

BBC INTERVIEWS SED'S BRASCH ON GDR-FRG BORDER

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[Excerpts from an interview granted to a BBC reporter in London by SED Central Committee Member Horst Brasch]

[Text] Horst Brasch, member of the SED Central Committee, would like to have the Berlin wall torn down "much rather today than tomorrow". This is what Brasch said in answer to questions of a BBC reporter during his visit to England. The essential passages of this interview read as follows:

Question: Can you imagine reunification?

Answer: I cannot imagine a reunification at this time because the problem in Germany is not reunification. The problem is that we are building socialism while the Federal Republic, though having a social democratic-liberal democratic government, is a capitalist state. These two social systems cannot be united. The situation would change if the Federal Republic would become a socialist state.

Question: When British people think of East Germany they mostly are surprised that your country is highly praised and that it is time and again repeated what splendid socialist state you have and that all people living there are happy. And yet, you have to lock your people up behind a wall so that they cannot get out. Why?

Brasch: Well, to begin with I must say the following: If there were no wall, then the two of us would not be talking with one another here. For if we had not had the wall there would be no peace in Europe...

Question: Do you really mean to say that the wall serves the purpose of keeping the capitalists away and not of holding your socialists back?

Brasch: This is my view, yes.

Question: Why, then, are people wanting to leave your state prevented from doing so?

Brasch: First of all, this is the opinion of some of your newspapers. But this is not the truth.

Question: Do you mean to contend that it is not true that East Germans wanting to come to the West are shot at along the border? We see that; we see it on television; we see it in the newspapers, and there is ample proof that shots are fired at people.

Brasch: I do not deny that. But what you fail to see is the West German border guards who fire on our territory. I believe that you have not seen that on television. It may be that the number of incidents is not equal on both sides of the border...

Question: Would you personally like to see the wall torn down?

Brasch: Oh yes, much rather today than tomorrow. But this requires that one state respects the other...