

BERLIN WALL MARKS ANNIVERSARY

By EDWARD SHIELDS
United Press International

Berlin—UPI—One year ago, goateed Walter Ulbricht hung out the bankrupt sign on Communist East Germany's policy and economy.

The sign was a wall seven feet high and 26 miles long. It spelled out in concrete and barbed wire that East Germany could survive only by becoming a gigantic concentration camp.

The Communist regime under Ulbricht has survived for the past year, literally with its back to the wall. It bought 12 months' time with machine guns and the blood of its own citizens.

West Berlin, which the Communists said would wither inside their barbed-wire noose, is booming, backed by the determination of the free world.

The wall stands as communism's desperate admission it couldn't meet the competition of the West.

Peace Treaty

In June, 1961, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev told President Kennedy that the Soviet Union would sign a peace treaty with East Germany by the end of the year, and Western troops would have to leave Berlin.

To East Germans, that meant the closing of the "Freedom Gate"—the end of free movement between East and West Berlin which had been the way to freedom if life under Communists became intolerable.

In June, about 19,000 East Germans came through the gate. In July, Ulbricht and his lieutenants aired confident forecasts of what would happen when they controlled all access routes to a "free city" of West Berlin without its allied garrisons.

But they had to erect roadblocks to control East Germans entering East Berlin and set up armed sentries to stop them from going on to West Berlin and freedom.

They slammed particularly harsh measures on the 60,000 to 100,000 East Berliners and East Germans who worked in West Berlin every day.

Flood of Refugees
Despite the ever-tougher border controls, 30,000 refugees from Ulbricht's Germany reached West Berlin in July.

East German industry came almost to a standstill as skilled workers, foremen and engineers disappeared. The harvest could not be gathered or transported because of the manpower shortage. Teachers and students, doctors and lawyers silently turned their backs on the "German Democratic Republic."

"We thought things would get better but now they are as bad as they were eight years ago" at the time of the June 17, 1953, uprising, one refugee told UPI. "We can't even get diapers for our babies."

The refugee stream became a flood as East Germans became convinced the freedom gate would soon close.

On Aug. 2, 1961, 1,322 refugees registered at Marienfelde Refugee camp in West Berlin. Six days later the total was 1,741. The next day 1,926 more people left East Germany forever.

A desperate Ulbricht flew to Moscow to consult Khrushchev, whose threat had loosed the flood.

The only answer the rulers of the Communist world could find to stave off East Germany's collapse was brutal, harsh and crude.

The Hatchet Falls
On grey, showery Aug. 12, the line of refugees at Marienfelde contained 2,400 people. Hundreds more were with relatives in West Berlin.

Then the Communists let their hatchet fall.

At 1:30 a.m. on Sunday, the 13th of August, the East German news agency ADN reopened its silent wires and began to run a series of paralyzing decrees.

It was announced East Germany was setting up a system of "reliable supervision and effective controls" between East and West Berlin, with the backing of the Soviet Union and the Communist Warsaw pact.

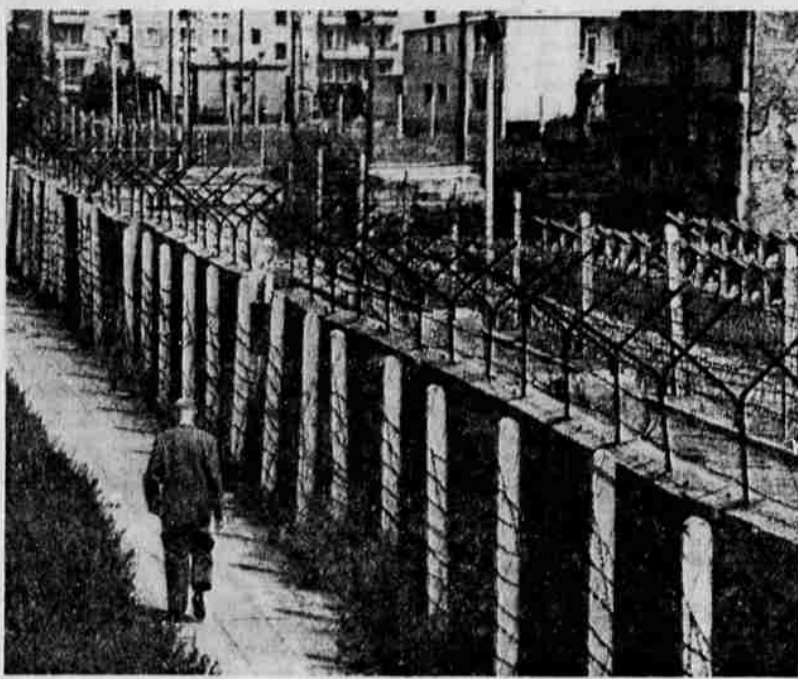
Thousands of Communist police suddenly turned up in the darkness even as the ADN teletypes were rolling out the faithful message. The police began to string barbed wire along the border.

More than 80 crossing points between East and West Berlin shrank that night to 13. In the weeks that followed they came down to seven road crossings and one rail line.

Subway and elevated train connections were severed. When the dawn came, the Berlin escape hatch had closed.

A chapter of drama and tragedy, high politics and squalid betrayals had opened.

Escape From East
Escape from East Germany was no longer a matter of making a decision to abandon



BERLIN WALL—A West Berliner walks along the wall at Sebastianstrasse between the U. S. and Soviet sectors in Berlin. In residential areas like this, several lines of barbed wire fences on the East side make an approach to the wall impossible. Two Communist border guards are in the center background. The numerous loudspeakers mounted on lamp post are used by Reds to blare propaganda across the wall into West Berlin. It has been one year since the wall was built. (UPI telephoto)

don home and property and start a new life elsewhere. It was a simple question of how.

In the first few days, it was fairly easy. In more than one place, West or East Berliners clipped holes in the barbed wire, often under the eye of Communist guards, and escapees scrambled through.

Others rammed cars or trucks through the wire, swam the rivers and canals on the borders, or even managed to evade Communist controls on trains entering West Berlin.

Then the Communists began to replace the barbed wire with concrete blocks, diverted from the construction of much-needed apartment houses. And the guards became much tougher.

West Berliners were angry, shocked and frustrated but, restrained by their own police, they made no serious attempts to smash the wall. The Western powers also were slow to react, except in protest notes and denunciations.

A West Berlin student, trapped at his parents' home in East Berlin on Aug. 13 week end, dashed past lounging guards three days later and leaped over the concrete wall to freedom.

He voiced the feelings of many East and West Berliners at that time: "We expected the West to give the Russians an ultimatum when they sealed the border Sunday. We did not expect the West to shrink back."

West Berlin newspapers headlined "The East acts. What does the West do? The West does nothing."

Mayor Willy Brandt wrote a personal letter to President Kennedy, asking for Western support.

The appeal—which has never been made public—drew a dramatic answer.

Combat Troop
A combat-ready battle group of the U.S. Army, 1,500 men with their vehicles, rolled up the Autobahn from West Germany on Aug. 20.

They were met at the edge of the city by Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson and retired Gen. Lucius D. Clay, the "Hero of Berlin" from airmail days, who had flown in from Washington.

The West Berliners gave an almost hysterical welcome to the troops, sent to beef up the 5,000-man U.S. garrison here.

Johnson pledged the United States would continue to defend Berlin's freedom, and a month later Clay returned as President Kennedy's personal representative to watch the tense situation.

West Berliners felt their spirits rise as Clay flew over East Germany to the little West Berlin enclave of Steinstuecken, or sent U.S. tanks and armored cars patrolling the East-West city border along the wall.

But the wall itself was growing stronger and more permanent. Where there had been one strand of barbed wire, there now were two. Where there had been two, there were concrete walls. East Berlin garden allotments beside the border were bulldozed clear of trees and garden houses so they could not be escape routes.

On Bernauerstrasse, the windows of East Berlin apartment houses fronting on the West Berlin street were being walled up and residents with friends or relatives in West Berlin were moved out. The wall began to take its toll.

Rudolf Urban, 47, jumped from his upper-floor window



CHECK MAP—Here, tourists in West Berlin study a map of the divided city, showing the Communist wall and other border fortifications between the Western sectors and the Communist Zone. The map is offered along with picture postcards of the wall at Potsdamer Platz, which is frequented by tourists. (UPI telephoto)

into Bernauerstrasse when Vopos (people's police) came to move him. He died in a hospital a month later.

Three wooden posts circled with a barbed wire wreath mark the place on Bernauerstrasse where 39-year-old Mrs. Ida Sieckmann died in a drop from her apartment window on Aug. 22.

Two days later, Communist bullets claimed their first victim. Guenter Litfin, 24, tried to swim across the Humboldt basin on the border canal system. East German transport police fired at the swimming youth until his hands flew up and he sank.

At least 40 East Berliners or East Germans have died in sight of freedom. The names of many of them are unknown to the West.

Their memory is marked by the granite block on the edge of the Spree river in the center of Berlin, inscribed to "The Unknown Refugee."

Broadcast Plea
Most Vopos paid little heed to the plea broadcast by loudspeaker trucks and big placards "Germans, don't shoot your fellow Germans."

West German police tried to hold their fire. In many cases, they knew, the Vopos firing at refugees were aiming their shots wide.

There always was a chance that the Vopo apparently trying to stop an escapee was hoping soon to follow suit himself.

But there was no doubt when Bernd Luenser, 29, appeared 75 feet above the street at Bernauerstrasse and called for help. Vopos on the rooftop were firing at him. West Berlin police fired back. One Vopo was injured. But another rushed at Luenser, who lost his grip and missed the firemen's net far below.

A cross marks the place. But many Vopos did flee, sometimes singly, often in pairs.

Several Communist police and Army members were shot by their politically indoctrinated comrades as they tried to cross the six-inch white line to the West.

The loyally-Communist East police have not come through unscathed. Border gunfights became more frequent this spring.



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In late afternoon on May 23, Cpl. Peter Goering, 21, and Cpl. Kurt Laumer, 20, confidently sprang on the wall beside a border canal and began to pump machine-pistol bullets into a 15-year-old boy swimming to the West.

A West Berlin policeman raised his American-made carbine and fired two shots, killing Goering and seriously wounding Laumer.

The boy still is in a West Berlin hospital, permanently crippled.

Goering became a Communist martyr.

A month later, Cpl. Reinhold Huhn, 20, tried to stop a West Berliner running for a tunnel exit in East Berlin.

Huhn fell dead of bullet wounds as Rudolf Mueller, his wife and two children and sister-in-law reached West Berlin through the tunnel. West Berlin police claimed Huhn was shot by other Vopos trying to kill Mueller, who had tunneled into the East to rescue his family. The Com-

munists accused Mueller of the murder.

Tunnels became one of the most popular means of escape as the wall grew thicker and the Communist guards grew tougher.

West Berlin university students organized many tunnel projects. One even came up in a border cemetery where a tombstone would silently swivel and a "mourner" could disappear underground and come out in West Berlin.

The greatest tunnel escape of all was in January, when 28 adults and teen-agers dug from the cellar of a house on the border in East Germany into West Berlin.

The sewers also were an escape route until the East Germans drove metal bars across them, from the surface, and then threw down gas grenades when they suspected an escape. Reliable sources estimate about 30 refugees died in the filth and darkness of the sewers.

Moved to West Germany
After the wall went up, and

morale went down, several thousand West Berliners gave up and moved to West Germany.

But in the last six months, many have returned and the places of the others have been taken by new settlers, brought here by good wages, good housing and good jobs, by the desire to live in one of the world's most sophisticated cities—and even by interest in being in one of the most exciting outposts of the West.

Part of the renewed confidence in Berlin is recognition that the United States and the French and British forces here have met and stood up to Communist challenges.

Last October U.S. and Soviet tanks stood muzzle-to-muzzle in the first hostile confrontation as the Communists attempted to interfere with U.S. rights to enter East Berlin.

The attempt failed. East Germany tried to harass and interfere with Allied traffic on the Autobahns and was rebuffed.

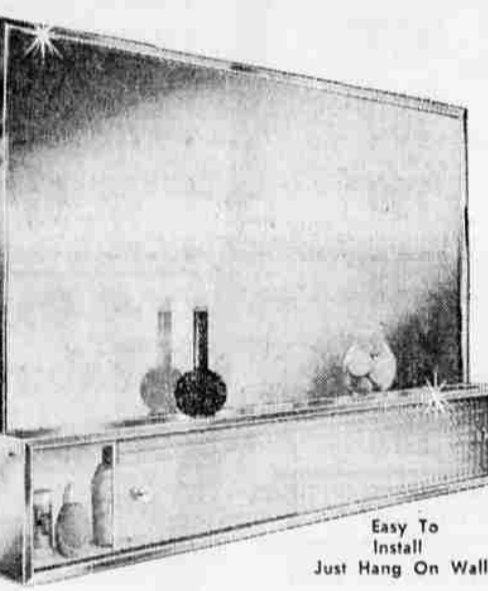
Soviet aircraft tried to squeeze Allied planes out of their vital air corridors to West Berlin. The West filled the corridors with its own planes.

One year after the wall, West Berliners know the Communists still have an arsenal

of weapons to use against the city. West Berliners have faith in themselves that they can meet the challenge, and faith that their Western allies are standing by. If either faith is ever broken, the Communists won't need their wall—the whole city will be theirs.

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