

[PDF] The Berlin Wall: A World Divided, 1961-1989

Frederick Taylor - pdf download free book



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Author: Frederick Taylor
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Starred Review. Walls, like those of Hadrian and Maginot, do not have a good reputation, and Taylor (*Dresden*) has written a superb narrative of the rise and fall of the monstrous one that scarred Berlin between August 1961 and November 1989. Walls, too, are more than merely bricks and mortar (or, in the 100-mile-long Berlin version's case, anti-vehicle crash obstacles, unclimbable barriers, barbed-wire fences, self-activating searchlights and heavily armed border guards), and one of Taylor's major themes is the Berlin Wall's significance in the global

power politics of the Cold War. According to Taylor, Kennedy, Macmillan and de Gaulle were not decisively opposed to the division between East and West Germans. Berlin, in truth, was a dangerously volatile potential flashpoint, and while the erection of the wall was brutal and oppressive to those caught behind or trying to get over it, it stabilized Europe and symbolized the differences between capitalism and communism. Reagan, however, emphasized the rights of the trapped and challenged Gorbachev to tear it down. The Kremlin, ironically, was undone by its own creation. Taylor's enthralling story, combined with impeccable research and its rich human interest, makes this as dramatically gripping as any of the spy thrillers that used the wall as a backdrop. 16 pages of b&w photos, map. (*June 1*)

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From On August 13, 1961, Berliners from both the western and Soviet sectors awoke to find their city divided by a barbed wire barrier. Within weeks the barrier would be converted into a wall, and eventually other obstacles and guard towers would be added. The effect was devastating, as families were divided, friendships severed, and East Berliners forced to live in a virtual prison state for 28 years. Symbolically, the wall presented a physical manifestation of the division of Europe; it also served as a brutal reminder of the tyranny and failures of communism. Yet, as Taylor eloquently illustrates, the wall served the purposes of both the Eastern bloc and the major Western powers. For the fragile East German state, the barrier stopped the intolerable drain of the best and brightest citizens; for the Americans and other Western powers, the sealing off of the Soviet-controlled sector provided a measure of stability and predictability in their relations with the Soviet bloc. Taylor provides a fascinating and often heartbreaking account of both the human costs and the geopolitical effects. Freeman, Jay

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