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Discourses Surrounding Divided Germany

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History of Divided Germany

1945: Allied Powers divided Germany after WWII.

1949: Formation of NATO

1955: Formation of Warsaw Pact

1949-1961: Brain drain from East Germany to West Germany

1961: City divided by Berlin Wall overnight

1963: John F. Kennedy visits the Berlin Wall and gives his "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech

1960s and 1970s: The physical Berlin Wall was built up: reinforced concrete walls, fences and barbed wire. "No man's land" created: guard dogs, landmines, heavy weapons, tanks, and military guards.

'60s, '70s and '80s: 5,000 attempted escape. ~190 killed in attempts

1987: Ronald Reagan visits the Berlin Wall and demands, "Mr. Gorbachev tear down this Wall!"

January 1989: Erich Honecker, President of East Germany, says "The Wall ... will still be standing in fifty and even a hundred years' time"

November 9, 1989: Fall of the Berlin Wall after: a quiet and prayerful revolution, and a relaxing of travel restrictions by the Eastern German government



Discourses Surrounding Divided Germany

Purpose of our Study: We examined *Schattenspruenge*, a collection of short, stories based in reality in order to compare the discourses of West Germany with those of East Germany concerning social, political, economic and religious themes.



Politics

- **"Gruss an Mario":** A story of a West German girl who participates in the "Young Pioneers" a socialist group for children to learn socialist principles. Later her friend Mario who was from the East tried to escape and was killed.
- **"Eva":** The *Stasi* (East German Secret Police) arrest Eva and lock her in prison with no explanation for 21 days. She thought it might be because she had a friend in the West that she wrote to, but she never finds out.
- **"Irrsinnige Freude - Irrsinnige Angst":** Shows the fears and thoughts of a Eastern German border guard as the Wall falls. He struggles over the fears of what could happen to his job and the government he serves.

Society and Family

- **"Einfach mal rübergucken":** The Wall, blocking their freedom, goaded people to learn about the other side of the city.
- **"Die Mauer":** The author's aunt and uncle were both in the East when the wall went up, and they were cut off. Even though they lived in the West they could not get back home. There was no warning; they were not expecting it.
- **"Berlin, du meine Stadt":** The character in this poem wishes to see Berlin be one again. This was a common desire.

Economics

- **"Pessimist oder Realist":** The comparison of the economic situation between the Communist economy in the East Berlin and the Capitalist West Berlin. One example is how the character views the chance of getting a second beer in the East as a treat. But in the West, it was no big deal.
- **"Trödelmarkt":** Shows the disparity between the health of the Western economy and the Eastern economy through the comment of a West German character who says that the East will need to receive help from the West. And it shows how a West German lady could buy three cooking pots for a cheaper price in East Berlin.

Religion

- **"Rückkehr":** The lack of a Christian Worldview shows the spiritual darkness of Germany and how some of the citizens did not have hope in their lives.
- **"Transit":** During the separation some Western churches offered relief to families of Eastern churches. In the story a young girl ventures across the border to give gifts to different families.

Conclusions

- The harsh and authoritative government of the East oppressed the people of the East politically by keeping them in the dark about policies.
- Families and loved ones were separated by the Berlin Wall without notice for years, and their lives were changed forever.
- A Christian Worldview either did not play a role in the lives of the authors or was not important enough to be included in the stories. Only a few glimpses of Christianity can be seen in the literature.
- During the time of the Berlin Wall, life in the East bore a dark contrast to the flourishing economic society of the West.