

**Volume 5**

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**The Fall of the Berlin Wall - I**

**Lead: Designed as a means of enforcing Marxist rule of Eastern Europe, the Berlin Wall became a potent symbol of that system's failure.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Through the choppy waters off Hyannis Port, Massachusetts the yacht *Marlin* carried John Fitzgerald Kennedy and his family on a day cruise. It was a warm August afternoon in 1961 and the President was looking forward one of his favorite dishes, fish chowder.**

**Instead, he got some disturbing news. The Soviets were building a wall along the line that separated their sector of Berlin from that of the western allies. Kennedy felt there was absolutely nothing he could do about it. Knock it down and the Soviets would just drop back 100 yards and build it again. Knock that one down and there would be war. Recent evidence seems to indicate that Kennedy could have called the Soviet bluff, but at the time for whatever reason, he let it stand.**

**The City of Berlin had become a powerful political symbol. Divided as a part of the postwar settlement after the defeat of the Nazis, there were four sectors each administered by one of the Allies, Britain, France, the United**

**States and the Soviet Union. In 1948 the western nations merged their sectors into a single economic zone. This incensed the Soviets who withdrew from the Allied control Council and retaliated with a land blockade. Their coercive tactics were broken with a brilliant airlift which saved the city and launched it on the path to becoming a miracle of urban development, a shining outpost of democratic prosperity in the heart of the drab dullness that was Eastern Germany.**

**A decade of turbulence rocked the government of East Germany. Political, social and economic conditions were so bad, particularly after 1958, that hundreds of thousands**

**of East Germans voted with their feet. Using West Berlin as a corridor, a veritable human hemorrhage, the best and most talented East Germans began to leave for the West. Next time: Blocking the hemorrhage.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

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**Resources**

**Lucas, Michael and Adrienne Edgar. "Germany After the Wall," *World Policy Journal* 7 (1 1989-1990): 189-214.**

**McAdams, A. James. "An Obituary for the Berlin Wall," *World Policy Journal* 7 (2 1990): 357-375.**