

## Von Schnitzler Commentary

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[Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler commentary]

[Text] Ladies and gentlemen, for 15 years and 3 months the border had been open between the western sectors of Berlin and the democratic sector, which then became our capital. What happened then is history for many young people; it is forgotten, unbelievable or unknown. East of the Brandenburg Gate something new was in the offing, something completely different which the old and just beaten powers and their international manipulators disliked. Now they had an outstanding opportunity: 160 kilometers deep in the liberated area, where Adenauer and U.S. Secretary of State Dulles wanted to roll back communism, there was an advanced economic and military base, the western sectors. A base with open borders and virtually uncontrollable transit to the GDR, the state borders of which were supposed to be no state borders so that their violation would be no dangerous violation of international law, but a good German right; it was supposed to be a zone, not a state, so that an attack on it would not be intervention but an inner-German police action.

War was in the air--World War III. Not just the state border of the sovereign GDR runs along the Elbe and Werra and around the western sectors; this is simultaneously the western border of the socialist community of states. When the Warsaw Pact states 15 years ago in agreed joint interest decided to build the antifascist protection wall in Berlin, and when the GDR was strictly controlling its western state borders, the Western world suddenly realized: Attention! This is not a no man's land but a state. And socialism is not limited to this state only. A liberation attempt, that is every attack, would mean war. The war did not take place.

The gradual fall of the Adensuer government began. Those in NATO capitals and eventually also in Bonn began to think it over. Realistic opinion began to gain ground vis-a-vis adventures. The result was a system of treaties in Europe, in Helsinki, and the growing insight that the only form of peaceful living together of different states was peaceful coexistence. So the wall turned out to be one of the historically most necessary and effective constructions.

As regards the planned building of the GDR and the security and happiness of our citizens--the wall was blessed. An end was made on 13 August to black marketing and the smuggling of people, goods, industrial installations, money and what not, and to the robbing of our territory which always has been the poorest part of Berlin and the poorest part of Germany.

Much has happened in the meantime--to our benefit. The uninformed citizen of capitalist countries sees a completely new picture of the GDR. But in the FRG, realistic and unconquincible forces are struggling with each other amidst the development of crises. Peaceful coexistence must be protected continuously. In view of the recent agitation, it must be pointed out factually that on the western side of our border until now no policeman, soldiers, customs official or member of federal border protection units has been hurt, wounded or killed. We only complain about dead comrades among our border soldiers who have been murdered. Historic experience teaches that dangers never have emerged from a border but only from forces not recognizing it, trying to change it and violating it.

Border violations are not a gentleman's delict or pranks. Even if somebody acts on his own, instigated by lack of information or a state and journalistic agitation, every provocation fits into the concept of those who want to agitate and sabotage normalization and detente. Every border provocation proves the necessity to secure the borders because the inviolability of borders is a core problem of European security. Therefore, our border is and remains what it has been for 15 years: an antifascist protection wall, demonstrating to the imperialists the limits of their deteriorated power, and permitting us socialists to build our life and future happily and according to plan without somebody constantly picking our pocket. The protective wall is eventually a decisive element of securing peace. Respect and solidarity, therefore, must be shown to our comrades on duty at that border. Vigilance and defense preparedness belong to an unswerving policy of detente.