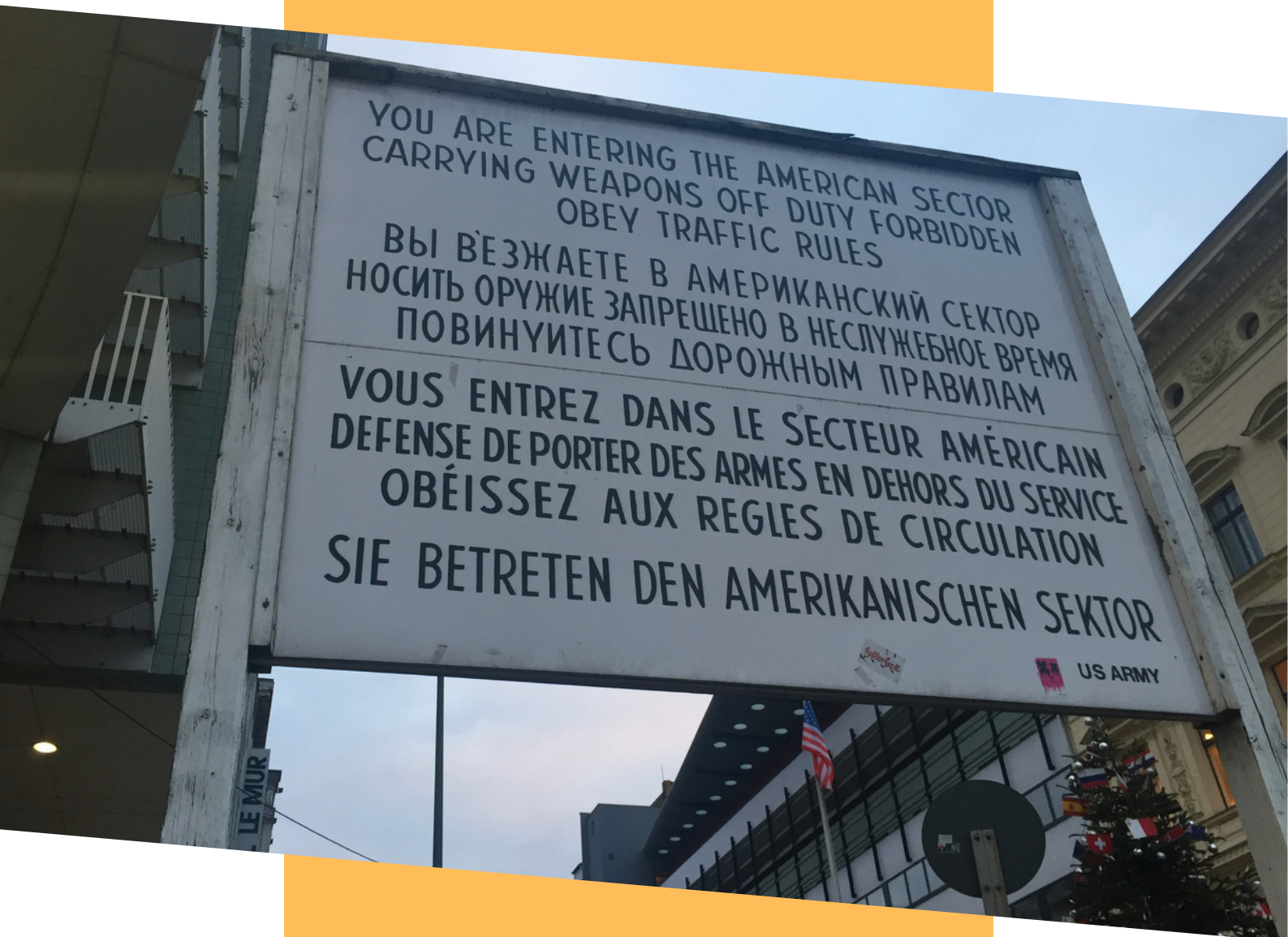


A Symbol of the Cold War



The Berlin Wall
1961-1989

Berlin after WW2

In 1945, Germany was divided into four zones of occupation.

In 1949, Germany formally split into two independent nations. In 1952, the East German government closed the border with West Germany, but the border between East and West Berlin remained open.

In June 1961, a bulb wire barrier was constructed around West Berlin. This was eventually fortified into a concrete structure isolating West Berlin from surrounding East German territory.



Bernauer Straße



Bernauer
Straße
became a
historical site
as the Berlin
Wall was
erected here
in August 1961
directly in
front of the
East Berlin
houses.

The Wall tore families and friends apart. It divided lovers and separated parents from their children. After the Wall was built, the SED authorized only a few visits to the West. After its initiative to distribute entrance permits to West Berliners failed, it ceased allowing any West Berliners to enter East Berlin. Since very few people had telephones, the only way to maintain contact was through the exchange of (monitored) letters and by waving across the border. After the border was closed, crowds of people gathered to wave to their family on the other side. East German police, and later the border troops, tried to hinder this. But until the Wall fell, Bernauer Strasse continued to be a place where people arranged to see each other from a distance and wave.

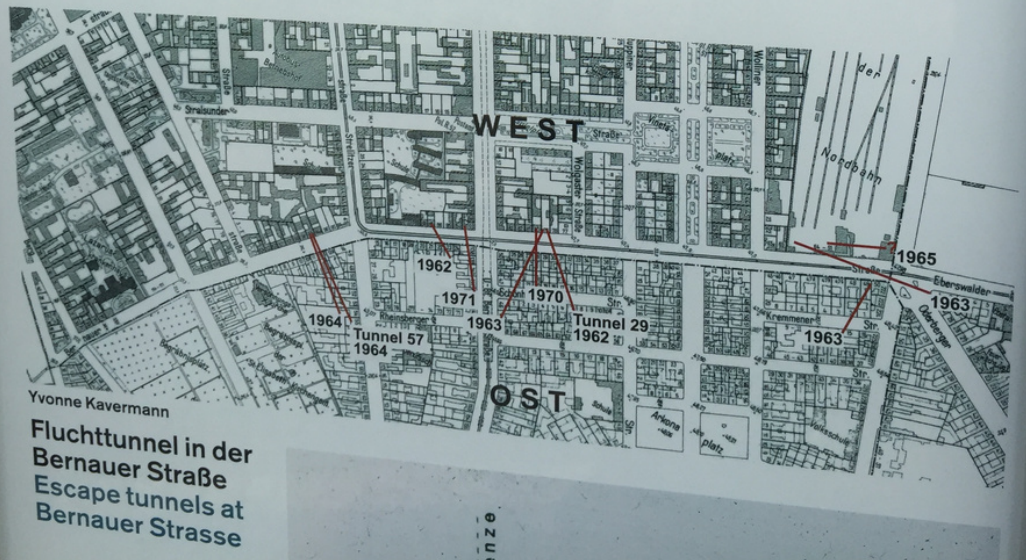
Escaping to the West

Between 1961 and 1989, thousands of East Germans made risky border crossings.

The 27-mile-long wall was actually two walls with a no-man's-land known as the "death strip" in between.

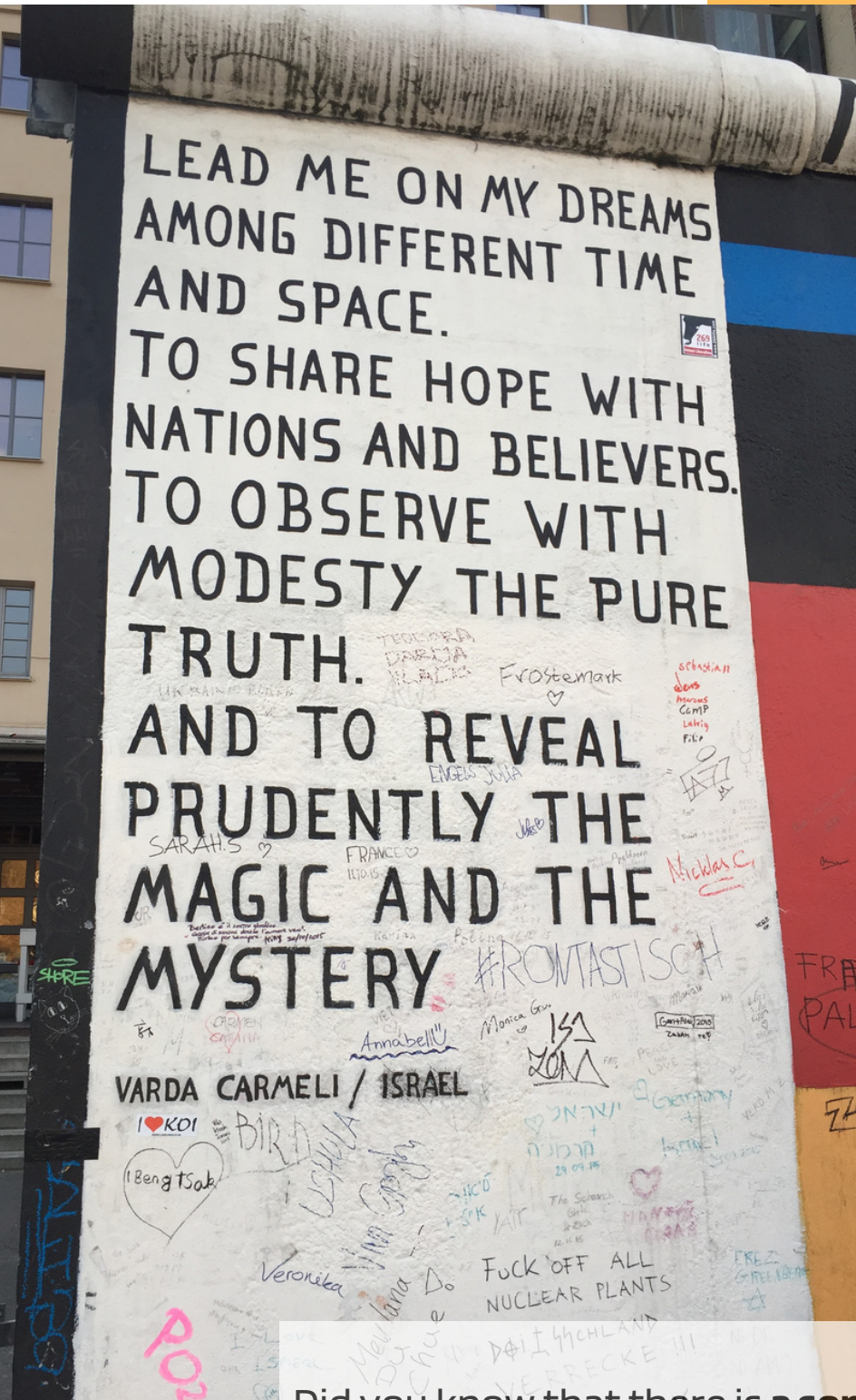
Fertigstellung aufgegeben werden... an die Staatssicherheit verraten. Fast 90 Menschen kamen in der Bernauer Straße auf diesem Weg nach West-Berlin.

A less dangerous route to the West appeared to be beneath Berlin's surface: Several tunnels were dug between 1961 and 1989. Some of them were built from the East to the West, but most ran in the other direction. During the first decade after the Wall was built, escape helpers dug tunnels to bring over their wives, relatives and friends. The area beneath Bernauer Strasse was particularly well suited for this because the ground there was extremely stable. It took the workers three to six months to complete a tunnel. Only three of about a dozen tunnels were actually used to bring fugitives to the West; the others had to be abandoned before completion or were betrayed to the secret police. Almost 90 people were able to reach West Berlin through tunnels at Bernauer Strasse.



Yvonne Kavermann
Fluchttunnel in der
Bernauer Straße
Escape tunnels at
Bernauer Strasse

9th Nov 1989



On 9 Nov 1989, the head of the East German Communist Party announced that citizens of the GDR could cross the border freely.

That night, crowds swarmed the wall and some brought with them hammers and picks to chip away at the wall itself.

While the wall came down partly because of a bureaucratic accident, it fell amid a wave of revolutions in Eastern and Central Europe.

Did you know that there is a song associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall? Check out "Winds of Change" by The Scorpions

The Berlin Wall in NUS

Did you know that two fragments are on display at a garden behind the Tembusu College at NUS University Town?

They are on loan to Singapore since October 2016 for at least 5 years, to mark 50 years of diplomatic relations between Germany and Singapore.



Do check out the Berlin Wall Fragments if you are near NUS University Town! Directions [HERE](#).