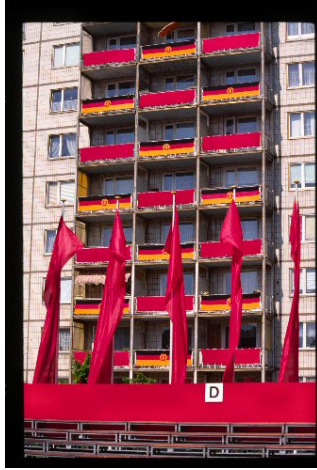


We were so free...
Snapshots 1989/1990

May 1 to November 9, 2009

German Kinemathek Museum for Film and Television



Potsdamer Strasse 2
10785 Berlin
[Sony Center]

1 May 1989

The Wall was something I never saw much of when I lived there in 1971. But then in the mid-1980s there were reports in the U.S. of some paintings on the Wall. I thought this was very interesting, knowing that art in Berlin was highly valued and the Wall seemed to be the perfect canvas. It was then I decided to take pictures of the Wall and document the art on it. I thought this would be an ongoing project, because at the time it seemed like the Wall would be there forever.

I arranged for a three-week visit to West Berlin in May 1989. At first the Wall was a disappointment because the paintings by the “artists” were covered with graffiti made by everyone who happened by. That was when I realized that this was all an extension of the art on the Wall and it truly created its very own art form.



We decided to go to the May Day parade and wanted to go to the outside concert afterwards. We were in line at Checkpoint Charlie when we were singled out for special questioning. (I happened to have 400 *Ostmarks* in my sock that I had changed illegally a few days before.) It was then that they brought in five more border guards to watch us as we filled out our papers. Of course, I did not list the marks and proceeded through customs, while my associate was taken to a private room for further interrogation. I thought it best to wait for him. When he was cleared we decided to disappear into the nearest crowd. At one point a bus full of police arrived and the woman who had changed my money a few days earlier was among them. This really made it imperative to get lost in the crowd.



All of a sudden everyone started moving. As we moved along it became apparent that we were actually in the parade and not just onlookers. I thought the only way to avoid problems was to use my camera and act as if I was entitled to be there. I could have just been any other photographer covering a parade.

At the end of the day and before returning to West Berlin, I extracted the money from my sock, put it in a cigarette package, and left it under a bush on my way to Checkpoint Charlie. The next day, I called my former girlfriend who had friends in the East to tell her where the money was. But her friends were too afraid to go get it.

Edward G. Murray (Boston, born 19##