

COMMENTATORS HAIL CONSTRUCTION OF BERLIN WALL

Klein Commentary

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[Manfred Klein commentary]

[Text] It will be exactly 15 years ago tomorrow that we secured the state border to the FRG and West Berlin. We--more than just the GDR, but the states of the Warsaw Pact--jointly prepared and implemented this action. This fact must be mentioned, above all, because the united action mirrored the united will of our states to safeguard peace and security. But should the line not be drawn further? Peace and security are fundamental interests not only of the socialist states; they deeply affect all European peoples. Therefore, this action constituting an important event of postwar history was not to be separated from the peaceful interests of all European peoples.

The will for peace in the historical situation of August 1961 meant setting clear limits to the possibilities and objectives of NATO strategists and revanchist forces in the FRG, objectives which left nobody in the dark, which they sighted and voiced unequivocally in the period before 13 August 1961, and which were to culminate on that day--as they wrote and said--in a march through the Brandenburg Gate.

On that day the marching maniacs were definitely stopped. And if we said that the measures of 13 August were in the security and peaceful interests of all European peoples, then the following years supplied impressive proof. This was also confirmed by the actions of those West European politicians who showed more readiness for more realism, thus supporting the policy of peace and detente proposed and initiated by the socialist states. The development of events showed that the wall, so often reviled by anticommunists of all types, by no means proved to be a wall against equal and useful cooperation, a wall against treaties that were to initiate and deepen detente.

A review of the one and a half decades, the successful, gradual implementation of the policy of peaceful coexistence, proves how correct and historically necessary the security measures were on the state border of the GDR with the FRG and West Berlin. It was, above all, a principle that was clarified by 13 August and has since been a criterion of growing importance for the judgment of political objectives and facts: the principle of the inviolability of borders in Europe, a principle formulated bindingly under international law in the Helsinki final act. To quote: The participating states mutually consider all their borders as well as the borders of all states in Europe inviolable and will therefore now and in the future make no attempt on these borders.

Thus, the link from 13 August 1971 to the Helsinki conference in 1975 in this key issue is obvious and clear. It cannot be overlooked or ignored nor can the fact that the measures of 13 August were of outstanding importance for the entire internal development of the GDR. The securing of the border not only had frustrated every intention of extorting us militarily but also put an end to the belief that the hiring and exploiting practices carried on for years vis-a-vis our state could continue with impunity. We did not go down on our knees, as one had intended us to do, but advanced, safely protected, closely allied with the Soviet Union and the other states of the socialist community.

And the function of this security becomes especially clear seen against the background of the objective of the Ninth SED Congress, a policy focused on the consistent implementation of the main task: the rise of the material and cultural living standard of our people. For this policy, which is oriented at the well-being of the individual as well as our society, one can stand up with knowledge and optimism, aware that protection and security are reliably safeguarded, protection and security that we are daily implementing anew by way of strengthening our state politically, economically, culturally and militarily. We will always keep this strengthening in mind, because we do not allow ourselves to be deceived.

The serious disenchantment of the imperialist forces on 13 August, the results of detente policy alter nothing in the unchanged aggressiveness of imperialism. Reviewing the more recent period of time, two facts may suffice as proof: The forced armament efforts of NATO and the growing number of provocations against our state border. Who can fail to notice the inconsistency existing between the violations of our state border from FRG territory and the commitments assumed by the FRG in the Basic Treaty with the GDR, its UN membership, and the signing of the Helsinki final act, from which I quoted the clear-cut formulation earlier.

Seeing the inconsistency clearly is the guarantee of order and security on our western border, the consequence derived from it. The GDR state border with the FRG and West Berlin was and remains reliably protected. Its protection is a guarantee for peace in Europe. It remains a prerequisite for the continuation of the policy of detente and peaceful coexistence, which imperturbably includes a policy pursued along these lines vis-a-vis the FRG and West Berlin.