The Significance Of The Berlin Wall

The deconstruction of the Berlin Wall symbolized the end of dictatorship and oppression after decades of being held in this vicious cycle. The people of Germany in 1989 had an instinct for liberty and political equality that overruled their want for governmental control after the second world war and up until the end of the cold war.

In order to understand the significance of the Berlin Wall, one must go back to what was life prior to the mere mention of a wall, or rather borders in general. Beginning in 1945, Germany had officially become liberated from Nazism, a belief in anti-communism while upholding extreme racist and authoritarian views. Because Germany had been dictated for twelve years, beginning in 1933, the people were not only left with financial burdens but also in political confusion. The nation had difficulty discerning what it's political standpoint was, to side on a democracy that would give them their long-awaited free will, or to follow the communist footsteps, a government that promised equality regardless of class and allowed the government to fix the problems that laid at large. Those who chose democracy paved the way to a Western Alliance, and likewise to those who favored the promises the Soviet Union stated. There were multiple stances a German person sided on: that one would avail themselves to the traditions of their culture (supported by most of the population), he or she could opt out of change entirely (a belief held on the few, yet persistent subdivision), and those who became the extremists, who wanted the drastic change in government to favor the democratic philosophy. (Forner, 59).

While the mass population became lost, a new philosophy emerged from the depths of time where it was considered illegal to think of such and anti-nazis. Marxian socialism. Where the struggles of the class are the major focal point in recognizing the concept that the government's inescapable progression from the injustices the middle-class experiences under capitalism to a society without classes (Fromm). To diminish the thought from the middle class's mindset that there is no "concrete human being." The upcoming Germanic democrats agreed with this ideology, proposing a Marxian Socialist society will exemplify humanism (Forner, 60).

Among this, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a leader in the German idealism movement in the early eighteenth century, prophesied a theory on the act of humanity that would later be presented as truth in Germany's history later on. He warned the people that there will be a day where the government will propose concepts that will enact as the new social order, disband and then disappear. During their minor authoritarian ruling, they will dictate the entire country, allow themselves all of the glory they prophesied onto themselves, deprive the people of liberties, just as how the Nazis took over Germany over a century after Hegel's prediction.

For Germany, he wanted the middle class to be recognized as a powerful entity. That the accomplishments of the Mittelstand must be closely safeguarded for future's sake, their subjectivity will change to objectivity by their own free will. Karl Weber, a West Germany politician, saw this as a democratic renewal that would spark a new era reborn into the modern world.

However, there is no such thing as a common political platform. There were those who sought after total control that will lead the rebuilding of Germany. Others begged for a self-reliant

government, that the people had a say in the way in which their government was run. The dispute between the Federal Republic of Germany, in favor of Hegel's theory, and the German Democratic Republic, in favor of Karl Marx's political theory, called for the help of the powerful political forces at the time, the Soviet Union and the Western Powers. In 1949, Germany split in two. The Western Powers took control of the west and the Soviet Union took control over the Eastern part. (Forner, 68).

The communist rule over Eastern Germany had gone according to plan, except that the goals of the Soviet Union surpassed all that was planned. The control East Germany desired for was well received by the public until the government decided to control the lives of its people. Their freedoms in the press were slowly diminished, expression was limited, and the leadership of East Germany forced the people to believe in only them. With this recognition, a multitude of the population fled to the borders of West Germany, where they were welcomed with a new awakening of self-rule and freedom of expression. The outpour of refugees resulted in the leading powers, Walter Ulbricht, the leader in the GDR, proposing an ultimatum and peace treaty. Either for the West to give up Berlin, making the city a "free-city", or to have their borders sealed. President Kennedy acting as a representative on the Western forces, along with declined the offer, allowing East Germany to begin operations to build the Berlin Wall. Within a month after Ulbricht received word of the definitive rejection, the borders were sealed. (Wilke, 292).

Stretched at ninety-six miles around Western Berlin, and standing roughly twelve feet in height, the Berlin Wall, commonly referred to as No Man's Land enabled the government to hold its citizens captive. Thousands of civilians were separated from their families, homes were destroyed, and Eastern Germans became frustrated at their government. The GDR struggled to answer the various questions on why the construction of a wall was necessary. Politicians and studios dedicated their art to produce propaganda films such as Und Deine Liebe Auch (And Your Love Too), yet wielded little success in its audience (Buffet, 15). But the necessary actions to prevent a fall out was placed in the responsibility of the military. Army troops were stationed along the entire zig-zag path of the structure, barbed wires on top of the wall itself, watchtowers created to make sure that no one could escape the fortress. The GDR assumed the wall was impenetrable, but clearly, the wall failed the nearly 100,000 East Germans who attempted to cross into the Western Zone during its twenty-seventh-year reign (Barnstone, 3)

Guns did not frighten the people who attempted to flee to the Western Borders. Military action only provoked the refugees to leave quicker. The hundreds of lives lost just trying to climb the Berlin Wall only sparked the rebellion against the authoritarian terror, to defy the laws in which the communist regime imposed. The citizens adamantly spoke out against the regime, for they were not afraid of facing their oppressors, their dictators. Those who lived during the Nazi regime remembered the limited freedoms they endorsed, their memories fresh of the thousands who laid dead in the streets in a result of the brainwashed soldiers ordered to kill those who spoke ill of their autocrat, to murder for the master-race. Rather than a race, they fought to keep a one-class system, and those who recognized the similar pattern fought endlessly against it.

To keep the rebellion at bay, the German Democratic Republic gave up on all efforts to make conversation about the Berlin Wall to the public, and in reflection of the rejection to utter the phrase Berlin Wall, films produced in this area did not present any clips, no matter how subtle, of the Berlin Wall until it's dismantled (Buffet, 15). East Germany politicians realized that the topic would remind people of the heartache of losing loved ones to the wall, thus ridding any

mention of No Man’s Land would cause people to potentially forget that there was life that existed outside the country’s borders, that their way of life has always been under ultimate control of their government.

Rather than causing forgetfulness, the leaders provoked oppression. The very nickname, No Man’s Land, alluded to a warning. No one, on either side of the divide, could escape to the other side. The very act was considered a suicide mission. No Man’s Land was empty, lifeless, and exhaled only sadness (Barnstone, 2). The East German citizens did nothing wrong to anger the Soviet Union, the only mistake they made was to side with the political party. They became imprisoned in their own homeland, forced to believe the lies the government constantly told them of sovereignty and freedom as one class. The communists promised a better life under their control, to which they deliver, yet what the Soviet Union failed to mention was that they will dictate their lives, rip them away from the people they hold dear, and asseverate that they are successful, that all is well within their system in place.