

## Chapter 2

### Segregated Sectors

#### Leonard Freed, The Berlin Crisis, and the Color Line



Figure 2.1: Leonard Freed, Berlin, 1961 (Magnum Photos)

*“We, he and I, two Americans. We meet silently and part silently. Between us, impregnable and as deadly as the wall behind him, is another wall. It is there on the trolley tracks, it crawls along the cobble stones, across the frontiers and oceans, reaching back home, back into our lives and deep into our hearts: dividing us, wherever we meet. I am White and he is Black.”*

—Leonard Freed, *Black in White America*

*“If the American found in Europe only confusion, it would obviously be infinitely wiser for him to remain at home. Hidden, however, in the heart of confusion he encounters here is that which he came so blindly seeking: the terms on which he is related to his country, and to the world.”*

—James Baldwin, *“A Question of Identity”*

#### I. “We, he and I, two Americans”

On August 13, 1961, the East Germans started building a wall, and two weeks later Leonard Freed arrived in Berlin. In those uncertain days of the Berlin Crisis, as the Allied West

and Soviet East once again moved close to war, each side was on high alert. The potential for conflict in Berlin between the superpowers seemed imminent, leading to a standoff at and the eventual sealing off of the city's internal border. It would take the East German Democratic Republic months to fully enclose West Berlin, but in a matter of hours, the newly-fortified boundary was beginning to take shape: with barbed wire, wooden barricades, torn-up pavement, and, increasingly, a rudimentary five-foot high concrete wall. In the early days of the wall, soldiers from each side drew near to protect and inspect the implementation of the closed border. The photographer Freed was fascinated by the implications of this Cold War frontline – Berlin was again the epicenter of global conflict, in what he conceived as “a war of nerves” between East and West.<sup>1</sup> Freed spent his time during his August travels close to the center of the divided city. With the world fearing the brink of Armageddon, he pointed his camera toward one of the West's last lines of defense: American GIs in the American sector of West Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

Freed was born in 1929 and grew up Brooklyn, New York. His parents, Sam and Rose, were both born to Jewish families in Minsk, Russia, but met and married after they immigrated to the United States — escaping a wave of pogroms in their native land around the First World War. In 1952, Freed traveled through Europe and North Africa for two years. After going home briefly, he returned in 1956 and settled. While living in Europe, Freed honed his craft as a documentary photographer and supported himself by selling photographs to local magazines and newspapers. Postwar Europe was a puzzle for Freed: a land of great artistic civilization, familial aura, Jewish trauma, postwar destruction and potential redemption. In his mind, Germany was the central and most jagged piece.

From his earliest travels to Germany, Freed pondered the ways in which history and memory influenced the nation's postwar condition, and in turn, his relationship to its people and



landscapes. He also wrestled with his identity as an American Jew. Freed began photographing Germany on his first trip to Europe in the early 1950s — including at least one image taken at the walled boundary of the Dachau concentration camp. He bought his first Leica camera, a used model, in Cologne in 1954, and returned home to America soon after. He lived in Little Italy in New York City for one year and photographed Hassidic Jews in Brooklyn. In 1956, he returned to Europe on assignment in Italy for *Look* and met German woman Brigitte Klück. Freed's work was first published by Klück's hometown newspaper in Dortmund. In 1957, Leonard Freed and Brigitte Klück married and settled in Amsterdam. While living in Holland, Freed first sought to further understand his Jewish heritage in the context of post-World War II Europe. He thought of his idea for his first book, *Joden von Amsterdam* (Jews of Amsterdam) (1958) after visiting the city's Anne Frank House. Early in 1961, Freed had started photographing in neighboring Germany. These images would later cohere into his second book *Deutsche Juden heute* (German Jews Today) (1965).

By August 1961, Freed had been living outside of America for more than five years. The legacy of conflict in Germany weighed on Freed that August, when he took a train from Amsterdam to Berlin. Freed travelled to Berlin with his close friend, Dutch journalist Willem Oltmans in late August 1961. Neither man had an assignment or a particular itinerary. As many around the world waited on edge for the breakout of World War III, Freed and Oltmans stepped close to the border. Freed's photographs and recollections from that trip attest to his movements near Zimmerstrasse as he stalked the wall's emergent path. Freed meandered through parked Army tanks and jeeps, GIs squatting with trays of fast food, and pedestrians passing through a then-makeshift but heavily-guarded Checkpoint Charlie on Friedrichstrasse. Freed and Oltmans witnessed a frenzied evening scene on Moritzplatz in which U.S. military tanks with searchlights and jeeps with speakers blasted Elvis Presley music near the border wall, to galvanize throngs of

West Berliners who had gathered to protest the still-fresh physical division of the city.<sup>3</sup> Freed confronted his visions of a war-prone Germany in the American sector of a newly walled Berlin, and through the refracted lens of American culture, he confronted his own expatriate status. In the majority of his images from this trip, though, the physical Wall itself is barely visible. Instead, American GIs stationed by the border receive his most consistent and direct focus. Many of the soldiers barely acknowledge Freed's presence while others cast sideways glances at him and his camera.

There is one exception to this general focus, when Freed faced head-on both the Berlin Wall and a fellow American in the same frame. The resulting image would haunt Freed, beckon his return from exile, and transform his practice as a photographer. Here, at the wall in its nascent days, Freed snapped a photograph of an unnamed black soldier, standing at the edge of the American sector (Figure 2.1).<sup>4</sup> After lifting his finger from the shutter release of his camera, Freed left the scene without taking any more photographs of the soldier. Unlike his other GI images at the wall from this trip in which he sometimes captured the same serviceman from several angles, his contact sheets from this trip confirm that the black soldier image was powerfully a single shot.<sup>5</sup> Taken at a middle-distance in black and white, the frontal portrait features the uniformed soldier in its foreground, his eyes cast downward and to the side of the camera's lens. Freed stands with the soldier near the intersection of Zimmerstrasse and Charlottenstrasse, between a set of trolley tracks that culminate in the imposed boundary of the wall envisioned at the image's background. The soldier is equipped in combat gear, and a helmet weights his head with a slight forward lean. Several of his comrades can be seen in an Army jeep behind and to the side of him, yet their focus is elsewhere, outside of the frame. The soldier's arms jut softly out to his sides and his hands rest below at his hips. This image, though an exception, typifies two central and productive challenges

for Freed in this period: how should he identify with his subjects, and how should he view the Berlin Wall?

When Freed's soldier single shot was later included as the opening image to his collection *Black in White America* (1968), Freed locates this image in "Berlin, Germany," conjuring the city as a whole, without an Eastern or Western distinction. He goes on to label the image as to call attention to the soldier's affiliation and stance: "In defense of Western Civilization, an American soldier's hand rests on his gun."<sup>6</sup> Freed explains this moment of strained exchange in the book:

We, he and I, two Americans. We meet silently and part silently. Between us, impregnable and as deadly as the wall behind him, is another wall. It is there on the trolley tracks, it crawls along the cobble stones, across the frontiers and oceans, reaching back home, back into our lives and deep into our hearts: dividing us, wherever we meet. I am White and he is Black.<sup>7</sup>

Freed's annotation affirms the profound duality of this visual encounter – citizens of the same country stand feet away from one another as countrymen in an American-occupied zone of a foreign country and yet are divided by a deep history of racial strife.

*Black in White America* is a book-length photo essay that captures the prevalence of racial division in America in the decade following the 1954 legal mandate to end segregation, as well as the landmark Civil Rights legislation of the mid 1960s. Curator Brett Abbott places the photo-book at the start of a mid-20th century photographic practice of "engaged" observation, in which Freed's "approach to photojournalism was aimed not so much at telling the details of a particular day or week, but at relating the contours of a bigger, more conceptual narrative about America."<sup>8</sup> The image of the soldier was emblematic of a central contradiction of post-World War II American culture: the soldier guarded the U.S.'s Cold War frontline abroad but was denied full citizenship rights back home. Through his work on the project, beginning days after the initial construction of the close internal border in Berlin, Freed captured and attempted to

encroach on America's racial buffers, all the while mapping the color line from his transnational mobile perspective.

Freed's trip to Berlin in August 1961 was carried out as he finished capturing images for *Deutsche Juden heute*, but while there he spawned another project, one that would culminate into a panoramic exploration of his wife's homeland, *Made in Germany* (1970). Freed later wrote in this book's Introduction, "Made in Germany means...know your history and geography," and he understood the Berlin Wall as marking another historical turning point of "defending Germany from itself."<sup>9</sup> This book is about the historical memory and potential transformation of postwar Germany. It features a substantive section devoted to the Berlin Wall and the American GIs he encountered during the Berlin Crisis. The single shot of the black soldier, however, was not included in this collection. But in *Black in White America*, Freed's black soldier image fuels the idea that the divided city of Berlin was also an uncanny construction in the architecture of U.S. racial segregation. The site around the Berlin Wall in *Made in Germany*, however, represents an ongoing and noble struggle to reconcile the U.S.'s historical obligation to Germany through its own postwar freedom project. In each case, Freed confronts the limits of American-sponsored democracy and must place himself close to the Berlin Wall to do so. The two books share more than an overlapping image contexts – they were both printed by the same Dutch printer (Joh. Enschedé), through the same process (copper intaglio), and published by the same American publisher (Richard Grossman).

Freed's Berlin Wall images, and the photographic trajectories that spring forth from them, present his treatment of photographic perspective as a tool of relationality in these emergent years of his career. Perspective is measured as the imagined distance between a photographer and his subjects, determined by the angle and framing of a shot. The term perspective also

connotes a viewpoint that is informed by experience and interaction. Freed chose photographs, both at the point of capture and later in editorial selection, that convey spatial relationships to his subjects. Curator William Ewing, in Freed's retrospective *Worldview*, explains the title around its German cognate, *Weltanschauung*, and the parallel between Freed's practice as a photographer and his philosophical outlook:

For Leonard Freed saw, interpreted and transmitted in a particular way. He had a *Weltanschauung*. This term and its less-than-perfect translation, *worldview*, wraps beautifully around both Freed the man and Freed the photographer. ... He used photography as a tool to better understand the world, first to himself (to discover who he was), and then for us (to help discover who we are).<sup>10</sup>

Freed's perspective, as it pertains to the Berlin Wall, epitomizes the way his approach to photography was influenced by his ideas of relationality, both formalistically and historically. His photographs from this period originate and most prominently circulate in his German or American archives, and eventually were included in the three books *Deutsche Juden heute*, *Black in White America*, and *Made in Germany*. Because of Berlin's geopolitical situation, it becomes difficult to limit Freed's photographs to only two national contexts. But by thinking through the three national places in which Freed's black soldier image may reasonably "belong" – Germany, the American sector of Berlin at the wall, and/or America – we may consider his perspective as forging a transatlantic and transhistorical mapping practice. Where does Germany end and the U.S. begin in occupied Berlin? Where does history end and the present spring forth? To explore these concerns, I contend Freed exercised distance between himself and his subjects: at once moving closer to identify with them but marking space as to recognize the historical and social buffers which he attempted to make sense of or to overcome.

Visibly displaying the scars of postwar Germany, the city of Berlin occupies a special place in Freed's work. The images from his many journeys to the divided city exemplify his visionary

approach. He traveled to Berlin by train in August 1961 to confirm for himself the construction of a wall cutting through the middle of the city; he lived in West Berlin briefly in 1976 to work on the Time-Life book, *Great Cities: Berlin*, and his curtain-less bedroom window faced the border wall; he photographed Turkish families in West Berlin in 1984 who were living close to the wall in the neighborhood of Kreuzberg; and he returned in November 1989 and October 1990 to observe the dismantling of the wall and the rapid reunification of the city. Beyond the Cold War, the Berlin Wall symbolized for Freed the many legacies of division and conflict running across the different epochs of modern Germany. The Berlin Wall also helped Freed visualize the social barriers that defined American society.

Over the next decade, after taking his photographs during the Berlin Crisis, Freed would travel back and forth between the “old” and “new” worlds of Europe and America. In doing so, he produced book projects, and challenged the underlying dichotomies of home and away, past and present, countryman and stranger. Despite the separate emphases of each project, the fact that Freed took photographs across roughly the same period affirms the shared productive contexts and tensions of these works. More specifically, Freed’s depiction of the Berlin Wall alongside other historical boundaries marks these projects as products of the same emergent practice of roving perspective. Understanding where Freed locates the Berlin Wall or these structures and himself in each of these images allows us to measure his transformation as a photographer and his depiction of his surrounding terrain – how he would identify *and* distance himself from his subjects during these transatlantic travels.

In this chapter, I explore the Berlin Wall as a space of photographic encounter in Freed’s contemporaneous projects on America and Germany. First, I register how Freed’s images and published works demonstrate a larger cultural practice – that within weeks and months of its

construction, the Berlin Wall was an analogous site and discursive formation for U.S. Civil Rights activists and artists drawing attention to the battles over segregation. Second, I examine the liminal national and/or historical sites in which Freed places himself in Germany, America and in between, to consider what is at stake for Freed in identifying (or not) with his subjects. For Freed this means calibrating a proper distance between himself and his subjects. Third, I consider the outcome of his work, in part, prompted by his photographs of the early days of the Berlin Wall, the photo-texts *Black in White America* and *Made in Germany*. I contend that his representations of the early days of the Berlin Wall in each respective work is complementary, as he assesses the post–World War II U.S. democratic project as itself an incomplete construction in America’s liminal presence abroad and Germany’s postwar landscapes. Ultimately, I contend that this and other such cultural productions of this era engage Cold War Berlin through a linkage to barriers of segregation in U.S. society, while positing both sides of Germany’s need for continued reconciliation following the Holocaust.

Before proceeding, a note on Freed as a photographer of relationality: one way visual culture scholars have approached perspective is through the relationship forged between the photographer and his subjects, either at the moment of image capture or in encounters with printed photographic images. Documentary photography operates through simultaneous modes of proximity and distance, and the potential for either direct engagement or disassociation are dialectical outcomes of such moments of visual exchange. In her germinal study, *On Photography*, Susan Sontag writes with precaution, “between the photographer and his subject, there always remains distance.”<sup>11</sup> Sontag is concerned with images that make claims of social truth, and warns against the consumerist and predatory nature of postwar documentary photography. Sontag

writes of the historical shift in which “picture-taking is an event in of itself.” She adds, “Our very sense of situation is now articulated by the camera's interventions.”<sup>12</sup> Roland Barthes, in *Camera Lucida*, considers the problem of the ownership of images (“to whom does the photograph belong”) around the transformation of a person into an imaged pose. He writes “the Photograph is the advent of myself as other: a cunning disassociation of consciousness from identity.”<sup>13</sup> For Barthes, photography is imbued with paradoxical dualities: as producing images of public use and private provenance, with the power to still the subject through disassociation and to animate them by extending the visual field to the viewer. He balances these dualities by shifting the burden of truth from the photograph: “To ask whether a photograph is analogical or coded is not a good means of analysis: The important thing is that the photograph possesses an evidential force ... the power of authentication exceeds the power of representation.”<sup>14</sup>

In more recent work by scholars of post–World War II documentary photography, the construction of race in this period hinges on both powers of authentication and representation. In *Harlem Crossroads*, Sara Blair writes about photographs in “contexts of encounter” and “the work of postwar photographers who were altering possibilities for understanding subjective experience and the social landscape.”<sup>15</sup> Blair attends to African American writers whose engagement with documentary photography of Harlem “enabled ... an aesthetics of witnessing” important to literary portrayals of the particular urban space of Harlem in this period and its metonymic connections to American modernity, for both black and white cultural producers. Blair explores the ways these authors “[wrenched] images from instrumental contexts for their own uses,” and in effect distanced photographs according to their own expressive needs.<sup>16</sup> In *The Self in Black and White: Race and Subjectivity in Postwar American Culture*, Erina Duganne complements this with another approach in which she considers the distance between photographers and their



subjects at moments of capture, and following an image's circulation yields complex insights into constructions of race and photographic messaging. Duganne contends such photographers "were ... interested in using the relationship between themselves and their subjects as a means to negotiate the relational space between their private and social selves." Duganne refers to the term "intersubjective exchange" as a dialogical approach to photography that accounts for how "photographic representations of race collided and colluded with the broader social systems in which they were produced and received."<sup>17</sup> Photography in these cases models a sort of social interaction that seeks to redress legacies of racial separation through the acts of photographic capture and circulation.

Whether as a matter of political urgency or cultural intrigue, Americans turned their attention to the walling of Berlin through photographs of its construction. From the tense moments of the Berlin crisis, among the first press photographs of the border scene that circulated around the globe were of East German border troops, either building the border or escaping it. On August 15, 1961, Peter Leibing photographed East German Corporal Conrad Schumann taking a running leap over the barbed wire blocking the border, while throwing his rifle off his shoulder (Figure 2.2). A photograph showing this "leap of freedom" soon appeared on the front page of the West German *Bild* newspaper and was soon reprinted in papers across the world.<sup>18</sup> For Western purveyors, their vision of the wall was simultaneously one of enclosure and potential albeit challenged escape. But the narrative of the image is not self-apparent. The civilians in the background, pictured in a soft focus, stand casually in the background, and one figure appears as if he has his hand in his pocket, a contrast in postures to the fleeing soldier for a war zone. Such a juxtaposition reminds the reader that perspective of the Berlin Wall was rendered through an exploration of this newly fortified area, ascertained by going close to the



Figure 2.2: Peter Leibing, "Conrad Schumann jumps the wire," 15 August 1961, *Bild*

border, but often framed through a bipolar Cold War logic. The presence of another photographer's upheld camera in the frame reinforces the proximity and power of photography on the scene. The perspectival relationality here in the dominant reading models the sense of East Berlin as otherworldly, and West Berlin as the visual norm.

Freed was thus neither the only photographer nor the sole American cultural figure to make sense of the wall in the wake of the Berlin Crisis. But in the case of Freed's early images of the Berlin Wall and his single shot in particular, Freed uses the wall to connect other topographies of division to this scene and to find analogous borders of freedom and repression that challenge the bipolar Cold War frame. He does so, similarly to Leibing's method, by attending to the liminal spaces of a divided Berlin. But by mapping Freed's images across national spaces, in Berlin and America, and considering the state of racial rule in the U.S. in the 1960s, we can more reflexively locate the subject and photographer as they stood together while the photograph was taken in an

American-patrolled zone of the city. To locate Freed and the unnamed black soldier in *and* out of Berlin is to acknowledge Freed's complicated ideas about the limits of freedom in a moment when the fight against segregation demanded that in a functioning democracy, America's own walls and divisions must crumble.

## **II. Locating the Wall and "Freedom Land"**

Before there was a Berlin Wall, President John Kennedy sat at his desk in the Oval Office to talk to the American public about the impending crisis in Berlin. On July 25, 1961, Kennedy delivered carefully prepared remarks in a thirty-minute address broadcast to television viewers and radio audiences. A month prior, Kennedy had met with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna, only to hear stern advisories about Berlin from the Soviet leader, who was intending to stem the tide of refugees leaving the Eastern Bloc through the portal of West Berlin. To do so, Khrushchev threatened to sign a separate treaty with East Germany, which would nullify the 1945 agreements and endanger free access through all of the sectors of Berlin. Kennedy announced America was prepared to go to war over free access to the city.

During the speech, the Oval Office was simmering due the July heat and the powerful television lights illuminating the President. Kennedy wiped sweat from his brow several times while on camera. For audiences this reemphasized the drama unfolding in the Cold War hotspot of Berlin, and the urgency of Kennedy's public messaging. His televised address was an attempt to sell the merits of such a stance to the public: "The immediate threat to free men is in West Berlin. But that isolated outpost is not an isolated problem. The threat is worldwide ... an attack upon that city will be regarded as an attack upon us all." Kennedy made his case for guarding West Berlin by appealing to the historical circumstances of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. He

attempted to protect American interests geographically, explaining that the precarious circumstances of an outpost “110 miles behind the Iron Curtain,” as he put it, was indicative of the threat to freedom “worldwide.” To do so, Kennedy supplemented his speech with maps to visually reinforce Berlin’s pivotal and endangered location. Kennedy spoke during prime time, utilizing the medium of television to make symbolic political and rhetorical links between the U.S. and Berlin. Toward the close of his address Kennedy said, “Today the endangered frontier of freedom runs through divided Berlin. We want it to remain a frontier of peace ... To sum it all up, we seek peace – but we shall not surrender.”<sup>19</sup> Kennedy’s allusion to the frontier was an appeal to American geopolitical history as a settler nation in which the cross-border reach of militarism was morally justified and necessary through the logic of American exceptionalism. Further, he echoed a Cold War political stance in which confrontation was favored over unfettered Soviet influence.

Mary Ann Watson, in her book, *Expanding Vista: American Television in the Kennedy Years*, writes, “It is impossible to separate the major events of American history in the early 1960s from the development of American television.” She points to television as a “New Frontier,” a cultural deployment of the term, through which Kennedy put forth a message of being “both exalted and personalized.” She notes, “John Kennedy believed that nonpolitical talk to the unconvinced was better than political talk to the already convinced.”<sup>20</sup> Taking to the airwaves, Kennedy attempted to address questions swirling around the Berlin Crisis that predated the construction of the Berlin Wall: Where exactly was this Cold War border? How was Berlin both a frontline and an outpost? How and why was the city to be protected? What other post–World War II divisions did the border lead to or suggest? Kennedy’s choice of a televised platform for his speech emphasizes his understanding of the medium, to apply a phrasing from Penny Von Eschen, as a “pivotal cultural weapon in the Cold War.”<sup>21</sup> Whether as a threat to domestic security or as a prelude to another

World War in Europe, Kennedy was attempting to harness the airwaves to compel Americans to consider Berlin as an important and linked site of their own freedom.

The content and framing of Kennedy's speech posited Berlin as both the heart and "outpost" of American freedom. As Andreas Daum demonstrates, America's postwar strategic relationship with Berlin operated through the location of "America's Berlin" as a "political and symbolic place" both in *and* out of the United States. The charting of America's Berlin, he suggests, "incorporated Berlin into the history of the United States and linked the often dramatic events in the German capital...to America's own cultural memory."<sup>22</sup> Daum suggests American politicians encouraged the public at large through the practice of "mental mapping" – the act of converging political and imaginative geographies – before and after the initial construction of the Berlin Wall. Kennedy's attention to geography would end up being echoed in early American cultural responses to the construction of the Berlin Wall, which sought again to selectively visualize the components of the border and both sides of the city following its division.<sup>23</sup> Kennedy's direct address to the American public served more than a political purpose. Specifically, it laid claim to America's Berlin through an acknowledgment of the many frontlines of Cold War-era freedoms, including those implicitly within the United States.

If the concept of America's Berlin conjured visions of freedom through symbolic and political ties to the German capital, other cultural discourses from this moment may also reveal fissures in the nation's own democratic identity.<sup>24</sup> In a column published August 12, 1961, just one day before East Berlin sealed its borders, Langston Hughes wrote an editorial in the *Chicago Defender* titled "Beer, Berlin and Simple." The original draft was submitted on July 27, two days after Kennedy's speech.<sup>25</sup> Lacking only the immediacy of live televised broadcasting, the piece was circulated nonetheless widely in nationally distributed newspapers. The poet and prolific

author Hughes wrote in one of his oft-used editorial forms, presenting an imagined conversation between himself and “Simple,” a fictional Harlem resident whose ideas reflected common but critical negotiations of domestic and global politics. In this column, Hughes opens with Simple picking up where Kennedy’s speech ended: “If they can’t talk it out ... why do they think I should fight it out?” As the exchange between Simple and the writer goes on, Hughes’s alter-ego character Simple reveals the dilemmas for black Americans looking toward potential conflict in Berlin. Simple, and other black citizens, would be amongst those drafted to go to the frontlines, thus drawing energy and attention from domestic Civil Rights struggles. “In the next war I’ll have to fight for Berlin. I had rather fight for Birmingham.” Simple goes on to contextualize the latest crisis in terms of his fears of recent German history (“It were but a short time ago that Berlin was fighting me”) as well as America divided internally by Jim Crow laws and customs (“I’ll bet Mississippi has WHITE and COLORED air raid shelters.”).<sup>26</sup>

Hughes conjured the figure of Simple to open a space of dialogue in his column between himself, the writer, and a personified potential reader. Hughes effectively splits his self into two, to find a place from which to inquire and argue, to invest belief and direct criticism of the United States. And through the Harlemit Simple, Hughes played with the ideas of locality and universality. His trajectory from being published in black newspapers to mainstream white and international periodicals parallels Hughes’ own broadminded approach to writing. Donna Harper suggests, “Hughes highlights the global appeal of the Harlem resident ... and emphasized the power of ethnic specificity to reach people of ethnic diversity.” Hughes articulates this concept of Simple in his own words:

I say that a fictional character can be ever so ethnic, ever so local and regional, and still be universal in terms of humanity. And I give Simple as an example. He is a Harlemit whose bailiwick is Lenox Avenue, whose language is Harlemitese, and whose thoughts are of Harlem. Yet in print Simple is known on the Boulevard

Saint Michel in Paris, in Soho in London, on the Unter den Linden in Berlin. ... He is concerned with such current American dilemmas as Birmingham and Selma, as well as the old puzzling problem as to just how closely is he, a colored American, related to Uncle Sam.<sup>27</sup>

Hughes' awareness of global context – including Germany and Berlin – is drawn from his own travel and politicized uses of his work elsewhere in the world.<sup>28</sup> His column links the defense of Berlin with the fight for full racial integration at home. Neither Kennedy's nor Hughes's words presuppose a Berlin Wall. But like Kennedy, Hughes locates Berlin as a relevant locale in the story of American postwar freedom. He conducts his exercise in imaginative geography to deploy a symbolic connection and to call America's own racial barriers into relief. Even before the construction of the Berlin Wall, America's Berlin-in-Crisis was a place to posit as a center of the Cold War's bipolar conflict between East and West as well as a symbolic frontline for the battle for domestic civil rights waged against the racial status quo.

American cultural productions from the late summer through the end of 1961, after the Berlin Wall was in its initial construction phase, drew focus to the city's internal border through reportage and fictional crossings – including episodes of NBC's *The Jack Paar Show*, and CBS's *Ed Sullivan Show* and *Armstrong Circle Theatre's* "Chapter on Tyranny: Dateline Berlin." The focus on the daring escapes of East Germans to the West away from communism in these productions was not only influenced by the perspective of American media – their reports were filed, literally in the West – but also by American cultural figures who flocked to West Berlin to help make sense of the situation and who broadcast images of themselves in the city. These efforts not only bridged the distance between "here" and "there," but also were underwritten by U.S. military presence in West Berlin. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, in the wake of a congressional hearing on Paar's use of military resources for his production, told reporters, "I hope Berlin will not become the new Mecca for the jaded of the Entertainment World."<sup>29</sup>

By December 15, 1961, American filmgoers were provided with their most extended glimpse of the Berlin Crisis with the release of Billy Wilder's comedy, *One, Two, Three*. The fact that the film farce was filmed in part on location in Berlin earlier in the summer of 1961 but released after the construction of the wall made it historically strange and significant. The film displays the dynamics of division through the aesthetics of historical farce. Wilder was an Austrian-born Jewish émigré to the United States who had escaped Hitler's reign while living in Berlin in 1933. He had previously returned to Germany in 1945 to make a film, *Death Mills*, about Nazi concentration camps for the U.S. Army. In *One, Two, Three*, Wilder favors a parodied depiction of Berlin as a crossroads of multiple divisions of national and historical nature, including those based on intertwined Cold War-Civil Rights lines of thought. For example, Wilder positions some of his film's humor through tropes of regional and racial strife in the U.S. If protagonist Robert MacNamara (played by James Cagney) represents an aggressive, Wall Street-styled American businessmen looking to expand across the globe, he is tempered against his Atlanta-based Coca Cola boss' wariness to expand behind the Iron Curtain. To reinforce this difference of economic and political opinion, Wilder peppers the film with references to America's Civil War and its ongoing civil rights struggles. In an opening scene in which Wilder stages a patriotic East German parade, signs like "*Nikita Über Alles!*" (Nikita over all!) and "*Nie Wieder U2*" ("Never Again U2") parody both Socialist fervor and American covert operations. In the same scene, another sign that reads, "*Was ist los in little [sic] Rock?*" (What is wrong in Little Rock?) references the efforts to desegregate high schools amidst violent clashes in the Arkansas capitol 1957.<sup>30</sup> In *One, Two, Three*, and all of these cultural works, we find the education of the American public about conflicts in Berlin including perspectives that stoked intrigue by visiting, or being located at, the border, and how they relate to American forms of division. In these



productions, the Berlin Wall is both a dangerous political boundary and a cultural meeting place, spotlighted by tropes of escape and intrigue, as well as historical traumas inside and outside of Berlin.<sup>31</sup>

In 1961 and beyond, as Americans became enthralled with tales of a divided Berlin, the crisis of segregation loomed in America.<sup>32</sup> Following the legal mandate to end to segregation in public institutions in the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the uneven adherence to the court decision led to further domestic unrest and divisive tactics by local authorities. In the aftermath of the case that struck down “Separate but Equal” governance as unconstitutional, the broad legal and social system of segregation continued widely across the South and in swaths of the North. Through a hybrid of law, custom, and architectural design, America’s own segregated sectors reinforced the social construction of racial difference. In May 1961, the first Freedom Rides organized by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) tested the desegregation of interstate bus travel. Sit-ins at lunch counters and other public venues continued to contest the customs of segregated business as usual. These protests also signaled toward the existing barriers – both symbolic and physical – that had plagued the United States and threatened its identity as an “indivisible” nation.<sup>33</sup>

Within weeks of the Berlin Wall’s construction, citizens from across the country began evoking the Berlin boundary as a metaphor for racial barriers in America. Activists, politicians, and artists used differing forms of cultural communication to highlight the on-going struggle for equality through the rhetoric of America’s Berlin. The barriers they contested included the elusive but violently policed Color Line; they also referred to existing architectures of segregation in cities (including walls, fences, and “common sense” boundaries) that divided redlined housing

districts from other residential areas or prohibited mobility for black citizens more ostensibly. Public speeches in 1961 from prominent black Americans such as NAACP President Roy Wilkins, Fort Valley State College President Cornelius Troop, and State Department official Carl Rowan all explored dimensions of U.S. racial

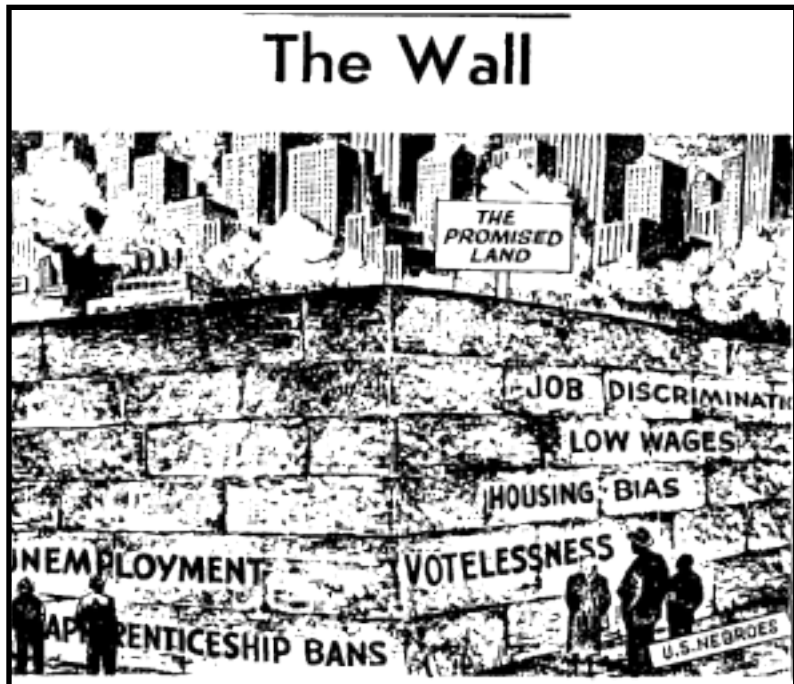


Figure 2.3: “The Wall,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 20 January 1962 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers)

segregation by relating civil rights struggles to the Berlin Wall.

An editorial cartoon printed in the *Pittsburgh Courier* on January 20, 1962 indicates the metaphorical grounds on which such a formulation was grounded. Titled, “The Wall,” (Figure 2.3) the unsigned cartoon depicts a looming stone wall, with a visible skyline of a metropolis, labeled “The Promised Land,” on its just out-of-reach other side.<sup>34</sup> In the foreground are figures labeled “U.S. Negroes” and blocks of stone inscribed with words like “Unemployment,” “Housing Bias,” and “Votelessness.” The accompanying editorial posits a forceful explanation to this scene: “The Wall that now divides East Berlin from West Berlin is as NOTHING compared to the wall that has long divided black America from white America.” This symbolic visual portrayal marked the uncanny nature of the Berlin Wall, and employs a slightly different logic than previous reporting of the Wall. “This American Wall is NOT insurmountable, but to

MOST black Americans it SEEMS to be: and they dream of seeing it RAZED so that, like the East Berliners, they can ESCAPE to the Promised Land of freedom and opportunity.”

Such rhetoric boomeranged back and forth across the Atlantic. In February 1962, Attorney General Robert Kennedy addressed an audience in West Berlin at a talk in front of the Ernst Reuter Society. There he echoed his brother’s pre-Wall televised message, and promised that the U.S. would fight to keep West Berlin viable. Even as he called such efforts in Berlin part of the push for a “New Frontier” of democratic progress, he recognized his own nation’s palisade: “For a hundred years, despite our protestations of equality, we had, as you know, a wall of our own – a wall of segregation erected against Negroes. That wall is coming down.”<sup>35</sup> Along these lines, many others spoke out publicly in America. Illinois Governor Otto Kerner told the NAACP’s 1963 annual meeting that whites and blacks should tear down the “Berlin Wall of prejudice and fear ... [and that the] walled-in bitterness we are now creating can destroy us.”<sup>36</sup> United Nations ambassador Adlai Stevenson spoke out that same year by saying it does “little good to demand the tearing down of the Wall in Berlin unless we tear down the wall that separates us in our own land.”<sup>37</sup> A board of education member in Los Angeles, Mary Tinglof, in 1964 spoke of school inequities “as rigid as Berlin walls.”<sup>38</sup>

In the first years of the BerlinWall, citizens across America also used “Berlin Wall” as a portable descriptive noun to refer to specific cases of U.S. segregation, imploring officials to tear physical color line barriers down in cities and towns. While over 70 American cities honored “Remember Berlin Day” on August 13, 1962 to commemorate the building of the Berlin Wall and to send messages of solidarity to West Berlin, other forms of American engagement domesticated such an act of identification.<sup>39</sup> In newspaper reports of protests and speeches, individuals in dozens of cities used the “Berlin Wall” to describe the boundaries in their own communities, and



Figure 2.4: "Atlanta's 'Berlin Wall' Divides Races," *Chicago Defender*, 24 December 1962 (ProQuest Historical Newspapers)

did so for years following the Berlin Crisis.

For example, the "Berlin Wall" of Atlanta referred to the steel-and-wooden barricades erected by the city on Peyton and Harlan Roads in the West End to discourage black development

into a mainly white residential area. In 1962 and 1963, protestors carried signs on-site calling it "Atlanta's Wall," while others proclaimed, "We Want no Warsaw Ghetto— Open Peyton Road" (Figure 2.4).<sup>40</sup> This incorporative form of protest sought to bring U.S. racial segregation, Holocaust trauma, and Cold War division into a shared frame. Speaking in 1963 in southeast Michigan, Rev. Dr. James Laird said of the actual Berlin Wall, "At least it is an honest wall, because it is visible, but in every city in America, including Detroit and Dearborn, there are invisible walls of discrimination and segregation."<sup>41</sup> In other instances particular streets were nicknamed for Berlin Wall-like effect: Parker Street in Boston, Alameda Road in Los Angeles, South State Street in Chicago. Elsewhere, in cities such as Birmingham, Deerfield, Greensboro, Philadelphia, Rich Square, St. Louis, Arlington, Wheaton, and Newark, individuals called out the specific architecture or attributes of their city's racial dynamics through references to Cold War Berlin.<sup>42</sup>

The Berlin Crisis was one major impetus for locating these barriers by way of Berlin, but the mental mapping of restricted areas and ghettos predated the Cold War. By reading across

several periods and disciplines, we can see the importance of symbolic and literal spatial boundaries (including walls) in African American oral testimonies and literature. During the era of legalized slavery, the Ohio River was referred to as the River Jordan, marking the brink of freedom. The Mason-Dixon Line separated slave state from free. The color line was another mental boundary, constantly shifting, marking segregation as the *de jure* and *de facto* rule of the land. At the turn of the century, W.E.B. DuBois theorized about the color line in his germinal text, *The Souls of Black Folk*, fueled by ethnographic travels through the South and travels to Europe, in which he remarked, “For the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.”<sup>43</sup> Spiritual songs similarly mapped boundaries and spaces of racial division, perhaps best epitomized through the symbolic importance of the biblical city of Jericho. The biblical story highlights the heroic Joshua, who led the army of Israelites to the edge of the walled city of Jericho. Rather than battering its boundaries, Joshua took the city by blowing his trumpet to crumble its walls. The spiritual song “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho,” adapted at the Selma protest of 1965 (and discussed in the Introduction) had far earlier been employed to redirect this biblical clash toward a racial freedom struggle.

Literature and sociological research similarly employed the lens of walls as a way to consider racial divides and dynamics.<sup>44</sup> A work of satire by white author Warren Miller, 1964’s *The Siege of Harlem* imagines Harlem as a fortified sovereign black capitol, in sync with Cold War constructions of Berlin and Cuba. Passersby must go through Checkpoint Frederick Douglass, as Harlem is surrounded by a boundary made up of car parts and old protest signs. Radio Free Harlem was broadcast by the “privileged” whites to entice black Americans to defect back to America. In the academic venue, sociologists like Kenneth Clarke and Lee Rainwater used the language of “the wall” to describe barriers to inclusion and confining nature of urban ghettos.

Urban theorist Jane Jacobs affirms these sociological constructs with her own contentions that some of the Urban renewal projects of the 1950s and 1960s utilized fencing and built barriers to create “forts” or “turfs.” She adds in cities, “in the past few years fences have become literal.”<sup>45</sup>

Hughes’ cultural work also evinces this discourse. His musical, *Jericho-Jim Crow*, written in 1963 and staged in January 1964 at the Sanctuary in the Village in New York, purposes the language of structural and symbolic boundaries. He considers and maps the fault lines of American society. *New York Times* theater critic Richard Shepard noted, “The title of the show comes from its theme, the endless fight to knock down the walls of Jim Crow.” The structure is part gospel showcase, part review of African American history. Ticket sales benefitted civil rights groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), CORE, and the NAACP. Hughes wanted staging and casting to be sparse – five different actors played the parts of plainly named black youth or elders, and one white actor would play the many faces of Jim Crow: Slave Auctioneer, Planter, Klansman, and Policeman. Like with the character Simple, Hughes plays here with generic types to levy specific social claims. Though *Jericho* is the symbolic reference point of the musical, the adaptability of Jim Crowism and white racial rule through the years since Reconstruction are what help capture the “vicious circle” of repressive boundary. Hughes’ dialogue and lyrical score offer perspectives on both the enduring and newfound boundaries facing those fighting for freedom. The character Old Man later says, “Just look at the world – all chopped up into boundaries and binderies and things, into cold wars and hot wars, great powers and no powers, into summits and valleys, black lands and white lands– no! It ought to be all one land– Freedom Land! Ain’t that right, son?”<sup>46</sup> To find Freedom Land, its characters must march, fight imprisonment and send letters. “I wonder on which map you [Freedom Land] can be found?” sings Girl. The play ends with its youth characters

acknowledging “there are so many walls to break down” as one assumes the role of a modern Joshua and leads an adaption of “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho” into “The Battle of Old Jim Crow.” References to W. E. B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King, Jr., Daisy Bates, James Meredith, John F. Kennedy, and others here join Joshua the fighter.<sup>47</sup> There are stage directions, at this point, indicating the audience should be encouraged to join along in song, as the musical is meant to culminate in a participatory performance.<sup>48</sup> Hughes here merges the performers and audience into a collective. Even though Berlin is never mentioned in the script, the musical demonstrates the power of the rhetoric and mapping within which many of the racial references to Berlin and places like “Freedom Land” circulated and were imaginatively located.

Hughes continued to ponder Cold War division. He wrote another *Defender* column titled, “Berlin Today,” published in 1965 after visiting the city for a literary festival that further reflected on his perspective on history through mental mapping: “Today there is the Berlin Wall. It is something like the barrier that separated Chapai from the rest of Shanghai...Or like the wire fence the whites had erected the last time I was in Birmingham station, to separate COLORED travelers from WHITE in Alabama.”<sup>49</sup>

As symbolism of racial walls predated the Cold War, the Berlin Wall provided those striving for full inclusion of black citizens with a profoundly resonant structure on which to tether their protests and expressions. Leonard Freed’s sense of the Berlin border builds on the media spectacle of the early days of the wall. And like Hughes, he also imagined the division of Berlin as importantly linked to other sites and eras of conflicts – and his own challenges in balancing forms of identification with that of distancing. In what both Freed and Hughes lost in immediacy, they gained in the ability to practice ongoing, deep historical and geopolitical reflection. Freed’s focus in the Berlin Crisis was on American troops, who had the strange position of defending

their nation abroad, as he observed them while also located outside of his home country. Rather than simply thinking of Berlin as a site of enclosure or potential for exile, Freed leveraged the idea of Americans being stationed in the island of West Berlin toward other ends. The trajectories for Freed's early work at the wall consider "America's Berlin" under two distinct but complementary formulations about US postwar democracy: whereas the Berlin Wall creates an anchor for his black soldier image in *Black in White America* to connect to his images that work to tear down barriers of American segregation, in *Made in Germany* the wall is more of a subtext, a border constituted by years of division, conflict, and attempts at rebuilding after the war and supporting the nascent German democracy. Freed's cumulative work here points toward a shaping of his perspective at the early days of the Berlin Wall: to locate his subjects through modes of proximity and distance, and the opportunities and limits inherent to each pursuit.

### **III. Division at a Middle Distance**

Even as Freed continued photographing in Europe in the early 1960s, his encounters by the Berlin Wall set him off-course. He returned from this trip several days later and told his wife about the single shot at the Berlin Wall and that he wanted to return to America. After completing more of his project on Jews in Germany after the Holocaust, Leonard Freed went to America in June 1963 to pursue more images of segregation in America, after having been out of the country for seven years. He and his wife (along with their toddler daughter, Elke Susannah) took their darkroom enlarger and trays out from their Amsterdam flat and packed them into the couple's tiny Fiat 600. They sailed with their car on the Holland-America line from Rotterdam to New York. The Freeds stayed in Leonard's childhood home, while his parents took their daughter to their cabin in the Catskills for the summer. After the July 4 holiday, Freed got to work. He



made an itinerary for himself on ruled notebook paper where he detailed dozens of potential photo shoots, with addresses and phone contacts, when available.<sup>50</sup>

Away from Freed's native boroughs, 1963 was the summer that Birmingham received the nickname "Bombingham," for the violent tactics levied against black protestors by vigilantes and police forces. President Kennedy also took to the television airwaves again to decry racism as a federal issue, after the state's governor met the proposed desegregation of the University of Alabama with extreme resistance. By summer's end, Freed would find himself photographing the summer's most publicized civil rights gathering, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28. The rally would draw the nation's focus: beforehand around fears and uncertainties of the event, and afterward for its peaceful and powerful outcome. Leonard Freed was there, amongst the crowds, a standout experience in his brief return. A year later, he came back to follow up his trip to America with a road trip through the South.

Being on-location was a significant part of Freed's method. To consider Freed's images from this period is to consider the photographer's own dynamic travels. His photographs offer a complex form of mapping. Freed negotiated his own positioning in relation to each of his images: how to, if at all, place himself in the same spaces as his subjects by deciding how to identify with subjects across a constellation of geographic contexts. No matter what is conveyed in the frame, he does share space with them in the moment of photographic encounter. Freed makes that fact known by referencing that presence in many of his images. He also represents these encounters in his photo-texts and offers new contexts for them, and as such his positioning evinces his sense of photographic composition with critical reflection. I contend that he accomplishes a middle distance by balancing his own perspective with that of his subjects – either approximating,

duplicating, or denying himself access to their fields of vision and indexing these encounters in his images by cluing viewers in to where or where not the photographer was positioned.

The civil rights struggle was surely one of Freed's subjects in *Black in White America*, but he did not approach its events to document it as "news." He preferred the role of author who renders a scene from multiple angles. As Freed said in an interview, "Photojournalism has to be specific. ... I don't make informational photographs. I am not a journalist, I am an author. I am not interested in facts, I want to show atmosphere."<sup>51</sup> Freed honed his photographic perspective by delving into the story of one place or one group of people, across time and space. Abbott notes of this perspective,

Freed's work provided a balance to the era's familiar press images of intensive strife. Complementing iconic series of pictures, like those by Bob Adelman and Charles Moore of fire hoses and attack dogs being used to control protestors in Alabama, Freed's pictures provide a reflective context to the era's defining moments.<sup>52</sup>

For Freed, showing atmosphere was made possible through conceptual engagement with both history and geography in which he brought his human subjects and the exposed layers of their social landscapes into a shared frame. Positioning his camera and finding the most compelling rendering of "atmosphere" had much to do with his understanding of himself in proximity and relation to his subjects. In other words, how he identified with his subjects, both at the moment the image was captured and how he contextualized the produced photograph when it was published. Freed developed a sense of perspective that measured distance as a form of engaged storytelling.

Freed's approach was influenced by his admiration of and affiliation with the international photography collective Magnum. Started in 1947 by photographers Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa, George Rodger and David "Chim" Seymour, Magnum was formed as a social and aesthetic response to the human catastrophes of the Second World War. With offices

originally in Paris and New York, this group used photography to respond to the traumas of war experienced firsthand by many of its early photographers who were victims or documenters of violence. (The word *magnum* recalls “a gun of a type designed to fire cartridges more powerful than its caliber suggests,” patented in 1935.<sup>53</sup>) They did so by re-appropriating several wartime advancements in photographic technology, including the use of portable “mini cameras” and more light-sensitive film, to rapidly restore human connection and nurture new forms of storytelling. They promoted the photographer as “the idiosyncratic mix of reporter and artist,” who also owned the rights to photographs they shot and contributed images to a large group archive.<sup>54</sup> Freed first visited Magnum’s New York offices in 1955, when Inge Bondi, the German-born assistant (and later its Director), welcomed him to use its facilities. Magnum’s most acclaimed photographers had already influenced his approaches. Magnum advanced a transatlantic image interchange between the United States and war-torn Europe that enabled photographers to self-directedly shoot on location, to gain proximity to their subjects, and to place themselves, even if marginally, in scenes with the people they photograph. In 1972, Freed became a full-time member of Magnum.

Rather than sticking to one place or one country, Magnum photographers were encouraged to travel between sites, to develop perspective on local matters and insights across cultures. They often directed their own shoots and importantly maintained ownership of their negatives, adding to their authorial position. For Freed’s work that grew out of his travels to the Berlin Wall, this manifested in reflections on Germany and America, respectively, as well as their overlapping geography and history. Freed attended to the two countries and concepts by thinking about the past through the present – most clearly through a focus on several overlapping tropes: war, mourning, and postwar reconstruction.

Freed's focus on Germany had much to do with his identity as a Jew of European decent, and his being the husband of a German woman. Freed's parents escaped a hostile Europe (his father, by way of Palestine) and settled in Brooklyn, only to realize years later that they became "survivors" of the Holocaust. According to Stefanie Rosenkrantz, Freed's friend and colleague,

[Leonard Freed] told me how he once came home from school in Brooklyn and found his father lying on the kitchen floor, hitting his head on the tiles, while holding a crumpled letter in his hands and crying. The letter said that most of his father's family had been murdered in Europe. A once large family of grandmothers, uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews and brothers and sisters had been killed by the Nazis. There were now only a handful of survivors.<sup>55</sup>

Among his first professional projects, when he returned home in 1954, was to begin to take photographs of Hassidic Jews who had survived the concentration camps and now lived in Brooklyn. According to Ewing, Freed was drawn to them "not because he was one of them ... but because he *might* have been one of them had history dealt his Russian family another hand."<sup>56</sup> (These were among the photographs he first showed to Magnum staffer Bondi and Museum of Modern Art curator Edward Steichen.) Several years later, Freed's first substantive contribution was his book *Joden von Amsterdam* (1958). Accompanied by an essay written by Dutch journalist Max Snijders, the two, according to Wim van Sinderen, "succeeded in finding a good balance between the shame and guilt of the Dutch and resignation and reticence of the Jewish community." After the production of *Joden von Amsterdam*, his focus on postwar European Jewry shifted to Germany and to the project *Deutsche Juden heute*. As van Sinderen adds, "*Deutsche Juden heute* did not come about easily ... very few [Jews] were prepared to expose themselves to the camera."<sup>57</sup> Freed did build trust with his subjects, photographing communal and ritualistic spaces, but in thinking about his own fraught position – as an American Jewish photographer working amongst a population that was hesitant to be photographed following the war – a complicated vision of his perspective and his sense of Germany emerges.

The result, as seen in the images that would later comprise *Deutsche Juden heute*, suggests a view of Freed as a photographer wrestling with how much distance from himself he should grant his German Jewish subjects. Freed's perspective demonstrates his feeling of affiliation with German Jews who stayed or returned to Germany after the war, even though he remains cautious about identifying fully with or as one of them. Freed's camera is positioned to be in line with the vision of his subjects, such as the case with the image of a man's hands holding a prayer book in a Frankfurt synagogue (Figure 2.5). But we can see that even with Freed's privileged position as a

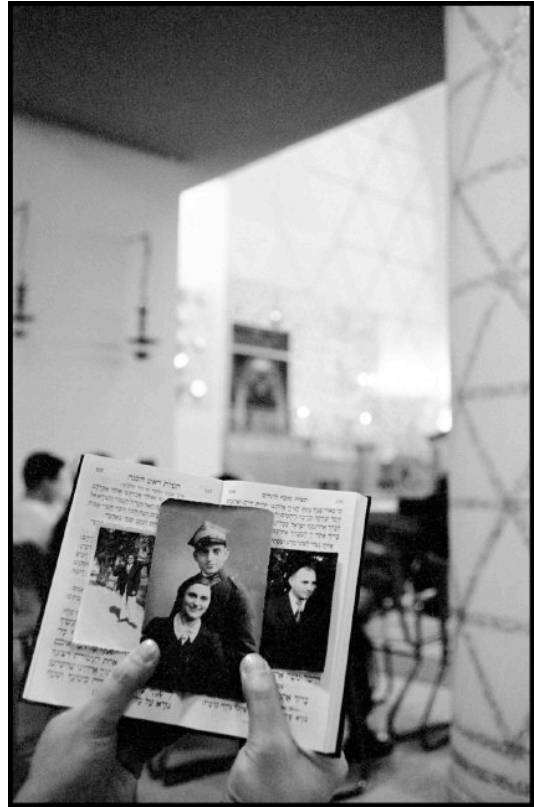


Figure 2.5: Leonard Freed, Frankfurt, 1961 (Magnum Photos)

photographer in proximity, he ultimately marks his liminal outsider status. The position of the prayer book, held outward, reveals two photographs held under the man's thumbs and contained within the book's fold. (The photographs are of the man's siblings who were reportedly killed or went missing in the war.) The prayer book and the photographs comprise the image's immediate focus. These elements obstruct the scene of the synagogue in the background, only partially visible above the prayer book, and draw attention from the greater scene. Freed takes this photograph while next to or behind his subject, in this case without showing us any part of the man's face or body other than his hands.<sup>58</sup> The man reveals his photographs to Freed, but keeps them in the fold of the book and in his own hands, as if to suggest the furtive nature of this reveal. Freed's image places him in close consideration of this scene, but only through an over-

the-shoulder or sideways glance. In referencing his subject's "interior" space and singular perspective, Freed can only approximate his subject's point of view and tactility. Despite a modicum of obvious access, Freed remains adjacent. He can only partially be let in.



Figure 2.6: Leonard Freed, Worms, 1961 (Magnum Photos)

In other images from this body of work, Freed seems to be photographing in isolation, away from human subjects and seemingly wandering about Germany's Jewish spaces. In one image of a Jewish Cemetery in Worms, he presents the burial ground's uneven terrain (Figure 2.6). He shoots from a sloped position and gives a sense of sprawling space. Here, the zigzagged layout of the tombstones and the lack of a clear vanishing point serve formally to disorient viewers. Though the ordering aspect of sunlight, entering the cemetery at an oblique angle creating daggered shadows of all of the tombstones, it is also the lack of a photographer's shadow in this scene that denies his full presence in the image. Freed does this by standing with the sun to his deep right, maximizing the light effects on the tombstones without having to stake a presence within the frame. By thinking about Freed in isolation and his photographing of a site of

Jewish mourning, the scene reads as solemn and personal. But by placing himself visibly outside the same context we see how he wrestles with his own fraught position in Germany.

If Freed depicts the cemetery landscape with a sweeping, panoramic horizon, his earlier photograph taken at a walled boundary of the Dachau concentration camp captures the specter of the Holocaust with a more confining perspective (Figure 2.7). This was actually taken on Freed’s first trip to Europe in the early 1950s with a Rolleiflex camera rather than his Leica. Here Freed encounters the



Figure 2.7: Leonard Freed, Dachau, 1954 (Magnum Photos)

remains of latticed wood planks along the former “blood trenches,” left lying amidst trees and shrubs. Like the rows of gravestones, the planks angle in a number of directions, except here form a general line down toward the vanishing point farther down the boundary wall. The base of the image has a soft focus, and as several long blades of grass creep out from the bottom corners of the frame, Freed himself appears to have been kneeling or squatting. By locating himself in the brush and at the outer wall, Freed pushes and limits his own vantage to the edge. Freed’s image here powerfully catches him between the two roles he plays while photographing Germany’s Jews: on one hand, a landsman staking out the history and reclaimed sacred grounds of Jewish German life; on the other, an outsider looking in, questioning his role and unsure of how to find a place for himself in post-Holocaust Germany.

In the photographs that would later comprise *Made in Germany*, taken in the subsequent year after his German Jewish project, Freed favors photographing crowds over isolation, as a way to get a sense of the public at large. Here, in contrast to his German Jewish images, he immerses himself, and nearly every photograph contains another person, who in most cases we are to assume to be German. These photographs show him as attempting to come to terms with Germany and its history, face-to-face and encounter-by-encounter. He negotiates his critical stance by meeting people at public squares, nudist colonies, schools and industrial worksites, all of which seem to demonstrate Freed's ability to wander around freely and "look at" Germans. In the vein of one of Freed's photographic influences, German photographer August Sander, he set out to photograph a broad swath of Germans in their occupational or leisure contexts.<sup>59</sup> But even as he draws attention to the many people "types" in Germany, he also draws focus to buildings that still display traces of poorly erased Nazi iconography, or Holocaust memorials that go unnoticed. In each case he challenges himself and others to measure the benefits of reconciliation against the traumas of the past, by playing between the particular and the collective.

Freed's photographs of "Germany," presented here as a unified formulation, mostly feature those taken in the Western half. Though the Cold War had divided the country when he started this work, Freed's sense of the oneness of Germany serves his greater attention to the continuities across Germany's history, across time through numerous moments of national unification and division. In doing so, Freed encounters the ghosts of World War II, and seeks to consider how the past influenced the changes to the nation occurring before and during the Cold War. One prominent way he does this in this set of images is to index his own encounters with Germans who struggle with how to memorialize their own pasts. Like his own pursuit of sites of Jewish mourning, Freed captures individuals who are attempting to handle the memory of the past,





Figures 2.8–9: Leonard Freed, Ruhr, 1965 and Tegernsee, 1965 (Magnum Photos)

which, for Freed, is routed through Germany's most recent war and the memory of the Holocaust. He meets Germans at moments of grieving and political reinvention, and in doing so remains at once suspect and empathic. His photographic perspective emphasizes this self-conscious form of commonality.

In one photograph, positioned at dining room table, Freed sits with a German anti-war activist in the Ruhr area (Figure 2.8). The table is full of empty dishes, two half-drunken cups of coffee, and crumpled napkins. The prongs of an angled fork point toward two photographs, propped up, each showing a formal portrait of a soldier. The depicted men look as if from different eras, one from earlier in German or Prussian history, and the other appearing more recent. A man in horn-rimmed glasses and a dark sweater appears in a soft focus at the other end of the short table, and looks down and to his side. Like the image of the Jewish prayer book, displayed photographs furnish this scene. The messy table is presented in contrast to the formal codes of the studio portraits shown at the table. Freed's direct vantage of the man and the photographs hint to complicity in this portrait, even as

the lack of eye contact between the men also suggests strain. The half-drunken cup of coffee directly in front of Freed suggests this encounter is still unfolding. His subject faces obliquely toward Freed and away from his family photographs, which are set against cup or something propping them on the table, and thus still appear as if the provenance of the man. His pose resembles the newer portrait though with a slightly different facial pose. The imperative to mourn victims of war becomes a matter of casual importance but powerfully connected to the present. Nonetheless, the need to mourn German fallen soldiers, for Freed and for his subjects, remains a complicated imperative.

In another photograph, Freed stands behind a short stone wall, looking out on the road below, as an older man and woman walk from a parked car and up toward a cemetery (Figure 2.9). They wear long dark overcoats and hats, and the woman tucks a bouquet of flowers under her left arm. Freed clearly is situated inside of the cemetery walls, as the two mourners approach. A stone wall separates the couple from Freed, as does a single leaning gravestone. The grave has an oval marker, bolted into the stone, with the dead soldiers' name and an engraved photograph of him. The same shape of the grave marker is also on the parked car, except as an oval sticker with a "D" (for Deutschland). Freed's perspective is not only slanted, but appears to be surreptitious. He does not face the mourners or the gravestone head-on, but instead captures both in the same frame and thus forges several suggestive affiliations in the process – between the mourners, the dead soldier's gravestone, and the photographer connected in this scene of mourning.

Unlike his photograph of the Jewish Cemetery, where it is unclear whether he sets foot in the space of the cemetery or not, and without the sanctioned certainty of photographs like those taken later at the burial of West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, Freed pictures these

mourners before they enter the cemetery as he stands behind its own boundary wall, as if to cautiously stake his claim to observe the scene. The process of moving onward from the horrors of the war for Freed, as an American and a Jew, takes place in Germany. Rather than treating this merely as a private matter, Freed makes public the rites of mourning to highlight the dilemmas of mourning – his own and those of German others in the postwar years.

Along with the images Freed took of the greater German public and landscapes of mourning in the 1960s, the Berlin Wall would become a key site of return for the photographer. In his images, there remains an overlapping political focus on both German and American society, and he treats the border area as a liminal space in that regard. His photographs from August 1961 include depictions of concrete building blocks, barbed wire, and wooden fencing, all of which help to compose this early days of the wall border system. He also returns over the next four years and onward, and attends to the constructed memorials and observation decks that are built along the border, as well as areas of war ruins that remain adjacent to the border. In many of his earliest images of the Berlin Wall, however, American GIs are the most prominent visual feature of such portraits – even as in these images, the wall is left outside of Freed’s immediate photographed field of vision. Of all of the eight Berlin Wall photographs that would end up in *Made in Germany*, with or without American soldiers, the wall itself is viewed obliquely or simply not at all. Rather than serving as a vanishing point or visual hindrance to the horizon, the Berlin Wall becomes a structure that is difficult to find in these photographs.

Among the GI images, there is one close up of three American soldiers with rifles hanging over their shoulders taken within “the first days after the Wall was erected,” looking across the street toward a phalanx of opposing eastern troops (Figure 2.10). No part of the border Wall is



Figures 2.10–11: Leonard Freed, West Berlin, 1961 (Magnum Photos)

made clearly visible. In this image, the soldiers comprise the immediate foreground. One, stands at profile, holding his weapon, and looking away from Freed but in



effect to glance back out and across the frame, perhaps over the top of Freed. The other two soldiers face the opposing phalanx, their backs and helmets facing Freed's camera. Freed's proximity to these men suggests that he stands directly behind the soldiers, as if to be guarded against enemy fire or advancement, even as he is extremely close to a frontline of division. In this case, there is no significant imposed distance between Freed and the soldiers. It would seem Freed is enclosed in this regard, just not clearly by the structure of the Berlin Wall.

Similarly, in a photograph labeled "An American soldier eats his lunch during a crisis along the Wall," no material components of the border system are present in the frame (Figure 2.11). Instead, an American soldier wearing glasses and a sideways-shifting combat helmet sits cross-legged on the curb outside a famous *Zimmerstrasse Apotheke* and comprises the image's central focus. Freed stands several feet from the GI, hovering above while he eats from a tray of fast food and his rifle lies on the ground beside him. Civilians chat above and around the soldier. In

addition, another soldier is barely visible, and is seated by the corner pharmacy. He is nearly left out of the image except for his foot protruding out from a crowd of people standing above and in front of him. He is only made visible by the inclusion of one of his black combat boots in the frame. Whether we are to consider the distracted lurching soldier or his obscured comrade, Freed is denied full access to both soldiers' frontality, this time, however, not in such a way to be enclosed by the troops. Freed is nonetheless put in a position of close observation. Again he embroils himself in a referential spatial relationship between American troops and the Berlin Wall. Freed offers no singular vision of this moment of the Berlin Crisis. By staging his photograph from an oblique street angle and a short distance from lurching soldiers, the image reads as if Freed is himself in transit, wandering to or through this scene, rather than being a fixture along the wall. Here the Berlin Wall is only a subtext, a border constituted by quizzical military might and a flurry of confused visual encounters.

Given Freed's askew photographs of the early days of the Berlin Wall in which he favors photographs of the American GIs over direct shots of the new border system, what do we do with Freed's single shot of the black soldier in which both the man and the wall comprise the main focus of the image? Though Freed himself includes this photograph in his American collection, its productive origins and Freed's own conceptualization connects the image with his other early Wall images. But unlike these other American GI photographs, Freed faces the wall and his human subject head-on. Not only does this differ greatly from his photographs from the early days of the Berlin Wall, but no other image in *Black in White America* seems to so deliberately to refuse a potential for Freed to "move closer" as this opening image of the soldier taken at the Berlin Wall. Given the middle distance built into the portrait, Freed reinforces the space separating him from his subjects, and registers the legacy of segregation more broadly. Though

frontality in portraiture can suggest cooperation between a subject and a photographer, here it is evidence of their strained relation, and invites speculation into the curious place of the soldier in this image. The parallel trolley tracks here show both photographer and subject standing in a shared urban placement, even as the soldier's motioning toward the gun on his hip portends to the possibility of friction. Freed's imaging of the soldier at a middle distance also pushes us to think about what other social buffers he intends us to envision in this image. Freed places himself close enough to the soldier to view details of his uniform, but just out of distance to be able to clearly read any of its identifying information with clarity. Whether we notice the space between the soldier and the wall behind him, or between him and his distracted comrades, such effects render this image as one of multiple associative alienations rather than mere isolation. The downward gaze of the soldier and his hand positioned by his holster, also suggests his own distancing from Freed, or at least again emphasizes the troubled nature of this encounter. The suggestion, if even if troubled, of mutual recognition is an outcome of this particular exchange.

The question of distancing, essential to Freed's work in photographing the foreign and familiar of Germany, is also important to his subsequent American project on race. Freed's own sense of perspective in many of these images allows him to approach the fields of vision and the immediate physical space of his subjects (regardless of their perceived race) or around cultural landmarks, as he affirms the prevailing existence of a divided color-line society. But in these American images he is more apt to mark his outsider status than feign immersion. He achieves middle distance most clearly here through eye contact with his subjects and the inclusion of blurred figures on the periphery of his frames. The interplay between acknowledgment and dissociation underscore Freed's work on segregation. The photographs that would culminate in

*Black in White America* locate and then invert the terms of a segregated society by shifting the focus of each image between his subjects and the encroaching photographer. America is mapped here as a divided nation, not merely by North and South, but through many axes, one of which is put to the test through a segregated field of vision between black and white, photographer and subject. As Duganne remarks of another photographer but apropos to Freed's subtextual practices, "[he] places his own unmediated access to [his subjects] into question."<sup>60</sup> In the mode of witnessing and intersubjective exchange, Freed enters spaces that are hostile (prisons, gatherings of unemployed men by the train tracks), solemn (funerals, polls where some black citizens are voting for the first time), and mundane (laundromats, school lectures, football games, children's summer camps) to emphasize that segregation is upheld through both violent and common sense buffers across all of these locales – and as a white photographer, he is not a detached observer but a constitutive part of these scenes, even if a stranger to local dynamics. Freed stated later that, "at the time [white] Americans didn't really look at Black people. What I was trying to do was to show the faces and see the differences between them – look at what the Blacks really *look* like."<sup>61</sup> Freed never attempts to become one of his subjects, that is to say, replicate or deny their perspective, but rather must approach them physically. He does so not to just show what they look like but to offer himself as an affirmation or acknowledgment of their vision. No matter if they, or he, is in the way of a clear image.

In one image from the collection, Freed snapped a tight, upward-glancing shot of a young Harlem resident flexing his muscles just inches away from Freed's lens (Figure 2.12). Freed recalled of the photograph, "Here he is really on top of you. So as a white person looking at him, he is right in your face. He's tough. ... When I photograph I am always relating things to one another."<sup>62</sup> Relationality is enacted here through his clear proximity to the "tough kid,"

accentuated by a shallow depth of field and resulting in the blurred focus on the buildings behind him. There is a lack of buffer space between Freed and the subject. Only the buildings behind him offer any sense of external space. But the fact that another arm protrudes into the frame from another child who makes a similar muscular flex and thus gives added depth to this portrait, Freed extends the field of vision through repetition. Freed is both simply up close and off-set, as his other subject is in the way of a pure portrait. Whether through a sense of timing, spacing or both, Freed renders a constellation of poses here, as with

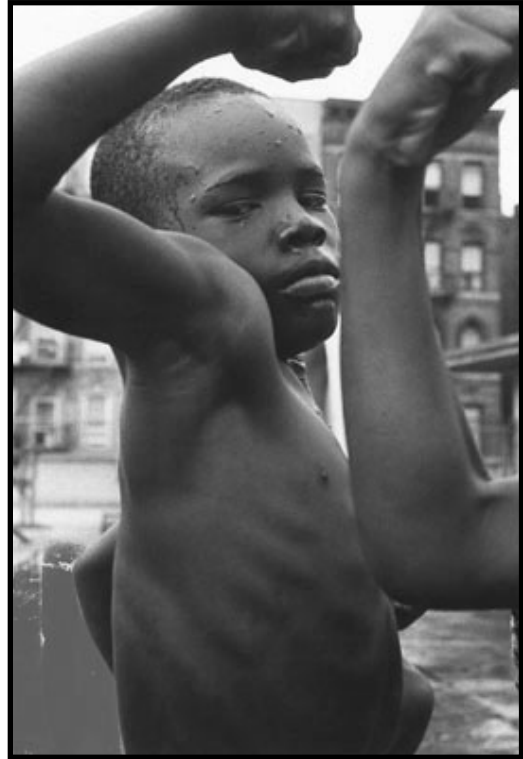
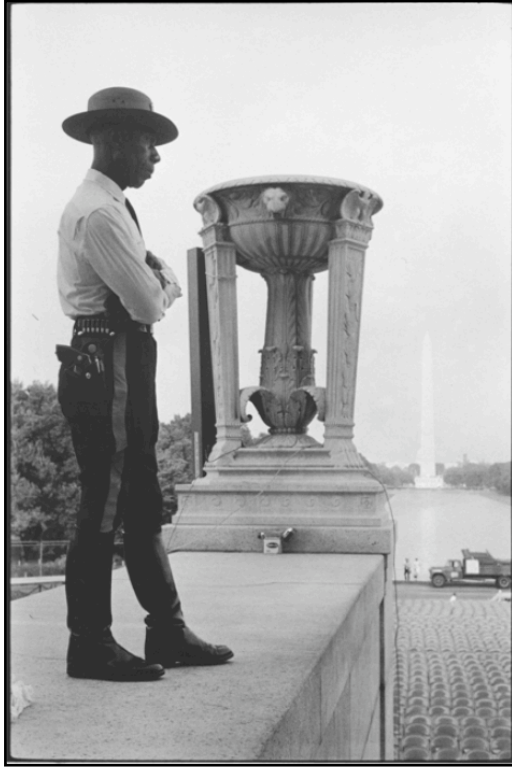


Figure 2.12: Leonard Freed, Harlem, 1963 (Magnum Photos)

many others in this set of images, that promotes a potential for the kind of relational proximity; he also necessitates the prospect for human-to-human closeness – between Freed and his subjects, and amongst the multiracial crowds he photographs.

In two image repertoires important to Freed's vision of civil rights history, we also see how he calibrates proximity and distance. The first set is from the 1963 March on Washington. On August 28, organizers convened a sweeping multiracial coalition of over one hundred thousand attendees to the nation's capital to march for jobs and freedom. Freed and his wife Brigitte spent three days in total traveling to and from Washington. They stayed in a campsite outside the city the night before, and arrived at twilight to the march. Freed took his first photographs of the day blocks away from the festivities, outside the Ford's Theatre where President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. By linking this site to the later activity by the Lincoln Memorial, Freed bridges the





Figures 2.13–14: Leonard Freed, Washington D.C., 1963 (Magnum Photos)

distance between them, and highlights the function of deep national memory and the vision of democratic progress championed on that day.

We can trace Freed’s movements through his photographs that day – approaching the Mall from the federal buildings beyond 14th Street and the flags around the Washington Monument, walking around the reflecting pool, under the trees, and walking through the tightly-drawn crowd. Whether due to the connective and crowded nature of the day, Freed’s photographic approach, or both, many of his images mark a middle distance with less separation. The moments where he can accomplish variable distances thus stand out: in one image from the early morning set up of the day, Freed looks out from the Lincoln Memorial (Figure 2.13). In the foreground is a black National Park Service ranger, whose crossed arms reveal a gun holster. He faces out over the empty seats of the Memorial, and in the distance is the Washington Monument. Though there is no eye contact here, Freed stands with his subject in a shared preemptive moment of visualization.

At the event’s culmination, when Dr. King spoke, Freed was at least a hundred yards away. Only one

photograph he shot that day includes an intended shot of King, a distanced atmospheric shot taken at what appears to be the moment of the keynote speech. But with thousands of marchers and several hundred feet separating the two men, this serves more as a collective portrait rather than a singular one. Perhaps more instructive to the day's unstable historical identity is one portrait from the end of the day. Here, Freed uses the Washington Monument again as an anchor (Figure 2.14). He stands behind and above a man sitting down at the bottom base of the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, who appears almost as a solitary figure. Debris from the march is littered around him. The contrast between the unobscured view of the Monument and the denied vision of the man's face allows for this moment of reflection to be registered without overpowering the visual exchange.<sup>63</sup>

As a follow-up of sorts to the March images, Freed photographed Martin Luther King in a Baltimore street parade on October 31, 1964. Freed had just returned from Europe, having come back to America to follow up his work from the year before. After a summer in Deauville, France with his family, Baltimore was Freed's first stop on a solo driving tour of the South. King had just returned from a European trip himself, in which he visited Cold War Berlin and the Vatican in Rome. While on this trip, King found out he would be the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

King traveled to Berlin from September 13–15, at the special invitation of Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt. King participated as the prominent speaker for several West Berlin cultural events, including a memorial service to President Kennedy and the opening of the Berlin Jazz Festival. In addition to being an esteemed guest of West Berlin, as further evidenced by his signature in the city's "Golden Book," King also crossed into East Berlin where he preached at the St. Mary's and Sophia churches, with back-to-back evening speeches. He did not bring his passport with him to Checkpoint Charlie, but was let through by guards aware of his intent to speak in East

Berlin. As Maria Höhn and Martin Klimke suggest, “King’s visit to the front line of Cold War Europe gave him new perspectives to draw upon when he continued his civil rights struggle back at home.”<sup>64</sup> The Berlin Wall would later become a part of King’s lexicon to help picture segregation in the United States, including particular instances in Philadelphia and Chicago. In a 1965 op/ed, King writes of Philadelphia’s then-segregated Girard College and their outer wall, “In this city known as the cradle of liberty...this wall is symbolic in the minds of many Negroes and freedom-minded whites— symbolic as the Berlin Wall – is symbolic.” In a 1966 article about housing protests in Chicago, *Chicago Defender* writes, “Housing developments along Chicago’s S. State st. create a ‘Berlin Wall situation like nothing I’ve ever seen before,’ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., said here.”<sup>65</sup>

The reception of King in Cold War Berlin – at once as a venerated visitor and border-crossing representative of America – was paralleled in his first celebration in America as the Nobel prize winner. Freed devoted a full day to photographing King in Baltimore, including at a parade honoring him and a speech at a local synagogue. Freed’s photograph from the parade is included in *Black in White America*, and has taken prominent status in of itself (Figure 2.15).<sup>66</sup> King is the centerpiece of this photograph. But like the March photographs, his account of the crowd, and Freed’s potential place within it, again become important factors in reading the variable distances built into this image. When we consider where Freed may be standing to take this picture, it would seem that he himself could reach out and touch the car in which King is riding, as the full rear of the vehicle, the driver and backseat driver-side passenger are almost fully excluded from the scene. Such a positioning could bring Freed “closer” to King, and allow the photographer to mitigate any notions of “isolation.” Yet it is the blurred face of a black figure in the image’s right top hand corner, printed to the edge of the page that suggests Freed’s place in the crowd to be further away



Figure 2.15: Leonard Freed, Baltimore, 1964 (Magnum Photos)

than it first appears. Whether this person (cues to their gender remain illegible) is standing next to Freed or is walking in front of his lens is indeterminable. The effect, however, is to demonstrate that Freed's perspective either approximates or accounts intimately for this figure's own perspective and proximity to King's car and hand. On closer examination, it is feasible that this image registers King in a moment of mutual recognition with the blurred figure (or, peripherally, with Freed). If *Black in White America* was a book that mapped American spaces of spatial division and identification, Freed's own work offers a remedy by inverting such an imagined locale, and calling for coexistence.

The work of identification in *Black in White America* involves shrinking the space between a white Jewish photographer and his black subjects in varying social contexts. Such a practice allows Freed to encroach on the social buffers imposed by the legacy of racial segregation while still registering an ongoing existence of racial strife in need of redress. The opening soldier image frames Freed's project as conditioned on a necessary and fixed distance. By taking a frontal portrait

of a black soldier, set at a middle distance with the wall in the background, Freed ends up squarely facing the concrete structure with a cautious distance, a distance the rest of the photo-text attempts to redress. The Berlin Wall must be made visible in this image, to stage a shared but troubled interaction between Freed and the soldier, and to become the photograph's troubling and ultimately obstructive vanishing point. This differs from Freed's other images of Germany and the Berlin Wall in particular, as well as those taken in America. The visibility of walls and boundaries help Freed emphasize the variable distances between him and his subject, even as he sets out to remedy them.

#### **IV. Reading *Black in White America* and the Berlin Wall**

In the years between the composition of his photographs and the production of *Black in White America*, Leonard Freed's home country experienced the tumultuous back-end pendulum swings of social change. Protest movements helped yield serious legislative gains in the form of 1964's Civil Rights Act and 1965's Voting Rights Act. But in 1968, the year of the book's full release, Freed's vision of a divided nation was echoed in the government-sponsored Kerner Report, which famously stated America was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."<sup>67</sup> King, who was at the height of his popularity and influence after the March on Washington and his Nobel Prize bestowal, had become marginalized especially after his outspoken opposition to the Vietnam War and his work on behalf of unions and poor people. King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4, 1968, while campaigning for striking sanitation workers. The same sort of social unrest that the Kerner Report was meant to investigate re-escalated and exploded in over one hundred American cities after King's murder. The slow drag of integration had been taking its toll. With military escalation in Vietnam, the assassination of Robert Kennedy,

and new waves of social unrest, the efforts to fight the civil rights-era divisions in American society would be overshadowed by a new set of challenges. In West Germany, the welcome exchanges of America's Berlin faltered through increased protest aimed at confronting U.S. imperialism.<sup>68</sup> These protests were fueled by transatlantic alliances between student activists. In American public spaces, segregation began to be acknowledged in the past tense, even as the effects of uneven integration continued to be felt.

In the years between the production and layout of the books and their publication, Freed found a place for himself in international photography circles. His inclusion in the traveling "The Concerned Photographer" exhibition (which opened in 1967 at New York City's Riverside Museum) put his work in shared consideration with photography greats like Robert Capa and André Kertész. Freed continued to travel through Europe, Israel, and Japan over the following years, affirming his global reach toward the end of the decade. He published magazine pieces and produced a television program for Dutch TV from his American race-based images.

By the time the book was printed, *Black in White America* was in some ways a testament published a few years past its originary historical epoch. In other ways, it presented America's racial condition as still urgent. Absent an Introduction or Artist's Statement, the book's epigraph carried the burden of offering an insight into what is at stake in this project around relationality, quoting Abraham Lincoln from an unnamed political debate: "Volumes have been written in defense of slavery, but I have never heard of any of these authors wanting to be slaves themselves." The opening image of the book, the black soldier by the Berlin Wall, picked up on this theme. Freed not only highlights the gap between language and visual experience in these opening gestures (perhaps this is also why only a handful of the images are captioned), but could be suggesting that identification, even if flawed, *must* be strived for in his work.<sup>69</sup> The layout

includes several images printed in two-page truck folds with two-inch white borders reserved for captions. (This was the case with both the Berlin soldier and Baltimore King photographs.) Other images are printed in close juxtaposition on pages where groupings convey particular messages, in turn aggregating Freed's visions and conveying his mapping strategies. In the final pages, Freed includes an excerpt of King's speech from the March on Washington. This citation was planned before King's death, but when it appears in the printed book for many of its first readers, it appears as elegiac. Freed was in Israel when King was murdered. His brother wrote him a letter the following day telling him about public outcry and rage in Brooklyn: "If I were a young black, I'd be with them – bitter as hell. The whites may have lost more in King than the blacks."<sup>70</sup> Just as King's speech and Freed's March images drew on the symbolic power of the Lincoln Memorial and National Mall, Freed's placement of King's words in the concluding pages of his photographic collection imbues a sense of melancholy within his urgent political treatment of America's racial struggles.

In a April 1969 *The New York Times Book Review* assessment of *Black in White America* (alongside a write-up of Eldridge Cleaver's *Post-Prison Writings*), Mel Watkins imagined Freed's photographic perspective as connected with his geographic mobility. Under the headline, "Diversity of his Experience," and next to a sampling of Freed's photographs from the project, Watkins writes:

The Black man's experience in the United States has been shaped by ... racial prejudice – he has been a prisoner of his own blackness. ... [Freed's photo-text's] panoramic view begins with the roots of repression in rural, Jim Crow America and moves as the black man himself has moved, to our large urban ghettos. Within its sweep, the grief, joy and rage of black America are abundantly illustrated.<sup>71</sup>

The panoramic impulse, referred to here by Watkins, speaks to Freed's frequent use of blown up snapshots printed across two-page double truck folds, as well as the geographic and topical sweep

of the collection. This write-up, and others like it published later in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*, posit the collection as illustrating how racial division can be rendered in images of America's built social landscapes and ghettos – and Freed as the traveling photographer who confronted it as such. These reports also highlight Freed as a border-crosser several times over, whose critical contribution to photography was his ability to identify with and literally move closer to his subjects. His own experience and mobility are presented in tension though with the way in which he captures in image and text the nagging fixedness of color line geography and racial division. It becomes harder to surmise that the Berlin Wall pictured in this book, by then a fixture itself of a Divided Germany, was only weeks old when Freed first photographed it.<sup>72</sup> The photographer's subjects in this formulation remain fixed, or attached to their depictions, locations or circumstances.

For Freed's other project from this period, *Made in Germany* is the title first branded through a capitalized, stencil-styled typeface that he uses on his book's cover and a refrain he echoes through his descriptions throughout the project. He later uses the formulation in his Introduction, in succession and in all capitals. His repeated uses of the refrain "MADE IN GERMANY" are separated through an on-going series of ellipses. And even though the project is obviously marked by the specific historical moment of a postwar and divided Germany, he also expresses the liminal nature of his photo-text, in regard to these fractures: "MADE IN GERMANY...let us retrogress in time and read, MADE IN WEST GERMANY...or still further in time and read, MADE IN THE AMERICAN OCCUPIED ZONE OF GERMANY." This sentiment is echoed when he brings up the Berlin Wall for the first time. "MADE IN GERMANY means...know your history and geography ... Berlin, controlled by four occupying powers, has its 'Berlin Wall' running through and around it...stamped MADE IN GERMANY."<sup>73</sup>



As noted, *Made in Germany* physically resembles *Black in White America* in many ways. This similarity is tied to the fact that he and his wife laid out both books, and had them printed through the same printing house in Holland.<sup>74</sup> They also share an American publisher, Richard Grossman. And conceptually, they both read like photographic renderings of Freed's travels, as maps made through photographs and the stories unpacking them. The photographs not only resemble one another in his use of perspective, in that he plays with his distance and proximity to his subjects, but that we can find Freed at the margins of his own images, locating himself in relation to them. The Berlin Wall is a generative space for Freed in these works, and onward in his career. Beyond being a Cold War frontline, Freed's worlds, old and new, American and transnational, intersect in Berlin.

The reviews of *Made in Germany* again reference Freed as a traveller. But the tone of his work was seen as more suspect of his subjects. In an article titled, "Pictures You Won't See in a Travel Folder," *New York Times* writer Gene Thornton praises Freed for his mastery of the photo-text but emphasizes the discomfort and quiet menace captured here. "Instead of picturesque castles and smiling peasant girls, Freed gives us grinning mobs, somber landscapes, traffic jams, clean cut kids wearing iron crosses or throwing rocks in the streets ..." Thornton reads a warning in Freed's photographs and captions: "You will get the impression that they [the Germans] are all somehow peculiar to the Friendly Volks from across the Rhine who gave us You Know Who, and You Better Watch Out, Or They'll Try it Again."<sup>75</sup> Though Freed cautions in his text, it is not simply about an inherent distrust or danger of Germans. Freed's work is a travel narrative, with an historical orientation. Again Freed's subjects are depicted as attached to a history through land, even as roves. For his work, Freed meets Germans in their spaces, at their sites of mourning, and attempts to reconcile his own struggles of religious and national identity. Again, his mobility, and the

emergent Berlin Wall, signify a vision of post-Holocaust Germany and the American Freed's place within it and back home.

## **V. Traumas**

In a noteworthy set of textual reflections that appear near the end of *Made in Germany*, Freed recounts a series of "Traumas" he experienced during his time in Germany. There are no images in this section, no titles beyond a numbered order, and none of the anecdotes explicitly correspond to photographs found elsewhere in the photo-text. Freed did not include any photographs of concentration camps, as he had in *Deutsche Juden heute*, but reserves this writing space in the back of the book for two short essays about visiting the death camps. His ideas about reconciliation and suffering look away from the war and to the moment in which he photographs. In the fourth and final Trauma, Freed shares a story about picking up a German student hitchhiker en route to the town of Lübeck. Freed explains that this young man "had tried" a career in the army, but now wished to be a school director. He pivots off this point of the narrative, and goes on to recall of the conversation: "Then he spoke of the Wall in Berlin. [He said] the problem was the Americans; they weren't hard enough, not ready to fight." After noting that the West Germans were weak too, and lacking national pride, Freed relays that:

He began speaking boldly, 'I must say what I think. The German people have given too much money to the Jews and Israel ... one can't talk too much because here in Germany, it's such a hot topic, but other countries also wanted to get rid of their Jews ... only Germany had the courage to do so ...'<sup>76</sup>

In concluding this Trauma, Freed states, "He left and I thought ... keep faith, one must not abandon those Germans still fighting to uphold democratic ideals ... Germany democracy is still too fragile to survive without outside support."<sup>77</sup>

This exchange is significant, in light of a consideration of Freed's staged perspective in this project, and offers a useful reference point into the distancing he used in his Berlin Wall image from *Black in White America*. The Berlin Wall is brought up here to suggest that, rather than just serving as a structure that divides a city or nation, it is a structure symbolic of democracy's fragility in a post-Holocaust world. Democracy is an ideal rendered as fragile and contradictory in each work. While his image of the black soldier at the Berlin Wall attests to a failure of American democracy to live up to its own ideals, his other images produced in Germany are equally poignant reminders of the power of such ideals – even as Freed is implicated within both works. Democracy is an ideal construction, though yet to be completed, in postwar America. Freed approaches the potential for social transformation in his photographs of Germany and America – at the Berlin Wall, to suggest sites of connection and trauma and the spaces in between.

Freed continued photographing the Berlin Wall through its years as a staunch border through its demise and ruined dispersal. In 1976, he lived in a flat in the artist co-op *Kunstlerhaus Bethanien* with a window that overlooked the wall as he photographed for a book on Berlin published by Time-Life. In 1984, he immersed himself in a Turkish community in Kreuzberg for a photo-essay. Just as he saw the wall go up in August 1961, Freed returned in November 1989 when the border was breached, photographing in Berlin for the country's reunification in October 1990, and several more times through 2004. In the final decade of his life, Freed intended to follow up his earlier Germany-focused projects, to weigh the unified "New Germany" by juxtaposing contemporary images with others pulled from his own archive, many accompanied by diary-style annotations in which he pondered the past of Germany, of his career, in first person prose through the window of his present. Freed faxed a letter to German curator Ute Eskildsen in 1990 at the onset of this project outlining his aims:

THE INTENTION IS TO FOLLOW UP ON MY 1970 BOOK WITH A SECOND, TO DEVELOPE [SIC] AND EXTEND MY EXPERIENCES AS I HAVE BEEN DOING IN BOTH EAST AND WEST GERMANY OVER THE YEARS SINCE ITS PUBLICATION. ... I FEEL BEING BORN IN THE UNITED STATES GIVES ME A FRESH OR EXTRA EYE TO OBSERVE WHAT THE AVERAGE GERMAN WILL OVERLOOK. ... THE CENTER AND BASE OF THIS WORK WILL BE BERLIN, THE UNIFIED BERLIN.<sup>78</sup>

He proposed several titles for this book – *The Children of Reich*, *Die Neuen Deutschen* (The New Germans), and *An American in Deutschland* – and worked with designers to conceptualize the contours and look of the book. Despite reaching more success during these later years, including the planning of a major museum and book retrospective, no publisher took on the project, perhaps because it was too soon to look back and across Germany history.

In the final year of his life, Freed exhibited some of the prints of this unfinished book project at the *Haus der Geschichte* in Bonn, under the title “Ein Amerikaner in Deutschland.” Though his image of the trio of American GIs taken in August 1961 comprised the publicity image for the poster, others dealt with the layering of Freed’s view of his career with the evolution of German history. Indicative of such a posture is a vision of a reunified Berlin shot in 1990, featuring a statue of Otto Von Bismarck. Here, a torso statue of the 19th century unifier of Germany, is sphinxed and delimbed, perched on a zigzagging steel beam, held directly above a bicycle and encircled by trolley tracks (Figure 2.16). Again, Freed approaches his subject at a middle distance. As a whole, the composition appears cubist, and the playful nature of this image is complemented by its serious historical moment. So much is up in the air, and public expressivity is having an impact on the moment, not just Freed’s but the people convening for Berlin’s next chapter. Freed had imaged bicycles in other post-*Wende* images, including one in a stationary position in the former death strip, as an emblem of progress, not in the imagery of the American open road, but in the potential for a shared fate of transformation and to convey momentary stillness amidst enormous social upheaval

(Figure 2.17). The absence of guards and the presence of the bicycle tell us that while its architecture remains for the time being, its very fact of openness means it has been neutralized. But in the Bismarck image, one can look deeper past the foreground, as the steel beams construct a window to draw focus toward the signage of an infamous site of memory in Berlin: the Topography of Terror; a former Nazi-era Secret Police (S.S.) headquarters and prison. The foundations of the site were rediscovered and excavated in 1987 during preparations for the 750th anniversary of Berlin. The area was then re-opened as an open-air museum. Since 1989, it also sits directly below one of the largest remaining continuous sections of the Berlin Wall. Despite the location of this image along the former border, in this photograph material remnants of the Berlin Wall are left out of Freed's deliberate field of vision. And though the sign for the Topography of Terror is nearly out of sight it is nonetheless framed in the center of this image. Freed reminds of the power of juxtaposing various layers of history and memory by the Berlin Wall, to imagine the present around what traces remain and what new possibilities we can create when we coexist with that past and one another.



Figures 2.16–17: Leonard Freed, Berlin, 1990 (Magnum Photos)

<sup>1</sup> Leonard Freed, *Made in Germany* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1970) 88.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the construction of the Berlin Wall, see Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-east German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003); Frederick Taylor, *The Berlin Wall: 13 August 1961-9 November 1989* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006); and Frederick Kempe, *Berlin 1961: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Most Dangerous Place on Earth* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2011). For more on the experience and impact of African American GIs in Germany, see, Maria Höhn and Martin Klimke, *A Breath of Freedom: The Civil Rights Struggle, African American GIs, and Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Willem L. Oltmans, *Memoires, 1961* (Baarn: In den Toren, 1989) 252. I thank Frank Kelderman for his translation assistance. For more on U.S. military and Elvis Presley in Germany, see Jon Wiener, *How We Forgot the Cold War: A Historical Journey Across America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012) 166–180; Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) 55–59; and Andreas Schröer, *Private Elvis: Elvis in Germany: The Missing Years* (London: Boxtree, 1993) 68–69.

<sup>4</sup> Neither Freed's private notes nor the photograph at its highest resolution bear any clear indication of a name or rank on the soldier's uniform. I am grateful to Maria Höhn who found what appears to be another photograph of the same soldier from a different location in the *Landesarchiv*. The other photograph is identified as: "229814 Bestand 290 and was taken at Grenze Waldemar-Luckauer Strasse, Bezirk Kreuzberg (Nachder Flucht zweier Ostdeutschen am 25.9.1980)."

<sup>5</sup> Leonard Freed Papers (LFP), Contact Sheets: 65-1-5-39. The date of this photograph has been previously listed in multiple publications and exhibitions as 1962 or 1965. In reviewing Freed's vintage contact sheets, the image can be dated to 1961. Freed had changed his notation system in 1970 when he joined Magnum as an associate. All of his German images from 1958–1965 were re-labeled as "1965." The original contact sheet bears an additional marking on its back denoting this contact sheet's originary date. The timing of this photograph was further corroborated through Oltmans' journal and interviews with Leonard's widow, Brigitte Freed.

<sup>6</sup> Freed, *Black in White America* (New York: Grossman Publishers 1967/68) 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Brett Abbott, *Engaged Observers: Documentary Photography Since the Sixties* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010) 18.

<sup>9</sup> Freed, *Made in Germany*, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Freed, William A. Ewing, and Wim van Sinderen, *Worldview* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2007) 14–15.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977) 13.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 11, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981) 12–13.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>15</sup> Sara Blair, *Harlem Crossroads: Black Writers and the Photograph in the Twentieth Century*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) xix.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, xix, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Erina Duganne, *The Self in Black and White: Race and Subjectivity in Postwar American Photography* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2010) 4–8.

<sup>18</sup> Taylor, 240.

<sup>19</sup> “John F. Kennedy, Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Berlin Crisis, July 25, 1961.” Available: <<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/JFK+in+History/The+Cold+War+in+Berlin.htm>>.

<sup>20</sup> Mary A. Watson, *The Expanding Vista: American Television in the Kennedy Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 1, 7, 17.

<sup>21</sup> Penny Von, Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004) 24.

<sup>22</sup> Andreas W. Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin* (Washington, D.C: German Historical Institute, 2008) 51.

<sup>23</sup> East Berlin was also a part of this imaginative geography, though characterizations of the city in popular culture were mainly drawn to make comparisons to West Berlin. The common motifs in representing East Berlin in American cultural productions will be covered later in this dissertation. For more on representations of East Berlin, see: Sunil Manghani, *Image Critique & the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2008); and Emily Pugh, *The Berlin Wall and the Urban Space and Experience of East and West Berlin, 1961-1989* (Ann Arbor: ProQuest/UMI, 2008) (Dissertation – 3311209).

<sup>24</sup> Scholars have studied the system of racial rule through the joint histories of the Cold War and Civil Rights eras. Thomas Bortelsmann writes, “The far-reaching changes that swept through the American South in the second half of the twentieth century cannot be understood apart from the international context of the Cold War. The evolving civil rights movement fit into the larger story of decolonization and the Cold War struggle over world leadership and the meaning of ‘freedom.’” Höhn and Klimke contend, “It was in Cold War Germany that the contradictions between America’s claim to be the leader of the ‘free world’ and its own institutionalized racism became the most painfully apparent to the global community.” Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001) 270; and Höhn and Klimke, 2. For more on Cold War civil rights, see also Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); and Von Eschen.

<sup>25</sup> Langston Hughes Papers, Box 416, Folder 9103, James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

<sup>26</sup> Langston Hughes, “Beer, Berlin and Simple,” *The Chicago Defender*, 12 Aug 1961, 8.

<sup>27</sup> Donna S Harper, *Not So Simple: The “Simple” Stories by Langston Hughes* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995) 203–204.

<sup>28</sup> Hughes, *I Wonder As I Wander: An Autobiographical Journey* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993). For scandals involving Hughes in Cold War Germany in particular, see Walter Sullivan, “U.S. Purges Libraries It Runs in Germany,” *New York Times*, 11 June 1953, 1.

<sup>29</sup> On August 28, NBC host Jack Paar informed his production crew they would be flying to West Berlin. On September 1, they arrived at Berlin’s Tempelhof airport and stayed at the Berlin Hilton. taped scenes in their adopted studio, and eventually got shots by the wall, on Friedrichstrasse, within steps of the border itself, while protected with US Army support. The episode aired on September 12, 1961, and with it came a Defense Department investigation and a congressional scolding. See Hal Gurnee, “Jack at the Berlin Wall - by Hal Gurnee, Who Directed the Late-Night Comedian's 1961 Program Filmed at This Historic Site” in *Television Quarterly*, 36.3 (2006): 52.

<sup>30</sup> In other scenes, we learn that Scarlett, painted as an eager paramour, previously drew her parents’ ire when she fell for guys from other countries or simply those at home who were from “the wrong side of the tracks.” Later, Scarlet is unbothered when Otto shows her a piece of Anti-American propaganda – a balloon that reads “Yankee Go Home” designed to float over to the West from the East on a windy day. (She responds when asked about by an irate MacNamara, “It’s not anti-American, it’s anti-Yankee! Where I come from everyone is against the Yankees.”). As Scarlett espouses her own version of Otto’s politics, we also learn that in lieu of flowers for their wedding they asked friends to send money to sharecroppers in Mississippi. After MacNamara tells the couple their marriage has no legal standing outside of East Berlin, Otto responds, “I know your tactics. You can have me arrested, you can have me tortured, you can me shot. Like you’ve been doing in the Congo!” Months earlier, democratically elected Congolese President Patrice Lumumba was in fact abducted, tortured, and assassinated by CIA and Belgian covert-ops. Wilder’s comedy hinges on the seriousness of Germany’s fascist past, Russia’s role as external incubators of East German socialism, and America’s on-going racial division and Cold War imperialism. Billy Wilder (dir), *One, Two, Three* (Los Angeles, CA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Miss Toni Fisher's Top 40 hit “West of the Wall” premiered in 1962. This song features Fisher reinventing one of her own melodies from an earlier song “Toot Toot Amore” but redeploing it here with lyrics about lovers separated by the new Berlin Wall. In the song, Fisher “waits” for her lover in West Berlin: “That wall built of our sorrow/ we know must have an end/ Till then dream of tomorrow/ When we meet again.” The song reached #37 on the Billboard charts in a moment when the future status of the wall was uncertain – the notion that the wall would come down soon was a political possibility. The metaphoric Berlin would be persuasive for artists who had previously never set foot in Berlin. For other musical works performed in Berlin and released in America, see Ray Charles, *Berlin 1962: Jazz at the Philharmonic*, David Brubeck, *Brandenburg Gate*, and Miles Davis, *Miles in Berlin*.



<sup>32</sup> Brian Norman and PK Williams define segregation as: “a diverse set of cultural practices, ethnic experiences, historical conditions, political ideologies, municipal planning schemes, and de facto social systems, though it is primarily associated with the Jim Crow South and the era between the Supreme Court cases *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and *Brown v Board of Education* (1954), when segregation was no longer the law of the land but a persistent de facto condition.” Norman and Williams, *Representing Segregation: Toward an Aesthetics of Living Jim Crow, and Other Forms of Racial Division* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010) 1.

<sup>33</sup> For more on freedom rides and domestic civil rights protests of 1961, see Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) and David Niven, *The Politics of Injustice: The Kennedys, the Freedom Rides, and the Electoral Consequences of a Moral Compromise* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003).

<sup>34</sup> Another *Pittsburgh Courier* staff editorial, published the week before on January 13, 1962, was titled, “The Walls Are Crumbling.”

<sup>35</sup> John F Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy, *John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy: Reden an Der Freien Universität* (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 1996) 23.

<sup>36</sup> “Tear Down ‘Berlin Wall’ of Race Hatred, Governor Kerner Urges,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, 2 July 1963, 3.

<sup>37</sup> “Adlai Speaks Out,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, 2 July 1963, 12.

<sup>38</sup> “Mrs. Tinglof Assails School District ‘Walls,’ Los Angeles Times, 13, Aug 1963, 2.

<sup>39</sup> For more on “Remember Berlin Day,” the efforts by the Free Europe Committee (operators of Radio Free Europe) and the American Friends of Captive Nations to commemorate the first anniversary of the Berlin Wall in American cities, see Christopher Temple Emmet Jr. Papers, Box 49, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

<sup>40</sup> Al Kuethner, “Atlanta's 'Berlin Wall' Divides Races,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, 24 Dec 1962, 3.

<sup>41</sup> “See New Pressures Forcing Integration of Methodist Church,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, 2 March 1963, 15.

<sup>42</sup> **Boston** - U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *a time to listen...a time to act: Voices from the Ghettos of the Nation's Cities* [a Report] (Washington: For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1967) 65; Los Angeles - Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.M. Norton, 1999) 267; **Chicago** - "Chicago Wall' - Dr. King Talks in Lansing," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 12 March 1966, 1; **Birmingham** - "Gregory Says - 'They Kick You Hard,'" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 18 May 1963, 29; **Deerfield** - Clarence Mitchell, "From the Work Bench: Deerfield Stands for Hate," *Afro-American*, 27 April 1963, 4; **Greensboro** - "Tension Grows in Greensboro, Barricade Separates Races," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 28 July 1965, 3; **Philadelphia** - "Dr. King Assails Policy at Girard: Likens Wall at Philadelphia School to Berlin Wall," *New York Times*, 4 August 1965, 19; **Rich Square** - "Small Towns Erect Negro Berlin Wall," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 23 August 1965, 7; **St Louis** - "Suburb Race-Wall Said to Outstrip Dixie Barriers," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 25 October 1965, 5; **Arlington** - Leslie Cheek, "White Neighbors' Wall Stirs Negro Residents," *Washington Post*, 5 June 1966, B3. **Wheaton** - "Freedom News," *The Crisis*, December 1966, 535; **Newark** - Gertrude Wilson, "There's Only Isolation," *New York Amsterdam News*, 12 August 1967, 17.

<sup>43</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903) 9.

<sup>44</sup> As the long Civil Rights struggle ensued, postwar African-American authors such as Richard Wright, Ann Petry, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin evoked the structure of walls as material structures within their novels. These walls signified along many lines, including those separating whites and blacks, the line between public and private space, and the individual versus the community. In terms of segregation, the allusion to walls marked the separation of racial spheres, calling attention to the border crossings and interactions between blacks and whites and the need to exorcise such boundaries through creative expression. Wright, in his autobiographical tome *Black Boy*, writes about his struggle for literacy: "In buoying me up, reading also cast me down, made me see what was possible, what I had missed...I seemed forever condemned, ringed by walls." Petry's protagonist in *The Street* similarly thinks about urban space as confining and dangerous: "Streets like the one she lived on were no accident. They were the North's lynch mobs...the method to keep Negroes in their place...From the time she was born, she had been hemmed into an ever-narrowing space, until now she was very nearly walled in and the wall had been built brick by brick by eager white hands." Richard Wright, *Black Boy* (New York: Harper & Brother, 1945) 251; and Ann L. Petry, *The Street* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin company, 1946) 323.

<sup>45</sup> Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961) 47-49. See also Warren Miller, *The Siege of Harlem* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); Lee Rainwater, *Behind Ghetto Walls: Black Families in a Federal Slum* (London: Allen Lane, 1971); and Kenneth Bancroft Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

<sup>46</sup> Langston Hughes, *Jericho*, *Jim Crow* in Hughes, Arnold Rampersad, Dolan Hubbard, and Leslie C. Sanders. *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001).

<sup>47</sup> In my introductory chapter, I cover another instance of "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho" being adapted to a contemporary protest song: in Selma in 1965 with the song "We've Got a Rope That's a Berlin Wall." For other civil rights covers of "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho" By Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, see Von Eschen, 77 and 121.

- <sup>48</sup> Hughes, *Jericho Jim Crow*.
- <sup>49</sup> Hughes, "Berlin Today," *The Chicago Defender*, 3 April 1965, 8.
- <sup>50</sup> Interviews with Brigitte Freed, 2009-2011; LFP, 1963 Working Schedule (Uncatalogued).
- <sup>51</sup> LFP, Interview with Tom Marotta. 1980 (Uncatalogued).
- <sup>52</sup> Abbott, 18.
- <sup>53</sup> "Magnum, n." *OED Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- <sup>54</sup> Fred Ritchin and Julien Frydman, *Magnum Photos*. (London; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2008) 1.
- <sup>55</sup> Leonard Freed, *Leonard Freed: Photographs, 1954-1990* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992) 6.
- <sup>56</sup> Ewing, *Worldview*, 15.
- <sup>57</sup> van Sinderen, *Worldview*, 104.
- <sup>58</sup> Roland Barthes notes how "the reading of public photographs is always, at bottom, a private reading." Barthes, 97.
- <sup>59</sup> Freed studied August Sander's work of "young people with scarred faces" in the November issue of Swiss publication *DU* while hospitalized in 1959. *Worldview*, 305.
- <sup>60</sup> Duganne, 21
- <sup>61</sup> Freed, *Worldview*, 204
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 204.
- <sup>63</sup> For more on Freed's images from the March on Washington, see: Freed, Julian Bond, Michael Eric Dyson, and Paul M. Farber, *This Is the Day: The March on Washington* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2013).
- <sup>64</sup> As Höhn and Klimke go onto note, King's visit has largely been "ignored" by historical memory, due to both US press' lack of attention to the visit, as well as GDR's mixed position on welcoming an American religious figure like King, even one who spoke out in accordance to their state policy prohibiting racism.
- <sup>65</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., "My Dream," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 25 December 1965, 10; "Chicago Wall' - Dr. King Talks in Lansing," *Chicago Daily Defender*, 12 March 1966, 1.
- <sup>66</sup> The image also serves as the cover to Pulitzer Prize-winner Taylor Branch's part two of three biography of King, *Pillars of Fire: America in the King Year 1963-65* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1998).
- <sup>67</sup> Kerner Report, Washington (Supt. of Docs., U.S. Govt. Print. Off, 1968).

<sup>68</sup> See Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>69</sup> Freed, *Black in White America*, 4.

<sup>70</sup> LFP, Letter from Brother, April 1968 (Uncatalogued).

<sup>71</sup> Mel Watkins, "Diversity of Experience," *The New York Times Book Review*, 27 April 1969, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Getty Publications recently re-published *Black in White America* after its forty years of being out of print, and in conjunction with their *Engaged Observers* exhibition. Curator Abbott writes in his foreword to the Getty reprinting of *Black in White America*, "More than forty years later the Berlin wall has come and gone, but the issue of race in America remains ingrained in the national conscience." Abbott in Freed, *Black in White America* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010) 3.

<sup>73</sup> Freed, *Made in Germany*, 4.

<sup>74</sup> *Worldview*, 105.

<sup>75</sup> Gene Thornton, *The New York Times*, 30 May 1971, D14.

<sup>76</sup> Freed, *Made in Germany*, 80.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 80.

<sup>78</sup> LFP, Unpublished German Book Folder (Uncatalogued).

**Chapter 3**  
**“Walls Turned Sideways Are Bridges”**  
**Angela Davis, Cold War Berliners, and Imprisoned Freedom Struggles**

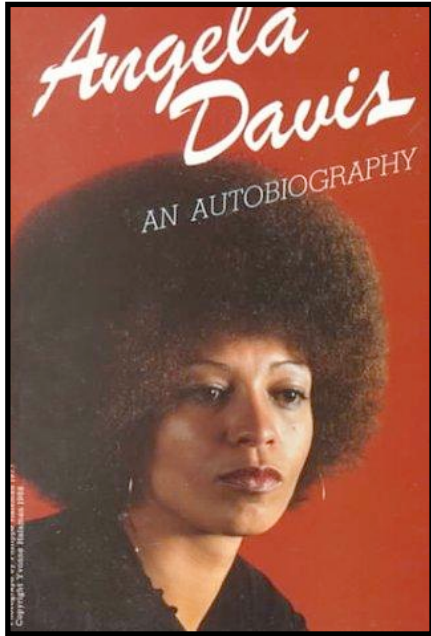


Figure 3.1: Cover of *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, 1974 (Random House)

*“Each day, I walked across at Checkpoint Charlie. ... Crowds of white tourists from the United States would be standing in line, probably waiting to cross the border to tell people they had seen the other side of the ‘wall’ – so they could say, in Kennedy’s war-filled words, “Ich bin ein Berliner,” that is, I’m ready to fight communism. The tourists were always complaining about the wait. But I never had any trouble – each time I went across, I would receive the signal to go on only a few moments after I had shown my passport. This was their way of showing their solidarity with Black people.*

–Angela Davis, *An Autobiography*

*“There was nowhere in the United States where Angela could feel safe and write.”*

–Toni Morrison, *“Literacy, Libraries and Liberation”*

*“The high wall, no longer the wall that surrounds and protects...but the meticulously sealed wall, uncrossable in either direction, closed in upon the now mysterious work of punishment.”*

–Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

## I. “The Wall”

In the formative years of the Black Power movement, and in the same week as one of its foundational moments, the Watts Rebellion of 1965, Angela Davis boarded a boat en route to Germany. There, the violent border clashes and tense diplomatic relations of the first years of the Berlin Wall began to temper into a sanctioned coexistence between East and West Germany. The policy of *Ostpolitik*, championed by West Berlin Mayor and eventual Chancellor of the Federal Republic Willy Brandt, emerged out of diplomatic negotiations in these years as the two regimes adjusted to the reality of Germany’s division. Following the 1962 shooting death of attempted

East German escapee Peter Fechter, which was caught by cameras worldwide, the two sides moved toward more stabilized relations and negotiated some limited border crossings for their respective citizens. Instances of violent skirmishes along the border and escape attempts also waned. Frederick Taylor writes, “As 1962 became 1963 and then 1964, the tunneling continued, but outside in the wider world things were changing. The crisis atmosphere that followed the building of the Wall slowly gave way to a kin of sullen acceptance.”<sup>1</sup>

As Davis sailed toward Europe to pursue a doctoral degree in philosophy at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, the black freedom struggle in the United States was transforming as well. “Black Power” coalesced as an ideology in the mid-to-late 1960s to summon self-determination and self-defense against prevailing racial injustices.<sup>2</sup> Even with the legislative and judicial gains associated with the Civil Rights movement, the afterlife of *de jure* segregation continued to press onward and adapt toward new repressive ends. The uprising in Watts was emblematic of the need for new grassroots approaches. Watts was not isolated in its unrest, but part of a wave of discontent erupting in black communities across the nation. Organizations like the SNCC, CORE, and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense were engaging students and young people toward addressing the need for new forms of mobilization. Davis, who would later become one of the Black Power movement’s most recognizable and influential figures, was just 21 years old and on a pathway toward advanced academic training, almost 6000 miles away from the flames of Watts.

Germany was a site of awakening and challenge for Davis’s burgeoning scholarly and political consciousness. Davis was born in 1944 in Birmingham, Alabama, in the neighborhood ignominiously deemed “Dynamite Hill,” named for the waves of bombings targeting black family homes and other violent actions by white vigilantes who objected to the neighborhood’s changing

racial demography. Davis' parents were teachers and members of the NAACP, and her mother had worked on the campaign to free the Scottsboro Boys in the 1930s. Davis left Birmingham as a teenager to attend Elizabeth Irwin High School in New York City through a program sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee. She later attended Brandeis University in Massachusetts, where she majored in French and worked with German émigré and professor Herbert Marcuse. She studied abroad in Paris during her junior year, where she encountered perspectives on global racism during the Algerian fight for independence.<sup>3</sup> On her way back home, she stopped in Frankfurt to attend lectures given by German intellectual Theodor Adorno. Her language skills were limited at the time, but with partial help through translations into English and French, Davis received serious entry into the world of German philosophy and critical theory. During her final year at Brandeis she applied for a scholarship to return to Frankfurt for graduate school. After graduation, she stopped in Birmingham briefly and then embarked for Germany. Davis eventually was awarded a German State Scholarship to study philosophy in Frankfurt. Davis stayed in West Germany for two years, engaging texts by Hegel and Marx in German, before departing to finish her studies in California.

The history of the black freedom movement and the shadow of Nazi fascism in Germany informed her trajectories in academia and activism, as did her involvement with the West German student protest movement of the 1960s. Davis eventually moved in with a group of fellow students, many of whom were involved the *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentbund* (Socialist German Student Union, or SDS), a group with whom she protested U.S. military aggression in Vietnam and the West German government's complicity in global Cold War conflicts (Figure 3.2). As U.S. Army bases in West Germany served as points of deployment for soldiers traveling to Vietnam, German universities became flashpoints of protest over the war. These student



Figure 3.2: Abisag Tuellmann, “Demonstration against the Vietnam War at the Opernplatz in Frankfurt with Angela Davis, February 1967” (AACVR/Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz)

activists drew inspiration from the Civil Rights, Black Power and Free Speech movements in the United States, but directed their own activism toward confronting the legacy of fascism and afterlife of imperialist governance in West Germany. Davis herself left Germany in 1967 to finish her graduate work in California, citing her own desire to return to the frontlines of the movement in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

Soon after returning to the states, Davis truly came of age as she was catapulted into national headlines tied to her intertwined academic work and activism. Her notorious public travails in the following years included her 1969/1970 high-profile removal as a philosophy lecturer at UCLA in part because of her membership in the Communist Party; three-months of national news headlines and television reports as a FBI Top Ten most wanted fugitive in 1970 upon the charge of aiding the kidnapping and murder of a judge in California with Jonathan Jackson, the younger brother of prison writer George Jackson (Figure 3.3); an eighteen-month period of detainment in New York and California prisons, during which an international



solidarity movement emerged across the world under the call to “Free Angela”; and an eventual acquittal in 1973 after a widely publicized trial. On the heels of her trial, during which her supporters and detractors routinely evoked the details of her life story in the national media, Davis wrote *An Autobiography*, alternately titled, *With Freedom on My Mind*, which was published by Random House in 1974. Davis presents her authored memoir as a “political

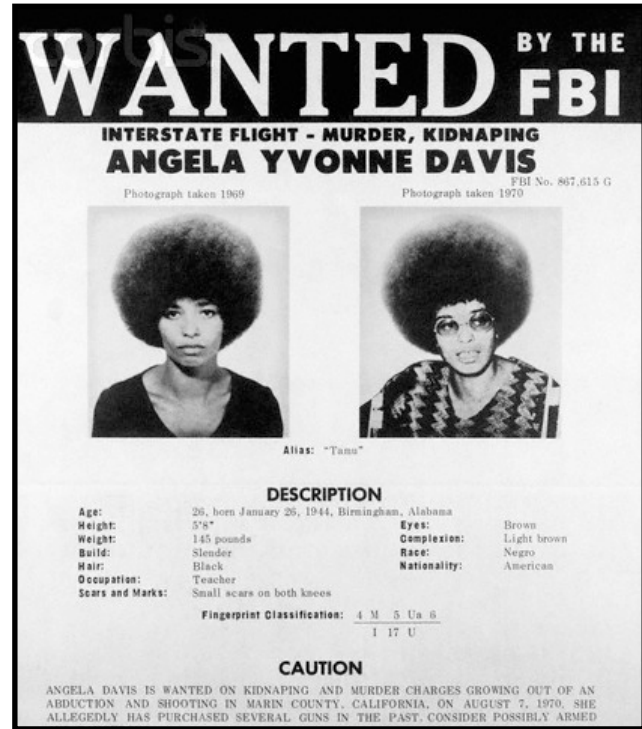


Figure 3.3: “Wanted by the FBI” Poster, 1970 (FBI)

autobiography” to offer “an important piece of historical description and analysis of the late 1960s and early 1970s.”<sup>5</sup> Davis aimed to explain her life circumstances as a product of an historical period rather than simply as those of an exceptional figure.

In Davis’s autobiography, she situates her experience and the development of her consciousness as a student in West Germany between two important moments back in America: The Watts Rebellion that marks her exit and the rise of a “collective” movement for black liberation that ultimately beckons her return and would mark her rise to national prominence. By doing so, Davis attempts to portray the influence of her time in Germany as one that at first bolstered her calling toward social justice and scholarship but ultimately limited by her distance, explaining why she left to finish her graduate work in the United States. Davis presents a key turning point in the text to exemplify her feelings of geopolitical dislocation – she recalls traveling to and across divided Berlin in the first spring of graduate school with other students from her

scholarship program. Here, she not only explains her ambivalence about her life as a student, but positions her status as an American squarely into her story about Germany. Davis does not spend much time describing the differences between the two sides of Berlin, but rather how she was struck by the nature of her encounters at the city's borders. Outside the bounds of her school trip, she describes her visit to East Berlin for May Day in 1966 to link up with family friends from Birmingham. In recalling her experience crossing into East Berlin, Davis writes:

Each day, I walked across at Checkpoint Charlie. ... Crowds of white tourists from the United States would be standing in line, probably waiting to cross the border to tell people they had seen the other side of the 'wall' – so they could say, in Kennedy's war-filled words, "*Ich bin ein Berliner*," that is, I'm ready to fight communism. The tourists were always complaining about the wait. But I never had any trouble – each time I went across, I would receive the signal to go on only a few moments after I had shown my passport. This was their way of showing their solidarity with Black people.<sup>6</sup>

Davis routes her narrative through a divided Berlin and locates this scene clearly by the Berlin Wall without acknowledging the structure by any name. Despite her descriptions of Cold War Berlin – including explicit references to Checkpoint Charlie, President John Kennedy's 1963 historic visit to West Berlin, and the time she spent in East Berlin – the words *Berlin Wall* are nowhere to be found in the text. The wall only appears in scare quotes, as “the wall.” Davis's act of distancing herself from other American travelers nearby the Berlin Wall in her manner of border crossing and recollection of solidarity with the border guard reminds readers that her time spent in Germany was not merely an excursion away from America, but a living case study of Western freedom and repression brought to a head through her time near the Berlin Wall.

Davis's choice of evasive nomenclature and punctuation begs further consideration. Her border crossing into East Berlin is marked by its ease, rather than conveying the tendency of many other cultural works that treat passage into East Berlin as a flight into enemy territory. Davis emphasizes her own ease at Checkpoint Charlie to consider East Germany through the

lens of the progressive racial policies of the socialist nation and signal to the debates over the legacy of German fascism in the West. Davis returns to East Germany, as noted in her autobiography in its epilogue as well, after her trial, on a tour of the Eastern bloc countries that supported her throughout her detainment. In such cases, her obvious omission of referring to the “Berlin Wall” by name stand out in relation to other American cultural works that refer to the Berlin Wall, but it is also indicative of the East German governing principle. From the German Democratic Republic (GDR) perspective and enforced through mandate, there was no “Berlin Wall” – only officially an “antifascist protective rampart.” In East Germany, the wall (in German, *Mauer*) was forbidden from language, and when possible, from sight. Most citizens rarely were able to approach the wall without official clearance. Their idea was that the GDR was protecting citizens from what they deemed the scourges of capitalism and imperialism, which the East aligned with Germany’s Nazi past. To further carry this out, the GDR practiced “border control” – itself a euphemistic term that reached far into the internal spaces and private lives of its citizens – by means of comprehensive state surveillance and armed violence against citizens. Davis’s textual narrative highlights tactics similar to “border control” used in West Germany and the United States, bringing out paradoxes in Western democracy. But she does not address this directly in a comparative transatlantic critique of repressive tactics.

Davis’s autobiography is an attempt to respond to the competing stories told about Davis’s life in public discourse, to reconcile the individual circumstances of her case and her life into a collective story of struggle. The autobiography is styled as an historical memoir of the Cold War but is also profoundly fashioned in the tradition of several transgressive literary genres including the fugitive slave narrative and the prison intellectual treatise. Toni Morrison, the author and future Nobel laureate, edited the book (Figure 3.4). Under Morrison’s guidance, Davis activates

both the political and literary imperatives of the book's production by utilizing the symbol of walls to outline the process by which Davis "decided ... [she] would use my life to uphold the cause of my sisters and brothers behind walls" – her critical prison abolitionist academic and activist work.<sup>7</sup> In the book, she traces and outlines her critical training and life experiences up until that point, explaining her particular form of engaged scholarly activism. Decades afterward and



Figure 3.4: Jill Krementz, Angela Davis and Toni Morrison, 28 March 1974 (New York Social Diary)

throughout her life, Davis continues toward the goal of what Robin D.G. Kelley deems "collective freedom," especially in the case of work on radical transformations of the prison industrial complex, to see "freedom *as* movement, as a collective striving for real democracy" in which democracy is not merely granted by law but "a participatory process that demands new ways of thinking and being."<sup>8</sup> Given the trajectory of Davis's career, her autobiography exemplifies her praxis around both the historical forces and personal circumstances of her life up until and immediately following her trial. The text accomplishes this through acts of storytelling shaped by politics and artful reflection.

As noted, prior to the publication of her own autobiography, Davis's life was previously and widely rendered through dozens of complementary and competing biographical narratives which fueled public and popular intrigue about the circumstances of her life. Her image – iconized by her natural hair worn out as an Afro – became a visual detail made nearly inseparable from stories about and explanations of her life story and political perspectives. Her

face and hair became emblematic of her life story and the political forces swirling around her case. Prominent visual representations of Davis, on materials ranging from an FBI Most Wanted poster to “Free Angela” paraphernalia to sprawling media coverage of her trial all fueled the extreme notoriety of her case. In her own oft reprinted 1994 essay, “Afro Images: Politics, Fashion, and Nostalgia,” Davis writes “it is both humiliating and humbling to discover that a single generation after the events that constructed me as a public personality, I am remembered as a hairdo.”<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the visual rhetoric associated with deployments of her image, stories and narratives around Davis’s biography, including her own writing, were also quite important fodder for creating a public persona. Davis’s case was a fixture in national media, including cover stories by *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *Jet* magazines, all of which used her image, but also delivered coverage deliberately aimed at her upbringing and development, especially to understand how she became a political radical on her academic trajectory. Davis’s own words and writings had been unsuccessfully leveraged against her by the State of California in the trial as “political evidence.” Other key evidence in her trial focused on particular books she read and may have shared with Jonathan Jackson. She would take up her identity as a literary figure in advance of the writing of her autobiography.

Leading up to and during her trial, in the face of the prosecution’s stories about her life attempting to demonstrate her guilt, the National United Committee to Free Angela Davis and associated groups circulated their own literature and versions of her life’s circumstances to contextualize her case. This included the pamphlet titled “A Political Biography of Angela Davis,” copies of her “Lectures on Liberation” from UCLA, and a radio interview aired on Gil Noble’s program in 1970 that was also released on record by Folkways titled, *Angela Speaks*, with

printed transcripts released to the press and included in the liner notes. In addition, popular musicians such as John Lennon and Yoko Ono (“Angela”), the Rolling Stones (“Black Angel”), Santana (“Free Angela”), and Sun-Ra (“Music for Angela Davis”) released music about her life and case during her imprisonment, attempting to bring attention and draw sympathy to her case. State sponsored solidarity campaigns from countries around the world and in particular in the Eastern Bloc implored officials to consider the political nature of the case through massive public demonstrations and letter writing campaigns. Davis’s world travels, including her time spent in Germany, were often packaged within these portraits. The story about Berlin, however, does not appear until her 1974 Random House autobiography. What does the story about this visit offer this particular autobiographical text? How does it function to carry out the goal of making an official narrative amidst the swirling and numerous stories about her life?

Significantly, Davis’s exclusion of the name “Berlin Wall” occurs despite her unmistakable and emphatic use of walls as important literary symbols and reference points throughout her text. Prior to the autobiography, the defense pamphlets, with language about or by Davis, were less shaped by literary symbolism than by a discourse associated with revolutionary thought. But in the book, the Berlin Wall enters a broader geopolitical imaginary of walls integral to the telling of Davis’s life story and future academic-activist pathways. In an epigraph for the book, she dedicates her work, in part, “for those whose humanity is too rare to be destroyed by walls, bars, and death houses.” One of her six chapters is titled “Walls,” and at the onset of her next and culminating chapter, “Bridges,” she begins with an epigraph that underscores the symbolic architecture and strategic trajectory of her autobiography: “Walls turned sideways are bridges.” Here, she suggests that lines of historic division between groups of people may be repurposed to build strong bonds of solidarity. She pointedly refers to dozens of

other walls to allude to the divisions contained within U.S. society – including those raised and fortified in the criminal justice and prison system, and exacerbated by race, gender, and class. In doing so, Davis makes a powerful case for the repressive character of integrated post-civil rights America through the symbol of the wall. As such, Davis’s evasive reference to “the wall” is both a subtle acknowledgment and disavowal of the shared repressive tactics of East and West. In doing so, she alludes to personal and particular histories of division with an ideological connection to the broad constituency of her supporters who worked across social boundaries, whether they be racial, transnational or juridical, in the Eastern Bloc.<sup>10</sup> Walls are a signature structure for Davis, but also a metaphor for the ways previous lines of division may be reimagined, overcome, or strategically displaced as an act of dissent.

In this chapter, I look to social struggles over the definitions of freedom, citizenship and subversion in the Cold War through a close reading and unpacking of Angela Davis’ autobiography and her use of the symbol of walls. I contend Davis’s exclusion is a strategic displacement of the Berlin Wall (a structure integral to the post-World War II U.S. cultural imagination) to call other divisions in American culture into relief. In doing so, she highlights transnational modes of solidarity, but also fails to fully grapple with repressive tactics across these contexts. Davis employs the literary symbol of the wall as a way to demonstrate and imagine working across lines of division, transgressing national and identitarian borders, and thus the grounds for critical intervention in a particular ideological manner. I depart from Davis’s brief representation of the Berlin Wall within her autobiography as a means to consider her use of the symbol of walls in her work. I ponder, what historical or personal perspectives inform Davis’s representation of the Cold War border in Berlin? What other sites are represented in Davis’s autobiography, especially where walls mark the landscape and/or her perspective? Ultimately,

Davis's narrative marks the nexus and negotiation of several transgressive Cold War cultural figures: the dissident citizen, the fugitive of the law, and the pop-culture phenom of the spy – all of whom are imagined as Cold War Berliners and border crossers, testing the boundaries and possibilities of citizenship in American culture.

Critical studies of autobiography have sought to weigh the balance between the personal aims and public undertaking endemic to such a project of recollection. Scholars working in this field ponder how a writer structures a narrative about the self in relation to the larger social networks and historical circumstances that shape one's life. Figuring out what sort of person makes a worthy autobiographical subject has informed debates about the structures and literary devices of the genre. In his influential 1956 essay, "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography," Georges Gusdorf writes, "Autobiography is not possible in a cultural landscape where consciousness of self does not, properly speaking, exist." Gusdorf places the tradition of autobiography in Western individualized rational thought in which distinguished historical figures look back upon the exceptional circumstances of their lives. He sees the failure of autobiography to emerge in cultures in which "the individual does not oppose oneself to others ... [and] lives are so thoroughly entangled that each of them has its center everywhere and its circumference nowhere. The important unit is thus never the isolated being."<sup>11</sup> Other scholars have expounded on this notion of the autobiographical "isolated being" toward broader considerations of authorial construction and legitimacy, especially given the way members of marginalized groups use autobiographical writing to adjoin personal stories to broader social histories.<sup>12</sup> Stephen Butterfield writes, "The 'self' of black autobiography ... is not an individual with a private career, but a soldier in a long, historic march toward Canaan. The self is conceived as a member



of an oppressed social group, with ties and responsibilities to the other members. It is a conscious political identity.”<sup>13</sup>

Work by other critical race theorists and feminist scholars have posited intersectional approaches to autobiography, around considerations of race, gender, and other identity formations during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Margo Perkins highlights the work of Davis and other black female figures of the Black Power era whose autobiographical writing “is marked by both a redefining of the self through a story of the Movement, and a notable uneasiness with the project of autobiography because of the genre’s historical emphasis ... on heroic individualism.”<sup>14</sup> Perkins uses Davis’s formulation of “political autobiography” to distinguish such narratives through the ways such writers contend with the “multiplicity of stories” publicly surrounding their lives, and the male-dominated accounts of racial struggle. Thus the imperatives of their projects include recollection of self, as well as potential for “control of the historical record, control over their own public images, and control over how the resistance movement in which they were involved is defined and portrayed.”<sup>15</sup> Perkins contends that the autobiographical strategy of such writers is to frame the personal circumstances of their lives within the scope of broader political struggles. Autobiographers like Davis embark on such projects while critically pushing the limits of the form, as well as approaching the entanglements and controversies of their historical periods, in her case, the intertwined Cold War and black freedom struggles.

Another popular literary genre of the period, the spy drama, also informs a greater subtext for Davis’s form of autobiography. As a Cold War-era cultural production, which similarly deals with notions of citizenship and subversion, Davis’s book brings to light several overlapping concerns between black leftist autobiographical writing during the Cold War and spy culture. Spy dramas, both in text and on screen, offered audiences many instances of a popular

cultural rendering of the border crossing figure in Cold War contexts who pushed the limits of the law and national jurisdictions to pursue ambitions of justice and freedom. To be clear, the popularity of such material during the 1950s and 1960s was promoted in a period of actual citizenship travails and extralegal practices of counterinsurgency. The Western Cold War policy of global communist containment was informed by domestic regulations on citizenship, including loyalty-based legislation and covert “Counter Intelligence Programs” (COINTELPRO) that sought to “to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize” black nationalist and civil rights groups.<sup>16</sup>

Davis was aware of the culture of spying and transnational surveillance that characterized her upbringing and influenced the evolution of her case. Her book critiques such a culture of repression and makes a case for freedom from such violations of privacy and harassment. For example, she compares her extradition to “the atmosphere ... of postwar spy movies,” and brings up several instances in her book in which she was conscious of CIA and/or FBI agents potentially trailing her movements, both while abroad and in America.<sup>17</sup> Davis, when recalling the moment of her FBI capture in a New York City hotel writes, “I could hear them alerting other agents who must have been stationed at various points in and outside of the motel. All these ‘precautions,’ all these dozens of agents fit in perfectly with the image they had constructed of me as one of the country’s ten most wanted criminals: the big bad Black Communist enemy.”<sup>18</sup> In the book, Davis directly addresses the ways in which Cold War era surveillance programs, both domestic and global, influenced the narrative of her life story and the government’s case against her, as well as the way anticommunism was a tool of repression in the name of national security, no matter one’s guilt or danger.

Scholars have pointed out the connections between spy dramas and debates about Cold War citizenship, and attempted to understand how the genre's popularity affected consciousness of actual government policy and practice at home and abroad. Michael Kackman contends, "From its earliest incarnations, the American spy drama was about more than nationalism in an abstracted, general sense; these programs offer explicit meditations on the challenges, possibilities, and limitations of dominant conceptions of U.S. citizenship." Kackman offers spies as figures in which model citizenship is explored and embodied – even as they resort to extralegal tactics. Spies are historical subjects of the state, and work at the margins to consider the reaches and limits of citizenship.<sup>19</sup> Allan Hepburn also explores the notion that the spy narrative informs Cold War citizenship debates. He argues the political ramifications of spying as distinct but related to the cultural "intrigue" of spy dramas:

As the expression of wish fulfillment, narratives of intrigue allow readers to enlarge their political imaginaries to speculate on the nature of statehood and citizenship. As documents of recruitment and survival, spy narratives allegorize civic responsibility by figuring competing loyalties to one's country, one's family, or oneself.

Hepburn views the spy as a "cipher" of ideological conflict in the Cold War, one which serves to question the nature of citizenship and dissent in a culture concerned with defining internal norms against competing world views.<sup>20</sup> Given the Cold War logic of American and British spy dramas, the characterization of communists as enemies and oppositional figures re-emphasized the global antagonisms of the period, as well as gestured to domestic citizenship debates.<sup>21</sup> In that sense, scholarship on spy fiction not only joins the construction of such figures as the citizen and the spy, but also ties in the critical dissident of U.S. racial policy to such archetypes set out by Davis, especially around who has power to test the limits of the law. Autobiography, in this sense,

becomes another way one can similarly explore the boundaries of citizenship and culture of spy intrigue.

A divided Berlin was (and still is) an important site for the spy thriller of the Cold War, as the construction of the wall brought about a cultural fascination with the transgression of the border.<sup>22</sup> Siegfried Mews contends that “it may be argued that the construction and long-lasting, formidable presence of the Berlin Wall profoundly affected the spy novel itself: it confronted its authors with a new situation that required a reexamination of its generic properties as well as the underlying aesthetic and ideological presuppositions.”<sup>23</sup> John le Carré’s novel, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* (1963), epitomizes the stakes in which Cold War polarity between East and West is dangerously blurred in the tactics of spying, and in which each side ends up resembling the other in policing security threats. Rather than glamorizing the border, le Carré uses the Berlin Wall to project the notion that when the ends justify the means, those waging extralegal ideological battles resort to violence in comparably dehumanizing ways. (Part of le Carré’s novel’s appeal was his actual experience in British Intelligence being stationed in Germany through the years of the book’s writing and publication.) American and British cultural productions similarly positioned near the Berlin Wall mined the conformities and contradictions of postwar American culture through a fascination with testing citizenship’s limits and transnational walls. The boundaries of such works resided in their ability to draw insight from a comparative lens rather than highlighting stark differences.

Davis’s autobiography presents and reflects on Cold War cultural productions wrestling with the definitions of citizenship and subversion. Davis does so to consider the danger and necessity of ends-justify-the-means authority in her own case. She attempts to place her case in relation to the plight of many others, though in doing so further highlights the particularities of

her own circumstances. The later positioning of her narrative in and out of Cold War Berlin both participates in this larger cultural practice and attempts to redraw Cold War boundaries through America's internal divisions and antagonisms. For Davis and other Cold War Berliners, the Berlin Wall served as a platform to at once reflect and distance conventions of state power.

## **II. Cold War Berliners**

In the summer of 1963, two prominent American visitors, President John F. Kennedy and Paul Robeson, traveled the two respective sides of a divided Berlin. Each experienced the border, but not necessarily the Berlin Wall. The first: On June 23, 1963, before President Kennedy proclaimed his solidarity with the public of West Berlin outside of City Hall in the neighborhood of Schöneberg, he set foot on an observation deck near Friedrichstrasse and looked over the Berlin Wall. The President was on a brief but highly orchestrated visit to West Berlin that lasted in total eight hours. Kennedy's was the focal point of a triumphant and massive parade through the city. He made several stops for photo-ops along the walled border and culminating in an ardent speech to tens of thousands in front of City Hall. There, Kennedy delivered a speech in which he declared, to the delight of the huge gathered crowd, "*Ich bin ein Berliner.*"<sup>24</sup>

His rhetoric as well as his physical presence near the Berlin Wall earlier that day gave credence to his administration's political goals for the day, to stake ongoing American presence and protection of West Berlin. Kennedy's trip marked one highpoint for Cold War West German-American relations, since West Berlin's survival and war recovery was tied directly to U.S. action, as demonstrated during the Berlin Airlift of 1949–1950. That history of support was broadly celebrated in West Berlin and similarly highly regarded by the majority of Americans.<sup>25</sup> And yet, in the first years of the Berlin Wall, there was no developed consensus within the U.S. on

how Kennedy's administration had handled the Berlin Crisis. Public opinion in America was mixed as to whether the aggressive actions taken by East Germany merited a stronger military reaction, or whether the construction of the wall also created a peaceful stalemate that may have staved off the danger of nuclear war.<sup>26</sup>



Figure 3.5: Robert Knudsen, "26 June 1963 President John F. Kennedy inspects the Berlin Wall during his visit to West Berlin" (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum)

Kennedy's June 1963 tour was taken over a year after Vice

President Lyndon B. Johnson visited West Berlin in August 1961, and months following an appearance by his attorney general and brother Robert Kennedy in February 1962, both attempts to quell fears of American evasion and Soviet invasion. President Kennedy's visit to West Berlin punctuated this period of questioning with a powerful showing of solidarity and a strident message of Western success in the face of the wall. Kennedy's declaration of "*Ich bin ein Berliner*," repeated as a refrain in the speech and further echoed by the translator was a diplomatic identification with a *whole* city, despite delivering his remarks from within the Western zone, and disavowed its division. In addition to being on location, Kennedy made an appeal of symbolic citizenship. Kennedy spoke, "Two thousand years ago the proudest boast was *civis Romanus sum* ["I am a Roman citizen"]. Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is "*Ich bin ein*

*Berliner!*” He reinforced this through the refrain, “Let them come to Berlin,” a rhetorical move that highlighted his presence in Berlin, a frontline of the Cold War.<sup>27</sup>

As historian Andreas Daum has demonstrated, Kennedy presented his rhetoric about the Berlin Wall as proof of the failure of the Soviet system in the East, but it was his choreographed presence in West Berlin that had ultimately affirmed his directed choice of words. Daum writes of the “politics of visibility” that dictated the planning and spatial considerations of Kennedy’s visit. Daum contends, “Kennedy was not merely to stand next to or in front of the Berlin Wall: he was to look at the Wall and beyond in East Berlin.”<sup>28</sup> Kennedy never set foot in East Berlin, nor did he have to emphasize his position. Kennedy instead glared over the wall, and made such moments visible to American and German press (Figure 3.5). Kennedy’s vision of and visit to West Berlin as a frontier of democracy was dependent on a sharp contrast to his assessment of the East, even if based on only cursory observation. The Berlin Wall was to be understood as self-evident of what the East looked and functioned like.

Two months after Kennedy’s trip, a case in relief: on August 25, 1963, African American performer and public figure Paul Robeson flew in secrecy to Schönefeld Airport in East Berlin. The circumstances for Robeson’s trip to Berlin were starkly different to that of Kennedy’s. Robeson was the son of a former slave, an All-American football star at Rutgers, and a world-renowned singer and actor. After years of widespread acclaim and popularity, as well as advocacy for leftist causes including anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, Robeson had fallen into disrepute with the American public during the years of McCarthy influence. After a series of publicized comments expressing his identifications with the Soviet Union, his passport was revoked in 1950 and he was called to testify in 1956 in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC).<sup>29</sup> This was a dramatic fall for a figure who was declared the

nation's most loved performer in the 1940s, but Robeson's politics and expressive prowess made him a target for such investigations. Richard Iton writes of Robeson, in the context of Cold War civil rights repression, "The combination of his artistic accomplishments and his political engagements made him exactly the kind of transgressive figure that would trouble, at some fundamental level, the arrangements on which the American modern depended."<sup>30</sup> Robeson was never convicted of any crime, but his passport was not reinstated until a 1958 Supreme Court decision in which passport revocations without due process were declared unconstitutional. In the same year, he published his autobiography, *Here I Stand*, to counteract stories about his public travails. His book opens with the lines, "I am a Negro," and then builds a few paragraphs later with the declaration, "I am an American." Afterward he continued to consider his identities as an American and global black citizen. Robeson wrote his autobiography while prohibited from traveling, but shared the work in the same year he left America for travels to Europe with no predetermined date of return. Robeson's career initially rebounded through appearances in Asia and Europe. In 1960, he was honored by East Germany in Berlin in October 1960, receiving an honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Humboldt University and the German Peace Medal, the "Großer Stern der Völkerfreundschaft" (Great Star of Friendship among the Peoples) bestowed by East German leader Walter Ulbricht. His next trip to East Germany, however, offered less of a public spectacle than a secluded rescue mission.

Even with his resurgence on the international stage, lingering health issues and deep anxiety further plagued Robeson. In 1961, after a suspicious turn of events in Moscow following a performance for Africa Freedom Day, members of his family suspect covert operatives from either the C.I.A. or Soviet Union poisoned the performer. Robeson was then institutionalized in a mental hospital in London.<sup>31</sup> Robeson disappeared from public life, and was treated with episodic



electric shock treatments and heavy sedatives for nearly two years, during which he remained almost entirely catatonic. After prolonged concerns about her husband's safety and distrust of his medical treatment, his wife Eslanda Robeson furtively coordinated a change of course in his treatments. On an early Sunday morning in August, with the help of a Polish ambassador and at the invitation of the GDR-based German Peace Council, the Robesons flew to East Berlin for alternative health treatment. Shocking reports of this "escape" from London to East Berlin rippled out across the world press. Headlines such as "Robeson Flown to East Berlin: Wife Boasts of 'cloak and dagger' work" and "Departure Kept Secret" accentuated the espionage angle given to the story. Eslanda issued a three-part explanation herself in the Baltimore *Afro American* weeks later in which she detailed the circumstances of the couple's relocation to East Berlin. Though she made a case for the furtive nature of the transfer (especially to avoid a persistent press and give her husband a chance to fully recover amidst new treatment), the headlines adjoining her stories further sensationalized the accounts – "Why He 'Sneaked' To East Germany" and "Escape Reads Like Movie Thriller."<sup>32</sup> Beyond defending the circumstances of their trip to East Berlin, Eslanda continued to carry on with the couple's political messaging back to America, including issuing a statement of support for the 1963 March on Washington which occurred days after their arrival to East Germany.

The first weeks of the Robesons' stay in East Berlin were spent out of the public eye. Paul was treated by doctors at the Buch Clinic. He was taken off the sedatives, and within weeks of his arrival in East Berlin in 1963 was able to receive visitors. He spent Thanksgiving with African American expatriates, jazz singer Audrey Pankey and cartoonist Oliver Harrington. Robeson stayed mostly out of the public eye, but did pose for several pictures for a newspaper story (Figure 3.6). Eslanda also represented her husband in public, including at least one photograph taken



Figures 3.6–7: Horst Sturm, “Robeson, Paul, East Berlin: Stroll through Berlin with Harry Francis Major,” 1963 (AACVR/BArch, Bild 183-B1217-0010-003) and Klaus Franke, “Robeson, Paul, East Berlin: Commemorative Event for His 70th Birthday,” 1968 (AACVR/BArch, Bild 183-G0407-0025-001)

with border guards near the Brandenburg Gate.<sup>33</sup> By December, his doctors agreed he was ready to go home, where he would retire from public life. Before the Robesons left, the process had begun already for the GDR to set up an archive of his cultural and historical materials, which opened in 1965. Cultural events, including concerts and museum shows would coincide with his 70th birthday in 1968 (Figure 3.7), and his cultural presence grew through his death in 1976.<sup>34</sup>

Kennedy and Robeson ventured to different sides of Berlin for different purposes. For Kennedy, his trip abroad created language and imagery of an American identity and citizenship further tethered to Berlin. Kennedy accomplished this through a publicizing of his rhetoric and presence in

West Berlin, and his movements within paces of the border wall looking out to the East without setting foot in the GDR. For Robeson, his latter visit to the GDR marked his wayward status as an American public figure whose family felt safest treating his illness in East Berlin, and thus he did not publicly visit West Berlin. As Robeson devoted much of his life’s work toward the attainment of full citizenship for black Americans, his liminal and convalescent status in East

Berlin emphasizes the difficulties of such a stance. East Germany's long-standing commitment to Robeson opened up the GDR as a place of refuge for him. But the secrecy held over his time in East Berlin says as much about the legitimate danger his life was in as it does about the secrecy that cloaked the GDR ruling regime. Together, these trips evince how Berlin signified a crossroads for American citizenship at this time, in each case testing its necessary boundaries and modes of crossing for idealized Americans on either side of the wall.

Even though many American cultural productions about the Berlin Wall took place in West Berlin, cultural perceptions of East Berlin informed these depictions. Together they formed the character of the imagined historic, undivided Berlin, even as they sublimated particular complicated stories about life in East Berlin. Just as the roots of America's relationship with Cold War Berlin pertained to direct diplomatic and military ties throughout all four controlled zones of Berlin, even the circulation of Western-based narratives advanced ideas of the East being a necessary, if not abject, part of the whole city.<sup>35</sup> Sunhil Manghani writes of "a Berlin Imaginary" where "a complex, accumulative process whereby an internalized political and cultural discourse of East/West relations develops as the result of an external exchange of images and myths...richly fueled by the symbolic and real division of Berlin."<sup>36</sup> Brian Ladd refers to the wall in one sense as "a zipper" that "signified both unity and division" by generating stories of geopolitical identification and alienation.<sup>37</sup> Emily Pugh contends, "East and West Germany each relied on the other to define itself, even when official rhetoric attempted to deny or ignore the other's existence and legitimacy. ... The Wall reconfigured and politicized physical space but also, as a symbol of the Cold War divide, spatialized aspects of culture, politics, and society."<sup>38</sup>

Cultural productions made by those in the West had to grapple with the division of Berlin, and thus East Berlin was an integral part of the city. But depictions of the East heavily

focused on motives and modes of escape. Spy dramas imagined crossing the border wall mainly through covert operations with violent connotations, often through alternating modes of furtive infiltration and then daring escape. The 1962 NBC production, *The Tunnel*, featured footage of actual West Berlin students working and successfully building an underground passageway to smuggle people across the border (Figure 3.8). Gulf Oil Corporation sponsored the television documentary, and the participants were paid for their participation

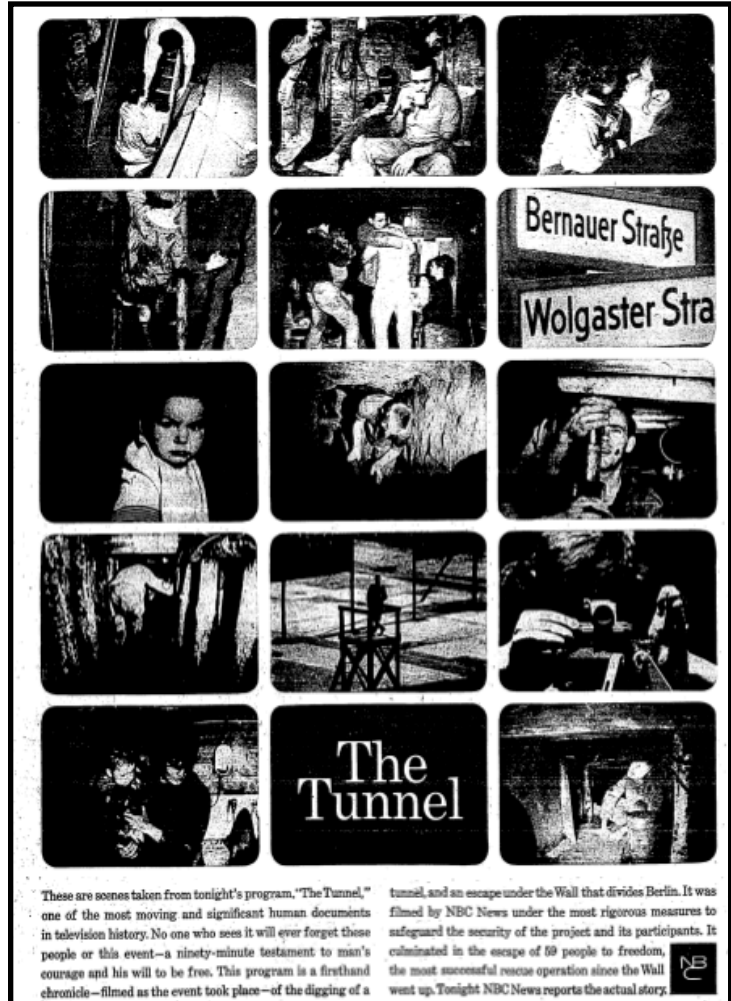


Figure 3.8: Advertisement for *The Tunnel*, NBC (ProQuest Historical Newspapers)

leading up to the illicit border-crossing. NBC planned to air the documentary in October 1962, but delayed the premiere until December because of the Cuban Missile Crisis. *The Tunnel* eventually won 3 Emmys and inspired several dramatic remakes.<sup>39</sup> In addition, British writers le Carré's *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold* (1963), Len Deighton's *Funeral in Berlin* (1964), and Adam Hall's *Quiller Memorandum* (1965), all wrote popular novels adapted into films by Hollywood studios. Another similar work includes Alfred Hitchcock's *Torn Curtain* (1966), which starred Paul Newman and Julie Andrews also contained espionage themes.

Other cultural productions imagine East Berlin through infiltrating its border to achieve justice or to imagine stories of escape. This includes the film *Lilies of the Field* (1963) starring Sidney Poitier (who won an Oscar for his performance), the Leon Uris novel *Armageddon* (1964), and television episodes of Kraft Suspense Theater and Perry Mason's "Case of the Fugitive Fraulein" (1965). Writers attempting to talk about life in East Berlin, such as author Steven Kelman, would position their tales from "Behind the Iron Curtain," or as *Behind the Berlin Wall* (1972), a book adapted from a *New Yorker* article, including a vignette about Angela Davis.<sup>40</sup>

American cultural figures engaged with a divided Berlin from the West around notions of it as both a refuge and site of confinement needing to be undermined. Performance artist Allan Kaprow visited West Berlin in November 1970 to carry out a performance piece titled, "Sweet Wall." With a small group of collaborators and a location of an empty lot near the border wall, Kaprow fashioned a wall of cinder blocks held together with bread and jam. Soon after constructing this sweet wall, the group toppled their creation. Kaprow reflected on this project by stating, "As a parody, 'Sweet Wall' was about an idea of a wall. The Berlin Wall was an idea, too: it summed up in one medieval image the ideological division of Europe...Like the wall with its bread and jam, symbols could be produced and erased at will. The participants could speculate on the practical value of such freedom, to themselves and others. That was its sweetness and irony."<sup>41</sup>

Lou Reed's 1973 album *Berlin* is a woeful and spiraling work of destructive love in the shadow of the wall. The album begins with its title track "Berlin" in somber discord. Reed's conceptual album is about an American man, Jim, in Berlin who falls for a seemingly deprived German woman Caroline. Much separates the lovers – not in distance or in geopolitics, as they share an apartment in West Berlin – but in terms of drugs and sex and violence shared between

the lovers. For Jim, it is also a sense of lacking financial power that he laments in relation to “men of good fortune.” But he also deals with the perilous nature of power enacted through defiance and deviance, which he sees in Caroline and ends up loathing. Berlin is the stage and metonym for stormy and sordid identifications. Reed’s character expresses sadness in bitter and angry tones, and violent gestures. Reed sparingly uses the historical situation of occupied West Berlin to add texture to the story, like lyrical cameos of US military men. On “The Kids,” Reed sings “the black Air-force sergeant was not her first one/ and all the drugs she took every one...and I’m the water boy/ the real game is not over here.” Reed sings out a wounded sense of masculinity to tragic conclusions, here with an emphasis on channeling his alienation through constructions of racial and gender otherness.<sup>42</sup>

When cultural productions referencing East Berlin or the border area frame their stories around flight or escape, many such accounts spatialize East Berlin as a space of isolation. They also take for granted that the GDR is a site of suffering, deprivation, and universal distrust.<sup>43</sup> Katherine Pence and Paul Betts identify “cold war Western logic, which often characterized state socialism as essentially a culture of surveillance, privation, economic mismanagement, and colorless lifestyles.”<sup>44</sup> Daum writes of Western accounts that aim to contract “life in East Berlin [as] all the more ‘dreary,’ ‘desolate,’ and ‘colorless.’”<sup>45</sup> While such characterizations highlight certain historical realities, left out of many of these accounts are considerations of nuances of life in the GDR. For example, unless created with Eastern allegiances, state sponsored programs of solidarity and workers’ protections, and other aspects of the cultures of everyday life were left out of many cultural productions or assumed as propaganda.<sup>46</sup> In total, many of the cultural productions fail to imagine crossing into East Berlin for reasons other than espionage, plotting

escape, or reporting on stark differences between East and West. The wall as a drab and austere structure not only marked this separation, but stood in as a metonym for the entire GDR.

But again from an East German perspective there was no “Berlin Wall” in common language and policy. In the GDR, wall was forbidden from language, and when possible, from sight, for citizens of the East. Border control was tied to but not limited to the area of the Berlin Wall itself, and stood in for a broader system of repressing dissent and difference. Ladd writes,

Apart from official ceremonies, Easterners were discouraged from approaching the Wall and even taking note of its existence. Those East Berliners who lived in the streets next to the Wall had to adjust to special restrictions, intrusions, and inconveniences. Friends from outside the neighborhood could never just drop by, for example: permission had to be obtained from the police.<sup>47</sup>

In this light, we see how Davis’s displacement in her autobiography displays an allegiance and violation to the perspective.

The framing of the Berlin Wall as an anti-imperialist bulwark was reinforced by GDR- and Soviet-sponsored discourse advancing the idea of America and the West as oppressors, and was publicized through a celebratory culture of some of its dissident African American figures. In terms of policy, Höhn and Klimke contend, “Ever since the regime’s beginning, the fight against racism was deeply ingrained in East German ideology, with ‘Rassen-’ and ‘Völkerhaß’ (racial and ethnic hatred) explicitly prohibited in the country’s constitution and punishable by law.” This resulted in cultural celebrations and political programs focused on prominent African Americans of the Left. As Höhn and Klimke add,

“East German leaders saw the oppression of African Americans in the United States as part of an international class struggle...Thus they actively championed what they considered the ‘other America’ of black civil rights activists, focusing especially on those who shared their Marxist and socialist convictions or were engaged in international peace activities.<sup>48</sup>

They note that such a position allowed the GDR “a welcome opportunity to exploit racial inequality in the United States for propaganda purposes. ... East German solidarity with African Americans also transcended mere rhetoric.”<sup>49</sup> Dissident African Americans such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Robeson, and Davis were honored by the GDR with official government visits and cultural celebrations and concerts, promoting their particular travails in the U.S. court systems, and opening up broader education about racism and liberation issues worldwide for their citizens. These controversial figures marked a particular struggle with power praised in the GDR. Gatherings sponsored by state-sanctioned groups such as the German Peace Council (a branch of the World Peace Council) sought to protest U.S. military engagement in Vietnam.<sup>50</sup>

One such example can be found in autobiographical writings by African American comedian Dick Gregory, in one of his memoirs, *Up From Nigger*. Gregory had previously made comments comparing Birmingham and Berlin. In his memoir, he recalls a trip in 1964 to both West and East Berlin, where he attends a peace council meeting and writes, “I thought of a comedy line I would use back home to enlist support for world peace in the Black community: ‘A lot of my friends say, ‘Greg, we weren’t aware that you’re interested in bannin’ the bomb,’ and I tell them, ‘I wasn’t at first, until I checked all the Black neighborhoods and found out we ain’t got no fallout shelters. We got to ban the bomb— or learn how to catch it’...From that moment on, I became an advocate of human rights, human dignity, and human survival.” Later, in the same memoir recalls another peace meeting in Berlin, this one in 1969, the World Assembly for Peace. On the way in London, Gregory reports he was given amateur footage from North Vietnam officials (he says “a home movie”) of the My Lai Massacre, and then details being tailed by U.S. government officials, who had listened to his phone conversations.<sup>51</sup>



Attention to America's racial divide gave fodder for East German criticism against their foes, even if alternately interpreted as propaganda. In the GDR, Davis was thought of as a communist popular icon. Reasons for this included a mix of cultural and political appeal. Conferrals of symbolic citizenship and protections were part of the ideological imperatives of the GDR, and created meaningful spaces of racial exchange and Cold War critique for a range of Cold War Berliners.

### **III. Writing Through Prison Walls**

Like Kennedy, Robeson and other visitors from the Cold War productions, in her autobiography Davis positions herself as a symbolic Berliner, even from her first trip there, by demonstrating her relationship to Berlin through modes of access and repression, as well as the possibility of transnational solidarity. Davis spent most of her days while in Berlin in the East. In her book, she directly challenges the mainstream iconicity of Kennedy's *Ich bin ein Berliner* speech: "The crowds gathered," she writes, "so they could say, in Kennedy's war filled words, "*Ich bin ein Berliner*," that is I am ready to fight communism."<sup>52</sup> Davis goes on, recounting her crossing of the border from West to East with ease. She counters common cultural portrayals of the dangerous escape from a bleak East Berlin with an account of easy passage at and across the border. She was able to bypass the long lines of tourists with help of border guards, recalling that, "This was their way of showing their solidarity with Black people." In East Berlin, Davis visited old family friends tied to her childhood who were staying in the communist side of the city. Her parents' friends, Esther and James Jackson were there, as was her childhood friends' Margaret and Claudia Burnham's stepbrother Robert Lumer. The Jacksons, who had founded the Southern Negro Youth Congress and published *Freedomways*, were in East Berlin to commemorate the

workers' May Day.<sup>53</sup> Lumer studied at the Brecht Theater and lived with the National Director of the Cuban ballet.<sup>54</sup> On this trip Davis would experience a bit of hometown Birmingham and America in East Berlin. Crossing back into West Germany would prove more difficult for Davis. Days later, on her way out of West Berlin en route to Frankfurt, she was detained while trying to leave the city. Police held Davis for several hours because she had failed to notify them of an apartment move. Davis believed she was singled out because of her visits to the GDR. Davis was threatened with imminent deportation unless she registered with local authorities the next day back in Frankfurt. There, Davis's references to "the wall" are informed by the logic of her own limitations, not in the East but the West, and her autobiographical strategy is to offer this counter-intuitive identification with divided Berlin.

By even mentioning "the wall" in reference to the Berlin border, she violates East German mandate and linguistic convention. She critically pivots off the cultural fascination of the Berlin Wall in American culture, but displaces the cultural intrigue and political symbol of the wall away from Berlin toward other divisions: in particular, politics of struggle around liberation against Cold War strategies of containment, and more focusedly, against the harsh, politicized and racialized contours of the U.S. prison system. She does so, however, without weighing or comparing the repressive tactics of the GDR or the regimes of the Eastern bloc in a shared frame. In her account, the prison (and more broadly the criminal justice system) is used in part to call out the spaces of freedom and repression in society, but also to look for potential for transformation out of the circumstances of her case, thus maintaining allegiance to the policies of the GDR.

When Davis left West Germany in the summer of 1967, she stopped first in London, where she attended a conference "Dialectics of Liberation" with her mentor Marcuse and

Stokely Carmichael, and from there she went to California – briefly to Watts and then in the fall to San Diego where she would continue with her graduate work at the University of California, San Diego. In adjusting back to life in the U.S., Davis remarked on the changes in her own outlook after her years abroad and the ways in which the political climate was rife with new tensions. In her autobiography, she brings up encounters rife with hostility from passersby when demonstrating against the Vietnam War, and she noticed increased police presence and repression encircling acts of public protest, especially near university settings. Davis writes, “Emotionally I was a stranger – in a way that I had never been a stranger among white people before.”<sup>55</sup> Davis found solidarity through associations with several activist groups including SNCC, the Black Panther Party, the Communist Party, and the Che-Lumumba Club. In 1969 she took a teaching position at UCLA in the Philosophy Department to teach a class on Black Literature as a way to support herself while finishing her degree. She was soon embroiled in a struggle to maintain her job, after a pair of articles appeared in California newspapers publicizing that she was a communist.<sup>56</sup> Davis had not hidden this fact, but due to an old statute of the McCarran Act leftover from the days of Joseph McCarthy, University Regents were permitted to fire instructors based on affiliation with the Communist Party. California Governor Ronald Reagan and the regents sought to have her removed.

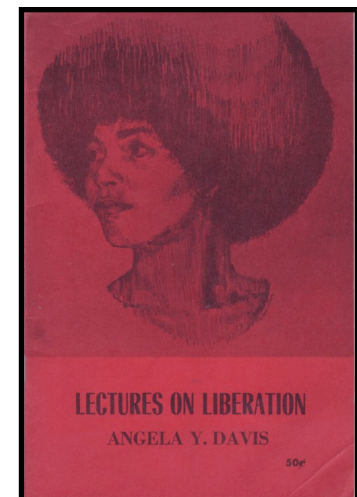
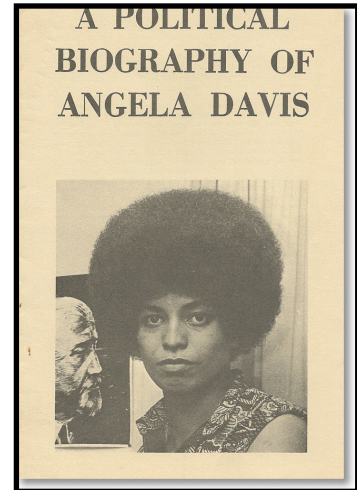
Around that time, Davis also became involved with the Soledad Brothers Defense Committee. She began also to work to free George Jackson, John Clutchette and Fleeta Drumgo, a trio of prisoners in the Soledad Prison who were known for their teachings of liberation in prison who also had been controversially indicted for murdering a prison guard. Davis’ defense of her job and her involvement with the Soledad case helped crystallize (and reveal challenges to) her own philosophies and practices of freedom. Before she became a suspect in the case against

Jackson's younger brother Jonathan, who attempted to free the Soledad brothers and murdered their trial lawyer, the prison became a site of Davis's important activist work and critical theory. The fortified prison walls were both a manifestation and symbol of other sites of repression. As she recalls in her autobiography, "I became convinced that there were impending explosions behind the walls, and that if we did not begin to build a support movement for our sisters and brothers in prison, we were no revolutionaries at all. ... The gray walls, the sounds of chains had touched not only their lives, but the lives of all Black people."<sup>57</sup>

Davis presents the development of her political affiliations around a series of spatial considerations. Where are sites where freedom and repression occur, or can be understood? Which such spaces are determined, practiced, or linked? In her account, the prison, and more broadly the networks of the criminal justice system, are structured through complex spatial logics of separation emblemized by walls.<sup>58</sup> Whether in her defense or her eventual autobiography, Davis viewed herself as part of a "growing community of struggle," a network of figures directly connected or loosely associated by their commitment to social justice and the potential to gain traction through solidarity despite their spatial separation or difference. Such communities of struggle are configured across borders – whether those boundaries be geographic, historical, or political by nature. They may also share the status of potentially "dangerous" by government agencies, who would also be responsible for surveilling, harassing, or imprisoning members of such groups. The same applies to the logic of autobiography – the presentation of a discursive self in prose. Davis uses the spatial metaphor of the wall to demonstrate the potential for coalition across any of these boundaries, including herself as an individual who stands in for the plight of many, and illuminates the power of cross-border solidarity.

For obvious reasons, the symbol of walls holds a significant place in the literature of intellectuals writing from or about prisons. Davis's own downplaying of the Berlin Wall exists alongside her wall-heavy discourse that paces a long-standing literary tradition of similar prison intellectual engagement. Caleb Smith argues that canonical American authors imagine space behind prison walls as a site to balance solitary forms of punishment with one's own existence against that of a larger social body. Such authors, he claims, consider prison walls as *mirrors* to reflect, not merely on the individual's crime but on larger contexts for their imprisonment – including the “claustrophobic structures of modern consciousness and capitalism.”<sup>59</sup> American socialist and unionist Eugene Debs wrote *Walls and Bars: Prisons and Prison Life In The “Land Of The Free”* in 1927 (published a year after his death) about his time being incarcerated under the Espionage Act. Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci published *Letters from Prison*, a series of epistolary exchanges between him and his sister-in-law in which he writes, “My practicality consists in this, in the knowledge that if you beat your head against the wall it is your head which breaks and not the wall – that is my strength, my only strength.”<sup>60</sup> George Jackson uses the language of walls, as well as references to concentration camps, to draw prison structures in critical relief.<sup>61</sup> For the historical context of Davis's work, Lee Bernstein writes about the 1970s as an era of prison reform in which “prisons had become the center of a key ideological fissure shaping American life.” He adds, “Incarcerated people during the late 1960s and 1970s hoped that the prison walls that segregated them from the larger world might reveal unseen aspects of U.S. society. Their words crossed the wall, but they also helped many people to rethink the meaning of the walls, and ultimately, the society that produced them.”<sup>62</sup> Calling attention to prison walls during this period became a central metaphoric strategy to bring about serious reform.

Davis's use of the Berlin Wall as a symbol develops over the course of several stages of public writing that culminated in the autobiography in which prison walls became a central architectural boundary even as the Berlin Wall remained elusive. Davis's eventual use of the Berlin Wall emerges out of a greater strategy that spans the stages of production of her autobiography – to underscore the importance of Germany in her life story – but also to route her story through Berlin to carry out this identification and displacement. We can understand the autobiography as a palimpsestic text, revised and conceptualized throughout her intellectual upbringing, and later her detainment and trial, in a range of texts.<sup>63</sup> Prior to the autobiography, Davis and her defense committees disseminated a range of textual materials defining her case. In doing so, they successfully link the project of liberation with literacy. Reading and writing are fundamentally connected to freedom and the refusal of repression. Davis's defense strategy was to place her individual case of incarceration in a greater context – all the while drawing specifics of Davis's own case. (This would also be the literary strategy she adopted for her autobiography.) Press statements, interviews and a variety of publications were circulated by her defense committees, including “A Political Biography of Angela Davis” (Figure 3.9). As such, Davis's life development, as an intellectual and a freedom fighter, were developed throughout her



Figures 3.9–11: Covers of *A Political Biography of Angela Davis*, ca. 1970; *Lectures on Liberation*, ca. 1971; and *If They Come in the Morning*, 1971 (National United Committee to Free Angela Davis/Third Press)

detainment and trial, and the stories in the autobiography contain many references to other writers and readers, and were developed in these antecedent publications. The power of autobiography is represented throughout these texts. Her time in Germany is referenced explicitly in many of these works to show her training as an intellectual and to gesture toward her networks of influence, however the stories about the crossing at the Berlin Wall would not appear until her autobiography, a reminder of the literary and metaphoric actualization of her work.

In reviewing the documents that would outline and then culminate in her own biography, the first to be distributed by her defense committee was a copy of two of Davis's lectures from UCLA in 1969, titled *Lectures on Liberation* (Figure 3.10). As a pamphlet, they sold at \$0.50 apiece, and the proceeds went toward her defense. Both lectures focused on Frederick Douglass's autobiography, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave Written by Himself*. In doing so, Davis's supporters frame her case as a continuation of both her struggles at UCLA and a larger history of freedom struggle and abolition demonstrated through canonical literature. This is bolstered by a letter that opens the pamphlet, written and signed by twenty-nine supporting UCLA faculty. Davis begins her lecture by citing philosophical traditions of two distinct locales – ancient Greece and colonial America. She examines liberation as a broader theme of struggle and examines enslavement as in direct opposition to freedom.

In these lectures, Davis also frames Douglass's status as a fugitive within a system of unjust laws, which merits resistance through flight to established modes of law and order. Douglass, she contends, goes on a journey that encompasses his enslavement through his flight and onward to his abolition work. His own movement is significant. Davis writes: "*The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* constitutes a physical voyage from slavery to freedom that is both the

conclusion and reflection of a philosophical voyage from slavery to freedom. We will see that neither voyage would have been possible alone; they are mutually determinant.”<sup>64</sup> And finally, she reinforces the idea that the act of writing becomes a way of problematizing and also actualizing freedom. As she writes, “The history of Black literature provides, in my opinion, a much more illuminating account of the nature of freedom, its extent and limits ... if the theory of freedom remains isolated from the practice of freedom or rather is contradicted in reality, then this means that something must be wrong with the concept.”<sup>65</sup> Using Douglass’s autobiography as a key historical and philosophical text, Davis and her defense committee created a link between self-narrativity and democratic inquiry.

Crafted during her time in prison in California, Davis co-edited a project with close friend and member of her defense committee, Bettina Aptheker. The book *If They Come in the Morning* consisted of writing about and from prisoners and was published in 1971 (Figure 3.11). The title was taken from James Baldwin’s “An Open Letter to My Sister, Angela Y. Davis”, originally published in the *New York Review of Books* in November 1970 and reprinted in Davis’s and Aptheker’s volume. Baldwin lets his reader know he is writing from Europe, and has returned presumably to Paris from a trip to Germany:

Since we live in an age in which silence is not only criminal but suicidal, I have been making as much noise as I can here in Europe. ... in fact, have just returned from a land, Germany, which was made notorious by a silent majority not so very long ago. I was asked to speak on the case of Miss Angela Davis, and did so. Very probably an exercise in futility, but one must let no opportunity slide.<sup>66</sup>

Baldwin uses the example of Nazi Germany as a comparative context for the politics of racial incarceration. He also compares her to “the Jewish housewife in the boxcar headed for Dachau, or as any of our ancestors, chained together in the name of Jesus, headed for a Christian land.”<sup>67</sup> The memory of the Holocaust is carried forward to inform perspectives on black freedom



struggles in the U.S. In sum, Baldwin attempts to forge connections between Davis's case and the historical relationship between freedom and repression. Davis and Aptheker employ Baldwin to open *If They Come in the Morning*, as they frame the repressive thrust of American history and its direct ties to the conditions of prisons. The project was envisioned as an educational and fundraising tool for her case, and a product that valued intellectual knowledge production as a means for gaining her and others' freedom. Davis and Aptheker attempt to contextualize prison within histories of enslavement, imperialism, and the law and order politics of the 1960s and 1970s. They also attempt convey the potential of a "united front" in which individual cases are leveraged to make a larger point about structures of injustice, to transform the system through a "thematic unity of resistance" that recognizes the ways in which "repression cuts across ideological boundaries."<sup>68</sup> Even as philosophical studies of repressive institutions characterize the book, the literary symbol of the prison wall sparsely appears in this book, other than a poem by Erika Huggins, an incarcerated Black Panther who would be later acquitted, which does utilize the imagery of walls:

noises  
sounds  
unspoken words  
feelings repressed because  
    the prison walls are also  
        soul walls  
        barriers  
if only all barriers could be removed  
    and we could walk/ talk/ sing  
        be...  
    free of all psychological, spiritual  
        political, economic  
        boundaries  
all of us all the freedom lovers of  
    the world but especially  
    right now – prisoners.<sup>69</sup>

The spatial imagination here pronounces a structuring sentiment of the collection – that connecting prisoners’ expressive and critical thoughts in a collection is a way to overcome such barricades. Davis, in one of her own essays written for this collection, “Prisoners in Rebellion,” wrote,

The impenetrable concrete, the barbed wire and the armed keepers, ostensibly there to deter escape-bound captives also suggests something further: prisoners must be guarded from the ingressions of a moving, developing world outside. Discouraged from normal social life, its revelations and influences, they must finally be robbed of their humanity...In utter disregard of the institutions’ totalitarian aspirations, the passions and theories of Black revolution and socialist revolution have penetrated the wall.<sup>70</sup>

Davis’s own writing structures extensive portions of *If They Come in the Morning*, as she is credited with nine essays or letters. The section of the book titled “Angela Y. Davis” also features a “A Political Biography” credited to her Defense Committee and a series of transcripts from an interview between Davis and counsel Margaret Burnham in the New York Women’s House of Detention in November 1970, later included on *Angela Speaks*. Her time in Germany is mentioned in both chapters, clearly important to the recounting of her life circumstances, even as the trip to Berlin, however, goes unmentioned. Davis says in the interview, when asked about her time abroad in West Germany, “My trip to Germany, inspired by a desire to learn more about the philosophical tradition out of which Marxism arose, taught me one basic fact. Marx was right when he said ... that philosophers as philosophers have simply interpreted the world and that point, however, is to change it.”<sup>71</sup> Her take was philosophical, but neither descriptive nor symbolic. Davis unites her vision of scholarly activism, through her training in Germany, but importantly reminds us that to fully enact this lesson, she had to come home to America. Biography is put forth as a significant genre for legal freedom, but not yet deployed as a literary tool.



Figure 3.12–13: “1,000,000 Rosen für Angela,” *Junge Welt*, 26 January 1971 and “Freiheit für unsere Angela Davis!” in *Für Dich!*, August 1971 (AACVR)

The publication of *If They Come in the Morning* aided the defense in myriad ways. In the first month of its publication, the book sold 400,000 copies in America, and an additional 60,000 in a British Edition. Additional contracts were signed soon after with foreign presses in Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Spain and Greece.<sup>72</sup> The expansive and global solidarity campaigns (including 200 officially linked U.S. based groups, and 67 in foreign countries) utilized the publication to raise awareness of Davis’s case and that of the other political prisoners included in the volume. During her trial, both the widespread national and international attention influenced the case. Groups from both West and East German organized on her behalf, either through state sponsored campaigns or grassroots efforts. Höhn and Klimke write extensively about the GDR-sponsored solidarity efforts, including Million Roses for Angela campaign (Figure 3.12), a postcard initiative where schoolchildren sent postcards to Angela and to officials with power over her case.<sup>73</sup> In her prison interview, Davis

mentions, “the thousands of letters from schoolchildren in the GDR have been tremendously moving.” She would also later capture the effectiveness of this campaign in her autobiography, bringing up that presiding Judge Richard Arnason noted as he ruled Davis was eligible for bail after months of detainment: “The mail I’ve received in the last two days and the telephone calls,

none of which I have personally taken, but which my staff has taken, from ... a tremendous number of states and telegrams from foreign countries. It is a case of amazing interest.”<sup>74</sup>

In June 1972, Davis was acquitted on all charges, and in the months after regaining her freedom began work on her autobiography.<sup>75</sup> In September, she travelled to several countries in which she was particularly supported through her trial. Davis visited East Berlin, and proceeded onward, entering through the Eastern bloc, to recognize her networks of solidarity from her defense campaign that could further her goal of a continued mass movement – her vision of a “growing community of struggle.” During this process, Davis completed her autobiography.<sup>76</sup> Though the job of gathering “facts” of her life had occurred throughout her imprisonment, the shaping of the narrative contours happened in the months and years after her acquittal. For example, Fidel Castro invited Davis to Cuba, where she used time there to write. Similarly, she and her editor Morrison spent time in the Virgin Islands. Morrison recollects in a public conversation with Davis in 2010, titled, “Literacy, Libraries, and Liberation” at the New York Public Library: “There was nowhere in the United States where Angela could feel safe and write.”<sup>77</sup> The transition toward the publication was a new phase for Davis, as she had to translate theoretical connections with a mind toward physicality and architecture. Davis recalled in the same NYPL event with Morrison,

When I wrote my autobiography I was somebody who was used to writing philosophy, and so I didn’t think about writing in the same way. Rather than, like, writing it for me, Toni would say, “well, you know, what was that room like, you know, what did it look like? What was in there? What were the colors?” And so she made me understand writing in such a different way.<sup>78</sup>

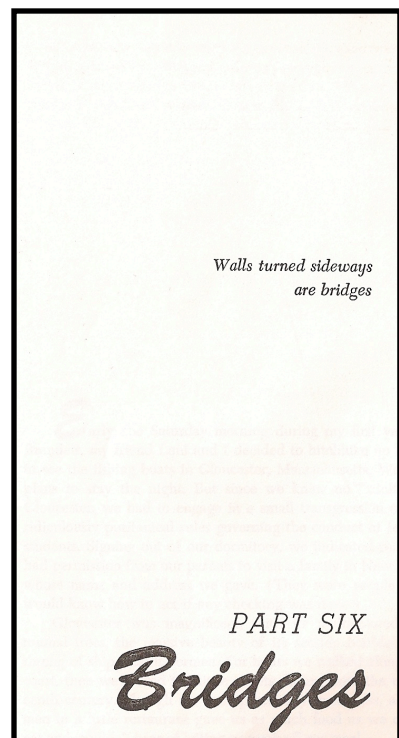
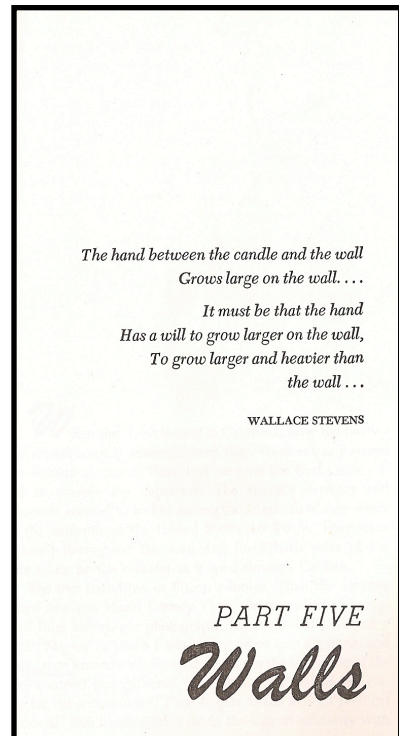
Davis’ autobiography presents the circumstances of her life in both an historical and a literary manner. As the symbol of walls is present throughout the text, Davis constructs her own life around structures of repression and networks of liberation that are conveyed through

imaginative and historical means, a shift from philosophy to narrative. Again, this is recalled most significantly in the tales of her incarceration, but walls stand in for and/or resemble those structures that reference histories of struggle, and offer the very imaginative architecture of walls necessary to build solidarity. A close reading of Davis's wall references highlights her attention to multiple forms of social division.

In Davis's first chapter, "Nets," she focuses on the three-month period in which she was a fugitive and ultimately captured in New York City awaiting extradition to California. The first appearance of a wall in the text, after the dedication page, is an exterior "red brick wall" of the New York Women's House of Detention. She remembers seeing this structure from the time she spent as a high school student in New York, and recalls it in her narrative as both looming and "archaic." The exterior wall then portends her characterizations of the detestable conditions and basic rights in prisons, as well as attempts by officials to cordon off support for Angela from both outside and inside prisons.<sup>79</sup> In this same chapter, as she describes being locked up in the prison's mental ward (the prison officials feared her influence in the general population), Davis uses the symbol of the wall to connote another disturbing division she encounters in this facility: "Each time I tried to help one [patient prisoner] out of misery, I would discover that a wall – far more impervious than the walls of our own cells – stood between us."<sup>80</sup> Davis writes of a hunger strike to call attention to the conditions of her imprisonment, to focus her own energy, and match the building support for her by those fighting for her freedom: "I would hold my own on this side of the walls while things got rolling on the other side."<sup>81</sup> Here, the symbol of the wall marks her physical separation from the movement starting outside, but the structure's inability to keep her fully disconnected.

In the following chapters, “Rocks,” “Waters,” and “Flames,” as the narrative shifts back to her childhood, she utilizes language of borders and division to emphasize the violence of Jim Crow society and authority. When Davis’s family moved to a house atop a hill on Center Street in Birmingham when she was four from housing projects nearby, she writes, “Almost immediately after we moved there the white people got together and decided on a border line between them and us. Center Street became the line of demarcation.”<sup>82</sup> Davis was brought up in networks of support and activism, and yet described both the dangers of the Jim Crow South as well as the confining nature of everyday life: “The provincialism of Birmingham bothered me. ... I could not define or articulate the dissatisfaction. I simply had the sensation of things closing in on me.”<sup>83</sup> Davis also recalls her experience as a high schooler in New York, in which she had dealt with being an outsider: “I could always tear away a piece of the wall and slip out to other worlds.”<sup>84</sup> In each case, she expresses confinement and any potential escape she experienced as a youth through the language of walls.

In the final two of the six chapters in the book, titled, respectively, “Walls” and “Bridges,” In her autobiography, Davis explains the case the state made against her and the



Figures 3.14–15: Chapter Title Pages from *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, 1974 (Random House)

evolution of the legal circumstances that led to the trial and utilizes an imaginary of walls. The epigraph to the “Walls” chapter is excerpted from the Wallace Stevens “Poem of Rhythms” (Figure 3.14). Davis highlights intertextual acts of reading and writing to both document life behind prison walls, and create connections across space and time to the politics of the larger society. Walls being toppled are central to just societies (the Berlin Wall notwithstanding). When recalling the preparation of *If They Come in the Morning*, Davis writes, “From the inception of the idea, we saw the book as an instrument through which people could deepen their knowledge of repression ... people ... could learn what was really happening behind the walls in general.”<sup>85</sup> Even as she marks the process of using writing to forge connections, she also recalls painful bouts of “profound sadness.” Davis used the acts of reading and writing letters to fellow prisoners to salvage her focus and maintain it during her 18-month imprisonment. Here, her maintenance and rendering of self is mitigated through connections to others. “My very existence, it seemed, was dependent on my ability to reach out to them. I decided ... I would use my life to uphold the cause of my sisters and brothers behind walls.”<sup>86</sup>

This form of connection prestages her final chapter, “Bridges,” which she opens with the epigraph “Walls turned sideways are bridges” (Figure 3.15). The culmination of her narrative forges a transformative architecture. In this chapter, not only does Davis recount the details of her trial, but describes how her defense posited her case in a larger struggle for freedom. Her defense team and solidarity campaigns were ultimately successful in forging solidarity across regional, racial, and ethnic borders, which Davis contends led to her acquittal. As the narrative moves towards her acquittal, the symbol of the wall appears less frequently but stays as a reminder of the repression she left behind. Just as she displaces the Berlin Wall in the earlier section, in this chapter she displaces the prison wall – here to emphasize the eventual outcome of

the not-guilty verdicts but also to demonstrate how her freedom was contingent on the mass movement that supported her defense. This displacement is emphasized on the final page of the chapter. She again uses an architectural metaphor to explain the circumstances of what is next for her. Rather than ramparts or barricades, pathways open in Davis' formulations: "Work. Struggle. Confrontation lay before us like a rock strewn road. We would walk it ..."87 Resembling debris from a tumbled wall, the path Davis writes as if the limits of her incarceration has yielded a new pathway for an activism built on solidarity networks.

The conceptual ground she lays out here, she also covers in a short Epilogue recalling travels she had taken since her acquittal, including trips to the USSR, the GDR, Cuba, and Chile – nations closed off to the West but seen as protective spaces for Davis. She also details more of the sort of activism that she would continue to carry out through momentum from her case. The language of autobiographical recollection segues into the present tense, as she marks her own timing in the writing in one of the final pages by mentioning new cases, stating, "My freedom was not yet a week old when I left. ...an enormous political responsibility has been thrust upon me ... our ability to keep the movement alive offered the only hope to our sisters and brothers behind walls." She suggests, "the tremendous power of united, organized people" are the means to transform society.<sup>88</sup> Such unity, emblemized by a wall turned sideways, may powerfully include prison walls and other social boundaries harkening to deep historical divisions. She recalls the "hundreds of thousands" of GDR citizens who greeted her upon her return to East Berlin after the trial, but no mention of "the wall" is present in this section, as it does not fully exist in the public perception and ideology of an honorary citizen of the GDR, like Davis, who turns walls sideways through critical forms of displacement and finds refuge behind its borders.



#### **IV. Rethinking Incarceration**

By the time Davis presented her own life story in 1974, America was in the midst of several challenges to historical record and standards of truth. The Watergate scandal brought President Nixon's administration and government illegality to light, and the recent pullout of troops from Vietnam occurred amidst further inquiries into the ground actions of combat troops, especially after the details of the My Lai Massacre were revealed to the public. Davis's publication also coincided with a major referendum in American political constructions of truth: the passage of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act.<sup>89</sup> The realization that members of governmental agencies gathered surveillance on American citizens and conducted covert missions abroad yielded legislation aiming for redress and transparency. Similarly, the Black Power movement was at a crossroads. Jeffrey Ogbar writes of the "radical spirit of black nationalism" that had started to transform national consciousness about issues of social justice and power – evinced in the spike of elected black government officials, sprouting of black studies and ethnic studies departments at universities and colleges, and cultural and commercial appeal for Black Power's messaging. In addition, Ogbar details the, "daunting and complex web of government repression [that] undermined radical black organizations."<sup>90</sup> The extent to which the government surveyed and curtailed such activist circles as they deemed "radical" is still being discovered today.<sup>91</sup>

Davis remained a polemic figure after her trial, and her book extended the public nature of her case and the questions around her as life. Several books about her trial were released before or around her own autobiography including Reggie Nadelon's *Who is Angela Davis?: The Biography of a Revolutionary* (1973), J.A. Parker's *Angela Davis: the Making of a Revolutionary* (1973), and Marc Olden's *Angela Davis* (1973). Former member of the jury, Mary Timothy, also published *Jury*

*Woman* (1974). Davis's friend and member of her defense team Bettina Aptheker, detailed courtroom proceedings in *The Morning Breaks: the Trial of Angela Davis* (1975).<sup>92</sup> When her own work was widely reviewed, sometimes multiple times by the same national publications, many reviewers made reference to Davis's development by tracing her global travel, though to ultimately considered her story in light of its significance to American social context. An anonymous reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* wrote, "Angela Davis' life is a uniquely American odyssey ... the book is her own account of that remarkable story, illuminated by the loves, sorrows, the outrages that shaped the public drama."<sup>93</sup> Reviewers noted the artful rendering of her prose, but took up the nature of the autobiographical project itself. The question of the genre of political autobiography managed to draw scrutiny from several reviewers. Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, in the *New York Times* writes, "The autobiography seems to be direct, simple, and relatively personal in style. So presumably we are afforded a glimpse at the author's character. ... As it turns out on closer reading, however, her character isn't especially conducive to the autobiographical mode. As it turns out, she is successful in not 'individualizing' herself."<sup>94</sup> Another *New York Times* reviewer, Elinor Langer, wrote, "Davis's book ... is a useful new look at black and radical politics of the 1960s. But her need to present her evolution as fully "objective" bothers me. Along with her need to represent herself as "unexceptional," I think it leads to distortions. ... I wish she had chosen to present herself in a slightly more rounded way. Psychologizing can undercut the political argument, true, but political autobiography can be propaganda."<sup>95</sup>

Reviewers disagreed on her story as singular or representative, but always remarked on her travels. Gwendolyn Osborne, writing for the NAACP's *The Crisis*, saw such movement as indicative of larger stories of African American experiences in the nation: "The autobiography of

Angela Davis begins – complex and paradoxical. It is the story of a black woman born in the South, and educated in the world’s finest institutions who remained bound to her roots ... it is also a collective biography – of black life in white America.”<sup>96</sup> The irony of her project of placing the individual in the content of her upbringing, is that the publication led to a further extension of the cult of her celebrity status and, for some, a sense that her project was itself too ideological to clear up inaccuracies about or exaggerated versions of her life.

After the publication, Davis returned to an engaged academic and activist path. She returned to the University of California system as a professor, and published books such as *Women, Class, and Race* (1983) and *Blues Legacies* (1999). Davis continued to speak out on behalf of political prisoners and against the prison industrial complex. In 1997, she helped start the group Critical Resistance, with the goal of prison abolition. As their mission states, the organization “seeks to build an international movement to end the prison industrial complex (PIC) by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure.”<sup>97</sup> In recent books, such as *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (2003) and *Abolition Democracy* (2005), Davis details how,

A protracted engagement with the prison system has literally defined my life. ... my own imprisonment was a consequence of this work. While I was in jail, I began to think – at least superficially – about the possibility of an analysis that shifted its emphasis to the institution of the prison, not only as an apparatus to repress political activists, but also an institution deeply connected to the maintenance of racism.<sup>98</sup>

Davis joins her experience of her imprisonment with her critical work through highlighting the ramifications of criminalizing dissent. The emphasis of her prison abolition work presents a political position that contextualizes her experience of imprisonment as unexceptional – incarceration is a common and often overlooked feature of life in the U.S.

In addition to this continuity and call for collectivity, Davis has herself been wary of the remaining ways her life has been extracted from the larger social circumstances that produced them. In her aforementioned essay, “Afro Images: Politics, Fashion, and Nostalgia,” Davis talks about the notoriety of her image, about the memory of her life and the trial against her, and warns of “the danger that this historical memory may become ahistorical and apolitical.”

Remarking on this cultural imaginary, she brings up the cover of her autobiography:

The photograph on the cover of my autobiography ... was taken by the renowned photographer Phillippe Halsman, When I first entered his studio, with Toni Morrison, who was my editor, the first question he asked us was whether we had brought the black leather jacket. He assumed, it turned out, that he was to recreate with his camera a symbolic visual representation of Black militancy: leather jacket (uniform of the Black Panther Party), Afro hairdo, and raised fist. We had to persuade him to photograph me in less predictable posture.<sup>99</sup>

The story reminds of the challenge of the autobiographical project Davis set out to accomplish: how the story of the public figure can stand both for the self and the greater public that produced them. In reminding of the enduring legacy of her own image, the book slips from purview and the acknowledgment that by taking on the mantle of political autobiography, the text helped construct public’s sense of her historicity and political evolution, and as she suggests, the same stories that helped reduce her to a hairdo also brought about a massive international movement that helped her attain and push boundaries of freedom.

## **V. Back at “the Wall”**

In the ensuing decade, Davis returned to East Berlin at least three times – in 1972, 1973 and 1975. During her first trip back to East Berlin in September 1972, after her acquittal, she was greeted by tens of thousands of East Germans, some of whom had written letters and sent telegrams sent on her behalf to the Judge presiding over her case, officials in California, and to



Figures 3.16–17: Klaus Franke, “Davis, Angela, East Berlin: Visits East German Border with West Berlin,” September 1972 (AACVR/BArch, Bild 183-L0912-412) and Burchert, “Angela Davis at the Reinhold-Huhn-Memorial in East Berlin on September 11, 1972” (AACVR/SAPMO-BArch Bild Y10-JW-518-72-5E-2)

Davis herself. Höhn and Klimke note that *Time* referred to the atmosphere as “Angelamania.”<sup>100</sup> Davis arrived as if on an official state visit and was met with much fanfare. Like Paul Robeson before her, she was bestowed with a Great Star of Friendship among the Peoples by Walter Ulbricht. She was also given tours of historic sites. Official state publications and photographers captured every movement and appeared in large public gatherings. In one photograph, Angela Davis is pictured, close to the Berlin Wall (Figure 3.16). Davis stands with hands clasped together in front of her, while speaking to border guards, one of whom is snapping a photograph of the communist star, as they stand just yards from a guard tower and presumably the Berlin Wall. On this trip, Davis visited several border sites – including the Brandenburg Gate and the memorial for East German corporal Reinhold Huhn who was killed by an escapee to the West (Figure 3.17).<sup>101</sup> There, Davis was quoted as saying, “We mourn the deaths of the border guards who sacrificed their lives for the protection of their socialist homeland. We also dedicate our lives to the fight against imperialism. When we return to the USA, we shall undertake to tell our people

the truth about the true function of this border.”<sup>102</sup> Davis uses the spatial metaphor of the wall in her autobiography to demonstrate the potential for social coalition and alienation, and to mark other historical boundaries. Here, after her trial, she stands close to the Berlin Wall, this time again without calling out its infamous name, in memory of a border guard, with her words directed at other lines of division.<sup>103</sup>

In 2010, as Davis prepared to release a new critical edition of *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave by Himself*, she joined Toni Morrison, her editor from her autobiography, in their public conversation at the New York Public Library. The two distinguished women discussed a range of topics, including a rare glimpse into the behind-the-scenes of the moments they shared in working to publish Davis’s autobiography. In discussing the financial crises of the recent years, Morrison brought up the Berlin Wall, and did most of the talking. Morrison said,

Capitalism is not dead, obviously, but it’s crumbling. Yes it is, they don’t know it, I know it. ... The Berlin Wall—interesting thing is when the Berlin Wall fell—this is how we talk all the time. ... All sorts of other walls went up. The one between Israel and the West Bank and then the wall in the south, Mexico, it’s the border. I mean, all these other walls jumped up, and then they’re not physical walls, but there are other kinds of imprisonment walls, I mean we are just constantly separating—in some instances, the Berlin Wall was so people couldn’t get out, now we’re building walls so they can’t get in. So you know it’s a constant. This shift looks to me long-range, like part and parcel of what I am certain, is, you know, it’s the disconnect, you know, it’s really crumbling.<sup>104</sup>

Davis nodded in agreement with Morrison, but here again did not utter the words “Berlin Wall.”

Davis did return to Morrison’s notion of walls several minutes later, without mentioning Berlin, but by expanding the conversation to legacies and practices of division in the contemporary moment:

Toni, you were talking about the wall in Mexico, you talked about Palestinians, so how do we bring Palestinian freedom into our frame, how do we bring the freedom of immigrants into the way we imagine freedom today? How do we think

about transgendered people? How do we think about gays, lesbians, bisexuals, within the frame of freedom? And what does that tell us about the extent to which our own framework of freedom is quite restricted? <sup>105</sup>

Davis's overture to potential communities of struggle is enacted through a series of identifications with walls and a framing of freedom that takes into account transnational and identitarian complexities, without needing to identify the Berlin Wall.

Davis's scholarly and activist work continues to take on the boundaries of freedom and repression. She addressed crowds in 2011

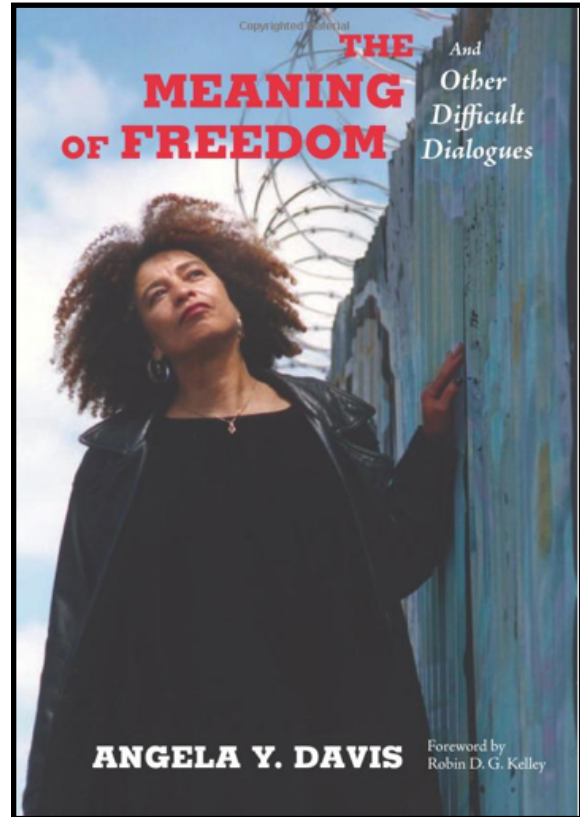


Figure 3.18: Cover for Angela Davis, *The Meaning of Freedom: And Other Difficult Dialogues*, 2012 (City Lights)

during the rise of the Occupy Movement, addressing crowds in appearances at sites in Oakland, Philadelphia, and Berlin. Walls continue to mark her engagement with power struggles. The cover of her most recent book *The Meaning of Freedom: And Other Difficult Dialogues* (2012), features Davis standing next to what appears to be a prison or border wall (Figure 3.18). Davis wears a black leather jacket and stretches her hand to touch the the metal structure painted with graffiti and topped by barbed wire. For Davis, walls continue to be a symbol of repressive power and a portal to solidarity networks. Davis continues to remind us that if walls turned sideways are bridges, freedom and repression may often share the same architecture.

<sup>1</sup> Egon Bahr, West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's press assistant, delivered the talk "Change through Convergence" in the summer of 1963, which Taylor claims "represented the beginning of a new era of relations between East and West Germany, and the beginning of what would become known as *Ostpolitik*." Frederick Taylor, *The Berlin Wall: A World Divided, 1961–1989* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006) 326, 341–343. See also Andreas Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin* (Washington, D.C: German Historical Institute, 2008) and Carole Fink and Bernd Schäfer, *Ostpolitik, 1969–1974: European and Global Responses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: Morrow, 1967) 545. For more on Black Power see Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Random House, 1967); Peniel E. Joseph, *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006); and Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> For more on Davis' time studying abroad in Paris, see Alice Y. Kaplan, *Dreaming in French: The Paris Years of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, Susan Sontag, and Angela Davis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

<sup>4</sup> See Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Belinda J. Davis, *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Davis presented this rationale in the introduction to the second edition of her autobiography, Angela Y. Davis, *Angela Davis - An Autobiography* (New York: International Publishers, 1988) vii.

<sup>6</sup> Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1974) 140.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 328.

<sup>8</sup> Robin D.G. Kelley in Angela Davis, *The Meaning of Freedom* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 2012) 7.

<sup>9</sup> Davis, "Afro Images: Politics, Fashion, and Nostalgia." *Critical Inquiry*. 21.1 (1994): 37–39.

<sup>10</sup> The oft-repeated practice of narrating and tracing Davis's particular biography would over time overlap with a practice of creative or social identification with her as a symbolic figure. Davis would become a symbol for a variety of political and personal struggles associated with the 1960s and 1970s. This strand of thought includes worldwide solidarity campaigns and cultural nostalgia both noted in this chapter, but also other forms of literary or artistic identification with Davis. This troping of Davis can be found in such works as David Wojnarowicz's *Tongue in Flames* (1990), Phillip Roth's *American Pastoral* (1997), Le Tigre's "Hot Topic" (1999), Me-shell Ndegecello's and Talbi Kweli's "Hot Night" (2002), and an unpublished screenplay by Stew and Heidi Rodewald. Davis's niece, Eisa Davis, also produced the stage performance *Angela's Mixtape* at New York's Ohio Theater (2009).



<sup>11</sup> Georges Gusdorf, "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography," in James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography, Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980) 29–30.

<sup>12</sup> For more on studies of autobiographical form, see Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); Shari Benstock, *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *De/colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992); Mark P. Freeman, *Rewriting the Self: History, Memory, Narrative* (London: Routledge, 1993); and Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing, and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* (London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Butterfield, *Black Autobiography in America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974) 2–3.

<sup>14</sup> Margo V. Perkins, *Autobiography As Activism: Three Black Women of the Sixties* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000) 7.

<sup>15</sup> Perkins also points to the literary antecedents, such as the African American emancipation narrative, to reposition the autobiographical form in a literary tradition and to comment on the precarious position women writers were in during the time they recounted their stories of the Black power era.

<sup>16</sup> Ward Churchill and Wall J. Vander, *The Cointelpro Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against Domestic Dissent* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990) 91.

<sup>17</sup> Davis, 70.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Kackman, *Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage, and Cold War Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005) xix. Kackman adds, "One of the duties of citizenship is the testing of laws to prove their worthiness or unworthiness, their contextual or universal applicability." Also, see Davis, 117 for the connections between criminality, citizenship, and spy culture.

<sup>20</sup> Allan Hepburn, *Intrigue: Espionage and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) xv. Hepburn adds, "One of the duties of citizenship is the testing of laws to prove their worthiness or unworthiness, their contextual or universal applicability." Further, his section on the imagery of walls in spy novels, starting on p. 167, is instructive.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Iton notes, "It is important to recognize that anticommunism was never just about the Soviet Union or the CPUSA; it also operated as a metaphor and proxy for the demonization of any forms of dissent or deviance." Richard Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 34.

<sup>22</sup> In previous eras, Germany already served as a locale in which to tether spy narratives, around World War I and World War II. But the consolidation of the wall brought about a political imperative and a cultural fascination with the transgression of the border.

<sup>23</sup> Siegfried Mews, "The Spies Are Coming in from the Cold War: The Berlin Wall in the Espionage Novel" in Ernst Schürer, Manfred E. Keune, and Philip Jenkins, *The Berlin Wall: Representations and Perspectives* (New York: P. Lang, 1996) 51.

<sup>24</sup> As much lore around Kennedy's speech suggests, grammarians have debated the President's declaration around its possible meanings. A "Berliner" refers to a citizen of the city of Berlin, and in some areas of Germany, a jelly-filled donut. Scholars, however, such as Jürgen Eichhoff have definitively demonstrated, Kennedy's usage referred to his urban identification with Berlin and not the pastry. See Jürgen Eichhoff, "'Ich Bin Ein Berliner': a History and a Linguistic Clarification" in *Monatshefte*. 85.1 (1993): 71-80.

<sup>25</sup> Daum, 36-37.

<sup>26</sup> See W.R. Smyser, *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall: A Hell of a Lot Better than a War* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009); Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-east German Relations, 1953-1961* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003); and Frederick Kempe, *Berlin 1961: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Most Dangerous Place on Earth* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2011);

<sup>27</sup> Daum, 147-156.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> See "You Are the Un-Americans, and You Ought to be Ashamed of Yourselves": Paul Robeson Appears Before HUAC" on *Historymatters.com* <<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6440>>, as cited from: Congress, House, Committee on Un-American Activities, Investigation of the Unauthorized Use of U.S. Passports, 84th Congress, Part 3, June 12, 1956; in *Thirty Years of Treason: Excerpts from Hearings Before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, 1938-1968*, Eric Bentley, ed. (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 770.

<sup>30</sup> Iton, 35.

<sup>31</sup> Given the intended reason for Robeson's 1963 visit to East Berlin was related to his healthcare and recovery, connections to the widely held suspicion that he was poisoned by C.I.A. or by another government's counterintelligence agency remain pertinent. As biographer Martin Duberman and Paul Robeson, Jr. have noted in their respective studies, there remain glaring omissions, redactions, and disappearances of health-related files within these law enforcement agencies' extensive surveillance records. For more on Robeson's health prior to East Berlin, see: Martin B. Duberman, *Paul Robeson* (New York: Knopf, 1988) 498-521; and Paul Robeson, Jr., *The Undiscovered Paul Robeson: Quest for Freedom, 1939-1976* (Hoboken, N.J: Wiley, 2010) 308-330.

<sup>32</sup> Eslanda Robeson, "Paul Robeson's Wife Tells Why He 'Sneaked' To East Germany," in *Afro American*, 2 November 1963; Eslanda Robeson, "Wife Reveals How Robeson's Friends Helped, 'Escape' Reads Like Movie Thriller," in *Afro American*, 9 November 1963; Eslanda Robeson, "Mrs. Robeson, In East Berlin, Says: 'Only Trying To Give Paul A Rest,'" in *Afro American*, 16 November 1963.

<sup>33</sup> In the Robeson Archive at Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, a folder of unattributed photographs from the 1963 East Berlin trip include one reference to the Berlin Wall, but depicts Eslanda, Renate Mielke of the Peace Council and a senior officer. Taken on August 28, 1963, the photo is captioned “The Wall, Brandenburg Gate, E. Berlin,” the three are pictured within feet of the pillars of the Gate, though no visible aspect of the border wall are in the frame. See Paul and Eslanda Robeson Collection (PERC), Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, NUCMC #: DCLV96-A948.

<sup>34</sup> Robeson was honored as a beloved honorary citizen of East Germany with numerous invocations of his legacy. Prior to his 1963 trip, he and Eslanda issued a special statement for Radio East Berlin, referencing not the “Berlin Wall,” but the “Question of Berlin.” In 1965 the Paul Robeson Archive was founded at the Academy of Arts in East Berlin, and on April 8, 1968, the GDR held a cultural symposium honoring his 70th birthday, featuring American singer Bernice Reagon, and an exhibition on his resistance to fascism at Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse. Later, on April 13 and 14, 1971, a symposium assessing his legacy was held at the *Deutschen Akademie der Künste*. After his death in 1976, a street in East Berlin’s Prenzlauer Berg was renamed Paul-Robeson-Strasse, and his face appeared on an East German Stamp with the words, “For Peace Against Racism, Paul Robeson 1898-1976.” Paul-Robeson-Strasse remains in reunified Berlin. See PERC; and Maria Höhn and Martin Klimke. *A Breath of Freedom: The Civil Rights Struggle, African American GIs, and Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 129–132.

<sup>35</sup> The incorporation of East Berlin into this imaginary is tied directly to the American political position of maintaining direct access for Western allies to the Soviet Sector of Berlin, as per the 1945 agreements. Eventually, East Berlin was imagined as the elusive Other to the American-rebuilt West Berlin, and as such the East became a point of comparison to highlight differences between the sides through spatial and cultural logics.

<sup>36</sup> Sunil Manghani, *Image Critique & the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2008) 116.

<sup>37</sup> Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000) 31.

<sup>38</sup> Emily Pugh, *The Berlin Wall and the Urban Space and Experience of East and West Berlin, 1961-1989* (Ann Arbor: ProQuest/UMI, 2008) (Dissertation – 3311209) 6.

<sup>39</sup> Joshua A. Braun highlights the dynamics of documentary production in which “such a structure invariably does violence to the ‘reality’ it professes to represent.” He prints an excerpt of a published leaked internal NBC memo from *The Tunnel*’s production: “Every news story should, without sacrifice of probity or responsibility, display the attributes of fiction, of drama. It should have structure and conflict, problem and denouement, rising and falling action, a beginning, a middle, and an end. These are not only the essentials of drama; they are the essentials of narrative. We are in the business of narrative because we are in the business of communication.” Joshua A. Braun, “The Imperatives of Narrative: Health Interest Groups and Morality in Network News” in *The American Journal of Bioethics*. 7.8 (2007): 6. For production and postponement, see Val Adams, “N.B.C.-TV Plans Documentary On Berlin Tunnel It Helped Build” in *The New York Times*, 12 October 1962; and Richard F. Shepard, “N.B.C. Postpones Tunnel Telecast” in *The New York Times*, 24 October 1962.

<sup>40</sup> Steven Kelman, *Behind the Berlin Wall: An Encounter in East Germany* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972) 25, 71, 280.

<sup>41</sup> Allan Kaprow, *Sweet Wall/Testimonials* (Berlin: Edition René Block, in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, 1976); and *The Allan Kaprow Papers*, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA.

<sup>42</sup> Reed resurrected this work with artist Julian Schnabel in 2008 with a new staged performance of the album. And another subtext for Reed's newest collaboration with Metallica, *Lulu*, which features the song "Brandenburg Gate." Lou Reed, Jon Kilik, Julian Schnabel, and Tom Sarig, *Lou Reed: Berlin* (New York: Weinstein Co. Home Entertainment, 2008); and Reed and Schnabel, *Berlin* (New York: Rizzoli, 2009).

<sup>43</sup> In cultural productions, distrust and surveillance were put forth as ever-present realities, as the rule of suspicion is enforced by members of a variety of police and military forces with violent tendencies (shot first, ask questions later), and further carried out by residents who are wary for nonconformity and dissent. Loudspeakers, arranged press conferences, banners are seen throughout these productions, and shoppers are seen perusing through sparsely stocked grocery stores, or fighting over resources. Even in scenes taking place during warm months, the weather is overcast and the skies tend to be portrayed as grey.

<sup>44</sup> Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008) 7.

<sup>45</sup> Daum, 41.

<sup>46</sup> On East German life and representations, see David F. Crew, *Consuming Germany in the Cold War* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); and Judd Stitzel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics, and Consumer Culture in East Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Ladd, 14.

<sup>48</sup> Höhn and Klimke, 125.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 125.

<sup>50</sup> For more on the Peace Council, see Daum, Lloyd C. Gardner, and Wilfried Mausbach, *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives* (Washington, D.C: German Historical Institute, 2003); Victor Grossman and Mark Solomon, *Crossing the River: A Memoir of the American Left, the Cold War, and Life in East Germany* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); and David McBride, Leroy Hopkins, Carol Blackshire-Belay (eds), *Crosscurrents: African Americans, Africa, and Germany in the Modern World* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1998). Bettina Aptheker mentions a women's conference in Berlin in June 1969 at which she met Charlene Mitchell. Bettina Aptheker, *The Morning Breaks: The Trial of Angela Davis* (New York: International Publishers, 1975) 58.

<sup>51</sup> Dick Gregory and James R. McGraw, *Up from Nigger* (New York: Stein and Day, 1976) 52, 191–192.

<sup>52</sup> Davis, 140

<sup>53</sup> See *ibid*, and John and Esther Jackson Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University.

<sup>54</sup> Margaret Burnham, Personal correspondence, July 27, 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Davis, 152.

<sup>56</sup> As Davis claims, at least one of the writers was paid by the FBI to write the article. Davis, 216.

<sup>57</sup> Davis, 250–258. For a literary comparison, see Lloyd Brown, *Iron City* (New York: Masses & Mainstream) 1951.

<sup>58</sup> This affirms Michel Foucault's formulation that, "The high wall, no longer the wall that surrounds and protects, no longer the wall that stands for power and wealth, but the meticulously sealed wall, uncrossable in either direction, closed in upon the now mysterious work of punishment, will become, near at hand, sometimes even at the very centre of the cities of the nineteenth century, the monotonous figure, at once material and symbolic, the power to punish." Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977) 115.

<sup>59</sup> Caleb Smith, *The Prison and the American Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) 67.

<sup>60</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince, and Other Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1967) 56.

<sup>61</sup> George Jackson, *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970).

<sup>62</sup> Lee Bernstein, *America Is the Prison: Arts and Politics in Prison in the 1970s* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). See also: Judith A. Scheffler, *Wall Tappings: An Anthology of Writings by Women Prisoners* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986).

<sup>63</sup> There is no collected archive of Davis' writings from this period. The public record of her published writing along with several archival collections allow for a reading of the transformation of her use of walls as symbols in her work.

<sup>64</sup> While originally circulating in the early 1970s, the cited version is from the reprint of these lectures in Frederick Douglass and Angela Y. Davis, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself: A New Critical Edition* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2010) 49.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>66</sup> James Baldwin in Davis and Bettina Aptheker (eds.), *If They Come in the Morning: Voices of Resistance* (New York: Third Press, 1971), 19. For more on Baldwin's trip to Germany, see David A. Leeming, *James Baldwin: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1994).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

- <sup>68</sup> Davis and Aptheker in *If They Come in the Morning*, xviii.
- <sup>69</sup> Erika Huggins, “Poems from Prison” in *Ibid*, 112.
- <sup>70</sup> Davis, “Prisoners in Rebellion,” in *Ibid*, 44–45
- <sup>71</sup> “Prison Interviews with Angela Davis” in *Ibid*, 190.
- <sup>72</sup> Bettina Aptheker, *The Morning Breaks: The Trial of Angela Davis* (New York: International Publishers, 1975) 64.
- <sup>73</sup> Höhn and Klimke, 134–135.
- <sup>74</sup> Davis, *An Autobiography*, 335.
- <sup>75</sup> Interview with Leo Branton, January, 17, 2012 (author).
- <sup>76</sup> There remains a question of where and over how long of a period Davis wrote the autobiography. Margo Perkins claims the writing occurred while Davis was detained. In an interview, Aptheker claims no writing occurred while in prison, and that she drove Toni Morrison to meet with Davis in Marin County. Interview with Bettina Aptheker, October 2011 (author).
- <sup>77</sup> “Angela Davis and Toni Morrison: Literacy, Libraries, Liberation,” New York Public Library, October 27, 2010. <<http://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2010/10/27/angela-davis-toni-morrison>>.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>79</sup> Davis, *An Autobiography*, 17.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 36.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 42-43.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 78.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 103
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 117.
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 305.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, 328.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 396.
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 398
- <sup>89</sup> For more on the Privacy Act, see Deborah Nelson, *Pursuing Privacy in Cold War America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
- <sup>90</sup> Ogbar, 199.

<sup>91</sup> For more debates about domestic counterintelligence, see Seth Rosenfeld, *Subversives: The FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to Power* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012).

<sup>92</sup> This includes the following books: Reggie Nadelon, *Who is Angela Davis?: The Biography of a Revolutionary* (1973); J.A. Parker, *Angela Davis: the Making of a Revolutionary* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1973); Marc Olden, *Angela Davis* (1973); Mary Timothy, *Jury Woman* (Palo Alto, CA: Emy Press, 1974); Bettina Aptheker, *The Morning Breaks: the Trial of Angela Davis*. In 2013, Davis's life story continues to be a part of public debate and consideration. For example, Shola Lynch's forthcoming documentary, *Free Angela and All Political Prisoners*, considers historical memory of her case.

<sup>93</sup> *Publishers Weekly*, as quoted in Random House ad for *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, printed in *New York Times*, 3 November 1974.

<sup>94</sup> Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, "Book of The Times: Not Quite Speaking Out," in the *New York Times*, 23 October 1974.

<sup>95</sup> Elinor Langer, "Autobiography as an act of political communication," in the *New York Times*, 27 October 1974.

<sup>96</sup> Gwendolyn Osborne, "Black Revolutionary," in *The Crisis*, April 1975. John W. Lewis Jr. also reviewed the book by stating: "[The book] is must-reading for those who wish to understand the turbulent forces of the past decade that led to American's black youth to revolutionary activities which questioned virtually every institution in the nation...Whatever your opinion of Angela Davis, the book is compelling reading, and a necessity for those they would understand the complex black struggles of the past few years." "Angela reveals how her rage became constructive," in the *Afro American*, 7 December 1974.

<sup>97</sup> Critical Resistance <<http://criticalresistance.org/about/>>.

<sup>98</sup> Davis, *Abolition Democracy* (New York: Seven Stories, 2005) 34–35.

<sup>99</sup> Davis, "Afro Images," 37–45.

<sup>100</sup> Höhn and Klimke, 135.

<sup>101</sup> Chronik der Mauer <<http://www.chronik-der-mauer.de/index.php/de/Start/Detail/id/1453474/page/0>>.

<sup>102</sup> *Peace, Friendship, Solidarity: Angela Davis in the GDR* (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1973).

<sup>103</sup> For more on Davis's relationship and first trip back to East Germany, see "East Germany: St. Angela," in *Time*, 3 April 1972; and Dorothy Miller, "Angela Davis in the GDR." Radio Free Europe Research/Open Society Archives, 18 September, 1972.

<sup>104</sup> "Angela Davis and Toni Morrison: Literacy, Libraries, Liberation."

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*