



# 20 years after the fall



Left: An East German soldier stands guard at the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the country's division, in 1961. Right: Berlin is an allusion, playing off the city's name, of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The image is a composite of two photographs: the left one shows a soldier in a trench, and the right one shows a soldier in a trench with a rifle.

## An East European looks back

By Richard Taylor  
In 1989, I was a young man of 21, living in East Berlin. I had just finished high school and was about to start university. The fall of the Berlin Wall was a moment of great excitement and hope for many of us. It was a turning point in the history of the city and the world.



## Relics of grim era keep past in mind

By Richard Taylor  
The Berlin Wall was a symbol of the division of the city and the world. It was a barrier that kept the East and West apart. The fall of the wall was a moment of great excitement and hope for many of us. It was a turning point in the history of the city and the world.

INSIDE  
► **PHOTOGRAPHY** — The fall of the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the country's division, in 1961. Right: Berlin is an allusion, playing off the city's name, of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The image is a composite of two photographs: the left one shows a soldier in a trench, and the right one shows a soldier in a trench with a rifle.

### 20 years after the fall

**ERICH HONECKER**  
Sept. 25, 1912-Sept. 29, 1994  
Leader of East Germany (May 3, 1973-Oct. 18, 1989)  
Survived the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 as secretary for military and security affairs. Later brought to trial for having ordered

border guards to shoot anyone trying to escape to West Germany during his years in power.  
"The Wall will be standing in 50 and even in 100 years, if the reasons for it are not removed."



**NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV**  
Sept. 19, 1894-Sept. 11, 1971  
Leader of the Soviet Union (Sept. 14, 1953-Oct. 14, 1964)  
Debunked the brutality of Josef Stalin, liberalized Soviet society, expanded exploration of space and installed nuclear missiles in Cuba. Acceded to U.S. demands to remove the missiles.

"Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you."  
"Berlin is the testicle of the West. When I want the West to scream, I squeeze on Berlin."



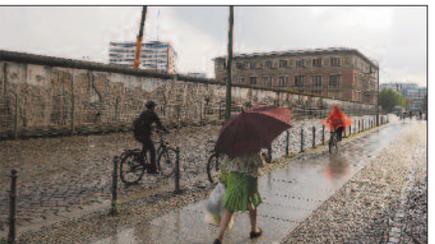
Formerly communist East Berlin is seen 20 years later from the city's Victory Column in the west. The Victory Column, which premiered in 1873, is a major tourist attraction.



AP/WIDE WORLD

## BERLIN

From page E1  
96 miles through the city and through the country. For those on the East side, it meant imprisonment for those on the West. In fact, it was a death zone — a gauntlet of walls, trenches, barbed wire and guard towers manned by grim sinners with shoot-to-kill orders. Floodlights bathed the surroundings in a harsh, nightmarish glow so intense that a mouse could not hide from sight.  
Today, life is left of the Wall, and motorists and pedestrians pass by, grinning at little notes. The paving stones on and around Potsdamer Platz are crossed every day by tourists and residents unaware of the former dividing line, which is noted periodically by metallic markers in the pavement.  
However, some draw attention to the fallen barrier, such as a dance troupe led by German choreographer Nagla V. Yankin, who grew up with the Wall. In her work, she has sought to capture the danger and isolation the Wall has represented, as well as the liberation and joy of its sudden demise.  
Her troupe's "Dancing With the Berlin Wall" project in July produced a video of dancers performing with the Wall, using it not only as a back-



A 200-yard-long intact section of the Berlin Wall runs along one of the city's main thoroughfares, Bernauerstrasse, one of a very few remaining reminders of a city once divided by the Cold War. The Wall cut through concert halls, apartment complexes and families for a full 96 miles, separating families into the communist East and democratic West until it was felled in 1989.

### 20 years after the fall



**MIKHAIL GORBACHEV** MARCH 2, 1931-  
Leader of the Soviet Union (March 11, 1985-Aug. 24, 1991)  
Embarked on political and economic reforms that led to the breakup of the Soviet Union and the emergence of freedom in Eastern Europe. Worked for arms control, survived a coup attempt and received the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize for helping end the Cold War.

"Americans have a severe disease, worse than AIDS. It's called the winner's complex. You want an American-style democracy [in Russia]. That will not work."  
"I am a Communist, a convinced Communist. For some that may be a fantasy, but for me it's my main goal, which is still far away."  
"The whole world is changing, and these changes are positive."



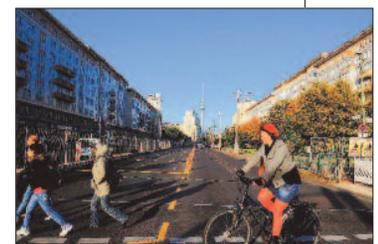
The words 'Our Planet' is painted on a 200-meter-long stretch of the Berlin Wall at Niederkirchnerstrasse, where fresh graffiti adorns the eastern side of the Wall's remnants today as an expression of freedom and hope.



A woman gazes at white crosses placed near the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin as a memorial for those who died during the Cold War at the Berlin Wall, a jumble of walls, trenches, barbed wire and guard towers manned by grim sinners with shoot-to-kill orders.



Left: Ahmad Culver dances at the Berlin Wall East Side Gallery in late June as one of 150 performers with a troupe choreographed by Nagla V. Yankin called "Dancing With the Berlin Wall." The project intends to reflect upon what the wall and its removal 20 years ago has meant to the Western world, from the danger and isolation the wall represented to the liberation and joy of its sudden demise. The project was supported by the Goethe Institute of New York City and the U.S. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.  
Far left: A re-enactment of U.S. troops guarding the famousCheckpoint Charlie crossing point between East and West Germany during the Cold War took place Oct. 13. Though little remains of the divide,Checkpoint Charlie is a popular tourist attraction today.



Pedestrians cross the Karl-Marx-Allee, a boulevard in then East Berlin built by the East German regime between 1952 and 1960 as the flagship of the GDR's reconstruction program after World War II.

drop but also as a dance partner. Dressed in tan trench coats like those of East German secret service agents, dancers paraded around, legs outstretched and clustered atop the remains of the barricade in a physical display of the emotions evoked by the Wall. The project was supported by the Goethe Institute of New York City and the U.S. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.  
What's more, fresh graffiti adorns the eastern side of the Wall's remnants — a brightly colored, personal expression of freedom and hope at a place where proximity meant death by automatic gunfire.  
Twenty years have passed since most of the Wall came down, and what's left — less than two miles of battered and scattered concrete ramparts — bears witness to a history that most Germans say should never be forgotten, or repeated.  
Sections of the Wall at Niederkirchnerstrasse are fenced in to protect them from souvenir seekers. At Bernauer-Strasse fresh concrete fills in gaps where monuments had been taken. And the Berlin Wall East Side Gallery, where much of the Wall artwork is displayed, has painted over a section in an effort to preserve it.  
\*Ahmad Culver, an award-winning choreographer for The Washington Times, was born and raised in Hamburg, Germany, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1984. Culver has danced on the set of this essay.