



STIFTUNG
BERLINER
MAUER

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The Berlin Wall, Flight and Division in Berlin

Discovering
Historical Sites

About us

The Berlin Wall Foundation has the task of documenting the history of the Berlin Wall and the exodus from the GDR that occurred as part of and under the impact of Germany's division and the East-West conflict in the 20th century. It informs the public about this history at the historical site. The Foundation is supported by funds from the State of Berlin and the German federal government. The work of the Foundation is accompanied by the foundation council and also by a scientific advisory board. Supporting associations exist for both the Marienfelde Refugee Center Museum and the Berlin Wall Memorial.

Sector sign with view of the Wall, 1963
Photo: Paul Kremer



The Wall on Bernauer Strasse, 2018



Lighting candles at the monument, Berlin Wall Memorial, 2018

Historical Sites

The Berlin Wall Foundation consists of five Historical Sites in Berlin:

The Berlin Wall Memorial on Bernauer Strasse is the central memorial dedicated to German division.

The Marienfelde Refugee Center Museum addresses flight and emigration from the GDR.

The Günter Litfin Memorial is a commemorative site for Günter Litfin, who died on August 24, 1961. He was the first person to be shot and killed at the Berlin Wall. The memorial is located in a former GDR watchtower.

The East Side Gallery – The longest open-air-gallery in the world, a section of the Berlin Wall painted by 118 artists in 1990.

Parliament of Trees against War and Violence – An artistic monument in Berlin's government quarter.

The Foundation is also currently developing a concept to establish an educational remembrance site at the former Checkpoint Charlie.

Border soldier and West Berliners
standing at the concrete wall, 1961
Photo: Michael-Reiner Ernst



Guided tour at East
Side Gallery, 2020



Preservation

The Berlin Wall Foundation preserves structural relics and traces of the division. The history of these objects is presented in the context of the divided city and against the backdrop of the Cold War.

Commemoration

The Berlin Wall Foundation facilitates commemoration of victims of the Wall and division. Memorial events are held on August 13 and November 9, marking the Wall's construction in summer 1961 and its fall in autumn 1989. In addition, prayer services commemorating the victims at the Berlin Wall are held regularly in the Chapel of Reconciliation.



Window of Remembrance, 2010, memorial grounds

Discussion with a contemporary witness, 2019



Information

The Foundation offers guided tours at the Historical Sites, permanent and special exhibitions, seminars, discussions with contemporary witnesses, special events, workshops and conferences. Many of these programs are offered free of charge. Current information is available online: www.stiftung-berliner-mauer.de

If you are a contemporary witness and would like to talk about your experiences or share documents, objects, historical photos or materials with us, please contact us!

People watching from the Border Wall 75
at Potsdamer Platz as the temporary border
crossing to West Berlin is opened, 1989
Photo: Nicole Montéran



Discussion

Questions about history must continually be asked anew and placed in an appropriate context. This is why the Berlin Wall Foundation sites are designed as open spaces where visitors can engage in exchanges, reflection and dialogue. They allow for the discovery of both the local and global dimensions of contemporary history.

Beyond historical questions, the sites enable a differentiated examination of topics concerning borders and border regimes, migration, rule of law, democracy and human rights as they relate to current issues today. They show the serious consequences of authoritarian rule and the importance of a pluralistic society.



Exhibition at the Marienfelde
Refugee Center Museum, 2017

Young people at the Berlin Wall
Memorial, 2019

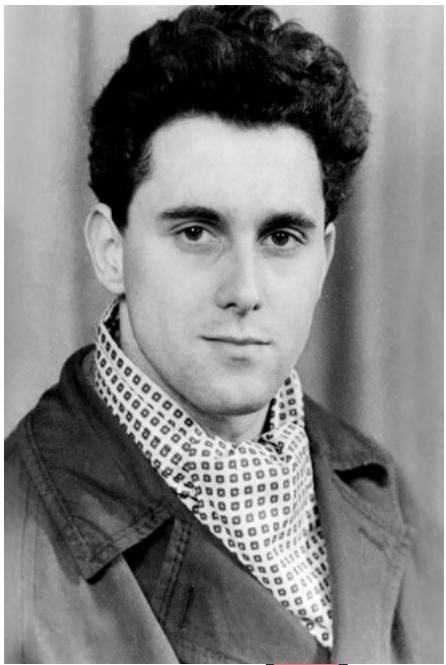
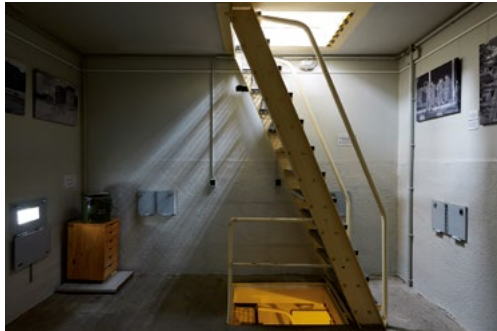


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Günter Litfin Memorial

The memorial at Kieler Eck is situated in a former command post of the GDR border troops on the Berlin-Spandau shipping canal. After the Wall fell, it was established as a memorial to Günter Litfin, one of the first victims of the Berlin Wall. It is both a document of the border regime and a testament to a vibrant remembrance culture.

Inside the tower, 2019



Günter Litfin
(Photo donated by
Jürgen Litfin)

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Berlin Wall Memorial

The memorial extends along 1.4 kilometers of Bernauer Strasse. It is situated on the former border strip between East and West Berlin. Bernauer Strasse acquired sad notoriety when the Berlin Wall was built in 1961 because the Wall here divided not only the city but also the street. The memorial site contains the last section of the Berlin Wall that has been preserved along with the border grounds behind it. The stories of events that took place here in combination with the presentation of preserved historical relics and traces of border obstacles help make the history of Germany's division comprehensible to visitors.



Demolition of the Reconciliation Church,
Bernauer Strasse, 1985
Photo: Krüger



Steel poles and the Wall, exhibition grounds, 2020

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Parliament of Trees against War and Violence

A living memorial against war and violence in Berlin's government quarter created by Berlin nature and art activist Ben Wagin in 1990. The site has undergone frequent redesign since then. It commemorates the victims of the Berlin Wall while also condemning all forms of war-related violence. Ben Wagin secured original pieces of the Wall and planted trees in the former border strip as a message of peaceful coexistence. The result is a dynamic ever-changing site of nature, remembrance and art.



Parliament of Trees



People waiting outside the refugee center, 1960
Photo: Horst Siegmann, © Landesarchiv Berlin



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Marienfelde Refugee Center Museum

The museum provides information about flight and emigration from the GDR: It is located at a historical site in the former main building of the refugee center that opened in 1953. Between 1949 and 1990, some four million people left the GDR for the Federal Republic, with 1.35 million passing through the Marienfelde refugee center in West Berlin.



Bed inside the refugee center
Photo: Andreas Tauber

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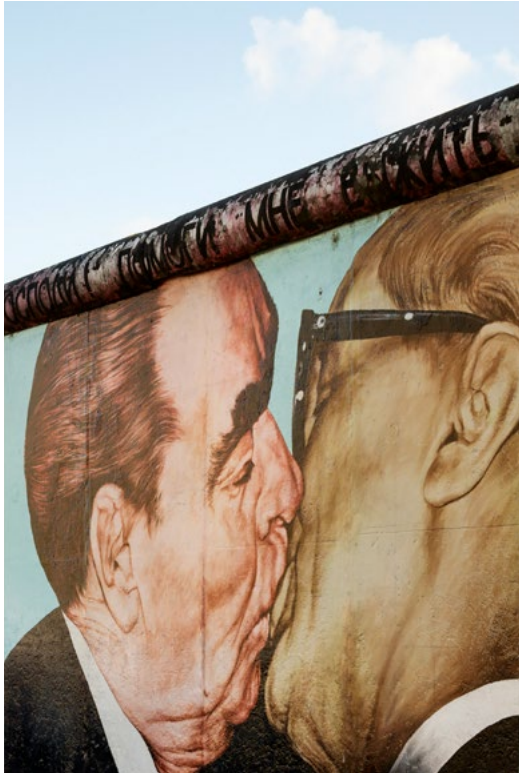
East Side Gallery

The longest preserved piece of the Berlin Wall, standing between Ostbahnhof and Oberbaumbrücke, is known worldwide as the East Side Gallery. After the Wall fell, 118 artists from 21 countries redesigned 1.3 kilometers of the former border into the longest open-air gallery in the world. The East Side Gallery stands both as a symbol of joy over the end of Germany's division and as a historical reminder of the inhumanity of the GDR border regime. Today it is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the capital.

Jim Avignon, "Doin' it cool
for the East Side", 2018
Photo: Jascha Fiebich



Dmitri Vrubel,
"Lord Help Me Survive This
Deadly Love", 2018
Photo: Peter Adamik



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