University where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1979, and of North Carolina State University where she received a Master of Arts degree in English in 1983.

Donald P. Steury is a historian currently working in the National Declassification Center at the National Archives. He previously served as a Soviet military analyst and worked on the CIA History Staff from 1992 to 2007. He has written widely on intelligence history in World War II and the Cold War and his publications include two documentary histories, *On the Front Lines of the Cold War: the Intelligence War in Berlin, 1946-1961* and *Intentions and Capabilities: Estimates on Soviet Strategic Forces*. He has taught at the University of Southern California and the George Washington University and presently teaches at the University of Maryland University College. He also served on the Wissenschaftlicher Beirat of the Alliierten Museum in Berlin. He has a doctorate in modern European history from the University of California, Irvine.

Playing along the Wall.



LIFE & DEATH IN THE SHADOW OF THE WALL

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS 1961-1987

22 Feb 1962
Robert F. Kennedy visits West Berlin and places a wreath on the Bernauerstraße sidewalk below the 3rd floor apartment of Ida Sieckman.

17 Aug 1962
18 year-old Student Peter Fechter Shot and Mortally Wounded Attempting to Escape over the Wall to West Berlin, near Checkpoint Charlie.



A solemn visitor to Peter Fechter's memorial.

19 Aug 1961
LBJ Visits Berlin



22 Aug 1961
Ida Sieckmann Dies after Jumping from Her Third-Floor Bernauerstraße Apartment in an Effort to Escape to West Berlin; First Casualty of the Wall.



28 Jan 1964*
US T-39 shot down in Soviet Zone

27 Mar 1964*
Crashed RB-66 crew members released by East Germany

12-14 Sep 1964
Martin Luther King, Jr. Visits Berlin

14 Oct 1964
Khrushchev overthrown and replaced by Brezhnev and Kosygin

26 Jun 1963
President Kennedy views the walled-in Brandenburg Gate with GDR flags blocking the East Berliners from seeing the President. The propaganda sign, in English, is addressed to the President.



21 Oct 1963*
In October and November, Soviet and East German Harassment of Allied Convoys stepped up. This was last Berlin issue faced by JFK prior to his assassination.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Soviet Sector border of the Wall in Bernauerstraße.



23 Nov 1965*
US Policy document "Prevention of U.S. Citizen Involvement in Refugee Exfiltration Activity."

7 Apr 1966*
Soviet fighter crashes in British Sector of West Berlin

27 Feb 1969
President Nixon views the Berlin Wall from the Moritz Platz observation platform.



Aug 1973
GDR builds memorial at the corner of Schützenstraße and Jerusalemer Straße in Berlin-Mitte honoring border guards killed at the Berlin Wall.

3 Jun 1972*
Quadripartite Powers Sign Agreement on Future of Berlin



29 Mar 1975*
"Spy camera" falls from airplane over East Berlin, Dobrynin hands Kissinger protest note on 29-Mar-1975

8 May 1975*
Army Briefing re Exfiltration Activities



Checkpoint Charlie, a site of successful and unsuccessful exfiltration.

11 Jun 1982*
President Ronald Reagan visits Berlin



15 Jul 1978*
President Jimmy Carter Visits Berlin



24 Mar 1985*
Major Arthur D. Nicholson is shot, the only USMLM tour officer to be killed in the line of duty

21 Jun 1985
After three years of negotiations, 23 Americans held in Eastern Europe were exchanged for Polish spy Marian Zacharski and 3 Soviet agents arrested in the West. The exchange took place on Glienicker Brueke, also known as "The Bridge of Spies".



One of the last exchanges took place after three years of negotiations, when 25 Americans held in Eastern Europe were "traded" for 1 Polish spy and 5 arrested Soviet agents. This exchange took place on Glienicker Brücke, known as the "Bridge of Spies."



1 Feb 1983
Vice-President George H. W. Bush visits the wall during his tour of West Berlin.



11 Aug 1986
On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the "anti-fascist" Berlin Wall, East German children place wreaths at the memorial for fallen border guards.

12 Jun 1987*
President Ronald Reagan makes "Tear down this wall" speech at Brandenburg Gate.

30 Jun 1987*
The Wall Remained...



1960

1963

1966

1969

1972

1976

1979

1982

1985

1988

A CITY DIVIDED:

LIFE & DEATH IN THE SHADOW OF THE WALL

NEIL G. CARMICHAEL, JR.
NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER

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. “*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.



“Compulsory military service is an honorable duty. The protection of the Socialist Fatherland is the most righteous thing of the world.”

THE BERLIN WALL

DR. DONALD P. STEURY, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

BREWER K. THOMPSON, NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER

SUSAN L. BURRELL, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Sunset – August 12, 1961: The combined British, French and American sectors of Berlin were surrounded by 155 km of fortifications on their north, south and west sides and mirrored the defenses emplaced by the German Democratic Republic (GDR) along the inner German border. Only along the relatively “open” border between the Soviet and Allied Sectors, could Berliners go to and from East and West for work, family or pleasure.

Dawn – August 13, 1961: Berliners awoke to a new set of fortifications: the barbed wire and guards that the East Germans used to barricade the border between the Soviet and Allied sectors. Now, East and West Berlin were two separate cities. At this point in history, West Berlin evolved into a symbol of freedom—an island representing choice and self-determination in a terrain of suppression. What the Berlin Wall was and why it was constructed are two key points to understanding, this iconic symbol of the Cold War.

The Berlin Wall closed the last, easily accessible route that East Germans had for emigration to the West. (*Figure 1*) The GDR had lost over three million citizens, roughly 20% of its population, since 1952. These were GDR’s “best and brightest” usually well educated and skilled workers that were deemed the economic foundation of the socialist state. This brain drain led Walter Ulbricht, leader of East Germany, to push Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev for a resolution to the status of Berlin and an end to mass emigration. Though actually built to control the outward movement of East Germans, the wall was promoted inside the GDR as an “anti-fascism wall,” designed to keep what were referred but these as Western fascists out of East Germany. The structure was built just inside the

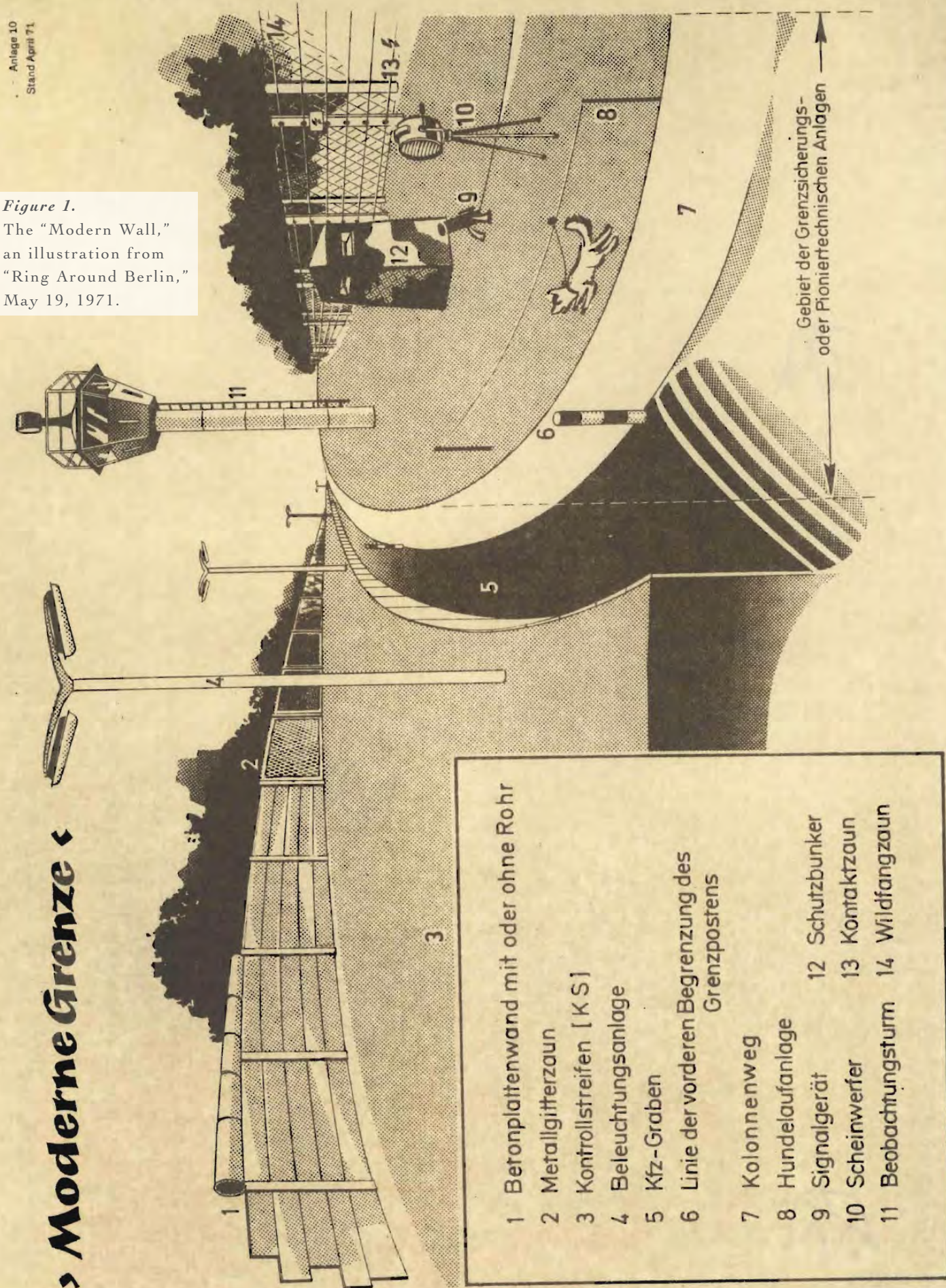
Soviet occupied sector border, technically outside the control of the Allied occupying powers. The Wall was first made of barbed wire strung between posts with VOPOs [Volkspolizei - East German Police] or GDR soldiers standing guard. Within weeks of the first simple barricades going up, there was a concerted effort to build guard towers and replace barbed wire fences with concrete slab walls. People were forcibly moved from buildings that were along the border and could provide escape routes to the West. Some buildings were demolished to expand the ‘no-man’s land’ along the route of the Wall. Along Bernauerstraße, complete apartment blocks were destroyed.

Ultimately, the Wall and its accompanying “death strip” surrounding West Berlin consisted of a wire fence, raked sand or gravel, more than 40,000 reinforced concrete slabs topped with smooth surfaced pipe, flood lights, reinforced wire fence/mesh, trip wires and signal fences, concertina wire, anti-vehicle trenches, tank traps and guard dogs leashed onto wire runs. By the end of the 1960s, there were approximately 110 watchtowers and 20 bunkers. The “Death Zone” around West Berlin mimicked the Inner-German border, but without the mines and spring guns that were an added feature of the inner-border defense system. It was said that air travelers could tell when they approached West Berlin at night — there would be a ring of light formed by the floodlights illuminating the Wall’s route — a counterpoint to the darkened landscape of East Germany.

Throughout the collections, there are descriptions of the Wall, the Allied responses to its existence and its impact on the lives of both East and West Berliners.

Anlage 10
Stand April 71

Figure 1.
The “Modern Wall,”
an illustration from
“Ring Around Berlin,”
May 19, 1971.



Appendix 10
(As of April 1971)

MODERNE GRENZE	MODERN BORDER
	Legend
1 Betonplattenwand mit oder ohne Rohr	Wall of concrete slabs with or without pipe
2 Metallgitterzaun	Metal lattice-work fence
3 Kontrollstreifen (KS)	Control strip
4 Beleuchtungsanlage	Lighting system
5 Kfz-Graben	Motor Vehicle ditch
6 Linie der vorderen Begrenzung des Grenzpostens	Front line of border patrol
7 Kolonnenweg	Vehicle road
8 Hundelaufanlage	Dog run
9 Signalgeraet	Signal device
10 Scheinwerfer	Searchlight
11 Beobachtungsturm	Observation tower
12 Schutzbunker	Protection bunker
13 Kontaktzaun	Electric fence
14 Wildfangzaun	Game exclusion fence
Gebiet der Grenzsicherungs- oder Pioniertechnischen Anlagen	Zone of border security or engineer technical installations

Figure 2.
Translation of the Wall Legend.

ESCAPES...

SUSAN L. BURRELL, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
BREWER K. THOMPSON, NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER

What if you were told you could not leave someplace? What would you do? If you wanted to leave, how would you go about escaping? For citizens of the German Democratic Republic [GDR], those three questions were serious ones. Leaving the GDR was considered desertion. Individuals who escaped were traitors and deemed politically, morally backward persons. Escape attempts were a criminal act in the GDR, and unsuccessful attempts faced harsh fines, up to three years imprisonment and/or deportation to internal exile in distant towns. The same penalties were imposed on those giving assistance with their escape attempt. Yet, even in light of those penalties, citizens of the GDR were willing to try to leave their country. Some were able to get official permits; some were ransomed by West Germany after being imprisoned, some escaped by way of other countries, and some attempted very visible escapes by directly crossing the border, either at the Berlin Wall or at another location on the East-West German border.

What provoked GDR citizens to take the risk of escaping? Some of the reasons given by refugees include specific social or political reasons, such as induction into the GDR military or being forcibly moved from one area in East Germany to another area away from family and friends. Other reasons were more unique, such as the destruction of villages as border fortifications were expanded. Still others cited the lack of opportunity and the deteriorating living conditions in East Germany.

How East Germans escaped is a study in the resolve of the human spirit. Although the majority of the escapees crossed by foot at little guarded, or fortified sections, others escaped in

a more spectacular fashion, such as by building a tunnel or hiding under pig carcasses in a refrigerated truck delivering meat to the West. In 1979, one successful escape even inspired a movie—the hot air flight of two families using a cobbled together balloon and a home-made engine fueled by propane. Others swam, floated and wind-surfed the Baltic Sea to Denmark. Some of the more flamboyant methods involved a zip line, ultra-light planes or meat hooks to cross the Wall and the adjacent death strip.

The GDR was quite adamant in restraining its citizens. (Figure 1) East German soldiers had orders to shoot if individuals failed to halt when “requested” to do so at the border. Both General Hoffman, the GDR Defense minister in 1966, and Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party from 1971-1989, stated on numerous occasions that those who do not respect GDRs orders will be shot. In 1982, the regulations were formally codified, and the use of extreme force was permitted against any who attempted to break through the border. Essentially, the GDR soldiers had a warrant to use lethal force to prevent any escape or border penetration. This authorization to use deadly force was more commonly called Schießbefehl—“order to shoot” in reference to Befehl 101 (Order 101).

Throughout the collection, there are descriptions and reports of successful and failed escapes as well as the regulations that governed the use of extreme force and the concurrent sanction to kill.



1757-1629-9257 9-52-101 3178 1012
915-1257
CONFIDENTIAL/LIMDIS
Classification
Department of State
TELEGRAM

POL 38
CONTROL 0761

USMISSION BERLIN

1810
3 MAY 73

DISTRIBUTION

XXXXX
ACTION

E.O. 11652:

GDS

TAGS:

ETRD, XH

SUBJECT:

GDR EMIGRATION POLICY

ACTION:

SECSTATE

WASHDC

INFO :

AMEMBASSY

BONN

AMEMBASSY

BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY

BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY

HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY

MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY

PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY

SOFIA

AMEMBASSY

WARSAW

Figure 1.

State Department telegram from
US Mission Berlin dated May 3,
1973 which outlines East German
emigration policy. (5 pages)

EAS3

MIN-3

USCOB

POL-2

USIS

ASAG

CHRON

11

HELSINKI FOR USDEL MPT

BERLIN 0761

KMXXK LIMDIS

REF: A. State 80268

B. Berlin 733

C. Berlin 1804 of Oct. 19, 1972

1. East German emigration policy is one of most restrictive in Eastern Europe. Current GDR Constitution (1968) does not contain provision ~~(of Article 10)~~ of 1949 Constitution according to which East German citizen had right (on paper at least) to emigrate, and provides only for freedom of movement within GDR. Even

this right, however, can be limited by law. Travel to West for visiting purposes is also severely restricted.

Attempts at unauthorized exit (Republikflucht) are subject to severe ~~penalties~~ penalties.

Moreover, GDR's western borders are equipped with intricate system of barriers, including mine fields and automatic shooting devices, and border guards have standing orders to fire at would-be escapees. Most recent shooting incident occurred at Berlin Wall, in which escapee was killed (Ref B).

2. No GDR emigration laws or regulations have been made public but presumably such exist in unpublished form to provide "socialist legality" and guidance to GDR officials handling emigration requests.

3. GDR pensioners, unproductive element which regime evidently regards as economic burden and therefore expendable, are only category of citizens exempted from otherwise virtually total ban on private travel to West. They are allowed one or more trips totaling up to 30 days a year. Some are also permitted to leave ~~country~~ country permanently, and some simply fail to return. In context of FRG-GDR Basic Treaty, GDR agreed to certain measures for reunification of families; ~~assessment of implementation~~ ^{effect} will be ~~possible~~ ^{evident} only after that treaty enters into force.

4. According West German figures, 11,627 GDR residents, almost without exception pensioners, legally emigrated to FRG/West Berlin in 1972. Further 5,537 left GDR illegally, of whom 1,245 in circumstances dangerous to their lives.

Classification

CONFIDENTIAL/LIMDIS

FORM FS-413(H)
4-68
(CONTINUATION SHEET)

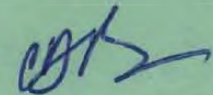
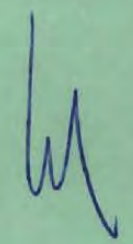
DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 67230
By BKT/NC on 26 March 2013

CONFIDENTIAL/LIMDIS
Classification

FORM FS-413(H)
4-68

5. Official GDR fee for passport exit visa is DME 10 (about \$2.40). We have, however, unconfirmed reports that Western sponsor had to pay GDR unofficially up to equivalent of several thousand dollars for exit permit for emigrant.

6. Our Consulate General has been receiving only one or two East German immigrant visa applications per year. Difficulty of obtaining GDR exit permit illustrated by case of an Amcit's father, who has been denied such permit on security grounds even though he is 70-year-old retired roofer.

KLEIN 


TUNNELING TO FREEDOM

DR. DONALD P. STEURY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Attempts to escape from East Berlin began as soon as the Wall was built. At first, it was not too difficult; the concertina-wire barriers and mortared concrete block walls that were thrown up by the East German troops were slap-dash and full of holes. East Berliners found ways to go over, under or wriggle through the Wall. Sewer lines or subway tunnels provided ready access. Attempts were made to swim across the River Spree and, in places like Bernauer Straße, where apartment buildings abutted right on to the dividing line between East and West, people could drop down or jump into the Western half of the city. West Berliners helped and the Fire Department tried to catch would-be escapees who jumped from upper-story windows. Some smashed through the traffic barriers in cars or trucks or simply legged it as fast as they could through the checkpoints. It was always dangerous, but the guards could be taken by surprise, or they might hesitate before shooting, or pity might stay their hands.

Maybe.

This did not last. The East German regime, confronted with the reckless attempts of their citizens to flee, quickly began to improve the barrier and to plug the holes through which they were escaping to the West. Gratings were installed in sewer lines, subway tunnels were sealed or blocked, windows looking out on West Berlin were bricked up; anything offering cover near the border was removed. The Wall gradually became a fortified zone, with guard towers, spotlights, dogs and a "death strip" swept by machine guns and filled with antipersonnel mines. At some point, the infamous Schießbefehl (Order to

Shoot) was issued. Although not given written form until 1982, this secret order was implicit in the regulations issued to the border guards, which criminalized escapees and made preventing escape into the West an "absolute priority." Guards were further enjoined to use every means at their disposal to prevent unauthorized border crossings.¹ The fatal consequences of the border regime were made manifest on 24 August 1961, when 24 year-old Günter Litfin was shot dead trying to swim across the River Spree, the first of some 90 East Germans to be killed while trying to escape to the West.

Under these circumstances, tunneling quickly emerged as the most viable means of escaping to the West. It was not completely safe—the East German border guards were on the lookout for tunnels and were not afraid to use violent means—including explosives—to shut them down. But, with caution and luck, a single tunnel could be a path to freedom for dozens of people before it was discovered.

A total of 70 tunnels are known to have been dug, of which 19 are believed to have been successful. The first known tunnel was completed in October, 1961. Leading into Zehlendorf, at the south edge of the city, in the American sector, this tunnel was dug from East Berlin into the West: unusually so, for it was considered less dangerous to dig from west to east and most tunnels took that direction. Between five and 14 East Berliners escaped through this first tunnel, the vanguard of at least 209 East Germans who crawled their way into West Berlin and freedom.²

¹Sälter, Gerhard, "Zum 'Schießbefehl' und dem Einsatz von Schußwaffen an der Berliner Mauer und der innerdeutschen Grenze," (Gedenkstätte Berliner Mauer, 2007 <http://www.berliner-mauer-gedenkstaette.de>), p. 2

Tunnels were attempted throughout most of the Cold War, but about half of the known tunnels were attempted in 1962. The year also saw the widespread appearance of *Fluchthelfer*, groups of “escape helpers” who worked with East Berliners to arrange escape attempts. Most were volunteers, students from one of West Berlin’s two universities—the Freie Universität and the Technische Universität. Some worked for pay, some were con artists and a few were agents of the East German Ministerium für Staatssicherheit—the Stasi. They were invaluable for tunneling operations, which were intrinsically labor intensive and required organization, planning and considerable logistical support. The first tunnel project known to have involved Fluchthelfer was begun in September 1961. Dug from a rail freight yard in Schönholz, the tunnel emerged on the eastern side in the Pankow Municipal Cemetery. Between 20 and 100 people used it to escape before it was uncovered by the East German police in December—making it possibly the most successful tunnel ever.³

The appearance of Fluchthelfer highlighted what was perhaps the biggest problem in any tunneling attempt, that of security. Tunnels had to be dug and the more workers who could be brought in, the quicker a project could be completed. But the more people who were involved in any undertaking involving East Germany—even legitimate ones—the more likely it was to be compromised to the police. A successful group of Fluchthelfer offered some reassurance in that regard—since, if they were successful, they were unlikely to have been penetrated by the Stasi. But, the fact of their success made them all the more likely to be targets of the East German security services. Success in any tunneling operation meant, first and foremost, resolving this security dilemma. Failure to do so meant arrest, stiff prison terms and possibly even death.

Two tunnel projects in the summer of 1962 demonstrate this well. One, undertaken by a group of Fluchthelfer led by Fritz Wagner and Harry Seidel, was dug in the vicinity of Kiefholzstraße, at the borders of Neukölln in West Berlin and Treptow in the East—an area favored by tunnel builders because of good soil conditions and the configuration of the border. Wagner and Seidel eventually were joined by the so-called Girmann Group—formally known as *Unternehmen Reisebüro* (Operation Travel Agency)—which had been involved in a variety of innovative escape operations, but not usually tunnels. But, the Girmann Group was well-suited to the project, being efficient, technically proficient and security conscious—which was just as well, for the Girmann Group also was well-known to the Stasi, which made them a target for penetration and betrayal.

The other tunnel was on the other side of the city, in Bernauer Straße—an address known more for dramatic above-ground escape attempts than tunnels. This was a private endeavor, begun by Luigi Spina, an Italian student at the Technische Universität, who wanted to help a fellow student and his family escape from the East. He was joined by, among others, fellow students Domenico Sesta, Hasso Herschel, Ulrich Pfeifer and Joachim Rudolph. Being engineers, they brought a level of sophistication to their project not hitherto seen. Herschel, Pfeifer and Rudolph served as a link with the Kiefholzstraße project, contributing labor in this tunnel when their own was inundated by summer rains.⁴ This was, potentially, a hazard, for it meant that, if one tunnel was compromised, the other, through Herschel, Pfeifer and Rudolph, might be as well.

Both tunnel projects quickly experienced money problems. Both sought out an interesting source of funds for materials and equipment: American television.

From the beginning, the Kiefholzstraße tunnel was the more problematic. Security was chaotic—tunnel diggers and would-be escapees were recruited by word of mouth and the need for volunteers was widely broadcast in university circles in West Berlin, which meant that it was only a matter of time before the Stasi learned of the tunnel’s existence. Reportedly, it was the local branch of the West German security service which brought the Girmann Group into the project, in an effort to establish some security discipline.⁵ Nevertheless, it was with some alarm that the US Mission Berlin learned from old Berlin hand James P. O’Donnell—formerly on Gen. Clay’s staff—that the diggers had made contact with CBS News Correspondent Daniel Schorr, with an offer of exclusive rights to the story and the opportunity to film the whole escape attempt.⁶ Citing the “adverse effect on our relations with the German press and Berlin city officials,” the Mission applied pressure, first to O’Donnell and then to Schorr, in an effort to dissuade them, eventually bringing pressure on the Head of CBS News from the Secretary of State.⁷

Fortunately for Schorr, they were successful. On 7 August 1962, as truck loads of would be escapees converged on the Eastern terminus at the corner of Kiefholzstraße and Puderstraße, the East German guards moved in. Fortunately, look-outs from the Girmann Group saw what was coming. At the last minute, the diggers—including Herschel, Pfeifer and Rudolph—were able to escape back down the tunnel. But, the East Germans arrested 37 East Berliners waiting to go down the tunnel that night and, after interrogations, another 52 participants in the project. Since Schorr was not there, a major diplomatic incident was avoided, while Schorr himself had escaped possible arrest and imprisonment.⁸

Ironically, it was the Girmann Group that had compromised the tunnel. At the end of March

1962, the Stasi had placed an informant (*Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*), codenamed, “Hardy,” in the group. Hardy was assigned to the Kiefholzstraße tunnel, working as a courier. He blew the tunnel to the Stasi, who simply laid a trap, waiting until the tunnel was finished to gather as many as possible into the net.⁹

The Bernauer Straße tunnel was a much more closely-held affair. Luigi Spina and Domenico Sesta, who were really the driving force behind the project, spent much time reconnoitering likely sites, trying to balance accessibility, easy of construction and security. The site they finally chose was unusual. The western terminus of the tunnel from which (as was typical) the digging began, was in the basement of an abandoned swizzle-stick factory on the western side of Bernauer Straße. The eastern terminus was the basement of a deserted apartment building on Schönholzer Straße—ironically, vacated by the East German police because it was too close to the Wall and might be used for escape attempts. It was to be a longish tunnel—140 yards—and would require the engineers from the Technische Universität to make full use of their skills. The result was the most sophisticated effort thus far, employing extensive internal structure to reinforce the tunnel, electric lighting, ventilation, a miniature electric rail line to retrieve the excavated dirt and a pumping system to prevent flooding. All of which they would need.¹⁰

Work on “Tunnel 29” began in March 1962.¹¹ Almost immediately, it became apparent why other tunnel projects had paid more attention to soil conditions and less to security. Fifteen feet down, they were secure against East German sensors and below the cable and pipes of the Berlin substrata, but well inside the shallow Berlin water table. The soil was sandy and, when wet, turned to butter, requiring consider support to keep the tunnel from collapsing. Even though the tunnel was only three

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶National Archives and Records Administration RG 84 Entry 256 Box 36, Memorandum for the Record, 3 August 1962.

⁷Daniel Schorr, “The CBS Tunnel Documentary That Never Was,” Newseum, 12 June 2012 (Interview on Youtube). Schorr remained bitter about the whole affair until the end of his days.

⁸Nooke and Dollmann, op. cit., p. 30.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁰Wyden, Peter, *Wall. The Inside Story of Divided Berlin* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), p. 290.

¹¹This, like other tunnels, became known for the number of people who successful used it to escape.

²Arnold, Dietmar and Sven Felix Kellerhoff, *Die Fluchttunnel von Berlin* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2008), pp. 279-88. Because of the secrecy implicit and necessary in these dangerous enterprises, our information is incomplete. Probably more tunnels were attempted and failed, most likely because they were abandoned before much progress was made. Some others may have been discovered by the East German authorities, some may even have been successful.

³*Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁴Nooke, Maria and Lydia Dollmann, *Fluchtziel Freiheit. Berichte vonn DDR-Flüchtlingen über die Situation nach dem Mauerbau* (Veröffentlinchtungen der Stiftung Berliner Mauer; Berlin Ch. Links Verlag, 2011), p. 28.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 67230

By BKT/NC on 2 May 2013

~~SECRET~~

AEBU-IO

7 August 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Possible Refugee Influx (U)

1. (S) A reliable source has reported that on 7 August, approximately 90 refugees will be exfiltrated from East Berlin. This operation is being directed by a group of West Berlin wholesale butchers who operate trucks between West Berlin and East Berlin. In conjunction with a local student group, they have constructed a tunnel which allegedly egresses into Neukölln (U.S. Sector). Source reports that Dan Shore, CBS Commentator, has already taken 3 rolls of film of the tunnel, for which he paid the operators 5,000 DMW. Film is allegedly to be released on 13 August.

2. (U) Evaluation of Source is B-3.

GERALD V. SABATINO
Lt Col, GS
Acting Intelligence Officer

DISTRIBUTION:

USCOB
G-2
POL
USBER
USASAG
FILE

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES
COPY 4 OF 2 COPIES

NO FORN
Not releasable to Foreign
Nationals Except NONE

IO/USCOB Reg. No.
X-2102

DOWNGRADED AT 12 YEAR INTERVALS
NOT AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED
DOD DIR 5200.10

~~SECRET~~

feet by three feet, it eventually consumed some 20 tons of lumber, while it was necessary for pumps to be running constantly, taking out 8,000 gallons of water a week.¹² Like all tunnel projects, this one was on a shoe-string budget, living off donations begged from local political groups, anti-communist groups and newspapers. These funds ran out before the tunnel was one-quarter done. More money had to be found.¹³

Fortunately, the word was out that NBC Berlin Correspondent Piers Anderton was looking for a tunnel. Spina approached Anderton and presented him with a demand for \$50,000—which Anderton bargained down to \$12,000. Anderton had virtual *carte blanche* from the head of NBC News, Reuven Frank, who was determined to produce a tunnel documentary and was equally determined that the tunnel be a successful one. Frank was willing to keep the tunnel builders on a long-lead and kept Anderton and his cameramen away from the tunnel until it was time to film the escape. Knowledge of the tunnel was strictly on a “need to know” basis at NBC. Frank himself never saw the tunnel, and only drove by the swizzle-stick factory once, the night of the escape.¹⁴

This coalesced with the innate caution demonstrated by Spina and Sesta. The group directly involved in the tunnel was kept small—initially only eight and never more than 21. University affiliation also may have been a factor. Drawing from the Technische Universität, they had a different labor pool than other groups, which drew from the poets and scholars at the Freie Universität.

Then, too, if they did know of the tunnel, the Stasi may have been convinced that it was doomed. Taking seven months to dig, the tunnel was constantly threatened by flooding. Work had to be suspended in June, when a nearby water main broke and then again in July, when the tunnel was inundated by 40,000 gallons of water.

It was during this period that Herschel, Pfeifer and Rudolph went to work on the Kiefholzstraße tunnel. If they let it be known that the Bernauer Straße tunnel was abandoned, they may well have saved the operation.¹⁵

But then, finally, it was finished. A race against flood waters to the end, on 14 September the eastern terminus was opened. Over that night and the following one, 29 East Berliners made their way to freedom. At the last they were up to their faces in water—a terrifying experience, 15 feet underground. Late on the fifteenth a final flood closed the tunnel forever.¹⁶

The NBC camera men were on hand for the escapes. The documentary was kept secret until it was ready to be shown, on 31 October. A mix of actual tunnel footage and later reenactments by the participants, it employed no interviews, letting the footage and Anderton’s spare narrative speak for themselves.

The State Department did not become aware of the film until October. With the Cuban missile crisis underway, they acted to delay or prevent its being shown on television. The government of West Berlin also was alarmed. NBC deferred to the “National Interest,” but eventually broadcast the documentary in December.¹⁷

It stands as a masterpiece of Cold War journalism.

¹²Herschel, Hasso, “Seven Months to Dig a Tunnel, Newseum 12 June 2012 (Interview on Youtube); Wyden, *ibid.*, pp. 290-91.

¹³Wyden, *ibid.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 288-89.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 292.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 293.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

“ICH BIN EIN BERLINER”

MONICA OYOLA-COEUR
NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER

President John F. Kennedy's iconic statement delivered in his speech to the citizens of West Berlin during his eight hour visit on June 26, 1963 became a symbol of the friendship that was forged between the Berliners and the Americans during the blockage and of the support for American troops in Berlin's US Sector. In a memorandum dated July 4, 1963, Robert H. Lochner of the USIS Radio in the American Sector (RIAS) reports to Mr. A.R. Day of the US Mission in Berlin that the visit by the President of the United States "ranks equally with the American inauguration of the Air Lift 15 years earlier," and asserts that these were the two most important events that had happened in Berlin since the end of World War II.

Berliners received the President with affection and gratitude, and according to RIAS analysts these expressions of honor, faith and confidence inspired his "Ich bin ein Berliner" assertion. A telegram to the Secretary of State dated June 27, 1963 describes the Berlin reception as unprecedented: a record crowd of approximately 1.5 million lining the entire 35 mile presidential route (*Figure 1*). This telegram also discusses the long-term commitment to US-Berlin relations set forth by State Department foreign policy two months prior to the presidential visit, and clearly stated by President Kennedy to the people of Berlin.



Figure 1.

An estimated one-and-a-half million Berliners line the 50-Kilometer route taken by the President through the city. Here crowds wave greetings on the way to the airport.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 67230

By BKT/NC on 2 May 2013

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the
United States of America

16

OUTGOING

US MISSION BERLIN

COPY NR: 1

FILE ROOM COPY POL 7

POL 4
USCOB
M 3
EA
ECON
USIS
ASAG
IO
PS
STOUR
(PS)
F&R2

Charge:

~~SECRET~~

Classification

Control: 146

Date: June 25, 1963
4:20p.m.

ACTION: Amcongen FRANKFURT 027 OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE

INFO: Secstate WASH 1329

PRESIDENTIAL VISIT BERLIN

USCOB V/S
RIAS
ADM
CON
BBde
SA 8
GUILDNER (ID)
RUBLY (STG)
SABEL (STG)

Mission informed by Construction Workers Union Chairman Georg

Leber that bouquet from East German construction workers to be

smuggled into West Berlin for presentation to President. Leber wishes to know whether President will accept bouquet.

Mission inclined to favor idea since matter likely to become public information and President's refusal could be subject criticism.

Leber knows bouquet subject to Secret Service inspection and Secret Service therefore sees no objection from security standpoint.

SCP-3

Figure 2.

State Department telegram from US Mission Berlin dated June 25, 1963 regarding smuggling of bouquet into West Berlin for President Kennedy.

CALHOUN

POL: EANagy: aeh: 6/25/63

146rtg

~~SECRET~~

Classification

REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY IS
PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

These demonstrations of affection and gratitude to the US President and his message of freedom were not contained by the 12 ft. high barb-wired wall. A recently declassified document confirms that East Berliners were likewise uplifted by the visit of the American President to Berlin and they wanted President Kennedy to know. In a telegram dated June 25, 1963, Mr. Calhoun of the US Mission in Berlin informs the Secretary of State of the intention of East German construction workers to smuggle a bouquet to be presented to President Kennedy on occasion of his address to the Labor Unions Congress, taking place in West Berlin in conjunction with the President's visit. (*Figure 2*) Georg Leber, Chairman of the

Construction Workers Union and one of the labor convention leaders, submitted the request to the US Mission hoping that the President would accept the bouquet. The request was hence submitted to the Secret Service and the smuggled bouquet got its "good to go" with no security. In contrast to the overwhelmingly warm reception afforded to President Kennedy on June 26, Soviet Premier Khrushchev's visit to East Berlin two days later did not seem to draw much response and enthusiasm from the East Berliners. It was reported that only a small crowd gathered along the route that Khrushchev and East Germany's leader Ulbricht followed on June 28. (*Figure 3*)



Figure 3.

Waves by Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev and East German Leader Walter Ulbricht fail to draw much response from small crowd along the parade route in East Berlin. No one moves forward as small girls present flowers to the Soviet visitor.

CONVOYS!

ALLIED ACCESS TO BERLIN

BREWER K. THOMPSON, NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER

SUSAN L. BURRELL, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

The division of Germany and the concurrent division of Berlin created an outpost of freedom deep within East Germany. West Berlin was an island where life hinged on the air corridors and land transit routes crossing the territory controlled by the Soviets and East Germans. Everyone who traveled to or from Berlin—and everything produced or used in Berlin—from coal to soup—arrived or left the city at the forbearance of the Soviet-bloc authorities—who were extremely aware of West Berlin's isolation. The Western Allies refused to yield any iota of the treaty-defined rights that guaranteed their presence in and access to Berlin. The result was an endless series of confrontation on almost a daily basis as each side tested the resolve or tolerance of the other. Although these confrontations usually stayed at a low level of hostility, they could escalate—especially when dictated by Soviet policy. The most infamous example of this type of escalation was the blockade of 1948-49.

Access by air was the easiest, since it was guaranteed by treaties hammered out during and after the war. For safety's sake, West Berlin had a functioning air-traffic control system that was accepted by both sides. On the other hand, there was the occasional or opportunistic harassment by Soviet or East German fighters—often with hair-raising results. All in all, the air access system generally functioned without conspicuous interruption.

Access by the established land transit routes was drastically different. All heavy goods, military equipment and personnel moved over land—or if civilian, by canal. Allied military traffic crossed to West Berlin in special military trains, or by convoys

along the Autobahn. Vehicles and personnel entered the transit corridors at the inner-German border via heavily-guarded checkpoints. Land traffic could not exit these corridors until their arrival in Berlin. The procedures for clearing a military convoy or train through the corridors put junior and field-grade military officers in direct contact with their Soviet-bloc counterparts. There was little room for compromise on the frequent disputes over the seemingly ludicrous interpretation of procedure. Mostly these confrontations were handled at the checkpoints, or in Berlin, but, occasionally, they escalated to higher command levels and sometimes even drew the attention of the national leadership.

One of the last issues President Kennedy faced before his fatal trip to Dallas was the Soviet harassment of the Military Autobahn convoys going to and from West Berlin. There were three major incidents, two concerning US convoys and the other a British one. The first confrontation was on October 9-10, 1963, when two US Military Convoys were stopped at the Marienborn checkpoint just inside East Germany. One convoy was coming into West Berlin from its base in the Federal Republic of Germany [FRG] and the other was returning to the FRG. For both convoys, the Soviet observers demanded that all troops "dismount" so that they could be counted and nominally confirm that the convoy had not "picked up" any individuals trying to escape from East Germany. (*Figure 1*) The Allies considered dismounting a courtesy and, if all travel documents were in order, there should be no inspection of the convoys. President Kennedy closely followed the incidents and on the 21 October meeting laid out the tactics and responses to be taken by US convoys. All in all,

the stopping of convoys was a continuing plan of small harassments that reminded the Allies about the Berlin issue and the greater issue concerning the two Germanys. It also was a way to pressure the Allies into abandoning West Berlin, and would leave the East Germans in full control of the city and allow the Soviets to score a major propaganda coup in the Cold War.



A military convoy on the move.

TELEGRAM Foreign Service of the
United States of America

19/11 OUTGOING US MISSION, BERLIN

FILE ROOM COPY
POL 38-10

MIN 3
USCOB
UKCOB
UFCOB
POL 3
EA
ECON
USIS
AASAG
IO/U
BBDE
USMLM
ALLIED
STAFF
BERLIN
DAD
F&R

Charge: ~~SECRET~~
Classification

Control: 107
Date: OCTOBER 13, 1963
2130 HOURS

ACTION:	SecState WASH	PRIORITY	478
INFO:	Amembassy BONN	PRIORITY	426
	Amembassy LONDON	"	268
	Amembassy MOSCOW	"	224
	Amembassy PARIS	"	276
	USAREUR/POLAD	"	
	CINCEUR/POLAD	"	
	USNMR SHAPE/BURNS	"	
	USELMLO	"	

Figure 1.
State Department telegram
dated October 13, 1963 with
a chronology of events of the
autobahn incident of October 9-10.
(2 pages)

PARIS also for USRO; STATE pass to JCS

Following is short chronology of autobahn incidents

Oct 9 - 12; all times are local:

Oct 9

0701: Convoy 18 (dismount category) arrived Marienborn in rain. Sovs demanded dismounting. We refused because of weather. Before issue developed, rain ceased and troops dismounted. Convoy cleared at 0814.

1211: Convoy 21 (dismount category) arrived Marienborn in rain. Sovs demanded dismounting. We refused because of weather. Discussion continued until 1326 hours when rain stopped. Troops dismounted. Convoy cleared by 1336.

Oct 10

0634: West-bound convoy 24 (non-dismount category) cleared Babelsberg without dismounting or any Soviet objection.

107/TAF

~~SECRET~~
Classification

REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY IS
PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"

Charge:

SECRET

Classification

-2-

Control: 107

Date:

- 0859: East-bound non-dismount category convoy US 27 arrived Marienborn Checkpoint and held up by Sovs "because convoy refused dismount".
- 1010: West-bound non-dismount convoy US 24 held up by Sovs at Marienborn on same dismount issue as was holding US 27.
- 1050: Sov Checkpoint Marienborn officer answered query by US Checkpoint Alpha Commander: "You are detaining yourselves and denying access to yourselves by not dismounting."
- 1128: West-bound dismount category convoy US 25 arrived Marienborn checkpoint. No action taken to process due to other two convoys in area.
- 1208: US Checkpoint Alpha Commander delivered oral protest to Soviet Duty Officer, Marienborn. Sovs reiterated demand US 24 and US 27 dismount or be denied clearance.
- 1235: Gen Polk proposed to USAREUR to block autobahn with US convoys currently at Marienborn. Purpose to increase pressure, keep civilians out of critical area and preclude Soviet blocking with civilian trucks.
- 1250: Warning order passed to Alpha Commander to be prepared to block autobahn with US convoys' vehicles.
- 1309: USCOB reported impasse existed at Marienborn.

SECRET

Classification

REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY IS
PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

"...THERE ^{IS} _{NO} EAST, ^{NO} WEST..."

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. VISITS COLD WAR BERLIN

DR. TRICHITA CHESTNUT
NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER

*"...there is no East, no West, no North, no South,
but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole, wide world:"*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Sermon at the Marienkirche, East Berlin, September 13, 1964

In 1964, the city of Berlin was divided between East and West Berliners, much like the United States was segregated by black and white Americans. If anyone knew and understood the political and social ramifications of such divisions and discriminations, that person would be African American Baptist minister, nonviolent civil rights activist, and leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. At the invitation of Willy Brandt, Mayor of West Berlin, Dr. King traveled to Cold War Berlin in September 1964 to speak at the 14th annual cultural festival. In one and a half days, Dr. King spoke and toured the city of Berlin "which [stood] as a symbol of the divisions of men on the face of the earth," on the principles of unity and faith: "we are all one in Christ Jesus and that faith overcomes all man-made barriers."¹

Following Dr. King's signing of the Golden Book at Berlin City Hall (*Figure 1*), he opened the cultural festival at the Berlin Philharmonic Hall with a memorial service to late President John K. Kennedy, who visited the city the year before he was assassinated. In his eulogy, Dr. King emphasized "Kennedy's devotion to human rights throughout the world and specifically to civil rights issues at home."² Later that

afternoon Dr. King delivered a sermon before a crowd of 20,000 West Berliners in Waldbühne amphitheater on the occasion of "Tag der Kirche" (Day of the Church). After his sermon, Dr. King learned that an East Berliner had been shot when he attempted to escape to West Berlin. Immediately, he insisted to be taken to the Berlin Wall where the shootout had taken place



Figure 1.
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. signs the Golden Book of the City of Berlin in the presence of Governing Mayor Willy Brandt, center, and American Minister John A. Calhoun, right.

¹Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "East and West-God's Children" (Sermon at the Marienkirche, East Berlin, September 13, 1964).
²Telegram 380 from US Mission Berlin to Secretary of State, September 14, 1964, RG 84, Germany; U.S. Mission Berlin (USBER); Classified Central Subject Files 1961-1978, box 21, National Archives and Records Administration.

between the U.S. soldiers and East German border guards.³ (*Figures 2 & 3*)

In his pursuit to promote the spirit of brotherhood, he also wanted to visit East Berlin, as he believed that “we are all one in Christ Jesus, for in Christ there is no East, no West, no North, no South, but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole, wide world.”⁴ Later that evening, without a passport, he surprisingly managed to cross at Checkpoint Charlie, the border crossing point between West and East Berlin, into East Berlin with his American Express card as his form of identification.⁵ While there, Dr. King spoke at a church service at the Marienkirche (St. Mary’s Church), where he preached essentially the same sermon he gave earlier that day in West Berlin to 2,000 standing-room-only East Berliners.⁶

“My dear Christian friends of East Berlin,” Dr. King began as he spoke eloquently of “his spiritual message of brotherhood” as the city of Berlin symbolized a “divided humanity.”⁷ Identifying faith as a means to reconcile and not divide the people, regardless of the “man-made barrier” of the Berlin Wall, he stated, “...this city, which stands as a symbol of the divisions of men on the face of the earth. For here on either side of the wall are God’s children, and no man-made barrier can obliterate that fact.”⁸ He also called attention to African American’s fight for civil rights in the United States, “As you know, there is a great social revolution taking place in the United States of America, and it is the struggle to free some twenty million Negroes from the long night of segregation and discrimination.”⁹ The congregation was so moved by his sermon’s emphasis on the similarities of the faith, struggles, and sufferings of African Americans in the U.S.

Figure 2.

On his tour of the city, Negro leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. today visited Stallschreiberstraße in Kreuzberg, where a fugitive came over the wall into the western sector.



to their own, that some wept openly.¹⁰ Since the church was filled to capacity, the overflow crowd was sent to the nearby Sophienkirche (Sophia Church), and Dr. King ended up making a second, last minute appearance there. Before returning to West Berlin, Dr. King also took the time to speak with students from Humboldt University and church officials at the Hospice Albrecht.¹¹

Dr. King’s visit to Cold War Berlin (*Figure 4*) and his message of brotherhood, peace, faith, and civil rights for all of humanity, brought hope to both West and East Berliners of a possible peaceful social revolution. Dr. King argued that a “common humanity, common history, common calling, and common hope for the salvation of the world” binds together people in the divided city of Berlin and also in the segregated America, “regardless of the barriers of race, creed, ideology, or nationality.”¹²

Figure 3.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Soviet Sector border of the Wall in Bernauerstraße. Herr Werner Stelzer, director of the Berlin Information Center is indicating points of interest.



³“German Connections-Black History Month Martin Luther King, Jr. in East and West Berlin,” The German Way & More, accessed November 13, 2012, <http://www.german-way.com/famous-mlk-german.html>.

⁴King, “East and West.”

⁵The German Way & More, “German Connections.”

⁶State Department Telegram.

⁷King, “East and West,” State Department Telegram, and “Tracing an Untold Story: Dr. Martin Luther King’s Visit to Cold War Berlin,” The Civil Rights Struggle, African-American GI’s and Germany, accessed June 11, 2013, http://www.aacvr-germany.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=92&Itemid=64.

⁸King, “East and West.”

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰State Department Telegram.

¹¹The German Way & More, “German Connections.”

¹²King, “East and West.”

TELEGRAM

Foreign Service of the
United States of America

33/4

OUTGOING US MISSION BERLIN

FILE ROOM COPY

EDX-25

POL-3

USCOB
M-3
EAS
ECON
USIS
ASAG
IO/U
F&R
POUCH

Charge:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Classification

Control: 100

ACTION: SecState WASH 380

Date: 14 SEPT. 1964
7:30 P.M.

INFO: Amembassy BONN 347 (by pouch)
Amembassy LONDON
Amembassy MOSCOW
Amembassy PARIS
USCINCEUR/POLAD
USAREUR/POLAD
USNMR SHAPE FOR BURNS
USELMLO

PARIS ALSO FOR USRO

SUBJ: Martin Luther King Visits Berlin

Figure 4.
State Department telegram
from US Mission Berlin
dated September 14, 1964
regarding Martin Luther
King Jr's visit to Berlin.

Martin Luther King's eloquent address at opening of Berlin Festival morning September 13, following his signing of the Golden Book at Berlin City Hall, was primarily eulogy of late President Kennedy with particular emphasis on Kennedy's devotion to human rights throughout the world and specifically to civil rights issue at home. He spoke after GovMayor Brandt and former Ambassador James B. Conant. At afternoon appearance before estimated 20,000 attending annual Protestant retreat (Tag der Kirche) in West Berlin's outdoor stadium (Waldbuehne), King said Berlin was symbol of divided humanity. Continued that Berlin also focal point around which "wheel of history" turns and place where test being made of possibility of coexistence between two ideologies which are competing for world domination. Emphasis on civil rights also strong in this address, in course of which King said negroes in US had been called upon to be nation's conscience.

THE “SPY CAMERA” AND DÉTENTE

SARAH ANDERSON
PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES

Relations with the Soviet Union during the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald R. Ford are collectively known as a period of “détente.” This period was characterized by a number of summit meetings and important agreements between the two nations. It is important to note that détente did not mean that the Soviet Union and the U.S. suddenly became allies; rather they did not actively seek conflict with one another.

During both the Nixon and Ford administrations Henry Kissinger, first as National Security Advisor and then as Secretary of State, met weekly with the Soviet ambassador. The frequent meetings were intended as a way to bypass the bureaucracy and create an avenue for the President to exercise more control. Although the decision to bypass standard procedures led to additional complications at times, this period marked a series of agreements between the two states.¹ When Vice President Gerald R. Ford assumed the Presidency in August of 1974, he reassured the Soviets both publicly and privately that he planned to continue many of Nixon’s policies, including various treaties and the policy of detente.²

In March of 1975, the Soviets filed a formal protest with Secretary Kissinger regarding a Nikon camera that fell from a foreign plane circling over the German Democratic Republic.³ (*Figure 1*) The demarche illustrates the changing nature of the

relationship between the Soviet Union and the U.S. As written on the bottom right corner, the memo was hand delivered by Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin to Kissinger. This delivery indicates this was a matter to be kept between Ambassador Dobrynin and Secretary Kissinger.

The tone in the memo is warning, but not hostile. The Soviet Union demands no explanation, no public investigation. Instead the Soviet Union allows the U.S. to handle the matter internally with no interference. The rather neutral phrase, “[t]he Soviet side expects that the US military authorities will take all necessary measures to rule out the repetition of such cases in the future” is used. This allows the U.S. to claim that they have appropriately rebuked those responsible, while making no references to specific individuals or punishments.

The Soviets also did not publicize their acquisition of the Nikon camera. This contrasts with the confrontation that took place 15 years prior when the Soviet Union shot down a U-2 spy plane over Soviet airspace and captured the pilot, Gary Powers. Two weeks after the U-2 incident, the Soviet Union, U.S., Great Britain, and France were scheduled to have a summit in Paris to discuss among other concerns Berlin and disarmament. Premier Khrushchev refused to continue the

¹Kissinger did not consult with subject matter experts due to the highly secretive nature of the back channel talks. This kept the negotiations on general talking points, with Kissinger avoiding specific details. (Dobrynin, A. (2007). 122. Telegram From Ambassador Dobrynin to the Soviet Foreign Ministry. In E. C. Keefer, D. C. Geyer, & D. E. Selvage, Soviet-American Relations: *The Detente Years, 1969-1972* (pp. 293-296). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.)
²Meeting with Foreign Minister Gromyko, September 20, 1974 11:00 am, Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office File: USSR-Gromyko File, Box 35, National Security Adviser. Kissinger-Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum.
³March 29, 1975, USSR-Dobrynin/Kissinger Exchanges-Items #46-#55, 3/1/75-4/10/75, Box 33, National Security Adviser. Kissinger -Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, National Archives and Records Administration.

summit without an apology for the incident from US President Eisenhower. President Eisenhower declined to apologize, and Premier Khrushchev left the summit.

The incident could have easily derailed the numerous negotiations that were taking place in 1975, just as negotiations in 1960 were derailed with the capture of the U2 spy plane. In 1975, the Soviet Union and the U.S. were in the

second round of the Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty (SALT II), beginning negotiations on the Helsinki Accords, and laying the groundwork for a billion dollar purchase of grain and wheat during a drought in the Soviet Union.⁴ In 1975, the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project launched, marking the first joint U.S.-U.S.S.R. space program. The decision to handle the Nikon camera privately highlights the importance of positive relations to both states.

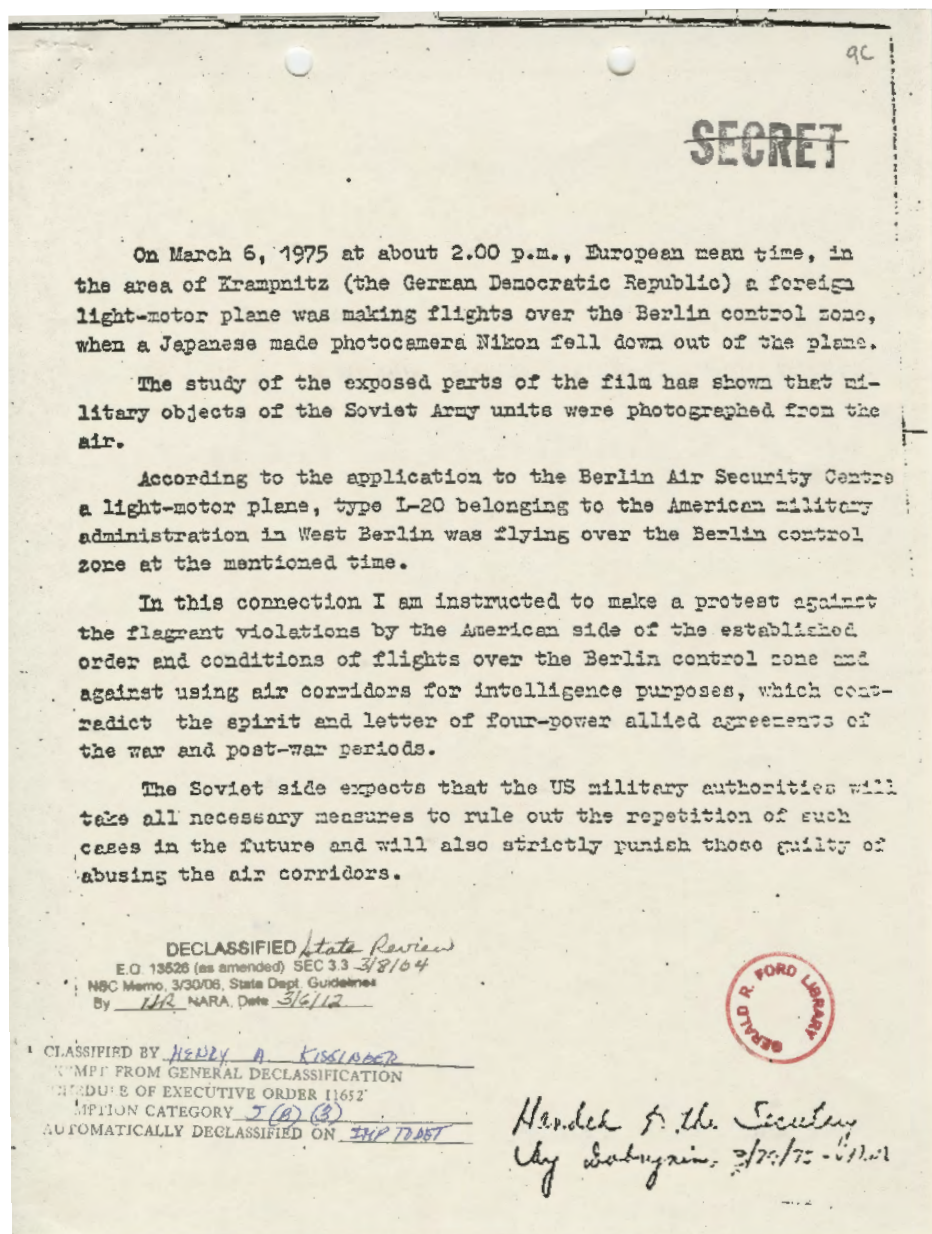


Figure 1.
Soviet protest letter
handed to Secretary
of State Kissinger by
Ambassador Dobrynin
on March 19, 1973.

⁴"Soviet Grain Production and Trade Prospects," Grain Sales to the Soviet Union, Box 5, Richard B. Cheney Files, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum.

EXFILTRATION AND US POLICY

DR. AMANDA WEIMER

NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER

Exfiltration, the clandestine escape of persons from an enemy-controlled area, was a prime motivation for the building of the Berlin Wall, continuing in Berlin long after the Wall's construction. The Department of State "reacted forcefully" against both U.S. private civilian and military personnel involvement in exfiltration, as is evident in a November 23, 1965, memorandum from Minister John A. Calhoun of the U.S. Mission Berlin (USBER) to Major General John F. Franklin Jr., U.S. Commander, Berlin, declassified as part of this project. (*Figure 1*) The memorandum mentions a "regular program of measures" to prevent the involvement of members of the armed forces, but provides more detail with regard to the Department of State's reaction to private civilian attempts to aid escapees, which could take the form of an official warning from USBER, or an attempt by State to enlist the civilian's parents in deterring involvement. Calhoun felt that successful deterrence rested upon the accurate assessment of the potential American citizens' intentions. He asked Gen. Franklin for "a more systematic approach to the problem of obtaining information" via surveillance programs already in place, in order to find evidence of unofficial American involvement in exfiltration in the hopes of discouraging it.

The obvious benefits realized by the West in increasing the rate of successful exfiltration of East Berliners, however, required a more complex policy. Two separate briefings were provided to military personnel serving in Berlin in May 1975: one for enlisted personnel, discouraging U.S. involvement entirely, and one for officers, suggesting a program more tailored to the minimization of impact to U.S. military personnel in exfiltration incidents not discovered by the Soviets. The contrast between

these two briefings corroborates a continuing policy of toleration—but not at the expense either of public safety or of free American access to East Berlin.

Official U.S. vehicles, vehicle plates, and personnel uniforms were all implicated as tools used by East German refugees to escape to the West. This use of American "cover" to aid escapees caused concern over the ability of the Department of State to protect private U.S. citizens in West Berlin; officials feared that Soviet representatives would detain more of the U.S. and other Allied personnel and vehicles which entered East Berlin. The policy excerpt shown here (also *Figure 1*), from November 1965, expresses this concern, but contrasted that with the "general desirability" of successful escape.

The concerns raised in the excerpt are laid out in more detail by a January 26, 1966 memorandum from the Department of State's James Carson to John A. Calhoun in Berlin. The memorandum outlines actions that State Department officials should take in any of several situations should East German guards suspect that vehicles with U.S. license plates may be carrying refugees through the various checkpoints between East and West Berlin. For example, should a vehicle with a U.S. license plate be shown by U.S. checkpoint records not to have entered East Berlin at that checkpoint, the official could presume that the plates were either stolen or forged, and that the vehicle's occupants were either refugees or those assisting them. Alternatively, if a US licensed vehicle known to have entered East Berlin should be detained upon its return, the State Department official should demand the presence of a Soviet officer—knowing that it was unlikely that this official would appear according to Soviet policy on their role in East

Germany—considerably hampering the possible actions of the East German checkpoint guards while pressuring the guards to allow the vehicle to proceed regardless of its occupants. The end game,

said Carson, was to “not open ourselves to charges of having too easily handed over any refugees,” but ultimately providing tacit assistance when possible.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 67230

By BKT/NC on 2 May 2013

Central file
M. J. Calhoun
80-29
This document consists of 3 pages.
No. 7 of 10 copies, Series A.

General Franklin

November 23, 1965

John A. Calhoun

Prevention of U.S. Citizen Involvement in Refugee Exfiltration Activity

Attached is a brief statement of policy on this subject formulated by the Mission. Our general view on exfiltration activity from the East is to look benevolently on such efforts provided they do not involve public security and order in the western sectors nor affect Allied rights and status adversely. We recognize that U.S. citizen involvement normally runs a risk of affecting Allied rights and status, as a maximum, or of creating difficult problems of protection of private U.S. citizens on East Berlin or Soviet Zone territory, as a minimum. Taking these factors into account, a decision is required on how we should seek to prevent U.S. citizen involvement in such activities.

It is evident that as time goes by the East Germans have improved their ability to prevent refugee escapes to West Berlin. The exfiltration operators have increasingly turned to the few remaining avenues of escape and one of the safest and most obvious of these has been the use of U.S. "cover" in one form or another.

When U.S. military personnel have become involved in the past, we have reacted forcefully to try to prevent any operations from taking place and there is a regular program of measures which are being taken to prevent such involvement. When private American citizens appear to be involved, or about to become involved, in escape operations, USIA warns them against such action, wires their parents to enlist their support and takes such other action as seems appropriate. This has often proved successful. However, in each case information about the intentions of the American citizen has been needed. In the past this information has been acquired primarily as a by-product of other activities, for example when an individual has asked the Consulate for assistance in locating an exfiltration organization, or when U.S. military personnel have been involved in a case and security agents have learned of the potential or actual involvement of other U.S. citizens. Given what appears to be stepped-up efforts on the part of the exfiltration operators to use Americans, we believe there is a need for a more systematic approach to the problem of obtaining information. This does not present so

/difficult

Group 3
Downgraded at 10-year intervals
Not automatically declassified.

Figure 1.

Memorandum from Minister John A. Calhoun to Major John F. Franklin Jr. dated November 23, 1965 regarding “policy Concerning U.S. Citizen Involvement in Refugee Exfiltration Activity.”

THE USE OF BALLOONS IN THE COLD WAR:

A METHOD FOR DISTRIBUTING PROPAGANDA AND A MEANS OF ESCAPE

BRUCE MACMILLAN

NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER

During the Cold War period, there were many attempts by both governments and individual citizens in Western Europe, to disseminate propaganda into East Germany and Eastern Europe through the use of balloons of various types and sizes. State Department telegrams for the period November 1964 thru February 1965,

document several such incidences. East German refugees seeking asylum in West Germany, also used hot air or gas balloons as a means of escape.

Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL) conducted the largest Cold War propaganda campaign using balloons.



Freedom or Death, March 1963; US Information Agency. Department of State

A CITY DIVIDED

They launched an estimated 590,415 balloons from West Germany, along the border with Czechoslovakia, during the period July 1951 through November 1956. Each balloon was four foot in diameter, buoyed with hydrogen gas, and was loaded with approximately ten pounds of food and 3,000 leaflets with a message of friendship for citizens of Eastern Europe.¹

Several State Department telegrams in December 1964 and January 1965, describe a number of incidents in which West German radar stations track meteorological (and other) balloons, as they drifted from Western Europe, across the border to East Germany. The authorities indicated their concern that these balloons posed a threat to the safety of air traffic, particularly when they entered any of the three Air Traffic Corridors (North, Center, and South) which connected West Germany with West Berlin. Radar stations in West Germany tracked these balloons as reaching altitudes as high as 84,000 feet over East Germany, before they descended. This radar tracking also revealed attempts by East German and Soviet helicopters and fighter aircraft to intercept these drifting balloons. One State Department telegram refers to investigations by West German authorities to establish the source(s) of these balloon launchings from Western Europe. In the State Department telegram, Control #133, December 12, 1964, an official with the West German Foreign Office (FONOFF), advises the State Department that "...agencies usually concerned had current activities which might account for the presence of balloons in the [air traffic] corridors ten days or so ago..." The FONOFF official revealed that "200 to 260 meteorological balloons are being launched daily from West European countries." British officials also told the State Department that these particular balloons were eight feet in diameter.²

¹Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL), "Using Balloons to Breach the Iron Curtain", last modified October 6, 2009. http://www.rferl.org/content/off_mic_using_balloons_to_breach_iron_curtain/1844564.html

²Telegram from US Embassy Bonn to US Mission Berlin, December 12, 1964, RG 84, Germany; U.S. Mission Berlin (USBER); Classified Central Subject Files 1961-1978, box 37, National Archives and Records Administration.

³Telegram from US Mission Berlin to Secretary of State, December 31, 1964, RG 84, Germany; U.S. Mission Berlin (USBER); Classified Central Subject Files 1961-1978, box 26, National Archives and Records Administration.

Several State Department telegrams also highlight efforts by individual citizens to deploy balloons for the purposes of disseminating propaganda. These telegrams also reveal the concern by West Berlin authorities that such propaganda efforts should be restricted as much as possible to prevent friction with both the East Berlin and East German authorities. The West Berlin Police closely monitored certain individuals known to have engaged in previous such activities. State Department telegram, Control #134, dated December 31, 1964, describes an incident involving several balloons deployed from West Berlin. These balloons are described as "...children's toys [which are] equipped with primitive fuses that burned until contact [was] made with [the] skins of [the] balloons causing them to explode..." This explosion caused the propaganda material attached to the balloon to be distributed in mid-air. The report indicates that West Berlin police subsequently arrested one individual and questioned a second person in connection with the incident.³

East German refugees seeking asylum in West Germany, in at least two instances also used hot air or gas balloons as a means of escape. Perhaps one of the most dramatic events of the Cold War was the successful night-time escape by the Strelzyk and Wetzel families, comprising four adults and four children, from East to West Germany, on September 16, 1979, in a homemade hot air balloon. Walt Disney Productions later produced the motion picture *Night Crossing* (1982) based on this story. Winfried Freudenberg, a resident of East Berlin, made one of the last major escape attempts from East Berlin prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall. He was killed when he fell from his home-made gas balloon, after it had successfully transited from East to West Berlin, on March 8, 1989.

13/2 OUTGOING US MISSION BERLIN

POL-3

USCOB
MIN-3
EAS
ECON
USIS
ASAG
IO/U
F&R

Charge:

ACTION: Secstate WASH 847

INFO: Amembassy BONN 736
Amembassy LONDON 272
Amembassy MOSCOW 286
Amembassy PARIS 331
USCINCEUR/POLAD
USAREUR/POLAD
USNMR SHAPE FOR BURNS
USELMLO

PARIS ALSO FOR USRO

SUBJECT: Propaganda Balloons for East Berlin

REF: Berlin's 846 to Department, 735 to Bonn

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Classification

Control: 134

Date: December 31, 1964
12:45 P.M.

FILE ROOM COPY
INF-8

Figure 1.
State Department telegram from
US Mission Berlin dated December
31, 1964 describing the use of
balloons to spread propaganda in
East Berlin. (2 pages)

Further examination of incident reported reftel revealed that balloons were gas-filled but carried no explosives. They were in effect children's toys equipped with primitive fuses that burned until contact made with skins of balloons causing them to explode. Propaganda carried included open letter to mother of Egon Schultz, East German border guard killed during October 5 tunnel escape. (Berlin's 509 to Department)

Shortly after incident, West Berlin police arrested Wolfgang Fuchs and his wife. Fuchs is well-known, right-wing anti-Communist, who was principal organizer mass tunnel escape October 4 and 5. At request of Mayor Albertz, who feared negative public reaction, earlier order of US authorities for police to hold couple overnight was modified and they were released at 0115 hours December 31.

Police interrogated but did not hold Rainer Hildebrandt, equally

Charge:

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Classification

Control: 134
Date:

well-known West Berlin cold warrior. Although Hildebrandt not arrested, it appears balloons were released from apartment rented by him almost at wall's edge near Checkpoint Charlie. Police convinced in any case that at least one other person involved.

There has been no press coverage of incident to date.

CALHOUN

AUTH: ARDAY

ARD (indraft)
jc

134/13/2/sc

Coordinated: General Franklin

FOL:JCarson/bg

Coordinated in substance: IO/USCOB Maj. Semsch

31 December 1230

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Classification

REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY IS
PROHIBITED UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED"

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

GETTING CLOBBERED:

UNITED STATES MILITARY
LIAISON MISSION INCIDENTS

BREWER THOMPSON

NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER

The Huebner-Malinin Agreement of 1947 allowed for the reciprocal deployment of military staff in the United States and Soviet zones of Germany. This was ostensibly to allow for monitoring of post-war Germany and the furthering of cordial relationships between the occupying forces. After the Cold War got going in earnest, the U.S. and Soviets used the Liaison missions to keep tabs on each other. Both sides (as well as Liaison Missions in the British and French zones) used their personnel as overt intelligence gathering units. Both sides were generally free to roam through their respective areas of accreditation, so long as they did not enter one of the many permanent or temporary restricted areas. The U.S. Military Liaison Mission staff (USMLM) were based in West Berlin, but generally started their "tours" of East Germany from Potsdam.

For the U.S. staff, being caught and detained by either Soviet or German Democratic Republic (GDR) forces was known as getting "clobbered." Getting clobbered was generally more of an inconvenience than anything else, but there was always the possibility of physical harm coming to both vehicles and staff members.

"An average of 10-15 USMLM detentions/incidents occur annually, of which two or three may be considered serious. Considering over 600 tours are dispatched each year, the percentage of incidents could be much higher. Tour officers and NCO's are extremely well-trained and

versed in all aspects of touring techniques; it is impossible, though, for all contingencies to be anticipated while operating in East Germany. Consequently, decisions as to the conduct of a tour in a given situation must be based on experience and judgement (sic); at no time, however, is the safety of USMLM tour or Soviet/East German personnel to be placed in jeopardy. Thus, a certain trade-off must be realized between aggressive intelligence collection and compromise of the tour (safety, discovery, etc.); prudent judgement (sic) from the tour officer is essential, with safety as the overriding concern."

There were more than twenty serious incidents between 1975 and 1987. These included detentions of U.S. personnel by Soviet forces, ramming of vehicles, assaults and shootings. Side-swiping, ramming, or reversing trucks into USMLM vehicles was a fairly common tactic employed against American and Allied mission staff, and major injuries could result from such actions. One case on 13 March 1979 ended up with the tour vehicle rolling over twice and the tour officer being incapacitated for four weeks. In 1984, French Mission officer Philippe Mariotti was killed in a ramming incident with GDR troops. Some of the shootings were clearly simple warning shots, while some came very close to harming USMLM personnel. (Figures 1 and 2) An incident in 1973 left a bullet hole in the boot of a USMLM driver, barely missing his foot. The most serious shooting incident resulted

¹Memorandum from DCSI USMLM to Chief of Staff, 6 Jun 1983, MH1-2007-99-0001-0003, USMLM, box 99, United States Army Heritage and Education Center.

in the death of Major Arthur D. Nicholson on 24 March 1985. Maj. Nicholson was the last American casualty of the Cold War and the only USMLM tour officer to die in the course of his duty. (Figure 5)

Reports of all incidents were quite detailed and there was always a great deal of discussion as to the most appropriate U.S. response. There was always a desire to keep tensions with the Soviets to a minimum, while pointing out the eastern forces' responsibility for their actions. The Soviets offered an outright apology for the shooting incident of September 17, 1987 in which a USMLM driver was injured. Such incidents continued to occur until the Missions ended in 1990 just before German reunification.

Figure 1.

A USMLM driver's boot, showing how close he came to being hit by an East German bullet on October 28, 1973.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, EUROPE and SEVENTH ARMY
THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
APO 09403

8 November 1973

Figure 2.

Letter from General Michael S. Davison to General Ivanovski dated November 8, 1973 protesting the shooting incidents of 1973. (2 pages)

Dear General Ivanovski:

I recall that during my recent visit to your headquarters in September of this year, we reaffirmed the desirability of maintaining harmonious relations between our commands. We also agreed that our respective missions should be free to pursue their assigned tasks under the provisions of established agreements.

It is with regret that I must invite your attention to a series of three incidents within a period of 42 days which appear to be in direct violation of our understanding.

On 16 September 1973 a Soviet guard fired at a United States Military Liaison Mission vehicle near Wittstock. My Chief of Staff protested the incident and received the reply that the Soviet guard had acted "strictly according to regulations." I am sure your regulations do not direct sentries to shoot at obviously unarmed personnel.

On 21 October 1973 an East German guard fired two shots at a United States Military Liaison Mission vehicle in Gueterfelde. Fortunately, neither the personnel nor the vehicles were hit in either of these two incidents.

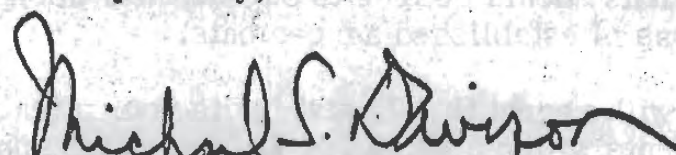
At 0630 hours on 28 October 1973, an East German guard fired several bursts from his automatic weapon at a United States Military Liaison Mission vehicle within the city of Leipzig. One round hit the vehicle and traveled into the car striking the boot of the driver. Fortunately, the driver was not hurt. I have attached some photographs and am prepared to have the vehicle made available for your personal inspection should you desire this.

TAB B

Such irresponsible acts cannot be condoned. The risks in terms of human life are obvious. The need to maintain good will between our commands is too vital to permit individual soldiers to act so irresponsibly and use firearms against liaison personnel based upon that individual soldier's interpretation of what are or are not the established rules of conduct for the military liaison missions. Every step possible has been taken to ensure that your liaison mission in Frankfurt has not been fired at when they have been in violation of established rules. I am sure that you will take the appropriate steps and assure me that the same will be done for my mission.

I regret these incidents have served to mar the excellent relations between us and I am convinced the measures you will take, will serve to restore these relations to their proper, excellent level.

Respectfully,


MICHAEL S. DAVISON
General, USA
Commander in Chief

General of the Army Y. Ivanovski
Commander in Chief
Group of Soviet Forces, Germany

~~SECRET~~

(C) Finally, in early October, Diepgen attempted to get the Allies to delay their official response to the (unacceptable) FRG proposals. Communicating through Chancellery Chief Stronk, he made a baldly political argument. The influx of draft dodgers, said Stronk, was changing the composition of the Berlin electorate. This, he argued was "not in the interests of any of us." 85

(C) In other words, Diepgen and his colleagues were asking the Allies to enforce FRG conscription laws as a means of ridding Berlin presumably objectionable voters. It goes almost without saying that the Senat got nowhere with such arguments.

8.(U) US-Soviet Relations: the Killing of USMLM Officer Major Arthur Nicolson.

(U) Shortly before 4 pm on 24 March 1945, a member of a US Military Liaison Mission patrol, Major Arthur D. Nicolson, Jr., was shot and killed by a Soviet sentry in a local training area of a Soviet tank regiment near Ludwigslust, a town in the GDR northwest of Berlin. Soviet behavior in the immediate aftermath of the shooting was nothing short of outrageous: roughly an hour passed before the Soviets rendered Major Nicolson medical help (by then far too late), and the first Soviet public announcements blamed Major Nicolson for provoking his own death by conducting intelligence operations on prohibited territory.

(C) For a full history of the incident, the reader is referred to two classified studies: a) to the 1985 USMLM Unit History, which has an excellent short treatment of the Nicolson shooting, and b) to a comprehensive study conducted by the Center for Military History in Heidelberg. Since USMLM activities come under USAREUR, rather than USCOB, auspices, this treatment will be limited to an outline of key events and outcomes.

a.(C) Immediate Aftermath. On 25 March the USMLM brought Major Nicolson's body back to Berlin. A memorial service was held in the Berlin Brigade Chapel on 28 March; and on 30 March Major Nicolson was buried in Arlington Cemetery. Anger over the incident was not relieved by continued Soviet refusal to apologize. Nonetheless, the Department of State decided early on to pursue a damage-containment policy. In particular, the Department warned against a retaliatory use of persona non grata expulsions of Soviet MLM personnel. This, the Department reasoned, might initiate a cycle of such expulsions that would in the end reduce US and Allied MLMs in Potsdam. The US policy of restraint was reflected in President Reagan's comments at press breakfast on 28 March, where he characterized the killing as an "unwarranted tragedy." 86

b.(S) General Otis's Protest and the Soviet Response. On 29 March 1985 the USMLM delivered to the Chief of Staff of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG) a strong but measured protest letter from USAREUR Commander in Chief General Glenn K. Otis to the GSFG Commander in Chief General Zaytsev. General Zaytsev's reply arrived on 10 April. It was curious document. Most of it was

~~SECRET~~

Figure 3.
Historical report of shooting Major Arthur D. Nicholson from the Berlin Command Consolidated Historical Review, 1985-1986

THE WALL REMAINED...

DR. DONALD P. STEURY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

The Cold War began and ended in Berlin. For 44 years the Western allies and the Soviet Union confronted each other across the sector borders that divided East from West Berlin. The Berlin Wall changed the nature of that confrontation, but it did not eliminate it. Throughout the Cold War, West Berlin remained a symbol of Allied determination not to surrender Europe to Soviet domination. Before the Wall, West Berlin was, additionally, a lifeline to the West. After the Wall was built, it was an island of freedom in a sea of oppression. The Wall itself was a symbol of tyranny; the machine guns, the dogs, the concertina wire were the tools of dictatorship. There was no more clear-cut expression of what the Cold War was about, than Berlin.

At the heart of the city, the Berlin Wall stood as a physical manifestation of the Iron Curtain. West of the Wall, Berliners reveled in the growing prosperity of a new, democratic Germany. East of it they labored under the apparatus of a new dictatorship, still overshadowed by the ruins of the old. This dichotomy defined life in Berlin. The longer the Cold War lasted, the more concrete that was added to the Wall, the more it seemed that this dichotomy would endure.

Yet, permanent though it appeared, the Wall was impermanent. It was built, not as a demonstration of strength, but as an act of desperation, built to halt the flow of refugees who were fleeing to the West at the rate of 300,000 per year.¹ Throughout the Cold War, it

stood as a reminder that here was a regime that lacked the support of its own people and could survive only by walling them in. It was obvious to all that, when the Wall fell, so, too, would the East German regime.

It was also obvious that the fate of East Germany was forever tied to that of the Soviet Union. Despite the formidable nature of the Wall's defenses, despite the fact that it was East German guards who patrolled it day and night, there was never any doubt that the Wall was built with the support of Moscow. It and the regime that had built it would vanish as soon as that support was taken away.

No one thought that this would be soon. East Germany was an armed camp, groaning under the weight of tanks, troops and aircraft. The massive military housing projects, the giant statues of Lenin that decorated the landscape, made it clear that the Soviets were there to stay.

Thus, the construction of the Wall brought a kind of enduring stability to the confrontation in Berlin, a recognition of the status quo. This was a shift in Soviet policy. Both Khrushchev and Stalin had pledged to drive out the Western Allies. There is evidence that Khrushchev planned military action to do so, if necessary.² The Wall, by putting an end to the steady depopulation of East Germany, seemed to make that unnecessary. East Germans had little choice but to accept the situation and most did so.

This was reflected in the number of escape attempts, which dropped off dramatically after 1962. In part, no doubt, this was simply the product of the growing effectiveness of the Wall itself, which quickly became a more of a fortified zone than a simple barrier. Escape, always risky, became unacceptably dangerous for attempts that frequently involved children and whole families. Those who were most desperate to escape made their attempts first. By the end of 1962, those who remained had decided to settle down and try to get on with their lives. It is noteworthy, though, that, although escapes became rarer, they never ceased altogether. Each year, the Wall claimed a steady stream of victims, the last three in 1989, the year the Wall came down.³

The Wall further reinforced the separate civic identities of East and West Berlin, already well-established when President John F. Kennedy gave his famous speech, just outside Rathaus Schöneberg, the seat of West Berlin's government. Across the Wall, East Berlin's government was ensconced in the red-brick Rotes Rathaus. These two buildings came to symbolize the two Berlins, much as the Brandenburg Gate was identified with the division of the city. The two Berlins grew apart, separate but intertwined. For what it was worth, East Berlin had the additional prestige of being the capital of the DDR; West Berlin became a Federal German Land.

Inevitably, relations between East and West Germany on the one hand and the two Germanies, the Soviet Bloc and the Western Allies on the other, gradually became regularized. In 1970, West German Federal Chancellor Willi Brandt—Governing Mayor of West Berlin in 1961—signed the Treaty of Moscow, in which the Federal Republic recognized the postwar borders of Germany and conceded de facto recognition to the German Democratic Republic. The following year, the

four World War II allies reaffirmed the rights of the Western Powers in Berlin, effectively recognizing the post-Wall status quo. In 1972 Chancellor Brandt signed the Basic Treaty with East Germany, mutually establishing formal diplomatic recognition. That same year, the two governments signed a transit agreement, guaranteeing West German rights to visit East Germany. The way was clear for the establishment of trade and for both Germanies to enter the United Nations, which they did in 1973. As the decade wore on, the two Germanies were more and more regarded as two separate states.

Bolstered by what was now a stable—which is to say, captive—labor force, East Germany achieved a level of relative prosperity that made it the jewel in the proletarian crown of the Soviet bloc. The rigidly controlled, centralized economy tempered massive investment in heavy industry and collectivized agriculture with not-always successful efforts to produce cheap consumer goods—typified by the notorious Trabant automobile—while extensive state subsidies kept prices low. Soon the DDR had the highest per capita income in the Soviet bloc, eventually exceeding that of the Soviet Union itself.⁴

But, East German economic success was relative and really only served as a measure of how bad things were elsewhere in Eastern Europe. In any case, the standard by which East Germans measured their relative well-being was not their fellow Soviet bloc countries, but West Germany. Reports from relatives, visiting West Germans and the sheer proximity of prosperous West Berlin meant that East Germans were well aware of how poorly they fared by comparison.⁵ If that were not enough, they were reminded daily by the omnipresence of West German television broadcasts, never blocked by the regime and received throughout the DDR. And it was noteworthy that, although West German rights

²See the testimony of Oleg Penkovskiy in *ibid.*, pp. 613-15.

³*Todesopfer* 1989, www.berliner-mauer-gedenkstätte.de

⁴In 1989, the per capita income in East Germany was \$9,679—compared with \$7,878 in Czechoslovakia, \$6,108 in Hungary and \$4,565 in Poland. That of the Soviet Union was \$8,700. CIA World Factbook, 1990.

⁵1989 per capita income in West Germany was \$15,300. *Ibid.*

¹*Current Weekly Intelligence Summary*: "Flight of Refugees from east Germany," 12 February 1959 (MORI: 45580) in Donald P. Steury (ed.), *On the Front Lines of the Cold War: Documents on the Intelligence War in Berlin, 1946-1961* (Washington, D.C. CIA History Staff, Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1999) p. 455-58.

to visit East Germany were guaranteed by treaty, no East German ever had the right—and few the opportunity—to visit West Germany.⁶

And the Wall remained.

Running like an open wound through the center of the city, it was a center of political activity. No Western politician ever visited Berlin without a stop at the Wall. Political demonstrations in West Berlin, large or small, focused on the Wall—and sometimes were met by blasts from water cannon fired by the Vopos. Its western face soon was festooned with graffiti—sometimes political, sometimes not. A few feet away, in East Berlin, non state-sponsored political activity was, of course, impossible, but the silent presence of the Wall made a mockery of officially sanctioned rallies and marches down Unter den Linden, the central thoroughfare of East Berlin. In a bizarre manifestation of their isolation from the real world, the East German leadership commemorated the “sacrifices” of the border guards, eight of whom were killed when escapees or Western police returned their fire. In August 1986, school children placed wreaths on the memorial in Jerusalemstraße, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the “Anti-Fascist Barrier.”

Increasingly, the physical barrier was buttressed by the power and authority of the sinister Ministerium für Staatssicherheit—the Ministry for State Security, or Stasi. Eventually numbering between 85,000 and 105,000 paid employees—the exact figure is unknown—the Stasi inserted itself into every aspect of East German life. The Stasi even had its own military unit, the 10,992-man Wachregiment “Felix Dzierzynski.”⁷ Supplementing the paid security officers was a network of perhaps 180,000 Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter—informants—recruited by conviction, opportunism, or coercion who monitored their fellow citizens and reported regularly to their Stasi handlers.⁸ The Stasi headquarters in East Berlin’s Normannenstraße was a gigantic information processing machine which kept a file on virtually every citizen of

East Germany and everyone who ever visited East Germany. It was a safe bet that any organized activity in East Germany contained at least one Stasi informant. A special class of informants was established to spy on the informants. The efficiency and omniscience of the Stasi was the first hurdle anyone wishing to leave East Germany had to cross.

Alongside the Wall, the Stasi manifested the undercurrent of violence that remained in Berlin throughout the Cold War. The Wall was a dangerous place, even for those who were not trying to cross it. Although not necessarily directly related to events outside of the Berlin, tensions along the Wall seemed to wax and wane along with Cold War tensions in general. The Vopos were prone to fire random shots into West Berlin, to counter what they regarded as suspicious behavior, or because they were bored. They also occasionally lobbed tear gas grenades into the West, while there were explosions—some of them bombs set by Western protestors. Random harassment of trains and truck convoys going to and from Berlin persisted. Hold-ups at the Sector Checkpoints were frequent, while the Western Military Liaison Missions—by treaty guaranteed untrammelled access into East Germany—were subjected to near-continuous harassment. At any time any of these low-level confrontations might escalate into violence. In 1985, one such incident resulted in the tragic death of Major Arthur D. Nicholson, shot by a Soviet guard while observing a Soviet military complex in East Germany.

But Nicholson’s death already was an anomaly—after initial efforts to avoid responsibility the Soviet Union actually apologized two years later. The West and even the Soviet Union had gradually evolved out of the psychology of unrelenting confrontation that was part of the early Cold War mentality, but East Germany did not. Secure in their fortified housing complex in Wandlitz—just outside of Berlin—guarded by elements of Wachregiment Felix Dzierzynski and sitting atop a formidable security apparatus that

quashed incipient discontent, the leadership of East Germany was a Stalinist gerontocracy out of step even with the leadership of the remainder of the Soviet bloc. From 1971 the country was run by Party General Secretary Erich Honecker, who, together with his closest advisors, socialist economics expert Günter Mittag and Stasi Chief Erich Mielke, retained a Stalinist vision of a communist utopia that proved unworkable in the confines of the DDR. Any deviation from the rigidly-held Party line was not tolerated so that, like Stalin, Honecker was fed false information by subordinates who were afraid to report the truth about the real state of affairs in the economy and society. In 1986, he declared the DDR to be one of the freest countries on the planet. Two years later he asserted that the standard of living in the DDR was higher than that of the Federal Republic.⁹ Yet, crippled by the oil crises of the mid-1970s, the heavily state-subsidized economy already had begun to falter shortly after Honecker took power. By the end of the decade, the top-heavy state bureaucracy proved unable to cope with growing deficits and trade imbalances. The economy, insofar as it functioned at all, did so solely because of subsidies from the Soviet Union and—irony of ironies—hard-currency loans from West Germany.¹⁰ Exacerbating the situation were heavy expenditures on defense and an intensive government campaign to militarize education in the secondary schools. The Wall itself—which, even after it was completed, had to be manned, maintained and periodically rebuilt and reinforced—was a formidable drain on state finances. Along with the state security system, it contributed significantly to a level of military expenditure that was the highest in the Warsaw Pact, after the Soviet Union.¹¹ Internal dissent burgeoned, fomented by the Western press, which lambasted the East German government as top-heavy, paranoid, troglodytic and obsessively militaristic—reports which, despite the best efforts of the Stasi, could not be kept out of the DDR.¹²

Meanwhile, the ascension to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in the Soviet Union cut away the major external support for the East German regime. Under Gorbachev, the Soviet Union embarked on a program of internal reform that eventually would result in the overthrow of the Communist government in Moscow. In foreign policy, Gorbachev moved towards better relations with the United States and NATO and towards serious reductions in nuclear armaments. Sometime between 1986 and 1988, the Soviet leadership came to the “momentous conclusion” that the massive Soviet military presence in Eastern Europe worked to the detriment of Soviet security.¹³ From that point on, they began to move inexorably toward withdrawal of the Soviet forces there. With this decision, the web of Soviet domination began to unravel all over Eastern Europe.

Against the backdrop of fading Soviet power, the Wall loomed once again in public consciousness. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan went to Berlin. Like all American Presidents, he made an appearance at the Wall, standing before the Brandenburg Gate, the monument that divided East from West Berlin. But Reagan’s intentions were different from those of any of his predecessors. Already he felt that he had forged personal ties with the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. Even as he stood at the Wall, the United States and the Soviet Union were beginning to implement the INF Treaty, bringing about, for the first time, the destruction of an entire class of nuclear weapons. Already, negotiations were underway for the dramatic reduction of strategic nuclear weapons and for the multi-lateral reduction of conventional forces in Europe. Now, President Reagan sought to surmount the Wall, reaching out to the Soviet leader to bring down this symbol of Cold War tyranny. “**Mr. Gorbachev,**” he said, “**open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!**”¹⁴

⁹Peter Grieder, *German Democratic Republic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p. 90.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

¹³Fulbrook, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

⁶Elderly East Berliners did have the right to visit the western half of the city.

⁷Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship. Inside the DDR, 1949-1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p. 48.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 49.

Reagan’s remarks did not produce an immediate public response from Gorbachev, but, in truth, the Soviet leader already had washed his hands of “the small-minded Realpolitiker,” Honecker and his cronies and soon would abandon the East German regime.¹⁵ The Soviet Union simply could no longer afford the luxury of supporting inefficient regimes in Eastern Europe, let alone one so resistant to change of any kind. Perhaps partly in response to President Reagan’s statement at the Brandenburg Gate, but, in any case as a part of the general Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe, in February 1988, Gorbachev declared the right of every country, “to choose freely its social and political system” before a Soviet Communist Party Central Committee plenum.¹⁶

To the overwhelming majority of Eastern Europeans, Gorbachev’s statement was an affirmation of the right of national self-determination hitherto unseen in the Soviet bloc. To Erich Honecker, it was an endorsement of his right to try to sustain a Stalinist dictatorship against the rising tide of liberalism and reform. Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary began to move toward popularly elected democratic regimes. East Germany rejected all but the most cosmetic reforms and began to distance itself from Moscow.¹⁷

Increasingly isolated inside the Soviet bloc, Erich Honecker mobilized the army and the Stasi to meet internal dissent with force. Although he had done nothing specifically to discredit the East German regime publicly, Gorbachev was identified with the wave of change sweeping over Eastern Europe and, by extension, with dissent inside the DDR. After decades of holding the forces of counterrevolution at bay in West Berlin, the East German leadership was horrified to find them coming in from Moscow. New publications coming in from Moscow were

banned. Demonstrators chanting, “Gorby! Gorby!” were arrested and soon even officially sanctioned gatherings were producing violent clashes with the police. Worse, the “bacillus” of democratic reform drifting in from the Soviet Union was infecting even East German communists. In 1988, 23,000 SED members were put on trial for ideological offenses, the highest number since 1946. Still resisting the forces of change, on 18 January 1989, Honecker declared, “The Berlin Wall will still be standing in 50 or 100 years.”¹⁸

Before the year was done, both Honecker and the Wall would be gone.

acronyms and terms used in berlin documents

While this is not a complete list, these are the most common ones:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| • ADN | Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst (ADN), German for General German News Service, was the state news agency in the GDR. |
| • BBB | Berlin Border Brigade, East Germany |
| • BRIXMIS | British Liaison Mission |
| • CINCBAOR | Commander in Chief, British Army of the Rhine |
| • CFK | Christliche Friedenskonferenz — Christian Peace Conference |
| • EKD | Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland — Evangelical Church In Germany |
| • FDJ | Freie Deutsche Jugend — East Germany Communist Youth Organization |
| • FRG | Federal Republic of Germany |
| • GDR | German Democratic Republic |
| • GSFG | Group of Soviet Forces Germany |
| • IZT | Interzonal Trade |
| • Inter alia | ‘among other things’ |
| • JACK PINE | Field Exercise and part of LIVE OAK |
| • LIVE OAK | Code Name for US, UK, French, West German contingency plan regarding Berlin |
| • MfS | Ministerium für Staatssicherheir — Ministry of State Security, the East German Secret Police aka Stasi |
| • MLF | Multi-Lateral Force |
| • POLAD | Political Advisor |
| • RFE | Radio Free Europe |
| • SED | Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands Socialist Unity Party of Germany East German ruling party |
| • SERB | Soviet External Relations Bureau |
| • Tagesspiegel | Berlin Newspaper |
| • UKCOB | United Kingdom Commander, Berlin |
| • UKBER | United Kingdom, Berlin |
| • USAF | United States Air Force |
| • USAIRA | United States Air Attaché |
| • USAREUR | United States Army, Europe |
| • USBER | US Berlin |
| • USCINCEUR | US Commander in Chief, Europe |
| • USCOB | United States Commander, Berlin |
| • USMLM | United States Military Liaison Mission |
| • VOPO | Volkspolizei — East German Police |

¹⁴Remarks of the President of the United States of America, Ronald Reagan, at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, June 12, 1987. Quoted in Trotnow, Helmut and Florian Weiß (eds.), *Tear Down this Wall: US Präsident Ronald Reagan vor dem Brandenburger Tor, 12. Juni 1987* (Berlin: Alliierten Museum, 2007) p.219.

¹⁵Igor Maximychev, “Berlin 1987 Cold War Turmoils or Birth Pangs of a New World?,” in *ibid.*, pp. 259-63.

¹⁶Quoted in Grieder, *op. cit.*, p. 92

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁸Quoted in Grieder, *op.cit.*, pp. 94, 96.

acknowledgments

NARA's National Declassification Center and the CIA's Historical Review Program gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, organizations and staffs for their declassification assistance and their courteous contribution of materials for this collection.



Department of Energy
Washington, D.C.



Presidential Libraries and Museums:

John F. Kennedy
Boston, Massachusetts

Lyndon B. Johnson
Austin, Texas

Richard Nixon
Yorba Linda, California

Gerald R. Ford
Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor, Michigan

Jimmy Carter
Atlanta, Georgia

Ronald Reagan
Simi Valley, California



NATO Archives
Brussels, Belgium



US Army Center of Military History
Fort McNair, D.C.



Historical Office
Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers
Europe [SHAPE],
Brussels, Belgium



US Army Heritage
and Education Center
Carlisle, Pennsylvania



Department of the Navy
Pentagon
Arlington, Virginia



Department of State
Washington, D.C.



Army Declassification
Records Management & Declassification Agency
Fort Belvoir, Virginia



National Security Agency
Fort Meade, Maryland



Washington Headquarters Service
Department of Defense
Arlington, Virginia



Joint Chiefs of Staff
Pentagon
Arlington, Virginia



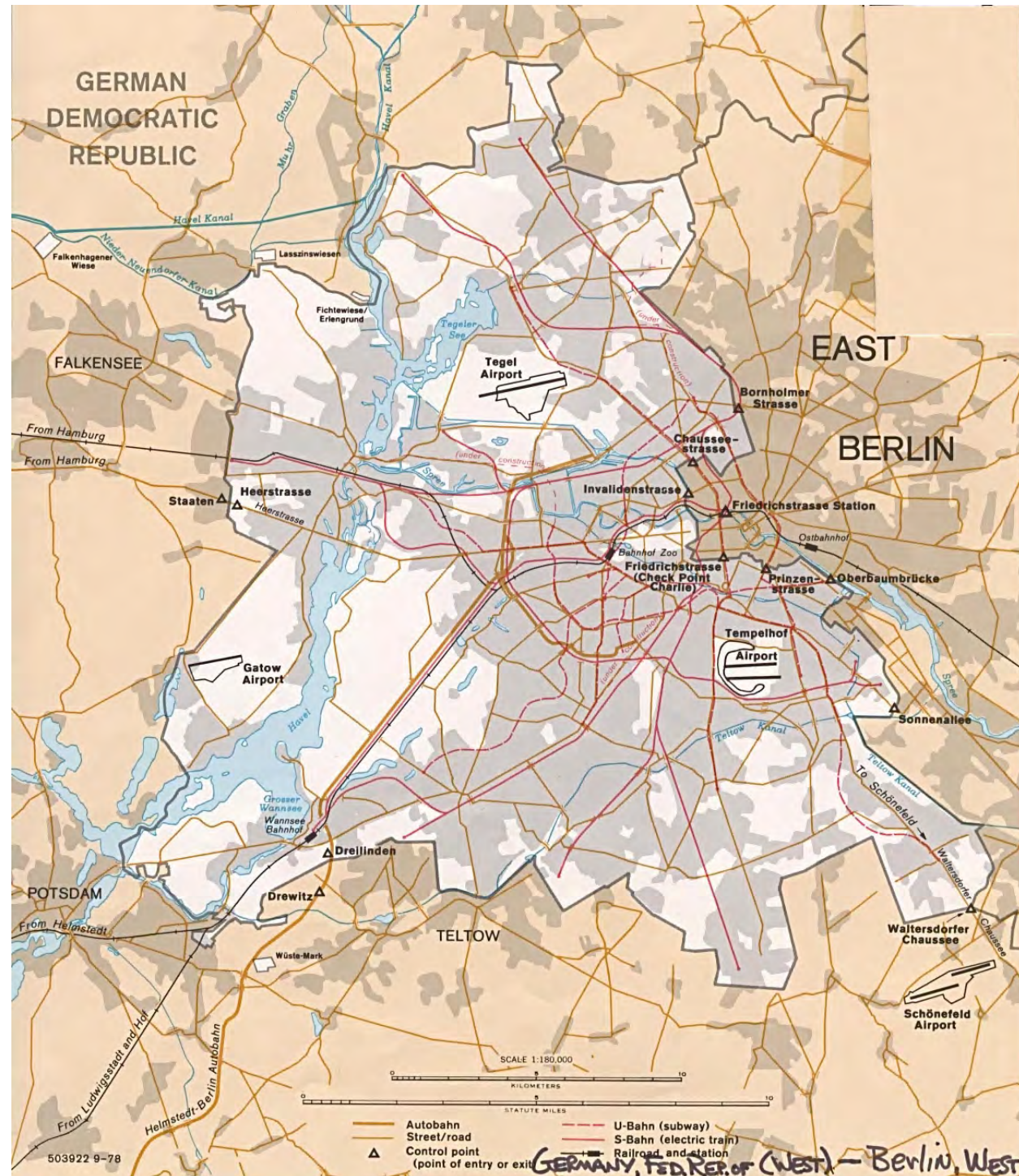
U.S. AIR FORCE

US Air Force Declassification Office
Pentagon
Arlington, Virginia



Defense Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.

map of berlin



Poster advertising the symposium, tear-out and display.



disclaimer

All statements of fact, opinion, or analysis expressed in this booklet are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect official positions or views of the National Archives and Records Administration and the Central Intelligence Agency, or any other US government entity, past or present. Nothing in the contents should be construed as asserting or implying U.S. Government endorsement of an article's statements or interpretations.

And the Wall remains...



The National Archives and Records Administration – Declassification Center and the Historical Collections and Information Review and Release Divisions of the Central Intelligence Agency's Office of Information Services reviewed, redacted, and released hundreds of documents related to the Berlin Wall for this event. The accompanying DVD contains over 500 documents and over 12,000 pages of material and is only a small part of the greater collection located at the National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

A City Divided: Life & Death in the Shadow of the Wall document collection features 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.

The multimedia collection – photos, audio, and video materials are from the collections of the above contributors. This DVD will work in most computers, and the documents are in .PDF format.

These collections, centered on a theme or event, are joined with supporting analysis, essays, video, audio, and photographs, and showcased in this booklet and DVD. Documents and other materials included in this collection are also located with the National Archives of the United States and other locations.

Access to the collection is available on the National Archives and Records Administration web site <https://www.archives.gov/research/foreign-policy/cold-war/berlin-1962-1987/>.

The Central Intelligence Agency's Historical Collections portion may be accessed at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/historical-collections-publications/>.

