

University of Alberta

All of Those Yesterdays
News media and the fall of the Berlin Wall in Russian and German cultural
memory

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

In

Germanic Languages, Literature and Linguistics

Modern Languages and Cultural Studies

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Fall 2012

Edmonton, Alberta

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Abstract

From a twenty-year distance, the fall of the Berlin Wall still remains and continues to reinforce its place in history as not only a pivotal event, but also, owing to the circumstances under which it took place, a unique event in the space of both memory and news media. The relationship between these two entities is a unique one, specifically in regards to the ability of news media to not only influence, but to prescribe on a massive scale and consequently exert considerable control over the content of memory, specifically the entity known as textual media memory. By focusing on the fall of the Berlin Wall as a common event, this investigation tracks the evolution of German and Russian textual media memory over a twenty year period as it appears in the news magazines “Der Spiegel” and “Ogonek,” with the purpose of determining the extent and nature of the effect news media has on memory in the form of textual media memory.

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Introduction

All of those Yesterdays

Die Menge trommelt auf die Dächer, streckt Hände zum Gruß oder mit Sektgläsern durchs Fenster, verbrüdert sich enthusiastisch mit den Insassen, Träne gegen Träne... Den gutgekleideten Ost-Berliner im neuen Fiat Uno rafft die Rührung dahin, als er stoppen kann und, mit dem Glas Rotkäppchen-Sekt in der Hand, aussteigt. Beim gekünstelten Versuch, mit "Endlich steh' ick auf dem Boden der Freiheit" einen Lacher zu landen, fängt er an zu weinen.¹

(Der Spiegel, Nr. 46, 1989: „Laßt die Leute raus“)

- Я никогда не поверю, - сказала Хельга, - что большинство жителей ГДР покинет свою страну. Я была там неоднократно. Раз мы хотим строить общеевропейский дом, то в нем не должно быть запертый дверей. А строить надо. А что касается бегства людей от социализма... Понимаете, я считаю, что социализм - это чудесно. И коммунизм - это чудесно. Только (шли) к ним до сих пор ложным путем.²

(Комсомольская Правда, 11.11.1989: “Человек проходит сквозь стену”)

It was on the night of November 9th 1989, that the Berlin Wall “fell,” and from a twenty-year distance, the fall of the Berlin Wall still remains and continues to reinforce its place in history as not only a pivotal event, but also, owing to the

¹ The masses pounding on the rooftops, offering hands or glasses of champagne in greeting through the windows, fraternizing enthusiastically with the occupants, tears meeting tears... The well clothed East Berliner in a new Fiat Uno up until then caught up in the emotion, is able to stop and get out with a glass of Rotkäppchen champagne in his hand, and hoping for a laugh with a contrived, “Finally I’m standing on the ground of freedom,” he begins to cry...” (Der Spiegel, Nr. 46, 1989: Let the People out)

² “I will never believe,” says Helga,” that the majority of people will abandon their own country. I was there a few times. One day we want to build an all-European House in which the doors need not be locked. And it needs to be built. And what happens if people flee from socialism... Understand, I think that socialism – it is wonderful. And communism – it is wonderful. It is only that so far we have been on the wrong track.” (Komsomolskaya Pravda, 11.11.1989: A Person travelling through the wall)

circumstances under which it took place, a unique event in the space of memory. Among other things one of the more prominent roles attributed to the fall of the Wall is its significance as one of the first concrete visual signs that regime change in the Eastern Bloc was inevitable. From a strictly political standpoint one could point to its part in having further reaffirmed the extent to which countries of Eastern Europe, which had previously fallen under a Soviet sphere of influence, were no longer as intimately linked to Moscow, while from a western perspective lending far greater credibility to the Gorbachev-led reforms underway in the USSR. Yet perhaps the most lasting legacy is not grounded in anything distinctly historical, but rather is present in the degree to which the fall of the Berlin Wall has assumed the role of the symbolic beginning of the end of the Cold War, ultimately evolving into an almost mythical construction, and assuming far greater significance and credited with a much larger influence on the course of history than the original moment realistically had – “The ‘fall of the Wall’ became a metaphor for the end of an era...” (Major 228).

On an individual level, the significance of both the period surrounding the fall of the Wall, as well as the Wall itself, extends far beyond its simple role as a barrier and border. Its name carries with it a veritable menagerie of meaning and memory for so many people, both within Germany and beyond its borders. Characteristic of the Wall itself, these meanings and the associated memories were, and in many ways still are, invariably at odds with one another and representative of differing if not opposing viewpoints. These viewpoints similarly are voiced and represented in a variety of both individual as well as collective

manners, from monuments, the Mauerpark in Berlin for example, to art forms such as Wim Wenders's 1987 film, "Wings of Desire." These examples constitute primarily a body of overt memory objects, which are designed to stimulate a specific response in their target audience; it should not be ignored that there are far more subtle and often times more common, though equally influential forms of memory objects and remembering. One of the most common and frequent of these is the medium of news media.

The opening quotations to this chapter in part demonstrate the presence of memory in media, but they also allude to the stated divisions in viewpoint and perspective surrounding the fall of the Wall, emphasizing how distinct and categorical stances and perspectives towards this event can be. The excerpt from *Der Spiegel*, for example, is distinctly western in tone, characterized by a sense of triumph, and promoted by the celebratory, "champagne" atmosphere. The tears are indicative of the level of disbelief, but more importantly emphasize how great a stake Germans had in the Berlin Wall, and the positive significance of its fall for Germany as a unified whole. Conversely the quotation from *Komsomolskaya Pravda* illustrates the fact that not only were there Germans, in this case from the East, who felt exposed and threatened by the fall of the Wall, but also underscores the fact that just as there were citizens of the GDR intent on leaving the country, equally there were those who remained loyal to the nation and to the socialist system. These examples of a divided perspective speak to not only both the physical and the symbolic role the Berlin Wall occupied as a demarcation line on the battlefield of the two ideological worlds of East and West, but also the role of

ideology as an institutional catalyst in shaping accounts of the fall of the Wall. In acknowledging the presence of this ideological divide, we touch not only upon the inherent duality of perspective between East and West surrounding the fall of the Wall in news media, but more importantly begin to engage a whole other body of questions. Specifically, how have these events come to be remembered in current and past memory contexts, and ultimately the extent to which this duality of perspective still remains embedded in the collective memories of two very different cultures and their news media sources?

Collective Memory and News Media

The field of memory studies is an extremely diverse one, comprised of a broad range of theoretical approaches and methodologies aimed at explaining and understanding the dynamics of collective memory. In an effort to provide a general statement summarizing the field, Wulf Kansteiner writes:

Collective memory is not history, though it is sometimes made from similar material. It is a collective phenomenon but it only manifests itself in the actions and statements of individuals. It can take hold of historically and socially remote events but it often privileges the interests of the contemporary. It is as much a result of conscious manipulation as unconscious absorption and it is always mediated. And it can only be

observed in roundabout ways, more through its effects than its characteristics. (180)

Although Kansteiner refrains from making any strong assertions regarding the detailed workings of collective memory, his summary does provide an idea of the dynamics, as well as some of the specific characteristics associated with the field of memory studies. In particular he alludes to the element of ambiguity and vagueness indicative of the size and diversity of the discipline. Although this element is not an issue unique to memory studies, it is enhanced in part by the relative immaturity of the field, as well as its variety in focus and theoretical background, particularly when looking at the inclusion of other fields of study in cross discipline based approaches. As a consequence, when critically employing the theories of memory studies it is productive to first define in more concrete terms the types of memory which are located under the broad base term of collective memory. This can be achieved through focusing on the memory work done by Aleida and Jan Assmann.

As both pioneers as well as innovators in the field who continue to further expand on both the ideas they have established, as well as the works of others, the Assmanns are renowned for their contributions to memory studies. The Assmanns identify three main veins which exist under the umbrella of memory studies, stating that “within collective memory we differentiate between three, major aspects which we propose to designate as communicative, cultural and political (A. Assmann 2006, 210-24).” The first of these is communicative memory which they define as, “a matter of socialization and communication, like consciousness

in general and the acquisition of language.” The second is cultural memory, which is “an externalization and objectivation of memory, which is individual and communicative, and evident in symbols such as texts, images, rituals, landmarks and other ‘lieux details memoire.’” Finally they also make the further differentiation of political memory, which “shares its externalized, symbolical character with cultural memory, but is a top-down institution which depends on the political organization that institutes it, whereas cultural memory grows over centuries as an interaction between uncontrolled, self-organizing bottom-up accretion and controlled top-down institutions more or less independent of any particular political organization” (“Globalization, Universalism, and the Erosion of Cultural Memory” 122).

The Assmanns identified these fields not only as an exercise in locating theories which had come before them within a specific framework, but also in response to case studies and phenomena arising from their own areas of interest. Jan Assmann for example has based a great deal of his conception of cultural memory on his studies into early Egyptian and Jewish cultures and the role of canon and canonical texts in constructing a cultural memory. What is inherent when approaching a study of news media through the lens of collective memory is the extent to which it cannot be located under any single form of memory as outlined by the Assmanns, rather it can be understood as its own unique phenomenon displaying characteristics of each of the three identified fields of memory.

News media plays a vital role in the dynamic of collective memory. Aleida Assmann makes the point that “to an unprecedented extent, the discursive dynamics of the public sphere are rooted today in the staging of images and messages. On a national level, media events 'synchronize societies in a collective heart beat; they reinforce the loyalty vis à vis the society and its legitimate authorities” (*Memory in a Global Age* 4). In an age when much of our historical knowledge or memory of the past is created by representations of events in the media, coupled with the accessibility of modern news media, there is perhaps a greater degree of reliance on this medium than ever before, suggesting that it occupies its own unique space as a factor in collective memory.

The fundamentals of this relationship between media and memory can be best understood by placing it in the context of the Assmann’s concepts of memory. As “those varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications” (Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity” 2), communicative memory has a prominent relation to news media based on the intrinsic nature of news concerning the current. Drawing on the ideas of the original architect of the term, Maurice Halbwachs, Jan Assmann notes that these communicative interactions occur between both individuals and groups:

“Every individual memory constitutes itself in communication with others. These ‘others,’ however, are not just any set of people, rather they are groups who conceive their unity and peculiarity through a common image of their past. Halbwachs thinks of families, neighborhood and professional

groups, political parties, associations, etc., up to and including nations” (“Collective and Cultural Identity” 2).

In the case of news media however, the interactions taking place between audience and media source are not comprised of unique communication between individuals or even groups. Accordingly there are two fundamental differences here. The first is that communication between individual and media is initially one way; secondly, when looking at individuals of a larger group exposed to a single media source, each one is individually influenced by the same source or “individual.” As a result there is an artificial flood of a particular memory or event entering into the stream of communicative memory. The resulting secondary interactions between individuals who have been exposed to that media are entirely communicative in nature, with the caveat that each interaction potentially involves the same memory material, derived from the original single media source.

The communicative aspects of news media become somewhat obscured when we focus on the textual aspect of the media itself, and its function as a cultural archive for memory. Drawing from Jan Assmann, “cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formations (texts, rights, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)” (“Collective and Cultural Identity” 3). As a form of text, regardless of the medium of its dissemination, news media has the capability of fulfilling the role of such a “cultural formation.” There are however two aspects of media which differentiate it from the Assmann’s conception of cultural

memory, those being the potentially recent time proximity of events or memories, as well the dynamic existing between text, interpreter and listener.

One of the demarcating lines for Jan Assmann in identifying where communicative memory ends and cultural memory begins is the separation that occurs between the oral everyday carrier and the memory event becoming embedded as an archive, in the case of news media as a text. He states that “when the contact with living models is broken, people turn to the texts in their search for guidance” (*Religion and Cultural Memory* 69), and it is at that point that what was strictly an oral memory is confirmed as a cultural one. The textual aspects of news media are however unique in that they play an immediate role as an institution or cultural formation, to which individuals turn for “guidance,” or more appropriately put, to which people turn to remind them or remember a memory. As a result, the function of media is not only that of a current textual cultural archive, operating in a cultural memory-like manner, but simultaneously occupying the role of a source and precursor in the dynamic of communicative memory, as described above.

Stemming from this unique aspect as well as leading into the relation between listener, interpreter, and text, is the question of access to this textual memory archive, and its potential to change and evolve over time. Jan Assmann writes that “it is only through writing that the bearer gains the necessary freedom to introduce something new, even unprecedented to the old, familiar material” (*Cultural Memory and Early Civilization* 84). In Assmann’s study of canon, he acknowledges that written traditions and canons change over time, in some cases

even more so than an oral memory, remarking that “of course... amnesia also exists in written cultures. Where we find it we speak of ‘rewriting history.’ It is even possible that memories that have been written down can be more easily disposed of than unwritten ones” (*Religion and Cultural Memory* 99). Assmann however points out that it is not in fact the physical text of the canon which is rewritten, but rather the interpretation of the text which changes over time and functions as a form of rewriting:

Interpretation becomes the central principle of cultural coherence and identity. The normative and formative impulses of cultural memory can only be gleaned through the incessant, constantly renewed textual interpretation of the traditional through which identity is established. Interpretation becomes the gesture of remembering, the interpreter becomes a person who remembers and reminds us of a forgotten truth. (*Religion and Cultural Memory* 43)

To place this in the context of news media, there is a distinct variation present in that the constant renewal of textual media is a two part process involving both a physical rewriting of the textual content, as well as a renewal by the audience through their own interpretation. As a consequence, there is a significantly greater potential for change within the media memory dynamic, owing to the presence of multiple opportunities for Assmann’s “renewal.”

With that in mind, the dynamic existing between text, listener and interpreter also varies considerably in comparison to that identified by the

Assmanns in their concept of cultural memory. Turning once again to the case study of canon, there is a further key variation to be identified between canon and news media, and concerns the question of accessibility to the memory. Jan Assmann writes that, “our dealings with canonic texts call for a third party, the interpreter who intervenes between the text and its addressee... . Canonic texts can only disclose their meaning in the triangular relationship between text, interpreter, and listener” (*Religion and Cultural Memory* 42 & 43). In the case of news media, taking the example of a print article, the initial assumption may be made that the audience or reader occupies the role of interpreter, much like a holy man interpreting a canonical text. This is however misleading. In this case it is in fact the author/media outlet and article which are the interpreter/interpretation of the original memory event. The interpretation does not stand as a canonical text, as described by Assmann, but rather as a pseudo-text. This pseudo-text refers not to a specific source text in the sense of a canon, although it may be a direct product of a recent event, but more often to any source such as a previous text covering an event or memory from which it was derived and renewed – a print news article is an appropriate example – it may itself be a renewal of a previous news article, which was the original report of an event. The audience within this dynamic remains the listener, and as such they do “interpret” in the sense that it is an inherent part of listening and processing, and to an extent occupy a secondary role of interpretation, however, as noted, not in the sense of Assmann’s dynamic for text, listener, and interpreter. This reallocation of roles as to who is the interpreter and who is the listener is one more aspect of the distinct relationship

existing between media and memory. It also provides a segue to the next example of media and memory, that being the political one, and the potential for manipulation and control borne out of this dynamic, as well as the location of the author/interpreter.

Superficially news media would appear to have a great deal in common with political memory. Particularly in light of the listener, text, interpreter dynamic, there would seem to be a definite structure in place to provide for the top-down direction of media travel, as outlined by the Assmanns, allowing for information and memory to be imposed from above. This is an aspect that Martin Zierold similarly notes in his article “Memory and Media Cultures” stating that, “on the level of production it is also important... to analyze who is in a position to influence the politics of memory, that is, who selects historic subjects to be represented in the media and which strategies of staging these stories are used” (405). In his statement, although Zierold does not explicitly state the fact, there is an implication that these occasions for remembrance are not only selected, but furthermore there is an opportunity for manipulation or even creation – indeed under certain circumstances and in certain political climates this would be the case. However in general it is here that media memory differs from its political cousin in that the source of the memory, although travelling in a top down direction of dissemination to the listener, originates from any number of sources be it a collective memory in the communicative sense or as a development, or further interpretation of a prior text as the archive of the original memory. The structure for the introduction of new information or content to memory is a

cyclical one, continually being fed by differing combinations of both old and new inputs. This structure does not discount the possibility or susceptibility to manipulation of the memory from above should it so be desired, but it does highlight that the origin of a textual media memory is formed through a feedback process, continually mediated, as opposed to exclusively dictated from the top down.

Within the Assmann's identified forms of memory there is an additional and final factor to be examined, which is crucial to all forms of collective memory, and the media-memory dynamic in particular. That factor is context. As noted by the Assmanns, it was Halbwachs who first spoke of this key memory feature when looking at reconstructions that start with the present and reach back into the past:

For Halbwachs, there was no such thing as objectification of past events. For him the past was always the product of cultural projections back into the past. His keyword was frame. Only from within the social and cultural frames of the present can the individual recollect the past, and the only past events that he can recollect are those that can be reconstructed within that framework. (*Religion and Cultural Memory* 170)

When looking at the processes involved in news media memory, context is not so much introduced through a conscious effort on the part of the memory interpreter, the originator of the media text, rather it is in many ways an unconscious product of the environment and the greater continuous communicative interactions

occurring with and around the listener, and there capacity as a secondary interpreter. Jan Assmann describes this reality best stating that, “no memory can preserve the past. What remains is only that which society in each era can reconstruct within its contemporary frame of reference. Cultural memory works by reconstructing, that is, it always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation” (“Collective Memory and Cultural Identity” 4). As a consequence, when looking at the relationship between news media and memory, a constant awareness of this influencing factor must be maintained. Although the unique features and processes at play within media memory have been illustrated by contrasting media to the Assmann’s identified forms of collective memory, it is context, as a product of a much larger collective memory matrix, which has the potential to significantly alter media memory content. Accordingly this aspect will play a significant role when looking at the evolution of a media memory over a given period of time.

Textual Media Memory

The analysis of the relationship between news media and collective memory demonstrates not only that media has the capacity to affect memory, but significantly, outlines an entirely different form of memory altogether. Drawing on the key feature of this memory concept that, regardless of medium, news media is a text and one which functions as a mnemonic archive, I propose to refer to the described form of memory as textual media memory. The analysis of

media's relationship to the Assmann's concepts of memory has outlined the premise of how textual media memory functions, but significantly has also identified a fundamental feature of this form of memory, that being the potential for change. The key identified features of textual media memory are the introduction of a single source on a massive scale to communicative interactions, the multiple levels of renewal occurring in the text as a cultural archive, by both the author and the interpreter, the continually varied and mediated feedback structure, and the overriding influence of the context or communicative environment in which the textual media memory interactions are taking place. Together these characteristics all recognize the potential for continual memory evolution and change, and lead to the question of to what extent can textual media affect change in a memory over time? More importantly how can such an evolution be measured or observed?

As a memory event, the fall of the Berlin Wall presents a unique and valuable opportunity to investigate the workings of textual media memory. As already detailed it offers the chance to track the progression of two, initially very different perspectives on a historical event over a period of time spanning two decades. Working from these established dynamics and relationships between print news media and collective memory under the identified concept of textual media memory, the intent of this endeavour is to examine this memory model through the case study of the fall of the Berlin Wall in the collective memories of Russian and German societies as they appear in print news media. This process consists of analyzing news media accounts of the fall of the Berlin Wall in the

German news weekly Der Spiegel and the Soviet/Russian counterpart of Ogonek. These sources will be analysed and evaluated based on the depiction of the fall of the Wall they present to the reader. This approach is designed to allow for the two distinct cultural memories emerging from the ideological divide of East and West to be tracked over a twenty year time frame, in order to investigate the role of textual media memory and ultimately the extent to which there has been a transformation of the two memory streams originating from the former Soviet Union, now Russian Federation, and the two Germanys, now the Federal Republic of Germany.

As stated, the chosen sources for this investigation consist of the Soviet/Russian news weekly Ogonek and its German counterpart Der Spiegel. Supplementary to these is the East German daily Neues Deutschland for the purpose of illustrating the East German perspective, and Komsomolskaya Pravda, which provides additional content in regards to Soviet accounts of the fall of the Wall. From a research standpoint the medium of print news media was selected based on source availability, as well the value in news weekly material, as they offer considerably more in depth accounts and a greater reflection of the state and location of an historical event within memory in their role as a textual archive. The sources themselves have been chosen based on their popularity, as determined through Average Issue Readership statistics, as well as containing content oriented towards general news. These guidelines, which are by no means strict requirements, do assist in providing a certain degree of control, which is desirable when evaluating change over a period of time.

The format of this investigation will consist of four main sections, one providing a historical recreation of the fall of the Wall on the night of November 9th and the early hours of the 10th, as well as influencing factors leading to its demise, the other three comprising news media accounts of the three respective eras of remembrance: 1989, 1999, and 2009. From a methodological standpoint these eras are designed to function as checkpoints, offering a means to illustrate and evaluate the evolution of Wall memory. The purpose of the first chapter, comprised of the historical accounts, is somewhat more complex. At its most general it will serve in part to introduce the reader to the socio-political climate of the time period, but more importantly clarify details and any misconceptions surrounding the event. Its second function will be to act as a control to contrast the news media accounts with in order to illustrate the initially differing perspectives put forward by the Soviets and the Germans, but also as a means of demonstrating the extent to which there is an inherent change in the accounts occurring over the twenty year period. The third is that a historical account will highlight the degree to which context effects how the audience receives news media and consequently the degree of influence it has in the dynamic of textual media memory.

Die Mauer

“Wann trifft das in Kraft?”

„Sofort, unverzüglich!“³

(Hans Hertle, *Chronik des Mauerfalls*)

Much is often made of the power of words – their power to inspire and mobilize, to enlighten, and bring truth. The late Vaclav Havel was often quoted for his phrase, “living in truth,” and it is said that, “no single phrase did more to inspire those trying to subvert and overthrow the communist empire in Europe” (The Economist 32-34). Yet have there ever been two words of such innocent origin, but with such power and consequence as when in reply to a question posed regarding the date of effect for the GDR’s revamped travel regulations, the GDR’s media man, Gunther Schabowski, replied with, “At once, immediately!” And so it was with that exchange of words that the destiny of the Berlin Wall was determined, along with the fate of a country already on the brink, and arguably set in motion a timeline of events that would witness the total collapse of communism in Europe culminating with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December of 1991.

The end of the Berlin Wall is, and will doubtlessly continue to be, remembered in a variety of ways and contexts, but much like Schabowski himself,

³ “When does this come into effect?” “At once, immediately!”

and his infamous words, the actual details of the event are relatively unknown. As detailed in the introduction, one of the key goals for this investigation is determining the extent to which there is ongoing change occurring in Russian and German memory of the Berlin Wall. In order to engage the issues and questions that have been outlined as the drivers for this investigation, it is necessary to construct a historical account of the events which unfolded on the night of November 9th, with which to contrast news media accounts from the selected eras. Further to this, additional background documenting some of the prominent events leading up to the fall of the Wall will also be outlined for the purpose of demonstrating the function of context in subsequent chapters.

There were those who believed the Berlin Wall would stand forever. Erich Honecker famously proclaimed that, "...die Mauer wird in fünfzig und auch in hundert Jahren noch bestehen bleiben" (Hertle 40),⁴ while others maintained that like all infallible elements of history it was inevitably a matter of time. It would appear that in retrospect time was once again proven to be victorious, and November 9th was the chosen date. However to properly frame the fall of the Wall in context we must rewind some 38 years earlier to the August night when the first blocks were laid.

It was during the early hours of August 13th 1961 that the Berlin Wall was first erected. Construction began upon the issuing by Erich Honecker, the then Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED⁵ for security, as well as the

⁴ "The Wall will be standing in fifty years just as it will still be in a hundred."

⁵ Socialist Unity Party of Germany

Secretary of the National Defence Council, of the executive order “Aktion X.” Dictated primarily by the socio-economic climate of the time, this ‘anti-fascist protection barrier,’ as it was officially coined by the SED, was designed not to keep Westerners out, who in most cases were in fact permitted to enter the GDR, but rather to inhibit the massive drain on the economy and resources, specifically man power. Sometimes referred to as the brain drain, the migration of labour from East to West was not limited to intellectuals, but on a broader level can be characterized as a mass exodus of labour from the East, specifically, as Ahonen comments, involving “the kinds of citizens (the GDR) could least afford to lose – overwhelmingly the young, many with good educations and specialized skills” (11). The failing economy was linked not only to this deficiency in man power, but was also occurring in the form of crippling trade and black-marketeering between East and West, resulting in inflation and unsustainable demand. According to Major, “between 1945 and the construction of the wall in 1961, 3.5 million, or one in six East Germans crossed the iron curtain to the West” (56), with an estimated total economic cost to the GDR of 120 billion marks. The GDR government, despite previous reassurances that there was no intention on their part to proceed with a more controlled or concrete form of demarcation, determined that a more drastic solution was required and with the blessing of the Soviet Union settled on the course of action that became the Berlin Wall.

Throughout its 28 year history the Wall would see many reincarnations, be recognized as one of the most advanced security perimeters in the world, and occupy the centre of many controversies, from the use of anti-personnel mines, to

the attempted Wall “jumpers,” wounded from gunfire and in effect sentenced to death in no man’s land as border guards from both sides looked on. Nor can its symbolic significance be over looked, for many a constant reminder of the political climate they lived in, for others a piece of merchandising and pop-culture, while still others a canvas for their artwork and protest. As the decade of the eighties progressed once again the prospect of economic crisis loomed, and it appeared inevitable that the economy would once again be the determining factor in the GDR’s future. Yet as much it was to be the biggest catalyst in the unfolding of events leading up to the Wall coming down, it was not a matter of money, which brought down the Berlin Wall, but rather one of travel.

On the Evening of November 9th 1989, at 18:00 on the dot, Günther Schabowski, the secretary of the ZK⁶ responsible for media relations for the German Democratic Republic flanked by fellow ZK members Helga Labs, head of the union for education, foreign minister Gerhard Beil, and Manfred Banaschak, sat before the press of not only the GDR, as well as representatives of other Communist Bloc countries, but also that of the western world, in itself remarkable. However the truly unprecedented nature of this particular press conference stemmed from the fact that for the first time a member of the Politburo would be open to uncensored questions from the world press.

The origins of this press conference although complex can be traced to two specific events. The first was the forced resignation of Erich Honecker, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, and his subsequent

⁶ Central Committee

replacement by Egon Krenz, a man of considerably more moderate sensibilities than his predecessor, and Krenz's accompanying suite of reforms which would comprise the policy of 'Wende' – more or less an East German counterpart to the Soviet policies of Glasnost and Perestroika. The second factor of influence was the ongoing issue of the GDR's current 'Ausreisegesetz' or travel law, which having received a number of socially and politically forced amendments had resulted in a great number of GDR residents attempting to exit the country via the West German embassy in Czechoslovakia. This flood of refugees hoping to emigrate to the West resulted in bitter protest on the part of the CSSR government and consequentially forced the hand of the Politburo to again draft a revised 'Ausreisegesetz.'⁷ The purpose of this conference was accordingly to first and foremost present and expand on what the policy of 'Wende' entailed, but also to announce to the general public the incoming retooled travel law.

And so it was with these two items at the forefront that Günther Schabowski took to the microphone. For the most part the conference played out as expected with the politics of the 'Wende' being both presented and clarified, however there was during the first 53 minutes of the conference a notable absence: the announcement of the new travel law. It was not until 18:53 that a member of the Italian press posed a question in regards to the issue of travel from the GDR, and it was at this time that Schabowski after providing a brief

⁷ For a more in depth analysis of the 'Ausreisegesetz' and the circumstances dictating its drafting and implementation, see Pertti Ahonen, *Death at the Berlin Wall* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 233-240.

background, specifically the objections of the CSSR, announced what appeared to be at least in part the new 'Ausreisegesetz:'

Schabowski: ...Und deshalb (äh) haben wir uns dazu entschlossen, heute (äh) eine Regelung zu treffen, die es jedem Bürger der DDR möglich macht (äh), über Grenzübergangspunkte der DDR (äh) auszureisen.

Frage: Ab wann tritt das in Kraft?

Schabowski: Bitte?

Frage: Ab sofort?

Schabowski: (*Kratz sich am Kopf*) Also, Genossen, mir ist das hier also mitgeteilt worden (*setzt sich, während er weiterspricht, seine Brille auf, blättert in seinem Unterlagen, zieht ein Papier*), dass eine solche Mitteilung heute schon (äh) verbreitet worden ist. Sie müsste eigentlich in Ihrem Besitz sein. Also (*liest sehr schnell vom Blatt*): ,Privatreisen nach dem Ausland können ohne Vorliegen von Voraussetzungen – Reiseanlässe und Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse – beantragt werden. Die Genehmigungen werden kurzfristig erteilt. Die zuständigen Abteilungen Pass- und Meldewesen der VPKÄ – der Volkspolizeikreisämter – in der DDR sind angewiesen, Visa zur ständigen Ausreise unverzüglich zu erteilen, ohne dass dabei noch geltende Voraussetzungen für eine ständige Ausreise vorliegen müssen. (Äh) Ständige Ausreisen können über alle Grenzübergangsstellen der DDR zur BRD erfolgen. Damit entfällt die vorübergehend ermöglichte Erteilung von entsprechenden Genehmigungen in

Auslandsvertretung der DDR bzw. die ständige Ausreise mit dem Personalausweis der DDR über Drittstaaten.‘

(Blickt auf.) (Äh) Die Passfrage kann ich jetzt nicht beantworten (blickt fragend in Richtung Labs und Banaschak). Das ist auch eine technische Frage. Ich weiß ja nicht, die Pässe müssen ja, ... also damit jeder im Besitz eines Passes ist, überhaupt erst mal ausgegeben werden. Wir wollten aber...

Banaschak: (*Fällt Schabowski unverständlich ins Wort*).

Frage: Wann trifft das in Kraft?

Schabowski: (*Blättert in seinem Papieren.*) Das tritt nach meiner Kenntnis... ist das sofort, unverzüglich (blättert weiter in seinen Unterlagen).

Frage: (*Stimmengewirr*) Sie haben nur BRD gesagt, gilt das auch für West-Berlin?

Schabowski: (*Liest schnell vor, dabei einige Worte verschluckend.*) ,Wie die Presseabteilung des Ministeriums..., hat der Ministerrat beschlossen, das bis zum Inkrafttreten einer entsprechenden gesetzlichen Regelung durch die Volkskammer diese Übergangsregelung in Kraft gesetzt wird.‘

Frage: Gilt das auch für Berlin-West?

Schabowski: (*Zuckt mit dem Schultern verzieht dazu die Mundwinkel nach unten, schaut in seine Papiere.*) Also (*Pause*) doch, doch (*liest vor*): ,Die ständige

Ausreisen kann über alle Grenzübergangsstellen der DDR zur BRD bzw. zu Berlin-West erfolgen‘ (Hertle 145 & 146).⁸

⁸ Schabowski: ...And that is why (ah) we have decided today (ah) to settle on a provision, which allows for every citizen of the GDR (ah) to exit the country via the (ah) border control points of the GDR.

Question: As of when does this come into effect?

Schabowski: Pardon?

Question: Effective immediately?

Schabowski: (*scratches his head*) Well comrades, it lists here (*sets down his glasses as he speaks, thumbs through his documents, removes a paper*), that such an announcement has already (ah) been distributed. In fact it ought to have been in your possession. Hmm, Ok (*reads very quickly from the paper*): ‘Private trips abroad may be applied for without the presence of any prerequisites – reasons for travel and status of relatives. The authority will be granted for the short-term. The responsible departments for Passport and registration of the VPKÄ – the offices of the People’s Police – in the GDR are instructed to grant Visas for permanent emigration immediately, without the need to have at hand the still in effect requirements for permanent emigration. (Ah) Permanent emigration may take place through all border crossing points of the GDR to the FRG. With that the temporarily enabled issuing of the corresponding permit in diplomatic missions of the GDR abroad or the permanent emigration with the personal identification of the GDR through third party countries respectively are no longer required.

(Looks up.) (Um) The passport question I can’t answer at this point (looks in the direction of Labs and Banaschak). It’s also a technical question. I don’t really know, the passports must, ... ah here so that everyone is in possession of a passport, or be issued one for the first time. We wanted though...

Banaschak: (*Cuts Schabowski off*).

Question: When does this come into effect?

Schabowski: (*Flips through his papers*). To my knowledge this is effective... is effective immediately, at once (continues to flip through his documents).

Question: (*buzz*) You only mentioned the FRG, does that apply for West Berlin as well?

Schabowski: (*reads out quickly, swallowing as he speaks*;) “as the press department of the ministry..., the council of ministers has decided that until a corresponding law can be passed through the People’s Parliament this transitional ruling is in effect.”

At that point in time there were essentially two main points to be taken from this exchange, which varied in significance depending on whether you were approaching the situation from the perspective of the press or the government. The first was that henceforth citizens of the GDR would be permitted to travel beyond the borders of the country, and in particular cross over into West Berlin, while the second was that this law would be effective immediately. From a media standpoint clearly the story lay in what seemed the shocking announcement of unrestricted travel out of the GDR. For the government the situation was of an entirely different nature. The revised travel law was anticipated and known to the majority of upper level officials to be on the agenda for the evening; for their part, and what would prove to be fatal to the GDR, was the entirely unexpected determination that the revised legislation would be effective immediately, instead of the following day, the 10th, as the original document had stated.

The travel law itself was a product of an earlier meeting of the ZK, during which it was put forward and approved, the details being that all passport holders would be entitled to leave the country through any checkpoint they desired. The members of the Mfs⁹ tasked with developing the original draft that morning felt this an adequate compromise as roughly only four million East Germans actually

Question: Does that apply to Berlin-West as well?

Schabowski: (*Shrugs his shoulders, turns the corners of his mouth down, looks in his papers*) Ok (*pause*) ah, yes it does (*reads out*): "Permanent emigration may take place at any of the border crossing points of the GDR to the FRG or to Berlin-West."

⁹ Ministerium für Staatssicherheit – Stasi

possessed passports, and this amendment would, at least in the short term, hinder the majority of the population from taking flight.¹⁰ The law was to come into effect on November 10th. Mounting pressure from both the protestors and the CSSR dictated that it was to be announced on the evening of the 9th during the press conference as a means to alleviate the pressure being brought from those two sources. It is important to note that Schabowski, although a member of the ZK was unable to attend the earlier reading and debate, and consequently did not actually know the exact contents of what he was to announce. From there the document continued along the production line of the GDR to the media office where it was handled and possibly modified for the purpose of publishing. The physical copy Schabowski received was in fact given to him in passing by Krenz himself. Major comments that, “what amounted to the Wall’s death certificate was then read out from a scribbled text in an atmosphere of improvisation and confusion” (253), however in his work *Die Mauer*, Frederick Taylor asserts that it was in fact not Krenz’s copy that was hand written, but rather the additional scribbled notes of Schabowski himself which led to the eventual confusion (500). There is further speculation that during the actual conference Schabowski may have modified/misread it himself as he announced it in summary form, and coupled with being somewhat overwhelmed by the open format of the press conference and the associated pressure, simply did not realize the implications of what he had said. In any event the damage was done.

¹⁰ For a more detailed account of the meeting minutes, see Frederick Taylor, *Die Mauer: 13. August bis 9. November 1989* (Bonn: BPB, 2009), 239-245.

Being that this particular announcement was being broadcast on radio and television throughout the GDR, the fallout was felt immediately: “binnen einer halben Stunde hatten alle anderen Nachrichtenagenturen die Meldung aufgegriffen, ebenso wie die Nachrichtensendungen des Westdeutschen Fernsehens“ (Taylor 500).¹¹ The press conference itself ended at almost exactly 19:00 – by 20:15 border guards at the Bornholmer Straße crossing had already reported 80 people waiting to cross into the West, with the number increasing at an incredible rate, as the announcement was quickly disseminated by the media and word of mouth. By 20:30 there were thought to already be a thousand people, and as the Grepos¹² attempted to disperse the people and have them return in the morning they were confronted by an escalating mob mentality. As a means of relieving tension it was decided to allow some of the ‘agitators’ and those who were more confrontational to cross into the West. Taylor comments that this ‘Ventillösung’¹³ did not however produce the desired effect, instead more than anything resulted in greater angst amongst the people (501). At 22:30 the Grepos manning the Bornholmer Straße crossing, being unable to hold their position, were forced to open the gates and allow people to cross into the West. It was estimated that between 23:30 and 0:15 over 20,000 people crossed in the West at the Bornholmer Straße checkpoint.

The situations at other crossings were varied. Although Bornholmer was the first, other crossings such as Invaliden Straße and Sonnenallee witnessed

¹¹ “within a half hour all of the other news agencies, and likewise the West German television newscasters, had picked up the announcement.”

¹² Grenzpolizei – border police

¹³ “relief solution”

similar events. At Checkpoint Charlie, however, a rather curious scene was developing, whereby it was not on the GDR side of the Wall that people had gathered, but rather on the west. In fact it was estimated that by 22:45 there were several thousand West Berliners chanting, "Laß uns rein",¹⁴ compared to only a hundred on the East side, shouting, "Laß uns raus".¹⁵ Eventually around 23:00 both sides would have their demands met and the gate was opened; by two minutes after midnight all of the remaining gates had gone up and all of the crossings had been opened with little or no attempt to intercede by the border police or other security forces.¹⁶

For most people one of the most recognizable images of the Wall coming down was the crowds at Brandenburger Tor. That area of the Wall did not possess a checkpoint of its own, but it was considered by the Grepos a priority, and a matter of pride to man the sector containing the most symbolic division between the two Germanys. The West Berliners similarly saw it as a symbol, but one which they were anxious to dispose of, and by midnight it was estimated that there were a few thousand people on the West side chiselling away at the Wall. The Wall would in fact be breached in several places, while others resorted to simply hoisting one another on to and over the Wall – indeed some of the most famous footage of the Wall would come from these moments, particularly the Wall dancers. Initially the Grepos attempted to disperse the crowds using a water

¹⁴ "Let us in"

¹⁵ "Let us out"

¹⁶ For an in depth, eye witness account of the events at Checkpoint Charlie, see Meyer, *The Year that Changed the World: The Untold Story Behind the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (New York: Scribner, 2009), 131-154.

cannon, but as this quickly proved to be a futile endeavour they eventually submitted, and in some cases were witnessed joining in on the celebrations. It was not until the next day that through a combined effort between both the East German border guards, supplemented by additional troops of the NVA,¹⁷ and the West German police, that for the sake of order and public safety that the area was once again under control, while anyone hoping to cross was encouraged to use a designated crossing. The situation would be further alleviated by the opening of additional border crossings, in particular in the area of what was Potsdamer Platz. Regardless, what had for so long been a symbol of division would in the days and weeks proceeding November 9th become one of unity and constant celebration.

Through all of this it is important to remember that the flood of people to the Wall was not part of any specific protest or demonstration occurring, rather, as Hertle identifies, more than anything initially the product of simple curiosity: „Sie blieben an der Grenze, und von Minute zu Minute schwoll der Strom derjenigen an, die sich von zu Hause oder aus der Kneipe, zu Fuß, mit der Straßenbahn oder per Auto, zum nächstgelegenen Grenzübergang bewegten, um die neue Reiseregulung spontan zu testen, zumindest aber sich von ihrer Handhabung unmittelbar vor Ort ein eigenes Bild zu verschaffen“ (155).¹⁸ Quite simply the majority of people wanted to see if it was in fact true that the Wall was open, and once there, grasp the opportunity to go into the West for a few hours and then

¹⁷ Nationale Volksarmee – National People’s Army

¹⁸ “They remained at the border, and minute by minute the flow of those who moved from home or the pub, on foot, by streetcar, or by car to the nearest border crossing swelled, in order to spontaneously test the new travel rule, but at minimum to get their own picture of how the situation was being handled.”

come back. The figures for the evening bear this out, with, according to Stasi estimations, between the time of the initial crossings until 08:00 the following day, 68,000 people having crossed into West Berlin with approximately 45,000 having returned (Hertle 214).

It is also important to keep in mind that essentially what was occurring was exactly what had been planned for the morning of the 10th. The residents of the GDR who came to the Wall that night were still required to have a passport as well as technically apply for the necessary visa, and at least initially it was not uncontrolled travel. However as a result of the sheer number of people and the developing mob mentality, the masses were able to simply push forward, the Grepos were rendered ineffective by the onslaught of people, and the vast majority crossed over without a visa or verification of passport. In all likelihood the manpower required to sustain such an operation in a controlled manner would have been available the next day to meet the volume requirements, however as the ‘effective immediately’ caveat was entirely unanticipated, no such measures had at that point been put in place.

The question can be posed of why the East German government did not move to clarify the mistake, or take preventative action after the fact. This is a complex question, however it can to an extent be broken down into two principle factors: poor communication and confusion resulting in a slow response time, and a lack of means on a number of levels to take any significant action. Having not expected Schabowski to make such an announcement, the majority of high ranking officials were not in any position to provide any direction, or for that

matter either deny or confirm what had been announced. In his detailed study, *Chronik des Mauerfalls*, of the circumstances and causes surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall, Hertle notes that some were attending various functions, while others were in transit to either their homes or in some cases leaving already for the weekend. Simultaneously because of the nature of how this particular law came to be, very few people beyond the select upper crust of the SED were aware of the actual content and in a position to verify it.

The second factor, the lack of means to deal with such a problem, was equally as fatal and occurred on a multiple of levels. The East German media, for example, being that it was state controlled was in a position to respond to Schabowski's error, however owing to the confusion and poor communication they received no instructions, but further to this factor, noted by both Taylor and Hertle, the ranking officials with the media apparatus simply had no experience in dealing with this type of situation particularly within such a brief window where time was critical – it was unprecedented for such an error to occur, but even more so to have to draft a denial. More importantly the reality at this point was that short of bloodshed it was simply not possible to stem the tide of people flowing through the checkpoints.

There were at several points attempts to employ the military, significantly with orders to use only non-lethal means in any engagement. This would prove to be unfortunate for the government as the units tasked with re-establishing order were not specifically trained in the use of non-lethal force, and consequently were ineffective. More importantly, in highlighting the difficulties presented by

operating in an urban environment, military units stationed on the perimeter of the city were initially unable to move into the centre owing to the sheer number of people and congestion on the streets, particularly the famous convoys of Trabbies. Paramount to the success of the people however was the fact that there was no mobilization of Soviet forces, as had occurred in past uprisings, with the bloodshed of 1953 still very much a recent memory.

No surprise

That the Berlin Wall came down on the night of November 9th was nothing if not a surprise. Hertle points out that none of the western intelligence agencies, particularly the BND¹⁹ who was monitoring the situation closer than ever, had any prior knowledge. Nor did the KGB whose Berlin resident was as much in the dark as everyone else and in fact, “in der internationalen Abteilung der Zentralkomitees der KPdSU erfuhr Valentin Falin die Nachricht über den Fall der Mauer erst am Morgen des 10. November, und zwar nicht vom KGB, sondern – wie das sowjetische Außenministerium – aus den Meldungen der Presseagenturen” (Hertle 237).²⁰ Of course this pales in comparison to the reality that not even high ranking officials of the SED, who although were aware of the incoming revision to travel regulations scheduled for the next day, had any inkling

¹⁹ Bundesnachrichtendienst - West German intelligence agency

²⁰ “In the international section of the Central Committee of the CPSU Valentin Falin first received word of the news over the fall of the wall on the morning of November 10th, and moreover not from the KGB, but rather - like the Soviet foreign ministry - from the announcement out of the press agencies.”

of what was about to unfold. It was truly an unpredictable, unforeseeable series of events. Yet as much as the date of the wall coming down was not to be predicted, that it was sooner rather than later going to expire, was only a matter of time.

The roots of this inevitable collapse can be traced back, arguably to the 1953 protests by the East German labour force. Initially in response to unrealistic work quotas and mismanaged food rationing, originally what were strikes and demonstrations rapidly developed into violent anti-communist protest, culminating in a march on the government quarter in East Berlin, where offices were burned and looted. The eventual outcome was that, “only the reluctant appearance of Soviet tanks in the late afternoon restored order” (Major 29), an action which resulted in considerable bloodshed. Beyond the immediate tragic nature of this event, it was significant on another level in that it demonstrated that the legitimacy of the GDR as a nation was based entirely upon the backing of the Soviet Union, and without this support and constant presence of a foreign military, the extent to which the East German government could quell a similar uprising, particularly if forced to employ military forces comprised of their own people, was in question.

Fast forward to the early 1980’s, and the whispers of change in the Eastern Bloc were growing ever louder in the form of the Solidarity movement in Poland. Composed of both workers and intellectuals intent on engaging the political situation in their country, in December of 1981 it would be virtually crushed by the government, with the majority of members being either arrested or driven

underground. The movement would however persevere, and as the 80's progressed, so did Solidarity, quietly gaining support until as James Sheehan writes, "Increasingly willing and perhaps unable to repress popular dissent with violence, the government tried a series of increasingly desperate compromises. Finally, in February 1989, it recognized and began negotiating with the Solidarity Citizens Committee" (53 & 54). The extent to which this movement had a direct effect on the situation in the DDR is debatable, it is however important to recognize that within the Eastern Bloc there was once again a pro-democratic voice emerging.

The inevitability of change within the GDR itself stems more than anything from the economic situation the country found itself in. As early as 1980 the GDR was experiencing a balance of payment crisis, essentially they were having to spend a great deal more on the import of products than they were receiving for the sales of their exports. In an unsuccessful effort to combat this Major notes that, "Increasingly, the GDR was taking goods on credit, only to re-sell them abroad for hard currency to service debts. Many goods originally destined for the home market were also finding their way abroad, much to the ire of ordinary East Germans" (228). As a product of this in 1983 the FRG offered the East German government a means to alleviate this growing debt. The proposal called for an easing of border restrictions, in return for a two billion Deutschmark credit towards the accumulated debt. This would be the first of many similar arrangements, always credit or cash in exchange for concessions on border control, issues of human rights, and even, as Major makes mention of, an

agreement stipulating that the East Germans would not ‘overreact’ to the stationing of intermediate nuclear missiles in the FRG. By 1989, the situation had reached such a point that in a November 10th 1989 report to Krenz by an unspecified ministry, it was stated that, “‘unserem Land in der Zeit der offenen Staatsgrenze laut Einschätzung eines Wirtschaftsinstitutes der BRD ein Schaden von ca. 100 Milliarden Mark entstanden ist’” (Hertle 94).²¹ Quite simply the GDR was no longer a sustainable country, nor were there any foreseeable means of recovery.

On a similar note we can also look to the economic relationship existing between the Soviet Union and West Germany, which in their work, “If a Wall Fell in Berlin and Moscow Hardly Noticed, Would it Still Make a Noise?” Taubmann and Savaranskaya argue that the importance of this developing relationship between Moscow and Bonn was paramount in how and why the fall of the Wall occurred. The authors point out that during this period of transformation and upheaval in the 1980’s the FRG, much like it is today and in fact since the 1970’s after the signing of the Moscow Treaty which normalized relations between the two nations, occupied the position as the most important trading partner for the Soviet Union in the West, selling over 35% of its exported natural gas and 20% of its exported oil and petroleum products, as well as other commodities such as timber, gold and precious stones. Particularly when taking into account the goals of, to an extent Glasnost, but primarily Perestroika, West Germany was seen as a viable source of new technologies desperately sought by the Soviets and

²¹ “in this time of open borders our country is in debt by approx. 100 Billion Marks according to an estimate by the Economic Research Institute of the FRG.”

necessary for the success of the Gorbachev led reforms, as well as an access point to other western economies and banks, which were viewed not only as potential trading partners but more importantly sources of credit and hard currency to ease the stifling debt and economic paralysis that had subdued the USSR. These Soviet policies of renewal will be discussed in greater depth in subsequent chapters, for the time being what is important is that the authors conclude that essentially West Germany gained increasing significance and value as a strategic partner capable of rendering assistance to the Soviet Union, to the point that by the time the Wall fell, although East Germany was still ‘an old war buddy’ they no longer had anything of potential value to offer on an economic level and were treated accordingly.

Back room economic policy alone, as much as it played a significant role in facilitating an environment which led to the fall of the Wall and subsequent collapse of the GDR, could not be identified or related to on a more common mainstream level by the people of East Germany. Instead we can look to a number of other incidents which were both indicative, as well as catalytic in the lead up to November 9th. The first of these was the opening of the Hungarian border to the West.

Hungary unlike the majority of its Eastern Bloc counterparts, was not so much in the midst of a popular uprising, instead, “the dynamics of dissent worked within, rather than against the Communist Party” (Sheehan 54), resulting in the replacement of long time party leader, János Kádár. Dismantling of the iron

curtain in Hungary began on May 2nd 1989. In anticipation of a potential means for crossing into the West thousands of GDR citizens poured into Hungary hoping to transit into West Germany via the Austro-Hungary border. The border for the time being remained closed, resulting in Hungary being transformed into a veritable refugee camp for East Germans, many of whom would hole up in the FRG embassies in Budapest or neighbouring Prague, in an attempt to be granted refugee status and be permitted to emigrate to the West. Major notes that Budapest was becoming increasingly annoyed with having to bear the brunt of an issue which was essentially dumped on them by the GDR and accordingly on August 25th President minister Németh and Foreign minister Horn flew to Bonn, at which time they met with their West German counterparts and agreed upon a deal whereby in exchange for allowing GDR citizens to pass into Austria, the Hungarian government would be allotted a credit of 500 million deutschmarks. With GDR-Hungary negotiations yielding no alternative as they were effectively deadlocked, on September 11th the border was opened and there were an estimated 18,000 crossings in three days (Major 240).

During this same time frame protests had been gaining momentum in Leipzig, calling for a wide variety of reforms, as well as representing a number of cliques within the GDR, originally, as Major comments, “the crowd divided between those demanding civil liberties, chanting ‘We are staying!’ and emigration seekers shouting ‘We want out!’” (243). Occurring typically every Monday since September 4th, these protests, referred to later simply as the Montag

Demonstrationen,²² began in earnest on the 25th, with crowds, previously numbering in the hundreds, totalling an estimated 5000. These demonstrations would continue to grow fuelled in part by the crackdown on further emigration via Hungary, as well as continual attempts to disperse crowds and refusals to recognize demonstration groups desiring official status. On the 16th of October in conjunction with the Leipzig Monday demonstrations there were also parallel events being held, with an estimated 10,000 in Dresden and Magdeburg, 5000 in Halle, and 3000 in Berlin. According to Hertle, “hatte das Mfs in der Woche vom 16. Bis 22. Oktober insgesamt 140.000 Teilnehmer auf 24 Demonstrationen registriert, so beteiligten sich zwischen dem 23. und 30. Oktober 540.000 Teilnehmer an 145 Demonstrationen“ (88).²³

Throughout this time of unrest, there was still yet another situation developing, that being the refugee situation in Prague. For the past few months residents of the GDR had been streaming into Czechoslovakia, and similar to the situation in Hungary there were now thousands of refugees hoping to travel through to the FRG via the West German embassy. The East German government however had no desire to release them, and it was only after heightened pressure by the CSSR government that GDR officials agreed to allow for these people to board one way trains bound for West Germany via the GDR. And so it was that on the night of October 4th some 14,000 people from the Prague and Warsaw embassies were gathered onto special trains and departed for the West. The fall

²² Monday Demonstrations

²³ “During the week of October 16th to the 22nd the Ministry for State Security had registered a total of 140,000 participants at 24 demonstrations, while between the 23rd and the 30th of October 540,000 participants took part in 145 demonstrations.”

out of this was significant, as Ahonen notes not only did this demonstrate to the world the type of struggle which was occurring in the GDR, as the trains arriving in the West was a televised event, but more importantly, “the sustained mass exodus was also fundamental in fuelling the rise of a nationwide protest movement that posed an increasingly direct challenge to the government’s authority” (239). More than ever “Massenflucht und Massenausreise werden zur Voraussetzung und Bedingung des sich entfaltenden Massenprotests” (76).²⁴

The above events comprise both the root causes, as well as some of the more visible indicators of impending change, which occurred over both the long and short term leading up to the fall of the Berlin Wall. This section was not meant to debate and determine the exact historical causes of the fall of the Wall, but rather to illustrate the extent to which the climate within the GDR as well as the Eastern Bloc had become increasingly hostile and demanding of social and political change for some time. As much as the Wall coming down may have been a shock, these examples demonstrate the inevitability of the situation, and more importantly in the face of this investigation highlight the type of prior events from which the people at that time located and provided context for the actual event of the fall of the Wall. In conjunction with the more detailed look at the specific events of November 9th, this background will be integral moving forward in the process of tracking the evolution of Wall memory over the subsequent two decades.

²⁴ “Mass flight and mass emigration became requirements and stipulations of the unfolding mass protests.”

'89

Wer sind das Volk?

The domestic transformation Gorbachev was trying to achieve was unprecedented. So too was his transformation of Soviet foreign policy. Put them together and you have an overwhelming set of challenges and opportunities – in the blinding light of which the fall of the wall paled in comparison

(Savaranskaya and Taubmann, “If a Wall Fell in Berlin and Moscow Hardly Noticed, Would it Still Make a Noise?”)

Few Prominent Europeans were prepared to say that the people in East Germany did not have the right to self-determination, but most – including an important part of the West German public – hoped that they would exercise this right without destroying the East German state and thus threatening the European peace.

(Sheehan, “The Transformation of Europe”)

It is difficult to imagine the fall of the Berlin Wall as either inconsequential or undesirable, yet as we will see, as much as many of the media accounts of the fall of the Wall focus on its newsworthy aspects of revolution and change, the above excerpts from Sheehan (57) and Savaranskaya and Taubmann (71) illustrate that equally for many people the fall of the Wall and the collapse of the GDR was a change, which was for a variety of reasons neither embraced nor acknowledged to the same extent as select media portrayals may lead one to believe. Sheehan’s account in particular alludes to the value many Germans, particularly West Germans, placed on stability and control of process, which they

felt would be jeopardized by the sudden demise of the Wall. Savaranskaya and Taubmann speak to the surprising reality that for many people in the Soviet Union the fall of the Berlin Wall was both figuratively and literally a thousand miles away, and in the face of the ongoing societal reforms they were experiencing had little impact.

This underscoring of the discrepancies existing between media representations and historical fact highlights the need for conducting further investigation into the similarities and divergences existing between portrayals of the fall of the Wall in news media. As stated in the introduction this approach allows for a more in depth and expanded comparison of the various media eras amongst one another, by working from a historical account functioning as a control. Of greater significance to the investigation, this type of examination illustrates the extent to which media begins the process of manufacturing what essentially becomes memory immediately, and the extent to which it is already a considerable distortion from other historical accounts of events.

In addition this chapter also serves as the initial opportunity to engage the role of context as a critical component within textual media memory. As touched on in the introduction section, there is an obvious potential for context to significantly influence the formation and content of memory. When looking at the specific medium of print media, an article can be viewed essentially as a snapshot free from context. It offers an account of a specific window of events, while typically any framing of the story or contextual details will be strictly compressed and only briefly alluded to within the text, but on the whole exist outside of the

story itself in the form of the context which the reader supplies based on current assumptions, beliefs and values through which the reader interprets and understands the text.

To combine this understanding of context with the issue of discrepancies between media accounts and historical fact, one of the more interesting possibilities which sheds light on this dynamic is the role of context in providing what is absent, i.e. the information not provided in a given media account. Exploring this possibility involves comparing the historical lead up to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the events of which functioned to create the original atmosphere, circumstances, and context under which the fall of the Wall took place, with the content appearing in the accounts of the *Der Spiegel* and *Ogonek*, as well as *Neues Deutschland* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. This process should not only highlight the extent to which context plays a role in this dynamic, but more importantly demonstrate the extent to which context allows for a detaching of events, which is necessary for an account – the memory – to be re-embodied in subsequent generations.

The focus of this chapter will therefore be to approach the role of context in cultural memory in greater depth and detail, focusing specifically on the function of context within print media, and what can be determined by comparing the source material to the established historical account. This process will consist first and foremost of establishing how the fall of the Wall was portrayed in the respective medias of the FRG, GDR, and the Soviet Union in 1989. This will allow not only for the source material from this era to be compared to the

historical account, but also will facilitate further comparison between subsequent eras and the current one being assessed, in order to track the evolution of the memory of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Der Spiegel: Nr. 46, 1989

If one were to characterize the content appearing in the edition of Der Spiegel covering the week of the 6th to the 13th of November 1989 in a single phrase, it would be: Guarded optimism, even in victory. The material is quite diverse, covering everything from the minutes leading up to and after those first Ossis streamed through the checkpoints, to the West German parliament session taking place in Bonn when news of the wall coming down was first relayed. It also offers a variety of perspectives, from those of eye-witnesses, to subject matter experts, and even East German officials, yet through all of this variety the content still adheres to that underlying motif.

Although there are a number of articles within Der Spiegel which comprise the section dedicated to covering the fall of the Wall, characteristic to all three eras for this source is the inclusion of a centerpiece or focus article directly occupying itself with the events and circumstances of the Wall's demise, while the others are strictly supplementary. These articles share the Berlin Wall as a common background, however only touching on the actual event indirectly. Some of their topics include the future of communism in Eastern Europe in light of what

has occurred within the GDR, the onslaught of East Germans visitors and their potential to entirely overwhelm the West Berlin infrastructure, and even an interview of younger members of a youth movement within the SED, allowing them an opportunity to voice their thoughts. From an analysis and methodological perspective, I believe this is a productive format allowing for a single article of similar nature and design to be evaluated in all three eras, making for a much more focused and controlled examination of the evolution of Wall memory.

The centrepiece or focus article, “Eine friedliche Revolution,”²⁵ provides the reader with extensive coverage of both events as they unfolded at the Wall, as well as subsequent political analysis and debate surrounding the potential implications of this night moving forward. In line with the tag of, “guarded optimism, even in victory,” the story is indeed initially very celebratory, with an emphasis on the festive, New Year’s Eve-like atmosphere, and the great show of unity and brotherhood. However as the article progresses this tone is replaced by one of caution as the focus changes to the political realities of the situation, primarily that as this was an event without any prior warning, the number of unknowns, and information gaps, demanded a course characterized by both scepticism and caution. Emerging from these general impressions there are three specific embedded aspects within the text which I would like to address as influential to creating the image that the reader is presented with by the article and their significance to textual media memory.

²⁵ “A Peaceful Revolution”

The first of these aspects is the extent to which the fall of the Wall is depicted as not just a moment of celebration, but more so a victory – a battle that had been ongoing for decades had finally come to an end. However as the reader progresses through the text, the question which begins to manifest itself is: A victory for whom? The reader is initially presented with text describing the event as a victory for the people of East Germany who have risen up and overcome their oppressors, apparent in the line, “Das Wunder hat das Volk der DDR bewirkt - ohne Waffen und ohne Gewalt”(18).²⁶ This is however one of the few times that the East German people are acknowledged as the victors, and as the article progresses they are subsequently replaced in favour of an emphasis on this being a victory for a greater united Germany, evident in phrases such as, “die zweite Niederlage für Parteichef Egon Krenz nach Problemen mit seinen Personalvorstellungen, aber ein Gewinn für die Deutschen”(18)²⁷ with a notable absence of any referent indicating West or East, instead simply “the Germans.” Further examples include, “Erstmals in der jüngeren deutschen Geschichte, dies der unglaublichste Aspekt in einem historischen Monatszeitraum, siegt das Volk gegen die Herrschenden, zwingt ihnen seinen Willen auf - ohne Gewalt, bloß willentlich” (21),²⁸ and finally, “Die Straße ist die Tribüne des Volkes” (21).²⁹ These last two excerpts, replacing “Germans” with the more unified “Volk” or

²⁶ “It was the people who brought about the miracle – without weapons and without violence.”

²⁷ “the second defeat for party chief Egon Krenz after Problems with his personal image, but a victory for the Germans.”

²⁸ “For the first time in recent German history, this, the most unbelievable part in what has been a historical month, the people triumphed over the rulers, forcing their will upon them – without violence, merely through will.”

²⁹ “The street is the stage of the people”

“people,” emphasizing the aspect of unity and reminiscent of the inscription on the German parliament in Berlin “Dem Deutschen Volke.”³⁰

A greater, unified Germany however cannot claim to be the definitive victor no more than the people of the GDR. Within the article there is the additional twist, or even perversion, that any victory by either the East Germans or the German people as a whole, is projected back onto and claimed by the West German leadership. This is in part apparent in the sheer amount of text dedicated to illustrating the atmosphere in the parliament at Bonn, but also the sense of sudden camaraderie between politicians, typically at odds with one another, united in victory: “Der Grüne Hubert Kleinert - seine Fraktion war wie üblich von der Runde im Kanzleramt ausgeschlossen - erlebte eine ‘eigenartige Situation: Alle sagten irgendwie nur Richtiges.’ Eine Seltenheit im Bonner Parlament: Grüne applaudierten CDU-Dregger, Unionschristen dem Grünen Helmut Lippelt“(20).³¹ Furthermore within the text there is much greater attention paid to describing the level of emotion contained within the scene unfolding in parliament – the applause, the singing, and the tears – than illustrating the touching moments people experienced at the wall: “Und nachdem Annemarie Renger (“Es fällt mir schwer”) auf Antrag des SPD-Geschäftsführers Gerhard Jahn unter allgemeinem Beifall die Sitzung beendet hatte, verließ ein emotionsbeladener Willy Brandt den Bundestag, weinend, gestützt von der SPD-Kollegin Liesel Hartenstein, die selbst

³⁰ “to the German people.”

³¹ “The Green party member Hubert Kleinert – his party was as per usual excluded from the table in the chancellery – experienced a ‘unique situation: somehow everyone said only the right thing.’ A rarity in the Bonn parliament: The Greens applauded CDU-Dregger, Christian Democrats the Green Helmut Lippelt.”

mit den Tränen kämpfte“(20).³² The result of this emphasis on the political players as victors is significant in that not only are they framed as having had a prominent hand in the event, which is debatable in itself, but moreover this artificial focus is essentially both replacing and drawing attention away from the people in Berlin who were far more involved in the actual fall of the Wall.

This depiction of events through the theme of victory, is significant when comparing this media portrayal to that of history. It is true that in their own respective ways, the people of East Germany, politicians from the FRG, and Germans as a whole, all played a role in a series of events, culminating with the fall of the Wall. The East Germans clearly were the foot soldiers whose protests and demonstrations were directly responsible for what had occurred leading up to the event. The fact that the vast majority of the people from the East at the Wall that evening were there owing to a combination of circumstances, primarily an error in communication and the ensuing curiosity on the part of East Berliners intent on verifying the unprecedented announcement of unconditional free travel, is not paid any mention, more than anything because these details were not immediately known. A case for the politicians can also be made in that they were the ones who through their economic dealings were able to create the necessary conditions in which pressure by the East German people would be at its most effective. In many ways they were very much in a battle in that it was their “duty” as members of the

³² “And after Annemarie Renger (,It’s hard for me’) on request of the SPD whip Gerhard Jahn ended the sitting to all round applause, an emotionally overcome Willy Brandt left the Bundestag, in tears, supported by his SPD colleague Liesel Hartenstein, who was battling tears herself.”

western system to oppose and subvert the East for the sake of gaining any possible advantage. A victory for the German people? Perhaps, but this is also one of the most contentious points.

On the whole there is very little evidence pointing towards the West German people being all that terribly interested in having anything to do with the East. While the East Germans were engaged in a genuine battle for greater civil liberty, many in the West were quite content with what they had accomplished in their own country, and had little interest in having this disrupted by a change in the status quo, a feeling and sentiment which will be at the forefront in the articles of future eras. To reintroduce Sheehan's statement, "few Prominent Europeans were prepared to say that the people in East Germany did not have the right to self-determination, but most – including an important part of the West German public – hoped that they would exercise this right without destroying the East German state and thus threatening the European peace" (57). It is in many ways difficult to locate this type of attitude and atmosphere within the larger narrative being provided of the Wall as a grand moment of unity and brotherhood. This significantly alludes to that fact what is essentially depicted then is a brief snapshot moment of a limited number of people that is being elevated to the position of representing an entire nation and memory.

More than anything this discrepancy speaks to the role of context. Without the presence or acknowledgement of events and circumstances which preceded the Wall coming down, such as the opening of the Hungarian border or the embassy refugees, it is possible to detach this snapshot from its place in history

and manufacture an artificial representation of what occurred, not by necessarily creating or skewing the facts, but rather by removing them from context. The significance of this, as we shall see shortly, is that by removing an event from its original or “appropriate” context, it is then possible to further distort it through the introduction of additional elements.

The second aspect I would like to touch on is similarly grounded in the theme of German unity, however touching on a much darker facet of it, that being the mention of the Nazi past within the article in conjunction with the prospect of a German reunification. The Nazi past itself is first alluded to within the text simply in passing: „Die neue Freiheit wuchs den Deutschen gänzlich überraschend binnen einer Woche zu, nachdem SED-Chef Egon Krenz eben noch ein umständliches Reisegenehmigungsrecht angekündigt hatte. 28 Jahre plus knapp drei Monate war Berlin mit Mauern und Sperranlagen geteilt, 40 Jahre lang die Nation als Ergebnis der Hitlerschen Expansionskatastrophe getrennt“(18).³³

When focusing on the wording used it is interesting that the impression the reader is given is that the German people, and the nation as a greater whole, in a way remained unified in the punishment they had to share and endure over the last 40 years, since the official founding of the GDR, for Hitler’s aggressions. Moreover, the extent to which this “sharing” of punishment is another creation, is evident in that fact that one of the more controversial, yet arguably unifying moves of East

³³ “The new freedom took the Germans completely by surprise within a week, even after SED chief Egon Krenz had announced a roundabout travel permit. For 28 years and some three months Berlin was divided with walls and barriers, separated for 40 years as a result of the Hitler expansion catastrophe.”

Germany was to consider themselves as the communist victims of Hitler's crimes, essentially exonerating themselves from having had any part in his policies.

Before commenting on the significance of this theme, it is productive to first introduce the second, and more prominent piece of text pertaining to the connection between Germany unity and their tumultuous Nazi past:

Erstmals in der deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte scheint... eine Wiedervereinigung denkbar und nicht, wie bisher, bloß utopisch. Tausende von Verbrüderungsszenen zwischen strahlenden oder tränenüberströmten, glücklichen oder angeheiterten Deutschen aus Ost und West stellten Erstaunliches unter Beweis: Eine Nation, deren Größenwahn Europa an den Abgrund gebracht hatte und die nach der Niederlage von den Siegern gezielt und vermeintlich dauerhaft zerteilt worden war, hat sich über das Zeitalter fast zweier Generationen hinweg ein offenbar dauerhaftes Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl erhalten (19).³⁴

The presence of this kind of dialogue is fascinating in that it emphasizes the almost perverse degree to which the Nazi past is “forever present” within Germany society, but more importantly is an example of the progression taking place whereby a theme which realistically has no direct connection to the fall of the Wall has suddenly found its way into the text, via the manufacturing and

³⁴ “For the first time in German post war-history a reunification seemed imaginable and not merely utopian as before. Thousands of scenes of brotherhood between bright-eyed or tear overflowing, happy or merry Germans from both East and West, proof of the astonishing: a Nation, whose megalomania had brought Europe to the brink, and who after defeat by the victors were purposefully and supposedly permanently divided, was able to maintain over the span of almost two generations a lasting sense of shared identity.”

inclusion of the concept of German unity and brotherhood. This speaks to two points, the first being the manner in which a removal from context allows not only for an event or memory to be represented in a distorted fashion as noted in regard to the theme of victory, but also the degree to which it subsequently allows for the introduction of additional issues such as the Nazi past. Secondly it is productive to note that this promotion of unity, particularly in relation to Germany's Nazi past, will reappear as a central issue in 1999, particularly as although it is a genuine issue, it is essentially manufactured and comprises a manufactured representation of the fall of the Wall.

The second half of the article lays focus on the political and social climate in the GDR and it is here that the theme of guarded optimism emerges in the form of a critical analysis of the situation unfolding in the GDR, specifically the complexities of East German internal politics, among others assessing the recent reshufflings within the SED and ZK, and the departure of many hardline Honecker-era types in favour of the younger and more moderate, in particular the election of Hans Modrow to the position of Prime Minister. What is significant within this portion of the article, and its evaluation of GDR politics, is the fact that at no time is it suggested that the outright demise of the East German nation is at hand, nor a subsequent reunification with the West, rather the focus is on an anticipated reorganizing of the GDR government and system. Although the fall of the Wall itself was described in great emotional detail, this frank analysis, and the guarded optimism, of the potential consequences stemming from the fall of the Wall highlights the degree to which the events of November 9th were at that time

by no means immediately equated to reunification or for that matter any of the massive transformation in the Eastern Bloc which lay on the horizon.

In the frame of textual media memory this section of the article functions to demonstrate the fine line between accuracy and deficiency, the influence of context within that dynamic, and its subsequent significance to the overall picture being depicted. The accuracy stems from the fact that, not only does it provide details in regards to the climate in the GDR, but in the process of doing so provides a degree of context within the text in the form of prior events and contributing factors to the fall of the Wall. Simultaneously however we can look to such absences or deficiencies, such as representation of people in the East who remain loyal to the regime and nation and the people in the West who are wary of the looming consequences of the two nations becoming much closer as voiced by Sheehan at the beginning of the chapter. Essentially what is occurring is that there is a context provided within the text in the form of background information, which remains embedded with the news account or memory, to support what is desirable, while context within the text pertaining to other less desirable issues, although existing in the form of the original exterior context in which the article is located, is absent. This consequently allows for a selective detaching (the undesirable) of memory from its original context. Moving forward and as we shall see, much of the embedded context re-emerges in future articles and is influential in shaping their content.

Neues Deutschland: 10.11.89, 12.11.89

When dealing with East German media, one of the most common assumptions made is the extent to which the material will be heavily censored as a means of not only preventing the inclusion of undesirable information, but more importantly to shape and focus what is presented within a news source – and not without good reason. The East German censorship/propaganda apparatus, which I will refer to simply as the media control apparatus, was as extensive as it was complex, with the Ministry of State Security occupying a position of central authority in “managing” everyday East German society, specifically their department VII dedicated to monitoring cultural life, including publishing, television and film (Schmeidel 124). In addition the Ministry of the Interior and to a lesser extent the administrative apparatus for the Council of Ministers in varying degrees also had a hand in the censorship process. In summary, as Philipsen states, “with an increasingly elaborate network of functionaries and secret police forces, the party state planned, informed, disinformed, organized, decided, supervised, and controlled virtually all aspects of life” (32). The presence and extent of the East German media control apparatus is an important factor to take under consideration, for the simple reason that the material in Neues Deutschland and how it is depicted can best be understood and illustrated by approaching it from this particular perspective.

As Neues Deutschland is not source material in the sense of adhering to the requirement for weekly publications as initially laid out, there is a greater

degree of latitude in how it can be approached in order to illustrate a more in depth picture along the lines of their news weekly counterparts. Accordingly the material will be broken down into two portions, the first consisting of a more superficial examination of the type of articles appearing throughout the issues of the 10th and the 12th, while the second will involve a more focused analysis of the section dedicated to covering the situation regarding the new travel laws. The purpose of this approach is ultimately to highlight the presence and role of control by the East German state, and in doing so evaluate how these controlled accounts fit within the established methodological framework.

To begin with the edition from Friday November 10th, beyond the notable absence of any mention of the previous evening's happenings at the Wall, one of the most common themes throughout the articles is the need for political renewal. The real issues of greater freedom, and unconditional right to travel, although alluded to in brief blurbs documenting controlled demonstrations in Erfurt and Gera, are not addressed by any of the SED officials and ZK members reporting on the current domestic situation in the GDR, instead any conflict, or issue would seem to fall under the umbrella of the need for political renewal. This is significant as when looking at this construct of political renewal, there is by the very nature of the word renewal, admission of a need for change. That this type of language is appearing is remarkable and indicative to an extent of the severity of the situation that the GDR government found itself in, but furthermore to look closer at the manner in which this need for renewal is expressed, there is evidence of a certain desperation, best exemplified by ZK member Hans Modrow's

opening remarks in his report from the ZK plenum, stating that, “Es geht in dieser Zeit um die Existenz der Partei und um die Existenz des Sozialismus in unserem Lande“ (Modrow 5).³⁵

The type of material appearing on Sunday the 12th is once again dominated by reports from the tenth ZK plenum. Similarly the type of language emerging can again be described as artificial but urgent, with headlines such as, “Jetzt gebe es in der DDR nur die Entscheidung Sozialismus und demokratie oder kein Sozialismus,”³⁶ and content focusing again on renewal of the political system and the economy. There is however in contrast to the issue from the 10th a much larger selection of topics in regards to articles not reporting on the ZK, touching on everything from ongoing demonstrations across the country, to calls by the people for reforms based on Marxist principles, which they feel have waned. Among these articles there are also a number of accounts touching on the fall of the Wall, although never in the sense of what had occurred, rather focusing on current issues, which are products of the Wall coming down, however avoiding any mention of what occurred on the night of the 9th. For example, articles such as, “Zehntausende DDR Burger zur Kurzbesuchen in die BRD”³⁷ and „Zusätzliche Verbindungen im Reiseverkehr DDR-BRD,”³⁸ address the mass migrations occurring, however only in the context of their being a product of the GDR’s travel law. This makes for a curious, almost nonchalant dynamic whereby the

³⁵ “In this time it is a matter of the existence of the party and of the existence of socialism in our country.”

³⁶ “In the GDR the only remaining decision is socialism and democracy or no socialism at all”

³⁷ “Ten thousand GDR citizens making short trips to the West”

³⁸ “Additional connections for tourist traffic GDR-FRG”

overwhelming impression delivered to the reader is that something had occurred at the Wall a few days ago, but of no particular significance.

The 16th and final page of the issue from November 12th provides what at first glance appears to be an entire side's worth dedicated to coverage of the Wall. Upon closer inspection this is not in fact the case, as although there are headlines such as "Eine Nacht und ein Tag hüben und drüben an der Bornholmer Brücke"³⁹ and "Stippvisite zur Reeperbahn und zurück zur Arbeit,"⁴⁰ there is not a single mention of the Wall having been breached. Essentially what is being presented is the accurate, statistical reality that there are thousands of people visiting the West on a daily basis, and for the government this is not an issue, as it was after all arranged by them according to their newly enacted travel law, while any accounts of the people storming the gates are explicitly ignored, as they would be an admission on the part of the government to having lost control – the greatest fear of any authoritarian state.

This refusal to acknowledge the fall of the Wall makes for an interesting dynamic, particularly as the reader is given the impression that these wonderful new experiences of travelling to the West have been given to them as a gift by the government. This is evident not only in the type of headlines, but particularly in the article titled "ND Leser zu neuen Reiseregulungen,"⁴¹ which offers accounts from "faithful" Neues Deutschland readers speaking to how wonderful it is being able to travel West under these new travel laws. Simultaneously there is another

³⁹ "A night and a day on either side of the Bornholmer bridge"

⁴⁰ "A quick visit to the Reeperbahn and back for work"

⁴¹ "ND readers on the new travel regulations"

article documenting the positive response citizens have had towards these new travel regulations, while another still, titled “Nur noch wenige wollen für immer aus der DDR weg“⁴² makes the claim that fewer East Germans than ever before have the desire to emigrate. There is all round a recasting of what would be a potentially damaging event into a positive planned event that should be embraced.

To view the described themes and portrayals through the lens of the media control apparatus one of the most apparent aspects consistently present when reading through the various articles and pages is control. It is apparent in a number of different ways, but can be categorized into two specific approaches: managing of content and diversion tactics. Content management as the more common of the two can be seen primarily in the sheer volume of political discourse and material which is included, as well as the absence of any account specific to what happened on the night of November 9th. What I will refer to as diversion tactics, work in conjunction with content management and result in, again the inclusion of coverage such as the minutes from the ZK plenum, but is most apparent in the thematic inclusion of ‘political renewal’ and the associated tone of desperation, as well as the emphasis on the new travel law and its positive benefits. In reading through the texts, what is immediately evident is how desperate the situation was and the precarious position the leaders of the SED found themselves in. To put the matter of the Wall to the side for a moment, at this point in time the type of rhetoric originating from the SED, as well as during the ZK, which had begun days earlier, was such that it was no longer a matter of

⁴² “Fewer than ever want to permanently leave the GDR”

hiding issues endemic to society or the critical failings of the socio-political and economic structures, but rather broad ranging admission amongst members of the ZK of these problems and a rather frantic collection of party rhetoric, which while artificial, and propagandistic in tone, the sheer diversity of it points towards the reality that not only were the senior party members no longer sure of what course to take, but more importantly the realization that the battle was already lost, and their system was no longer sustainable. This admission is an opportunity to acknowledge an issue of their choosing, maximizing the urgency of it, and then by moving to correct it, diverting the attention of the people away from other more prominent, and from the government's perspective more dangerous issues. Similarly in the case of the uncontrolled penetration of the Wall, as a means of concealing this loss of control, there is a diverting emphasis placed on the benefits of the new travel laws, and the positive impact they are having on everyday life.

In regards to textual media memory the presence of control as a product of the East German media control is significant to both assessing context, as well as the extent to which in this case the content is even reflective of a constructed memory. When looking at context, to compare the situation presented in here to that of Der Spiegel, there are two principle differences: the accuracy of content, and the presence of content. In the case of Der Spiegel, although there do exist both absences and narratives within the focus article, the content on the whole is both present and in line with the historical account, in that the fall of the Wall is actually addressed, and the account provided is more or less "accurate," in that it is not characterized by any gross misrepresentations or manufactured information.

Because of this it is possible for the account to exist and be grounded in an original “appropriate” context, from which it can be detached. The issue here is that in the case of the material presented in Neues Deutschland, as a result of control, the content is neither accurate, nor for that matter present at all, and consequently, as an artificial entity, does not possess an original or genuine context in which the East German people can locate it.

From a methodological perspective, this case would seem to be problematic. To return to Assmann’s fundamental points, it was established that news media functions as a reminding object, significantly one which is capable of prescribing a memory. In this case however, much like you cannot prescribe to someone something which has not happened, equally through a process of prescription you cannot erase what has occurred, meaning that omission of any mention of the fall of the Wall does not equate to it suddenly being removed from people’s minds, especially when so many were aware of what had occurred via word of mouth. The outcome and consequence of this dynamic is simply that the absence of material depicting the events of November 9th illustrates the importance of the communicative aspect of textual media memory, and the extent to which textual media memory is not formed exclusively through the content of the text.

The material present in Neues Deutschland is best characterized as an example of the East German media control apparatus. Although it offers little in the sense of expanding on memory of the fall of the Wall from an East German perspective, it does illustrate the type of controlled environment in which the

citizens of the GDR lived. Moving forward despite not contributing directly to the tracking of the evolution of Wall memory, it has provided a base from which future analysis can refer back to, particularly when trying to understand the united memory of two peoples as it appears in Der Spiegel 1999.

Ogonek and Komsomolskaya Pravda

In contrast to the accounts present in Der Spiegel, coverage of the fall of the Berlin Wall within the Soviet/Russian weekly Ogonek, for the month of November is somewhat lacking, so much so that there is not a single account or article within the pages of Ogonek for the established time frame dedicated to the events of November 9th. In fact, in looking beyond the source material time frame, it was discovered that there was no mention made of the fall of the Wall in any of the remaining editions of Ogonek for 1989. This proved to be somewhat of a revelation, particularly in light of the potential significance of such an event occurring in what was considered to be the crown jewel of communist dependants to the Soviet regime, and on a more everyday level the extent to which Soviet print sources typically contained sections devoted to recent and current events in fellow Warsaw Pact nations. How can such an absence be explained? Was it a product of Soviet censorship much like that of its East German counterpart?

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, one of the most immediate problems he faced was the extent to which the Soviet information

control policies were so staggeringly restrictive and prohibitive, that they were not only smothering the country, but simultaneously successfully hiding the fact. Gorbachev recognized that this system had virtually disabled any of the necessary feedback mechanisms between central authority and their spheres of responsibility, required to identify and subsequently rectify issues within Soviet society. As Scott Shane writes in his work, *Dismantling Utopia*, “the communist party had been holding up a gaudy and fantastic oil painting to the country and pretending it was a mirror” (45). Accordingly, the introduction of the policy of Glasnost was designed to alleviate this handicap and allow for greater freedom of the press, however the degree to which this was realized is debatable. The principle of this incoming reform and the extent of what was considered permissible and what was not is best summed up in the following excerpt from one of Gorbachev’s addresses:

Publish everything. There must be plurality of opinions. But plurality aimed at defending and strengthening the line of perestroika and the cause of socialism... We are not talking about any kind of limits on glasnost or democracy. What limits? Glasnost in the interest of the people and of socialism should be without limits. I repeat – in the interests of the people and of socialism. (Shane 66)

Clearly the program was in place to facilitate greater debate and as a by-product greater dissemination of information within the Soviet system and society, however Glasnost was by no means a carte blanche for publishing unrestricted content.

The absence of material dedicated to the fall of the Berlin Wall in Ogoniek can consequently be understood by focusing on two specific aspects of this Gorbachev led reform. The first lies in the specific wording, “Glasnost in the interest of the people and of socialism should be without limits.” The pages of Ogoniek, much like its German counterpart Der Spiegel, traditionally contain a fair amount of material centered on international events, providing that they were deemed acceptable. In looking at the type of content being published during this era this is simply not the case. Instead there is a noticeable emphasis on domestic issues, in particular a focus on revisiting the past, with an entire miniseries, spanning several issues, dedicated to the history of Stalin and his crimes. In fact this process of reengaging past history was so intensive that, “by mid-1988 so much had been published that contradicted the textbooks that school history exams for the year had to be cancelled” (Shane 123). There are also articles on more contemporary issues, such as the Soviet’s military engagement in Afghanistan, and significantly are not relegated to positive misrepresentations of the progress, but rather are quite critical in their assessment, the title alone, “спрятанная война,”⁴³ a fair representation of the criticisms appearing within the article. Despite their wide ranging topics, and the various levels of criticism they possess, they all have at the heart of them the interests of Soviet citizens. It therefore cannot be ignored that although Glasnost was a program for greater freedom of information, it still essentially patrolled the texts of the media ensuring that only desirable freedom of information was included. This does not however mean that the sole reason there is no evidence of the fall of the Berlin Wall in

⁴³ “The Hidden War”

Ogonek is because it does not have place within the framework of Glasnost, but rather as we move to the second aspect, it should be kept in mind that this was a possible influencing factor.

The second aspect is that the very nature and presence of Glasnost, points to the reality that significant changes were under way in the Soviet Union, and had the attention of the majority of the population – essentially they had their own more pressing matters to deal with. From the above mentioned revisiting with the past, to the new found participation by the people in politics, and even the “pop culture explosion.” “People who were not caught up directly in politics, whether their interest was Orthodox liturgy, rock music, or sexual techniques, became beneficiaries of glasnost”(Shane 185). Seemingly in every area of society the people of the Soviet Union were suddenly confronted with a transformation that not only had their attention, but also one which, more than ever before, they were able to participate in. From this perspective it becomes apparent that it was not necessarily a restriction or act of censorship which resulted in the absence of wall coverage in Ogonek, but more likely a result of an occurrence, which for most was outside the realm of everyday society, simply not acknowledged or considered to be of any significance in light of the massive societal transformation underway, which was of more immediate consequence. This probability is further borne out when looking at other Soviet news sources, but in particular the daily newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda, which unlike Ogonek provides within its pages coverage of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The purpose of introducing Komsomolskaya Pravda to the source material is in part to demonstrate that the absence of material dedicated to the fall of the Wall is not a product of censorship, but also to expand on the perspective of the other, that being the East German people, as well as to a limited extent the West Germans who did not welcome the end of the Berlin Wall, whose views are either neglected or controlled in Neues Deutschland and Der Spiegel. The first point is quite evident, based on the fact that Komsomolskaya Pravda contains a fair amount of material documenting the fall of the Wall. The second, the provision of an expanded East German perspective, is designed to present a more in depth illustration of what was omitted by Neues Deutschland, significantly framing it in a light which is decidedly Eastern Bloc, and in doing so expanding on the perspectives of those who desired to remain faithful to socialism, and which were in many ways entirely ignored by the account in Der Spiegel.

The first article to appear in Komsomolskaya Pravda, documenting the fall of the Berlin Wall is titled simply “Человек проходит сквозь стену”(Maslov 3).⁴⁴ Appearing in the issue from November 11th, it is not only the first of many subsequent articles dedicated to coverage of the Wall from the week immediately following the fall of the Wall, but also the most pertinent in content, focusing not on the peripheral fall out issues arising from the event, but rather on the moment itself. The article is in many ways similar to the lead story in Der Spiegel, providing the most current information available pursuant to what occurred on the night of November 9th, what is being done about it, and an outline of the

⁴⁴ “A Person Passing through the Wall”

anticipated impact moving forward. The focus here is on, among other things, the popular opinion of East Berliners on this new freedom, future relations with the West, the immediate logistical situation of such a mass of people running amok in West Berlin, and finally the perceived economic impact this constant visitation would have on the GDR and the FRG.

The author, Komsomolskaya Pravda's Berlin correspondent, S. Maslov, shapes his story initially around the background of an announcement by the East German government – Schabowski's name is not initially given – during a media broadcast declaring the borders now to be open to unrestricted travel to the West. As he himself had hurried to the Wall upon this announcement, the article continues with his eye-witness account as well as on sight interviews with the East Germans who had come to verify this news for themselves. In the course of documenting what he sees, as well as the interview dialogue, there is a fair amount of both analysis as well as speculation presented in the form of his own thoughts, as well as that of the interviewees, in regards to the significance of this event to the GDR.

On the whole the text can be characterized by an optimistic tone, with the author not taking anything away from the magnitude of the event, and recognizing the likely historical significance of it. In line with that general assessment it should be noted that the perspective from which the author writes can be described as relatively “neutral,” – key points such as the festival like atmosphere, the magnitude of the event, and the difficult situation which the GDR found themselves in, are present within the text and are voiced in a similar fashion to

that of their German counterparts. There are however two aspects of the text which are somewhat indicative of both an ideological agenda, and operating in conjunction with that, cultural preconceptions, which distinguish themselves from what is otherwise a fairly “neutral” account, in that it corresponds to its contemporaries, and from a historical perspective “accurate” account, in that there is no overt conflict with the established background. The first is the inherent distrust, bordering on hostility directed towards the West Berlin police and apparent in the manner in which they are portrayed. This is first evident when Maslov observes that:

Первое, что бросилась в глаза на другой стороне и чего не было на этой, множество полицейских автобусов зарешеченными окнами - бело-зеленые <воронки> западноберлинских стражей порядка. Подошел к одному из них с вопросом: <Почему так много полиции?> <Опасаемся выступлений определенных групп>. <Каких групп? - настаивал я. - За что или против чего они могут выступить?> <Против притока беженцев из ГДР. Есть люди, которые боятся, что это осложнит им жизнь>.

Таких выступлении я не увидел. Но присутствие значительных сил полиция оказалось кстати. (Maslov 3)⁴⁵

⁴⁵ The first thing that confronted my eyes on the other side, was the number of police vans with caged windows – the white and green of the “secret police cars” about. I went up to one of them with a question: “How come so many policeman?” “Concern over the actions of certain groups.” “Which groups?” I persisted, “For what or against whom can they act?” “Against the inflow of refugees from the GDR. There are people, who are afraid that this is a danger to their lives.”

Maslov's use of the word "воронки" is particularly telling, as the word refers not only to a "police cars," but more specifically is a slang term for a certain type of black unmarked car, used by and associated strictly with Stalin's secret police. The use of such a word is clearly not complimentary.

At a later point in the article, the author has the opportunity to speak with a West Berlin police inspector, and during the course of this discussion the inspector voices his concerns over the logistical difficulties of having so many people flooding into an urban area and overwhelming the capacity, particularly the transportation systems and their networks. The author seems to acknowledge this possibility but then abruptly discards it with a, "Это, конечно, мнение человека, который в данном случае ничего не решает"(Maslov 3)⁴⁶ There is in this instance a degree of ambiguity present, as in mentioning the inspector's opinion having no weight in the big picture, Maslov may simply be referring to his rank. However what tends to reinforce the fact that there is at least some type of aversion, fascination, etc... to the police, as opposed to simply reporting that there are a large number of police officers is again the presence of the "воронки," but also overall the disproportionate amount of the article dedicated to the illustration of the West Berlin police, particularly when the Der Spiegel articles make little mention of it.

The second is the number of interviewees who claimed to have no interest in abandoning their county, instead more than anything they were simply curious,

Such actions I never saw. The presence of this sizeable show of police force incidentally turned out to be required.

⁴⁶ "Of course this is the opinion of someone, who in the big picture decides nothing."

and interested in visiting the West but not relocating. There were in fact no more than handful of people interviewed, however it is very much elevated to being the consensus opinion. This is perhaps the most contentious and difficult to assess aspect of the article. Were there truly that many people still loyal to the country? According to Hertle, a great number of the people who went to the wall on the night of the 9th were indeed simply curious, and the numbers bore this out, as of the 68,000 people who visited the East between the time of the initial crossings and 08:00 the following morning, 45,000 of them returned within that same window (Hertle 214). However looking at the long term the level of emigration from East to West was extensive, with “über 70.000 DDR-Bürger siedelten allein im Januar in die Bundesrepublik über” (Hertle 276). Perhaps what is more telling is that whereas the Soviet account focuses on the people who apparently have little interest in emigrating, there is virtually no mention of these types within the pages of their West German counterparts. Consequently this discrepancy would seem to be more than anything an expression of the ideological divide, and the intrinsic underpinnings and allegiances of the two respective media sources.

Although lying outside of the source material for this investigation, this article remains crucial to the analysis, as it is a means of demonstrating that not only is a case for the presence of censorship in Ogonek difficult to make, but more importantly it provides a picture of how the event was received and in turn depicted in Soviet media. On the whole however, as much as Komsomolskaya Pravda functions to illustrate perspectives on the Wall appearing within Soviet Media, it is still the absence of accounts within Ogonek which is of the greatest

significance to textual media memory. When placing the content appearing in Ogonek in comparison with the absence of material in Neues Deutschland it is possible to highlight the difference between absence as a product of control, and the genuine absence occurring in Ogonek. Again to draw on the function of context, it is evident that content focus on issues stemming from Glasnost is located within its original genuine context, which is also characterized by an absence of Wall coverage. In comparison absence as a product of control, as is the case with Neues Deutschland, is an artificial one. The point could be made that Glasnost is similarly a means of control, however the underlying difference is that whereas Glasnost is a mode of control within society, resulting in societal transformation, the control taking place in Neues Deutschland is a direct one, whose result is as misrepresentation of society. The essential point to be gleaned from this particular section is that the beginning of textual media memory of the fall of the Wall, as contributed to by Ogonek, is therefore simply comprised of and characterized by two elements: Glasnost and absence.

Assessment

If this section has illustrated one thing more than any other it is that there is indeed a duality of perspective in how both the respective news apparatuses of the USSR and the two Germanys, as well as the German and Russian populations themselves, viewed the fall of the Berlin Wall. For the Russians their viewpoint was defined by government initiatives, resulting in the rapidly transforming

environment under Glasnost and Perestroika, which dictated a renewed interest in the direction of Soviet society, but more importantly memory of the Wall which defined itself through absence, in favour of a concentration on their own society. For Germany the picture was very much divided. The account presented in Der Spiegel offers an in depth recollection of what occurred on the evening of November 9th, however with some notable absences of its own which were demonstrative of the role of the function of context within textual media memory, but also resulted in the introduction of external themes which not only define the account as decidedly Western, but also provide an initial distortion of memory. In addition and in contrast, Neues Deutschland, although underscoring the extent to which the East German media control apparatus was paramount in determining what type of content would appear in the pages of the newspaper, unfortunately offered little in regards to the actual East German memory of the Wall.

As much as this first chapter demonstrates the mechanism and potential impact of context, the accounts of the fall of the Wall, and consequently the textual media memory, are not yet sufficiently removed from their original contexts of the event to have experienced much distortion in their content. Having illustrated the type of coverage that the fall of the Wall originally received in German and Russian media, and in doing so establishing the duality of perspective, moving forward it will be a question of how these portrayals evolve and distort over the first ten year period. With the significance of context also being established in this section, it will be an opportunity to not only witness the ten year anniversary accounts appearing within a new era and entirely different

context, but more importantly have the opportunity to see how this influences its depiction in media and consequently the memory of the Wall in 1999.

'99

Wir sind das Volk?

Russia was, and is, exactly where it had always been: in the realm of representation, utterly distracted by her own thwarted identity complex, whether in the time of Potemkin, de Custine, Stalin, or Putin. This time around, the country is entering the 'European house' by simulating a 'market economy', 'democracy', and 'postmodernism'. In reality, it remains exactly the same country as before, split between the reality of its own powerlessness and poverty, and the myth of its 'greatness'.

(Dobrenko, "Utopias of return: notes on (post-)Soviet culture and its frustrated (post)-modernisation")

There was excessive hope that prosperity would allow social integration, whereas truth and justice were 'tainted' because they were perceived as imposed by the West. In addition, *Aufarbeitung* seemed contaminated by the fact that so much of it, from the work of the EK to the reassessments of Ostpolitik, got caught up in West German party politics.

(Müller, "East Germany: Incorporation, Tainted Truth, and the Double Division")

The year is 1999. The world is on the verge of entering the new millennium and the last ten years have seen unprecedented levels of progress for some nations in an increasingly globalized, market-driven world, while others have struggled to emerge from the shadow of the Cold War and adapt to these new trends. In Europe in particular the outlook is very much ambiguous, what with the impending arrival of the Euro being both welcomed from an economic standpoint, yet feared from a cultural one as yet another step towards total integration among EU member states, and a further threat to their national identities. We can also look to the difficulties endured by former Warsaw Pact

nations, struggling to define themselves and re-establish their own identity after decades under communist reign, while simultaneously striving to integrate themselves into a European economy, which is eagerly anticipating the resource of cheap labour so long as it remains within its own borders. Finally the prospects for sustained peace stemming from the demise of the Cold War has been replaced by a series of far more violent ethnic conflicts in the Balkans, the products of instability left in the wake of fallen regimes and authoritarian control.

Germany and Russia are no exception to this general ten year trend of both progress and development in some areas, while plagued by an apparent regression in others. In Russia the welcomed opportunities provided by Perestroika and Glasnost, soon exposed the realities of a nation no longer able to function and sustain itself both politically and economically. What initially began as an exciting time of exploration and transformation within society rapidly evolved into a total collapse in government and a radical forced change in political system. As a consequence the decade of the 90's would be characterized by unemployment and poverty, as well as the unprecedented rise of organized crime, which in the absence of many government services, which were plagued by lack of funding, corruption and direction, provided alternatives for basic needs such as security. Culturally there is an ongoing struggle to engage with the turbulent Soviet past in an attempt to craft a new identity to define their culture in the new post-Soviet era, however struggling with the fact that "Post-Soviet culture is a culture of disintegration, the product of the USSR's collapse. That nation collapsed as a direct consequence of disintegration, rather than social protest"

(Dobrenko 165). As a result not only was there a lack of “desirable” history to draw on in discovering this new identity, but this deficiency was compounded by the fact that the turning point, the disintegration of the USSR, which was responsible for this new era, was not an ideal base upon which a new identity could be built.

Germany in contrast experienced a much more successful ten years although not without its own controversy and issues. The redistribution of wealth and labour occurring between the former East and West in particular posed significant problems to the economy, which although on the whole experienced fair growth throughout the decade, regional imbalances and the resulting migrations promoted both inflation and unsustainable demand. Culturally a desired unification for some was forced for others, and characteristically the coming together of two, in many ways surprisingly, different populations corresponded to a rise in extremism. Similarly the new freedom of speech being experienced by many in the former East Germany granted opportunity for some to express viewpoints long suppressed by authoritarian rule, in particular we can look to the transformation of the city of Dresden into a centre for German neo-Nazi activity.

On the whole however the process of reunification proceeded relatively smoothly, primarily as the GDR was essentially assimilated into the structure of the Federal Republic. As Jarausch notes:

The extension of the Basic Law to the new states was a gain, since its protection of human rights transformed an arbitrary legal system into a

functioning state under the rule of law (Rechtsstaat). The importation of a parliamentary democracy was also by and large positive, because it organized political competition between all German parties and the SED successor PDS according to accepted electoral rules and produced stable governments (“Beyond the National Narrative” 504).

Furthermore, a relatively strong economy and the prospect of occupying a leading role in an increasingly integrated European society were anticipated and looked on for the most part in a positive light, although as we shall see drew their fair share of critics as well. Questions of economic equality and the new German identity would emerge however as two of the greatest issues during this period that Germans would struggle with. “The social market economy made East Germans better off across the board, but did not eradicate the prosperity gap between East and West and made many East Germans feel like second-class citizens or even immigrants in the unified country” (Müller 272). Combined with reengaging with past German occasions of unification, this inequality would in many ways be both reflective as well as one of the key contributors to the identity “crisis,” which Germany experienced during this time.

What these realities of the past decade allude to is the extent to which the context in which wall memory is located in 1999 has changed considerably. Stemming from this, one of the primary questions to be approached in this chapter will be the effect of this change in context on textual media memory accounts as they appear in the source material. Further to that point this chapter will also provide opportunity to explore the extent to which the textual media memory

has evolved over the past decade and provide illustrations of these changes by examining the accounts in Der Spiegel and Ogonek. Finally, in illustrating the extent of this evolution of memory, the task of determining how this transformation has occurred will be a focus, particularly in light of the change which has taken place in regards to the environments and contexts in which these accounts now exist.

Der Spiegel Nr. 45, 1999

The November 1999 edition of Der Spiegel offers extensive coverage of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It pays tribute to not only the ten year anniversary of the Wall, but also utilizes the opportunity as a marker to assess the progress of the new unified Germany, particularly economically and socially, focusing on both where the nation is headed, and as ever the case with German society, coming to terms with its past. Accordingly the variety of topics presented as well as their tone contrast sharply with its ten year predecessor. Gone is the euphoric optimism, the product of having toppled the repressive East German regime, while the simplistic, ideal, and so very naive outlook on the prospects of a unified Germany are replaced instead by the much more trying and harsh realities that are the spawn of fusing two nations, who after almost forty years apart had a great deal less in common than perhaps it was realized. This tension is portrayed as being primarily a product of many East Germans feeling they have been ignored in regards to voice and are in danger of losing the only culture and identity they

possess, unable to adopt that of their western brothers, and there being little desirable common history to build upon between the two; it was very much the birth of a new nation. Simultaneously for West Germans it was a source of great ire and controversy that after decades of hard work to rebuild their society from its post-war ruins that it should suddenly be burdened again with the “deadweight” of the GDR, almost as if those same post-war hardships were being thrust upon them once again.

The focus article, “Planetarisches Visionen,”⁴⁷ offers first and foremost a curiously brief and almost “stereotypical” recount of the fall of the Wall. As one progresses through the article it becomes increasingly apparent that this is not only an anniversary and tribute to the fall of the Wall, but within the text the events of November 9th have a larger role as a marker or checkpoint – essentially an opportunity to reflect back on what has been achieved over the past decade – consequently delving into a number of topics that emerged over the previous decade and are now at the forefront of debate, in particular the new German identity, the difficulties of integration, and Germany’s future role in the EU. Analysis of this article offers an opportunity to first and foremost examine the extent to which memory of the fall of the Wall, which developed over the preceding ten years, appears within the text and its significance in demonstrating how some aspects of the Der Spiegel account from 1989 have become embedded as a part of textual media memory while others have not. Furthermore, this article sheds light on the process of introducing exterior issues to Wall memory by

⁴⁷ “Planetary Visions”

creating links through previously introduced issues, such as identity, and then expanding on the number of related themes which can be introduced such as the difficulties presented by past German unifications, as well as the future of a unified Germany within Europe and the EU. Ultimately analysis of these aspects serves to highlight not only once again the function of context in defining Wall memory, but of central importance to illustrate the ongoing evolution of Wall memory occurring in Der Spiegel.

The actual occurrence of the fall of the Wall is recalled only very briefly within the article, and can be seen as having two components. The first is the presentation of an “eye-witness” account: „Verwirrt tastet sie nach ihrer Handtasche. Vor ihr liegt die offene Grenze. Hinter ihr drängen ihre Ost-Berliner Mitbürger. Und dann ist kein Halten mehr. Die Frau rennt los, ein Mann im dunklen Mantel reißt sie mit, zwei junge Leute in Jeans und Turnschuhen stürmen an ihr vorbei. Hunderte folgen, tausende. Das Ende der DDR hat begonnen“ (30).⁴⁸ The second is the actual provision of how it is remembered: “Im kollektiven Gedächtnis der Deutschen sind diese Bilder fest verankert: Menschen, die sich am Grenzübergang umarmen, auf Trabis trommeln, auf der Mauer tanzen und "Wahnsinn" rufen, immer wieder: "Wahnsinn"; der Bürgermeister mit dem

⁴⁸ “Distracted she feels for her purse. In front of her lies the open border. Behind her push her fellow residents of East Berlin. And then there is no more restraint. The lady begins to run, a man in a dark coat pulls her along, two young people in jeans and runners storm by her. Hundreds follow, thousands. The end of the GDR has begun.”

roten Schal, der verkündet, dass "die Deutschen das glücklichste Volk" sind; die Nationalhymne im Bonner Parlament“ (30).⁴⁹

As indicators of how the fall of the Wall is remembered, these accounts are of considerable significance. The first one is a key example in demonstrating the extent to which memory has been compressed and distorted over the past decade evolving into a symbolic entity. This is evident primarily in the absence of any time parameters, as well as the degree to which the account is dramatized in the sense of the descriptors and style used to create an urgency or even mission for the individual in the account – her single crossing acts as the trigger for the release of the ‘hundreds’ and ‘thousands’ right behind her, and finally, “Das Ende der DDR.” Which checkpoint did this take place at? Over what time period did this occur? These questions cannot be answered because the memory is no longer of any genuine moment, but rather it has become a symbolic representation of what occurred, equating a single heroic crossing of the border with the disintegration of an entire nation. The moment the Wall came down is no longer a part of a much larger and more complex series of events that resulted in the end of the GDR, but rather it is now elevated to the cause of the demise of the GDR.

The second excerpt similarly illustrates particular snapshots as moments symbolic of the Wall, however in this case it is far more significant in that this is one of the first examples from any of the sources of a reference to a collective

⁴⁹ “These images are virtually fixed in the collective memory of Germans: People embracing one another at the border crossing, stomping on Trabis, dancing on the Wall and yelling, ‘Crazy,’ always again: ‘crazy’; the mayor with the red scarf, who announced that, ‘the Germans are the happiest people;’ the national hymn at the Bonn parliament.”

memory, including the provision of which elements are understood to comprise the memory of the fall of the Wall, such as people on the roofs of Trabis and people dancing on the Wall. This is not only an excellent example in regards to which aspects of the fall of the Wall have been retained, but furthermore alludes to an entirely new process which has not yet been witnessed whereby the textual media memory, which has already deviated from the original event, is being subsequently reinforced through prescription and laid out in an easily digested and accepted form.

Within the text these two components comprise the first half of a division that witnesses first the introduction and reinforcement of Wall memory, and then the future modification. This is an extremely important division to note as it represents two aspects to the formation of textual media memory stemming from a text. The first is the prescription of a memory, in this case a prefabricated memory presented to the reader as a reminder; this is demonstrative of how over the last ten years textual media memory has developed, and where it sits currently. The remainder of the article functions as the catalyst for further development and alteration of that memory, essentially consisting of the introduction of the current context to the memory of the fall of the Wall and its anniversary.

The question of identity in the new Germany can be seen as both one of those current context issues, as well as one which in part appears as an already embedded aspect of Wall memory, owing to its earlier introduction in the 1989 edition of *Der Spiegel* in the form of allusions to the Nazi past, as well as the prospects for a unified Germany. Accordingly it is a theme which pertains not

only to the future of German identity, but more significantly to the role of past history in shaping it and the linkage and the consequential influence it exerts on the other major topics present in the article. The tumultuous nature of German identity dictates that it is an extremely complex issue, however strictly as it appears within the text, it can be seen to be characterized by two main issues. The first is the notion of previous instances of German unity and the negative connotations they bring with them. This stems from, to an extent the First World War, but more so the Second World War and the aggressions and crimes committed by the Nazi regime. The second is the difficulties rooted in combining the GDR and FRG into a single unified Germany, and the accompanying issues inherent in East-West identity representation, specifically the location of this memory, particularly in light of the question of legitimacy or “authenticity” in regards to any East German identity contribution.

In regards to the first, the issues emerging from the text are again two-fold, the first concerning foreign perceptions and the inherent mistrust and misgivings that many governments harbour of having a unified Germany, as both of the most recent incarnations are directly linked to WWI and WWII. This mistrust is evident before the reader has even entered into the bulk of the article, with the introductory text proclaiming: “Zehn Jahre nach dem Mauerfall verbreitet sich wieder die Furcht vor deutscher Macht in ganz Europa. Bundeskanzler Schröder pocht auf die Größe des vereinten Landes. Doch Weltmacht will und kann

Deutschland nicht sein“ (30).⁵⁰ More specifically it is present in the statement that, „deutsche Bewegung macht Angst. Die europäischen Nachbarn waren alarmiert. Machten sich die Teutonen wieder einmal auf den Marsch zur Vorherrschaft in Europa“ (30)?⁵¹ These quotes allude to not only the present difficulties of other nations, particularly in Europe, in accepting a unified Germany, but furthermore, as one of the consequences of such a turbulent existence in past times of German unification, the German people have very little desirable history to draw on in defining a new unified identity.

This problem of creating a unified identity is accordingly the second issue for discussion. Specific to former citizens of the GDR, the authors of the article identify a number of issues primarily attributed to the fact that so many of the defining socio-cultural features of the GDR, which comprised East German identity, were seen as again undesirable, as well as to an extent illegitimate or artificial, as this identity was arguably maintained only by a regime through coercion and misinformation. For most East Germans however it is the only identity with which they can identify, and consequently they are reluctant to surrender this past, undesirable or not. Moreover the additional complexity of the hegemonic position, which the FRG occupied, must be recognized. Although it was a ‘reunification’ which took place, as already alluded to it is more accurately defined as an absorption of the GDR by West Germany, and consequentially

⁵⁰ “Ten years after the fall of the Wall the fear of German power is once again spreading throughout Europe. Chancellor Schröder insists that it is a simple matter of the size of the unified country. Yet a world power Germany cannot and does not want to be.”

⁵¹ “the German movement is creating fear. The European neighbours were alarmed. Are the Teutons once again on the march to European supremacy?”

many former citizens of the GDR feel that this was one more example of their own culture and identity being either ignored or lost.

This search for a unified identity from the past also touches on the larger difficulties of attempting to create one from the present and is inherent in the integration of East and West, and rooted in a much broader number of controversial issues, from infrastructure, to pension, to the need for economic stimulus, to the political system and election of officials required to work together within that system. This unease and tension is very much alluded to in the excerpt:

Normalität, hatte der jüngst gestorbene Publizist Johannes Gross 1995 in seinem Buch "Begründung der Berliner Republik" prophezeit, werde künftig vor allem "Normalität der Instabilität" bedeuten. Eine bittere Erkenntnis besonders für die Westdeutschen, die seit dem rasant gelungenen Wiederaufbau der fünfziger und sechziger Jahre auf einer Insel der Stabilität lebten (32).⁵²

What this story of two worlds demonstrates is not only the difficulties in locating common ground, but also more than anything the extent to which by 1999 the "honey moon," so very evident in the 89' account, was over. As much as originally the fall of the Wall was a source of such fantastic optimism, as this opportunity for a ten year reflection underscores, the difficulties and obstacles of integration are many and not to be easily overcome or simply pushed out of focus.

⁵² "In his book *The Founding of the Berlin Republic* the recently deceased publicist, Johannes Gross, had prophesized that normality in the future will primarily imply 'the normality of instability.' A bitter recognition especially for the West Germans, who since the swiftly accomplished reconstruction of the fifties and sixties have lived on an island of stability.

This analysis of the identity issue serves to illustrate the degree to which it was very much central to both German culture and society at this time, but also an aspect which found its way into and affected the process of reconstruction en masse – allocation of funds for rebuilding, amalgamation of federal bodies and services – during this period almost every facet of German life was in some way influenced by the process of reunification. Within the confines of this investigation, the appearance of the identity issue more importantly highlights the extent to which there is within the text the creation of a link through the medium of identity between remembering the fall of the Wall, and the greater past history of Germany. There is no direct tangible connection between the fall of the Wall and the turbulent past of Nazi Germany. Instead there is a process occurring whereby elements, such as the identity issue, are being introduced into prior accounts of the fall of the Wall, as described in the previous chapter, and are essentially becoming embedded as a part of the textual media memory. On that basis the identity issue once again appears in the current era's memory and functions as a relay or conduit through which additional issues relevant to identity, as well as the current context, that of 1999, can be more easily introduced, such as the difficulties of East-West integration or the mistrust stemming from past occasions of German unity

Comprising the latter half of the article are questions surrounding Germany's future in the new Europe and on a larger scale the world. These are some of the most controversial issues dissected in the text, as evidenced by the diverse number of ways in which these questions are critically approached, be it

historical, economic, or political. In a series of comments and citations the authors of the article provide examples the broad spectrum of opinion on Germany's future with thoughts ranging from, "Ist Deutschland gar schon auf dem Wege, "ein Gegengewicht zur amerikanischen Hegemonie zu schaffen" (33)?⁵³ „ to comments proposing Germany as, “ "eine bestimmende Weltkraft in durchaus positivem Sinn"? Oder vielleicht das "Zentrum des sich herausbildenden Europäischen Systems"“ (33),⁵⁴ and even, „Bauen die wieder vereinigten Deutschen womöglich ein "Viertes Reich", was 1989 gerade bei westlichen Nachbarn eine weit verbreitete Befürchtung war“ (33)?⁵⁵ The reality and the conclusion presented however is that Germany cannot help but to continue its ascension in regards to its position and influence in international affairs both in Europe and the world. A quotation in the text from the then Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer summarizes this best stating: "Ein Staat kann von seinem strategischen Potenzial, das sich aus seiner Bevölkerungsgröße, seiner Wirtschaft, seiner Rüstung und seinen Interessen ergibt, nicht einfach zurücktreten, kann seine geopolitische Lage nicht ignorieren und bleibt demnach ein objektiver Machtfaktor, ob er das politisch will oder nicht“(33).⁵⁶

The outcome as summarized in Fischer's comments alludes to the potential for a much brighter future both for the creation of a new German identity

⁵³ "Is Germany well on its way to establishing itself as a counterweight to American hegemony?"

⁵⁴ "a definite world power in the most positive sense' or perhaps, 'the centre of the developing European system,'"

⁵⁵ "Are the Germans, once again united, possibly building a 'Fourth Reich,' which was already a fear of western neighbours in 1989?"

⁵⁶ "A state cannot simply renounce its strategic potential, which stems from its population size, its economy, its arms, and its interests, it cannot ignore its geopolitical situation, and accordingly remains an objective power influence, whether it is politically desired or not."

and Germany's role in the new Europe. Fischer further states that, „die Erweiterung und Vertiefung der EU (ist) eine Sache der Friedens- und Sicherheitspolitik. Wie sein Kanzler Schröder denkt er dabei freilich weniger an die Vergangenheit, wie die Flakhelfer-Generation, sondern eher an die Zukunft, an die Bändigung von Nationalismus und ethnischer Konflikte auf dem Balkan oder im Kaukasus“ (35).⁵⁷ Taken together his statements essentially outline and recognize the potential components of what a new German identity may comprise: A Germany rooted within the EU as a leader and an economic pillar, on which the rest of the European Union will rely, whose interests are not only national – creating a strong and prosperous Germany – but also international as a team player and a force of stability and security within the European community and the world. Recognition of this potential saving grace for German identity is most evident in the assessment that “Wie für Kohl führt auch für Fischer ein gerader Weg von der gefallenen Mauer nach Maastricht: Der Euro ist der Preis für die Einheit. Die Transformation der Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion in einen europäischen Staatenverbund mit gemeinsamer Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik erscheint aus deutschem Blickwinkel nur folgerichtig und wünschenswert“ (36).⁵⁸

The presence of this issue of Germany's future role and identity, much like the instance of engaging with the difficulties inherent in East West unification, as

⁵⁷ “The expansion and consolidation of the EU (is) a matter of peace and security policy. Like his Chancellor Schröder, he thinks of course less to the past, as the Flak helper generation would, instead more to the future, and the repression of nationalism and ethnic conflict in the Balkans or in the Caucuses.”

⁵⁸ “Just as it did for Kohl, the fall of the Wall for Fischer leads down a path to Maastricht. The Euro is the price for unity. The transformation of the economic and monetary union into a European association of states with common foreign and security policies from a German perspective seems only logical and desirable.”

well as Germany's troubled unified past is quite simply one more example of current contextual topics being admitted to the memory of the fall of the Berlin Wall through the conduit of identity. Of greater significance, the inclusion of material which predicts a possible future of the unified German nation, presents an interesting opportunity whereby, similar to the function of the identity issue appearing in the 1989 article as a gateway for the introduction of additional issues in this era, the topic of Germany's future occupies a similar position, and suggests that moving forward the theme of identity will continue to occupy a space within German Wall memory.

Der Spiegel of 1999 depicts an interesting evolution of textual media memory of the Berlin Wall. This transformation of memory is perhaps best characterized by the fact that in this era the fall of the Wall is not so much being remembered as an event, but rather the occurrence is presented as synonymous with the repercussions of reunification, such as the identity issue and East-West integration. The process of analysing this dynamic has revealed the extent to which contemporary exterior issues are introduced via context to a memory, while in doing so simultaneously highlighting the degree to which this process also allows for the introduction of issues which concern themselves directly with the potential future evolution of German textual media memory of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Ogonek Nr. 33, 1999

The transformation in the overall variety of content within the pages of Ogonek from 1989 to 1999, is easily the most pronounced of any occurring between source eras. Gone are the long and tedious re-evaluations of Stalin's crimes, the rather bland offerings of the approved Soviet art, and the assessments of Soviet progress in Afghanistan. In their place are articles focusing on tennis stars, internet addiction, and even a small blurb on the Dalai Lama and his struggle for Tibetan autonomy. The material is not however comprised entirely of such arms-length and nebulous topics. There is equally a significant amount of space devoted to the realities of the time that were impacting a large portion of the Russian population. There is one article, for example, which deals with the issue of living conditions in Moscow, while another touches on the delicate state of the economy and the difficult task of composing the upcoming Russian budget for the year 2000. The nature of the content may have shifted from Glasnost approved to unrestricted, however the material still occupies itself with issues central to Russian society, which in this era, as alluded to in the introduction, are characterized chiefly by an ongoing struggle to re-establish and rebuild that society in a post-Soviet environment.

In regards to material dedicated to the fall of the Wall, the most immediately apparent difference between Ogonek in 99' and its 89' predecessor is the presence of content which does in fact acknowledge the event, albeit relegated to a single brief account. Entitled, "германия объединилась по

недоразумению”⁵⁹ the article provides an account of the Wall’s demise in a paragraph sized, “interesting fact/did you know-style” format, offering only the most basic of details in describing the event. Although minimal in content the article does nonetheless illustrate the degree to which the fall of the Wall occupied a place within Russian media at the time, as well as the extent to which textual media memory of the fall of the Wall has evolved as compared to its previous incarnation in 1989, as evidenced by its content, format, as well as on a larger scale the space it occupied within Russian society.

As the article is very brief, for the purpose of analysis it is possible for it to be included here in its entirety:

Ровно десять лет назад партийный руководитель ГДР Эгон Кренц решил либерализировать и подписал указ о свободе передвижения восточных немцев. Предполагалось тихо-мирно ввести в оборот новые загранпаспорта и милостиво разрешить проставлять туда визы. Не более того. Черновик указа Кренц отдал товарищу по партии Гюнтеру Шабовски, когда тот шел пообщаться с прессой. На пресс-конференции вечером девятого ноября 1989 года, когда исчерпались все темы, товарищ Шабовски достал из широких штанин черновичок: «Вот тут, кстати, указ. Отныне восточным немцам можно проходить через любые границы». Пресс-конференция шла в прямом телеэфире.

⁵⁹ “Germany United through Misunderstanding”

Через секунду берлинские квартиры опустели. Все ринулись ломать «Стену» (6).⁶⁰

In looking at the aforementioned aspects of content, format, and space which the material occupies within Russian society, there are a number of points which emerge as significant to the overall impression of the fall of the Wall and the associated textual media memory. To begin with content, much like its German counterpart from this era, the article depicts a very abbreviated and arguably inaccurate picture of the fall of the Wall, particularly when compared to the established historical account. This inaccuracy can be seen to occur on multiple levels, inherent in both what is present as well as what is absent. Looking at what is present, the article is characterized by a compression of events with only the most key details necessary for framing and illustrating what occurred on the evening of the 9th provided. This is particularly evident when looking at the motivation behind the actions of both Krenz and Schabowski, for example in the sentence, “...Эгон Кренц решил либеральничать и подписал указ о свободе передвижения восточных немцев,”⁶¹ there is no allusion to why these two players acted as they did, rather it is implicit that their actions were for the good

⁶⁰ Exactly ten years ago the party leader of the GDR Egon Krenz decided to pretend to be a liberal and sign a contract concerning freedom of movement for East Germans. It was intended to be a calm and peaceful introduction into circulation of the new cross-border passport and graciously allow for visas to West Berlin to be filled in. That was all. Krenz gave a draft of the law to fellow party comrade Günther Schabowski, on his way to meet the press. At the press conference in the evening of the 9th of November 1989, when all other topics had been addressed, comrade Schabowski produced from his pocket the draft: “Incidentally here is the law. Henceforth East Germans will be permitted to pass through any border of their choosing.” The press conference went straight to television. Within seconds Berlin apartments vacated. Everyone rushed to demolish “the wall.”

⁶¹ “...Egon Krenz decided to pretend to be a liberal and sign a contract concerning freedom of movement for East Germans.”

of the people, and not as history documents for the good of the SED and preservation of system. The reader consequently receives the false impression that the opening of borders on the night of November 9th when the Wall came down was strictly the product of a government controlled process.

To focus now on the inherent absence within the text, this aspect can also be characterized by the function of compression, however from the perspective of compression resulting in an omission of both time, as well as key events. In regards to the latter obviously there are a number of notable exclusions, the most significant one being the role the people played in overrunning the checkpoints. The most prominent example of time compression is the description of, “*Через секунду берлинские квартиры опустели. Все ринулись ломать «Стену».*”⁶² Essentially in the span of two sentences the reader is presented with what is a week’s worth of events. The reason for such compression of events, beyond the issue of format, which is still to be discussed, particularly when focusing on the absence of key information and facts, is not entirely clear. One such possible explanation lies in the need for manipulation which is better explained by the idea of the absence of result.

When looking at this notion of absence as it pertains to result, it is productive to frame it in the context of addressing the question of what was the result of the Wall coming down? Obviously the most immediate consequence was the beginning of the end of the East German regime and nation. We can also look to its role as a significant precursor to regime change in the Soviet Union. What is

⁶² “Within seconds Berlin apartments vacated. Everyone rushed to demolish ‘the wall.’”

important however is that as much as the Wall's demise to an extent functioned as a catalyst resulting in those outcomes, much earlier in this investigation it was recognized that the fall of the Wall in many ways became elevated to a symbolic role or metaphor for those consequences. The absence of any mention of those consequences, points to the possibility that one of the greatest reasons there is so little content dedicated to the Wall is that it is a harsh reminder and symbol of the hardships endured over the last decade. One of the goals of the introduction to this chapter was to outline the extent to which at the present juncture in Russian history the socio-economic situation in Russia was very poor. Consequently there is no mention of the result and symbolic meaning of the fall of the Wall, rather it is depicted as strictly an isolated incident involving the former GDR.

The fall of the Wall as such an "undesirable" event or memory particularly at this point, is important to keep in mind. Much like the aspect of predicting the future role of Germany in the EU, one of the additional functions of this aspect is the manner in which it speaks to the theme of undesirability as a product of the current context. Moreover as we shall see in future accounts of Ogonek, it also acts as a conduit similar to the theme of identity in *Der Spiegel* which results in the introduction of themes to the text of the Ogonek account in 2009 which do not necessarily conform to the exterior context in which the article is located.

Assessing these discrepancies in content lead to further issues in regards to the evolution of textual media memory on the whole. Whereas in the case of German memory it was possible to track the evolution of these discrepancies from the first article in *Der Spiegel* to that of this era, in this case the question is from

where does this perspective originate? In part the answer to this question lies in the next aspect: format. The format of this particular article is realistically not in the style of a news weekly story, but rather it is much more reminiscent of the type of news update that one would find in a news daily. My intention is not to make the case that this account is in some shape or form the descendant or evolution of what appeared in Komsomolskaya Pravda in regards to content. The goal here is to highlight the fact that much like the only mention of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 came in the form of news updates, because so much attention was being paid to the issues emerging from Glasnost and Perestroika, similarly in this case the size and format of the article are one more indication of the fact that memory of the Wall is of little significance in the face of ongoing issues in Russian society.

Working in conjunction with this aspect of format is the final point of the space which this account occupies. Obviously it is now apparent that one of the defining features of this article, based on format, is the extent to which it is a product of its environment. As alluded to in the introduction to this chapter the state of affairs in Russia or context in which this article finds itself in at this time, was not exactly one of prosperity, although by 1999 the situation was beginning to change. However memories of the past decade were still fresh in the minds of many Russians, particularly from an economic standpoint, which arguably is of greatest concern to the people, when it is severely affecting their standard of living. As Garcelon writes in his work *Revolutionary Passage : >From Soviet to Post-Soviet Russia, 1985-2000*, one of the greatest issues towards the end of the

90's as a consequence of the Yeltsin led privatization reforms of state property was that, "little investment flowed to retool factories or create service-oriented enterprises to meet the needs of the Russian populace... (as a result) a growing minority of the population failed to receive regularly paid salaries or pensions, while the salaries and pensions of those who got such payments often proved too meager to live off" (213). As a further consequence, "many Russians experienced some degree of "cash starvation" during the reform process, meaning that day-to-day economic survival depended on the handout of goods on factory floors, barter arrangements, and the tried-and-true Russian tradition of growing potatoes and cabbage on small private plots allotted citizens under the Soviet regime" (Garcelon 213). With these struggles forming the backdrop and context in which this article finds itself, it is of little surprise that the anniversary to fall of the Wall was given such little attention.

To expand this significance of context to focus on the evolution of Wall memory itself, it is quite evident that the changes occurring between 1989 when Wall memory was defined by absence and Glasnost, to this era when it is similarly defined by societal issues, are fundamentally not as great as it may have first appeared. In both cases memory of the Wall, or lack thereof, can be seen to be a product of the environment and context in which it is presented, while furthermore they both share a focus on the societal issues, which concerned the Russian people far more than the fall of the Berlin Wall. What this section has demonstrated, particularly through the process of evaluating the article's content and format, is the extent to which unlike its predecessor, in Ogonek of 99' the

Wall to a certain degree can be interpreted as occupying a negative position in Russian textual media memory, specifically as a symbol of the disintegration of the USSR, which led to a decade's worth of uncertainty and hardship. Looking ahead to 2009 this characterization of the fall of the Wall occupying a negative space within textual media memory will be key to understanding and tracking the further evolution of Wall memory.

Assessment

What this chapter has shown more than anything is the degree to which context, that is the environment in which the article appears, influences the content of memory. In the instance of the German account, there is the introduction of contemporary issues, such as East-West integration and Germany's role in the new Europe, through the conduit of identity, which had previously been introduced in the 89' era of Der Spiegel. These issues ultimately define the account more than any actual tribute or memory of the fall of the Wall itself. The Russian article is likewise defined by the context in which it finds itself, however the embodiment of this context is not seen in the text itself, but rather in the absence of result.

In regards to the evolution of memory there have been a number of distinct trends and progressions emerging. Looking at the German accounts, it was apparent how compressed and abbreviated the original memory of the fall of the

wall had become, resulting in a very symbolic and “stereotypical” depiction of the events of November 9th, while significantly having become quite distorted in regards to what specific facts and moments comprise these symbolic illustrations. Beyond that initial memory provision, it was also interesting to witness how exterior issues such as identity, introduced in the previous era, remained to an extent embedded within the account and allowed for the further introduction of themes and topics specific to the context and environment of 1999.

The Russian memory, to recap, was very much similar to its predecessor in that it was defined primarily through the context in which it is located. As a result the evolution occurring has been very much rooted in the exterior progression of Russian society, best depicted by, unlike in the previous era, the actual presence of an account of the fall of the Wall. As demonstrated this account is however one which has been manipulated and is characterized by an absence of result in order for it to be removed of its symbolic role as responsible for the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and subsequent hardships.

Finally this chapter was also the first opportunity to evaluate the extent to which there has been a confluence of memory occurring between the two streams. Unfortunately at this point this remains extremely difficult to determine. What is for certain is that both memory streams have been exposed to similar modes of modification in their respective evolutions, specifically a compression of events, as well as the introduction of exterior issues stemming from the contexts in which the accounts find themselves. The actual content however remains quite divided,

particularly as the Russian account does not even acknowledge the role of the people, while its German counterpart is characterized by an elevation of the briefest snapshot moments, such as when the first citizens of the GDR streamed across the border, to being symbolic of the end of an entire nation. With the aspect of memory evolution and transformation still very much unclear the final era of 2009 will be that much more crucial in determining an outcome to this central question.

2009

Wir sind das Volk

9 ноября 1989 года в 22:30 офицер контрольно-пропускного пункта "Борнхольмер штрассе" в Восточном Берлине позвонил вышестоящему начальнику в погранслужбе ГДР и доложил: "Сдерживать толпу больше невозможно. Я открываю ворота".⁶³

(Огонёк No. 26, 2009, „Потомки Берлинской стены“)

22.30 Uhr, Berlin, Grenzübergang

Bornholmer Straße

Die Ventillösung hat zunächst für Beruhigung gesorgt am Grenzübergang. Jäger hat drei Schalter aufgemacht, die Glücklichen müssen in eine Schleuse, die hinten durch eine Fahrstuhltür wieder verschlossen wird.⁶⁴

(Der Spiegel Nr. 45, 2009, “Die Nacht der Wildschweine”)

It is remarkable that from two different sources, thus far representative of two separate and distinct memory streams, there is suddenly a focus on the identical moment and its association to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Granted each account goes about its portrayal in a different manner, however the fact that these source accounts exhibit such similarity when previously they had so very little in

⁶³ On the 9th of October, 1989, at 22:30, the officer at the control point “Bornholmer Strasse” in East Berlin, telephoned to higher command at the office for border control of the GDR and reported: “It is no longer possible to hold the crowd. I am opening the gate.”

⁶⁴ 22:30, Berlin, Border crossing

Bornholmer Strasse

The solution of venting initially provided for calm at the border crossing. Jäger opened up three counters, the lucky ones had to pass through a double passage system, which became closed by a turnstile behind them.

common in regards to the memory of the moments surrounding the fall of the Wall, is quite significant. Does it however extend beyond these solitary representations? This final era in Wall memory twenty years after its fall offers an opportunity to reflect on the much more defined trends and evolution of memory which have developed, in order to ultimately arrive at a much more definitive statement in regards to the question of memory confluence which drives this project. This does not however eliminate the need or subordinate the importance of evaluating the relationship existing between the articles and the contexts in which they are located in this era. Similar to the previous chapter, the last ten years have witnessed significant change in the societies of both Russia and Germany, which have the potential to impact greatly upon the content of memory.

In 1999 Germany was very much at a turning point both socially as well as economically. While many economic indicators projected Germany to be entering into a new age of prosperity, societal and cultural questions, such as the future of German identity, still remained very much in flux. Come 2009 in regards to economy not only were the economic factors alluded to by Fischer and Kohl in “Planetarisches Visionen” significant to Germany’s ascension as an economic power, but furthermore the German economic model (*Modell Deutschland*) of CME, or Coordinated Market Economy, although criticised as being too rigid and unable to adapt to an ever changing global economy, would be a saving grace come the world-wide financial crash of 2009, resulting in Germany being able to remain relatively unmolested (Allen 377). On a socio-cultural level, many of the issues which in the past, particularly the previous era, had comprised the identity

debate, such as East-West integration, had become in many ways exhausted. As Langenbacher writes in 2010, “not only are there multiple collective memories circulating and vying for influence (based on holocaust, German suffering, and the GDR), but there is also evidence of diminishing interest in *all* collective memories. A quarter of a century of vigorous memory work may be coming to an end” (82). Germany in 2009 appears to have achieved what was predicted of it economically, while in doing so, whether as a direct consequence or not, witnessed a cooling in the identity debate in regards to the construction of a new common German identity and its origins. Best put “at sixty, the FRG has entered a comfortable middle age, leaving behind some of its earlier drama, but exuding a sense of competent normalcy. The mythical challenges of postwar reconstruction and recovery of international respectability have receded, followed instead by everyday concerns, the proverbial Mühen der Ebene, that are much less exhilarating” (Jaraus, “Federal Republic at Sixty” 28)

For Russia after the hardship and uncertainty which characterized the 1990’s, the proceeding decade would see a notable improvement in industrial output, as a product of a surge in oil, gas, and metal prices. This increase would roughly corresponded to a rise in earnings and living standards which, “recovered sharply and by 2007 it was claimed that on average they were back to the levels at the start of the transition” (Haynes 51). Haynes notes that this rise could in part be attributed to the Putin presidency, who “began to regain some control and used the opportunity to reintroduce a degree of order (51). However as is often the case, stability is a product of heightened control, and although Russia under the

guidance of Vladimir Putin became arguably a more stable country, it was at the cost of civil liberties, which for some was too high of a cost, although by no means the majority. Putin's populist approach to politics endeared him to a nation longing to regain the international image and respect they once possessed during the years of the Soviet Union, and to an extent he was successful, and through his own antics and rhetoric returning a certain "swagger," as superficial as it may be, to the view other nations had of Russia and its place in the international community. Come 2008 when markets crashed, and the ensuing financial crisis, many experts speculated that Russia would be better suited to weather the storm as a result of greater centralized control, particularly in the oil and gas sectors. This however would not be the case and in 2009 the workforce would witness a 30% drop in disposable income per capita (Haynes 49) – Russia had re-entered into a financial crisis.

With context having exerted a considerable influence thus far in defining the content of the accounts in both *Der Spiegel* and *Ogonek*, it once again is to be a focus for analysis, particularly in the face of some of the superficial similarities emerging. Does a confluence in memory reflect a conversion in context? This chapter will therefore provide an opportunity to not only investigate the relationship between content and contemporary context, but ultimately pave the way for arriving at a definitive conclusion in regards to the extent and nature of the transformation of textual media memory of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Der Spiegel, Nr. 45, 2009

To look at the previous two eras of remembering the fall of the Berlin Wall and the type of material appearing, there were a number of thematic trends beginning to emerge as embedded within the text, such as Wall memory as an occasion for approaching issues of German identity, that might lead one to predict the presence of similar content in 2009. It is accordingly somewhat of a revelation that issue Nr. 45 is void of the shallow and compressed recounts of moments at the Wall and the stereotypical images, which were characteristic of past editions. Similarly there is a notable absence of any direct engagement with the societal issues which were central to memory of the fall of the Wall in the 1999 edition and to a lesser extent 1989. There is in fact only a single article dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Wall, and takes the form of a detailed historical investigation, concerned not with the growing pains and continued consequences the fall of the Wall has had and may continue to have on German society, but rather offers the impression of being reflective of a maturing German society, able to more comfortably reflect back on the events that occurred on the evening of November 9th.

The article itself is characterized by a poignant and effective means of outlining exactly how November 9th unfolded. It is in fact styled in a manner quite similar to that of Hertle's *Chronik der Mauerfall* – indeed he is later acknowledged as the primary source, although not an author – utilizing a structure comprised of time-location segments to provide a play-by-play type account of

events leading up to the fall of the Wall. This method is particularly useful in presenting and highlighting specific details that played a key role in the Wall coming down, as it introduces a means to structure the many simultaneously occurring events, which require a sequence to be understood, and otherwise would seem much more nebulous and difficult to follow. There is however a key difference between the two methods as employed by the respective authors and that is whereas Hertle allows the facts and information necessary to produce a historical account to guide the content of his segments, in the article being analysed here, the time-location segments are restricted to covering the actions of a select few characters and locations. In analysing this approach it becomes evident that this focus on character functions as means of developing the characters and fashioning a narrative around them. This section will accordingly focus on the significance of these characters and the narrative they construct, specifically the allegorical roles they occupy, the article in its own capacity as an allegorical representation of the East German contribution to German identity, and the accompanying relationship between that representation and the context of German society in which it appears.

As stated the article is primarily constructed around the actions of a select few individuals, specifically Günther Schwabowski, Gerhard Lauter, and Oberstleutnant Jäger, as they go about their daily tasks on November 9th. That the fall of the Wall is retold through these characters is not in itself the source of the embedded dramatic narrative, rather it is most evident in the pains taken to develop the character of each individual, particularly when focusing on the

extraneous information presented, which from a historical stance has no bearing on the event in question. This aspect is most prominent with the character of Jäger, with whom it is that the account begins. Oberstleutnant Jäger's historical role in all of this revolves around his position of border guard and his legacy as the one who ordered the crossing gate to be opened at Bornholmer Straße. One might think that an illustration of the Wall would focus strictly on his actions at the Bornholmer Straße control point in his capacity as a senior border guard. Instead the reader is introduced to Jäger under the heading: 07:00, as he prepares to leave for work in the morning: "Harald Jäger nimmt an diesem Morgen den Dienstwagen, um zur Arbeit zu kommen. Er ist stellvertretender Leiter der Passkontrolleinheit, die nächsten 24 Stunden ist er im Dienst, darum darf er den Dienstwagen benutzen" (56).⁶⁵ At this time the reader is also presented with a description of his character much like one would expect in a novel: „Harald Jäger, 45 Jahre alt, seit 25 Jahren bei der Staatssicherheit, führt ein Doppelleben. Seine drei Kinder wissen, dass er am Grenzübergang Bornholmer Straße Pässe kontrolliert, dass er bei der Stasi ist, wissen sie nicht“ (56).⁶⁶ Again this illustration has no bearing on the historical process leading to the demise of the Wall, but as a nod to character development within the allegorical narrative of the text is a valuable inclusion.

⁶⁵ "On this morning Harald Jäger is taking the duty car to get to work. He is the deputy head of the passport control unit, who are on duty for the next 24 hours, because of which he is permitted to use the duty car."

⁶⁶ "Harald Jäger, 45 years old, for 25 years employed by state security, leads a double life. His three kids are aware that he verifies passports at the Bornholmer Strasse border crossing, that he is with the Stasi, is something they do not know."

The type of character which Jäger is portrayed as is significant. Although he is employed by the Stasi, he is by no means depicted as being “bad,” rather he is, despite his fairly senior military rank, very much the average working man, of good sense and values, earning his keep, particularly evident in the description of, “Jäger sieht sich nicht als Schnüffler, sondern als Staatsdiener, der hilft, den Sozialismus, diese wunderbare Idee der Solidarität und Brüderlichkeit, zu verteidigen” (56).⁶⁷ As we shall see, within the narrative Jäger is located as the protagonist and very much the antithesis to Schabowski, who is presented in the mould of someone who is lazy, dishonest, and corrupt. This opposition to one another is especially apparent in Jäger’s view of Schabowski:

Allerdings: Jüngeren Kadern, wie dem Berliner Parteichef Günter Schabowski, traut er auch nicht. Der hat auf einer Parteiaktivtagung die 40 000 Mark für den neuen Wartburg zornig verteidigt, Qualität habe nun mal ihren Preis.“ Am Nachmittag desselben Tages hat Jäger denselben Schabowski auf einer 1.-Mai-Veranstaltung in einem Volvo vorfahren sehen, das hat gereicht, um ihn für ihn unglaublich zu machen (56).⁶⁸

Moving to Schabowski, the reader is first introduced to him in the identical setting as Jäger: at his home. It is here that this character’s diametric opposition to Jäger is first made evident in the form of his morning routine.

⁶⁷ „Jäger does not consider himself to be a snoop, but rather as a civil servant, who helps to defend socialism, this wonderful idea of solidarity and brotherhood.”

⁶⁸ „Everything equal: Younger cadres, like the Berlin party chief Günther Schabowski, he also did not trust. At a party convention he’s the one who had heatedly defended the 40,000 Mark cost for the new Wartburgs. Quality after all does have its price. In the afternoon of that same day Jäger saw that same Schabowski at a 1st of May program drive up in a Volvo, which was enough to forfeit all credibility in Jäger’s eyes.

Whereas Jäger is “fortunate” to take the duty car to work, as his used Wartburg is in need of repair, Schabowski,

Von der Waldsiedlung Wandlitz, dem Ghetto der Politbürokraten, in der Schabowski mit seiner Familie lebt, bringt ihn der Volvo jeden Morgen ins ZK-Gebäude. Honecker hat die russischen Straßenkreuzer ausgetauscht gegen diese Volvos, damit seine Leute in Autos herumfahren wie ihre westlichen Gegenspieler; ein Mercedes, so Schabowski, roch ihm zu sehr nach Klassenfeind (57).⁶⁹

This also highlights that while Jäger lives with his family in the more working class neighbourhood of Hohenschönhausen, Schabowski lives among the privileged politicians who received luxury housing arrangements in a secure, gated community, but also further defines Schabowski’s character through the ironical tone present in the use of the word “Ghetto” and the idea of him not wanting to be a class enemy, despite the fact that his actions and depiction serve only to reinforce this notion.

The third character which the narrative follows is that of Gerhard Lauter. In his capacity as the department head for passport control within the East German Ministry for the Interior, Lauter is portrayed very much as a neutral character who is a component of the East German system. He is neither an idealist as Jäger is, nor is he spoiled and lazy in the shape of Schabowski. Quite simply he

⁶⁹ „From the Waldsiedlung Wandlitz, the Ghetto of the political bureaucrats, in which Schabowski lives with his family, he commutes in the Volvo every morning to the ZK building. Honecker exchanged the Russian land yachts in favour of the Volvos, so that his people drive around in cars similar to those of their western opposition; a Mercedes, to Schabowski, smelled too much like a class enemy.“

is a mechanism. This depiction is reinforced by the fact that at 09:00, when the reader is first introduced to his character, Lauter is not at home preparing for work in the manner of Jäger and Schabowski, but rather already at work in the confines of his office, and to that extent there is never any mention of him having any residence or family, only the office. In his role as one of the key individuals tasked with preparing the incoming travel law, his personal perspective or opinion is never provided, as a means of developing his character's beliefs, as per the other two.

What these characterizations allude to is the extent to which Jäger, Schabowski, and Lauter occupy symbolic roles within the narrative of the fall of the Wall as it is presented in the article. These three players, their actions and descriptions taken together function as an allegorical representation within the text of the identity debate, specifically as a critique of which aspects of East German society/identity are represented in the overall dynamic of East-West integration, with the portrayals of the three characters representing various perspectives from within East German society and how these perspective have fared over the past two decades. This is inherent not only in the characterizations presented, but to a larger extent the narrative structure in which they are delivered, comprised of an initial background, the actions they take on the day of the 9th, and the eventual outcomes they find themselves in, the last component illustrated through the provision of a summary of their lives after the fall of the Wall and where they are today.

The character of Jäger is cast as a representation of not only the “average” East German, but even more so the “other” or forgotten East German. It is not just the description of Jäger as a hard-working, and loyal individual who still believes in socialism, but of greater impact, and in-line with the idea of narrative structure, the outcome which he finds himself in post-reunification is significant in defining this type of character:

8000 Mark Abfindung hat er bekommen, als der neue deutsche Staat die Dienste der Stasi-Leute nicht mehr brauchte; als Zeitungsverkäufer hat der Oberstleutnant dann gearbeitet, später als Eisverkäufer, zuletzt als Wachhabender, erst für 5,50 Euro die Stunde, dann für 4,60 Euro. Seine Frau: lange arbeitslos, seine Enkel: inzwischen auch. "Arbeitslosigkeit gehört zum Kapitalismus", das hat ihn nicht überrascht (71).⁷⁰

The resulting feeling is accordingly one of sympathy towards Jäger, and by default sympathetic recognition of the forgotten East German, but more importantly forces the reader to acknowledge and consider the existence of the Jäger type of individual in a more positive light. It is however the opposing relationship existing between Jäger and Schabwoski, which makes the author's critique possible and underscores his perspective, specifically greater representation of the forgotten other, who believed in the GDR and the principles

⁷⁰ „He received 8000 Marks in compensation, as the new German state no longer required the services of the Stasi people; the Lieutenant Colonel worked then as a newspaper vendor, later as an ice cream vendor, and finally as a security guard, at first for 5,50 Euro per hour, then for 4,60 Euro. His wife: for a long time now unemployed, his grandson: the same. ‘Unemployment belongs to capitalism,’ that did not surprise him.”

of socialism, which thus far has been almost entirely been ignored in the accounts present in *Der Spiegel* and, as a consequence, memory as well.

Schabowski is in contrast representative of the citizens of the GDR who were anxious to embrace more western values, a curious choice considering he was a member of the SED, however significant in the light of the pseudo-class struggle occurring, which will be discussed in due time. Schabowski's role is emphasized in the manner in which he is depicted as preferring or embracing that which is definitively western, evident in the example of his car and standard of living, but even more so in the following reference to his self-image: "Gestern hat Günther Schabowski zum ersten Mal vor hundert westlichen Journalisten im Pressezentrum der Hauptstadt vorgeführt, dass er der westlichste aller ostdeutschen Führungskräfte ist" (56).⁷¹ It is significant though that in the follow up conducted on Schabowski, it is made apparent that in the aftermath of the collapse of the GDR, he was in many ways no better off than Jäger, spending a brief time in prison, and having difficulty finding employment, alluding to the fact that regardless of the extent to which certain brackets of the East German population may have received more or less recognition in the aftermath of the Wall and the process of East-West integration, East Germans as a whole struggled for representation.

To take the representation of Schabowski one step further, he is also arguably the crude embodiment of the East Germans, who have thus far

⁷¹ "Yesterday, for the first time in front of a hundred western journalists in the press headquarters of the capital, Günther Schabowski demonstrated that he is the most westernized of all of the East German leadership body."

comprised the “stereotypical” type coverage and images appearing in *Der Spiegel* in the previous two eras. They are the ones who have received all of the attention, while the forgotten ones, the East Germans who were content with their lives, as symbolized by Jäger, were until now consistently ignored in any of the evaluated memory accounts of the Wall. With that in mind, I do not believe that the intention is to necessarily degrade those East Germans who were at the Wall, but rather to capitalize on these oppositional, contrasting figures, as a means to highlight the “other,” in the form of Jäger.

The additional symbolism of Schabowski as a representation of all of those past stereotypical snapshot memories is further significant in that not only is the author bringing attention to the forgotten East German, but in equating Schabowski, essentially the antagonist with those types of memories, he is highlighting the fact that there is still a degree of uneasiness in the dynamic existing in regards to which aspects of the East are being remembered represented. This level of conflict and negative portrayal is further evident in the title of the article, “Die Nacht der Wildschweine.”⁷² “Wildschweine” or literally “wild pigs,” was a slang term used by the East German border guards in reference to citizens of the GDR who attempted to illegally cross the border. In employing that particular term in the title, the implication is that the author is referring to all of those people at the Wall that night, who comprise the stereotypical memory images of the Wall coming down, in a derogatory fashion, while in using that

⁷² Night of the Wild Pigs

specific terminology significantly implying that these “delinquents” came from within the GDR.

In the face of the bulk of the author’s critique being made through the dynamic existing between Schabowski and Jäger, the character of Lauter becomes somewhat of an afterthought. He too however plays an important role in this narrative as symbolic of not only “the system,” but more specifically socialism in its most ideal and sterile form. As already touched on he is portrayed in a manner akin to being no more than a machine. To that extent the author uses Lauter in this capacity to further emphasize the extent to which it was not socialism which failed, but rather the people who operated it. This is achieved through the continual highlighting of Lauter attempting to repair the damage that is being done by the people around him, in a process reminiscent of a machine moving to repair an error, followed by another, and then another, before eventually it is overcome. An excellent example of this can be seen in the excerpt:

Auf der Fahrt mit seinem Trabi ins Innenministerium ist Lauter durch den Kopf gegangen, was mit der Beschlussvorlage von heute Morgen schiefgegangen sein kann. Nachdem er den Wachtposten seinen Dienstausweis gezeigt hat, betritt er menschenleere Gänge - die Hauptabteilung Pass- und Meldewesen hat nachts keine Diensthabenden. Als er sein Büro erreicht, sieht er die 24 grünen Lampen seiner Telefonanlage leuchten.⁷³

⁷³During the drive in his Trabi to the ministry for the interior, Lauter continually turns over in his head what could have gone wrong with the draft proposal from that morning. After he presented

The extent to which the people have failed is particularly emphasized through the description of the government building – like Lauter a part of the socialist system – being entirely empty of the people who are required to ensure it functions properly, while the notion of being overcome by errors is inherent in the number of flashing lights Lauter is confronted with.

The author also employs Lauter to further sharpen his critique and better define his target. Beyond the contention presented to the reader that it is not socialism that failed, but rather the people who managed it, there is also an inherent accusation made in regards to who in particular is responsible. As a result, although historically, and in the case of the article superficially, the fall of the Wall is an event located in an ideological struggle, here it is used as a critique to construct a class struggle-like dynamic occurring, specifically the idea of Schabowski as the pro-western “class enemy” betraying the system and the people who believe in it, the forgotten East German of Jäger. Again this is an aspect which serves to better define the author’s perspective, as not only intent on illuminating the existence of the forgotten East German, but also the extent to which it was not just the people who failed socialism, but more accurately the people who betrayed socialism in order to fulfill their own needs.

To turn now to the role of context, unlike in prior occasions for remembering, within this account there is no open appearance of any kind of contemporary context or continuation of themes which were evident or introduced

his service identification to the guard post, he enters into empty halls – the principal department for passport and registration did not have a duty officer at night. As he reaches his office, he sees the 24 green lights illuminated on his telephone display.

in the previous era of *Der Spiegel*, in doing so to an extent moving away from any of the previously emerging trends. The key to this deviance in context lies in the statement by Langenbacher earlier that, “not only are there multiple collective memories circulating and vying for influence (based on holocaust, German suffering, and the GDR), but there is also evidence of diminishing interest in *all* collective memories. A quarter of a century of vigorous memory work may be coming to an end” (82). What we are presented with then in the form of this identity allegory is a much more indirect, and less aggressive continuation of previous issues, embodying Langenbacher’s statement that there is a notable decline in looking at such memories. It is accordingly not that the text does not correspond to its contemporary context, but rather it is a fairly accurate reflection, in that just as the themes of holocaust, German suffering, and the GDR, have faded into the background, likewise they appear, in this case focusing on the representation within Eastern identity, in a much more reserved capacity.

As if to emphasize the extent to which these issues have indeed retreated from the forefront of popular debate, and further in-line with Langenbacher’s statement, the article concludes with a rather reconciliatory ending. Despite the difficulties and issues which all three of the characters were forced to endure in the post-GDR environment, they are illustrated as having moved on from those trying times, and although they will forever be defined by their GDR roots, they have found their place in the new Germany:

Dass Deutschland vereinigt ist und die DDR seit 19 Jahren Geschichte,
das wissen alle drei zu schätzen, wenn auch nicht gleichermaßen.

Schabowski, der gefallene Bonze, ist der Radikalste, er hätte sich gewünscht, dass die SED verboten worden und eine intensivere Auseinandersetzung mit ihren Untaten möglich gewesen wäre.

Die Finanzkrise, so sieht es Jäger, hat all das bestätigt, was er früher in den Marxismus-Kursen gehört hat. An der sozialen Marktwirtschaft findet er bemerkenswert, dass er nun als Rentner mehr Geld bekommt, als er in die Rentenkasse eingezahlt hat. Sein Herz schlage immer noch links, aber sein Kopf sage ihm, dass Reichtum für alle utopisch ist.

Und Lauter, der am Morgen des 9. November durch einen dreizeiligen Absatz in einer Ministerratsvorlage seine DDR ins Wanken brachte? Will nicht den Sozialismus zurück, der an diesem Tag unterging, aber ist Mitglied im Leipziger Stadtvorstand der Partei "Die Linke" (71).⁷⁴

Particularly the summary of Jäger illustrates the extent to which it is not a matter of having forgotten or erased his East German roots – they are still very much on his mind. However he recognizes that although his origins and beliefs are important in defining his identity, they are no longer realistic in the environment

⁷⁴ That Germany is united while the GDR is history for 19 years now, that is for all three to figure, if not also equally. Schabowski, the big wig, is the most radical, he would have wished that the SED had been banned and a more intensive confrontation with their injustices made possible.

As Jäger sees it, the financial crisis has confirmed everything that he heard earlier in the courses on Marxism. With the social market economy he finds it remarkable that as a pensioner he now receives more money than he paid into the pension fund. His heart may beat towards the left, but his head tells him that wealth for all is utopian

And Lauter, who on the morning of the 9th of November as a result of a three line paragraph in a cabinet document, toppled his GDR? He does not want socialism back, which on this day went under, but he is a member of the Leipzig city council of the party, "The Left."

in which he now finds himself. This does not amount to a surrendering of ones beliefs and values, but rather this attitude is the personification of a much more mature German society, which, although has perhaps not embraced, has at least come to terms with, and recognized the necessity for a new common identity for the sake of a greater Germany moving forward.

In regards to the evolution of textual media memory of the fall of the Berlin Wall, this era has indeed witnessed an interesting turn of events. As stated briefly in the introduction, in many ways the emergence of this type of approach to Wall memory more than anything is indicative of a maturing of German society, as well as the extent to which the Wall is becoming increasingly more historical as opposed to directly influencing or relevant to current contexts. Whereas in past eras, particularly 1999, there was a massive undertaking to directly engage in questions of identity stemming from issues such as East-West integration, and past history, ironically the portrayal of the fall of the Wall itself was very much a one-sided affair representing only the “Schabowski’s” and Western interests and concepts. The account presented here has for the first time offered not only a well-rounded and detailed version of what transpired at the Wall, but through the use of allegory also highlighted the other, the forgotten East German, and critically approached the subject of where this other is in the greater scheme of German identity, and East German representation within that identity.

Ogonek, Nr. 26, 2009

It has been somewhat unexpected that thus far so little attention has been paid to the fall of the Berlin Wall within Russian media. It is therefore of equal surprise that the pages of the November 2009 edition of *Ogonek* contain a veritable archive of material when compared to the content of its predecessors. The main article dedicated to the twentieth anniversary of the Wall's demise, "Потомки Берлинской стены,"⁷⁵ is perhaps best described as contentious. Focusing primarily on the socio-economic and political instability within the world over the last twenty years, the article in many ways is similar in approach to that of its 1999 *Der Spiegel* counterpart "Planetarisches Visionen," in that the fall of the Wall more than anything provides a sort of checkpoint for reflecting on the past two decades, while the Wall is regarded merely as the catalyst for what has occurred during that time frame. Significantly this avenue of cause and effect between the fall of the Wall and the issues engaged in the text is not explored, and the anniversary as well as the original event itself are simply a frame for the image the author sketches of the world since the, in his words, "закончилась история"⁷⁶ of 1989.

The article in regards to perspective, content and argument, is targeted but shallow. The author strikes an interesting note with his criticisms in that he touches on some valid points, yet they quickly lose traction as a result of not providing a developed argument or acknowledging the existence of any counter

⁷⁵ "Descendants of the Berlin Wall"

⁷⁶ "end of history"

argument or perspective, instead offering little more than opportunistic criticism. The author's position revolves around the notion that the fall of the Berlin Wall was originally thought to be a new beginning and from the destruction of what had once segregated a nation, and on a more symbolic level the world, there was to emerge a grand opportunity for the building of new bridges and endless possibilities for a bright future. This he states quite unequivocally did not occur. Instead where once there was stability in the form of ideology and the stand-off deadlock of two great superpowers, the last two decades have been characterized by a massive void, occupied by nationalism, fanaticism, and an apparent hypocritical self-interest and reclusive attitude by nation states in the face of globalization and an increasingly globalized world. The author goes about demonstrating his points by focusing on these three main issues, and supporting his stance through a number of examples.

The first of these issues raised, the rise of nationalism, is one which the author believes very strongly can be attributed to the decline of ideology, based on the premise that an ideology functions as a means for maintaining cohesion amongst people who have been artificially grouped together. With the demise of ideology, or at least the great ideological battle of communism and capitalism, the author believes that it was inevitable that the spectre of nationalism would once again rear its head amongst groups of differing ethnic, cultural, tribal, or religious backgrounds. As proof he cites examples from the splitting of Czechoslovakia, to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and finally the succession of former member states of the Soviet Union. Interestingly it is never made clear whether the author

considers these tendencies to nationalism to be of a positive nature or of a dangerous one; at times implicit that it is in fact dangerous in statements such as, “В почти половине случаев самоопределение сопровождалось кровопролитными конфликтами, всплесками этнической ненависти и возникновением непреодолимых социально-политических пропастей между народами, жившими вместе.”⁷⁷ Yet at other times this critical tone inherent in the ‘bloody’ example, is replaced by a decidedly more positive one, for example when he writes:

Что же касается менее продвинутых частей мира, то там уникальный европейский опыт по-прежнему неприменим. Например, весь посткоммунистический мир — от Польши до Узбекистана, от России до Румынии — переживает (хотя, конечно, по-разному и в разной степени) процесс строительства национальной идентичности, в основе которого лежит противопоставление другим, то есть подчеркивание отличий, а не общности.”⁷⁸

Furthermore, at no point does the author move to distinguish between nationalism, and national identity, instead simply clumping them together. Although they arguably both function to occupy the void vacated by former ideologies, the lack

⁷⁷ „Almost half of the cases of self-determination were accompanied by bloody conflicts, surges in ethnic hatred, and the beginning of overwhelming socio-political schisms between populations living together.”

⁷⁸ “As for the less developed parts of the world, as before the unique European experience is inapplicable. For example, the entire post-communist world – from Poland to Uzbekistan, from Russia to Romania – are experiencing (although, of course, to varying degrees) a process of constructing national identity, fundamentally opposed to one another, and therein underlining the differences and not the commonalities.”

of clarification between two very different entities lends itself to reinforcing the noted deficiencies in the author's approach.

The rise of fanaticism is similarly attributed by the author to the void left by ideology, but in this case more so the regional stability formerly provided by the USSR and the United States. He believes that “Вакуум, образовавшийся после исчезновения идеологий, начал заполняться довольно быстро, и кроме национализма на смену им пришел религиозный фанатизм.”⁷⁹ As his primary study he looks at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which he feels without the backing of the two respective superpowers as in times past, has resulted in the reality that “на исходе прошлого столетия в этом конфликте появились новые составляющие — волна террора обрела все более религиозный, а не политический характер.”⁸⁰ Essentially he feels that whereas prior to 1989 the type of violence occurring in the Middle East was primarily politically motivated and an extension of Soviet and American foreign policy, the last twenty years have seen a transformation of that violence from symmetrical to asymmetrical – again a loss of stability. He also makes a point of singling out the American peace initiatives in the Middle East over the last twenty years as being in part responsible for continued destabilization, and a rise in extremism and suicide style attacks. The culmination of this destabilization is the construction of the security barrier separating the West Bank from Israel.

⁷⁹ “The vacuum, which was forming in the absence of ideology, began to fill rather quickly, and besides the replacement by nationalism, religious fanaticism also arrived.”

⁸⁰ “At the closing of the last century new components appeared in this conflict – the wave of terror acquired a much more religious rather than political character.”

In the final segment of the article, the author attempts to demonstrate how in his mind so-called globalization, and the “bright, bridge building future” borne out of the fall of the Berlin Wall, are, and were, nothing more than hypocritical rhetoric. Instead it is his belief that more than ever nations are isolating themselves and once again building walls in an effort to further their own interests and prosperity, and ultimately this notion of globalization is an artificial construct, contending that “Идеология свободы — рынков, идей, культур, — победившая в 1989 году, сталкивается с физической невозможностью переварить плоды этой свободы.”⁸¹ As a primary example of this, and the inevitable move to segregation and isolation, he cites the approval for the construction of a wall along the southern border of the United States with Mexico. Further to his point, he also elaborates on the roots of these divisions and some of the emerging European trends, stating that, “Социологические опросы фиксируют неприятные тенденции в Европе — ксенофобские настроения не являются доминирующими, но подспудно формируется раздражение против пришельцев, которые являются на все готовое, да еще и требуют уважать их культурное своеобразие, зачастую граничащее с мракобесием.”⁸² Finally the section concludes with the opinion that the United States is in some ways immune to this attitude owing to their “melting pot” culture, which although perhaps in theory the concept of the melting pot would dictate that possibility, I would argue

⁸¹ “Ideological freedom – markets, ideas, culture, - was achieved in 1989, clashing with the impossibility to digest the fruit of this freedom.”

⁸² “Sociological testing is determining some unpleasant tendencies in Europe – xenophobic attitudes do not appear to be dominating, but secretly developing an irritation towards newcomers, who appear willing, but demand respect for their cultural peculiarities, frequently bordering on obscurantism.”

that in reality the United States has witnessed more than their fair share of racially motivated violence. Moreover in providing that claim the author would seem to be to an extent invalidating his prior example of the United States and their tendency to isolation, as the entities of isolationism and a melting pot are more often than not mutually exclusive.

The two most immediate questions emerging from this article, are the significance and purpose of the embedded theme of “walls,” as well as what can ultimately be concluded about the author’s position and alignment within the text, as a means to understanding this somewhat unexpected evolution in Russian Wall memory. In regards to the first question, throughout the text, and particularly evident in the titles of each section – “Стена национализма,” “Стена фанатизма,” “Стена благосостояния,” and “Россия за стеной”⁸³ – there is an effort on the author’s part to establish a consistent theme of “walls,” both examples of new constructions, as well as deconstructions. In employing this wall motif the author attempts to make and emphasize the point that segregating ourselves is an intrinsic characteristic of mankind, regardless of whether this division is physical, as in the example of the Berlin Wall, or the way in which we identify ourselves, as in the case of nationalism.

From an analysis perspective, inherent in this use of a wall theme is both its value as a defining feature of the author’s perspective, as will be discussed in greater depth momentarily, but also the extent to which the author requires this

⁸³ “The Wall of Nationalism,” “The Wall of Fanaticism,” “The Wall of Prosperity,” and “Russia Behind a Wall”

particular motif of walls as a justification for voicing the issues which he does, and or link the issues back to the fall of the Wall, by focusing on examples and case studies which are also characterized by the presence of walls. This is a process very much similar to the introducing of contemporary issues through the embedded theme of German identity in *Der Spiegel* from 1999. Unlike its prior German counterpart however, in the case of this article there was no progression within the text or memory itself, stemming from the previous era, whereby any conduit type issues were introduced, and subsequently expanded on through the creation of links with contemporary issues. As a result this is arguably why the arguments within this article come across as so disjointed and arms-length from any actual memory of the Wall within the text.

Looking at the second question, one of the most immediate indicators the reader is exposed to in trying to assess the author's purpose, and inherent in the type and intended targets of the criticism that the author brings forward, is the extent to which the text is characterized by a distinct anti-western, and in particular anti-American sentiment apparent in the United States consistently being a target of his criticism, for example with such comments as, "Попытка международного сообщества, прежде всего США, изменить модель безопасности на Ближнем Востоке привела к обратному результату,"⁸⁴ and later in regards to the 2006 decision by the United States to erect a wall along the Mexican border, " 20 лет назад трудно было вообразить, что страна, возглавившая поход за объединение мира под флагом демократии и

⁸⁴ "The endeavour of the international community, in particular the USA, to transform the model of security in the Middle East, has led to the opposite result."

рыночной экономики, сама начнет возводить стены, чтобы отгородиться от соседей.”⁸⁵ This perspective by the author alludes to the possibility that there is a continued desire on his part to view the United States in the context of “the enemy.” When we combine this perspective with the aspect of the wall motif, and his stated beliefs in the dangers of a world without a strong ideological presence and the unavoidable trend towards segregation and isolationism, it is evident that the author not only believes a return to a Cold War type dynamic is inevitable, but more importantly very much desired. His concluding statement ultimately confirms this: “Образ холодной войны, возникающий на страницах газет при любых, даже малозначительных трениях между Москвой и западными столицами, показывает, что изменений в менталитете так и не случилось.”⁸⁶

What both of these points allude to is the extent to which these two defining aspects of the text can be seen as a product of the contemporary context in which the article is located. To return to the contention that this article is very much in line with the Der Spiegel article from 1999, one of the most prominent features of this text is the extent to which the issues appearing in conjunction with and being related to Wall memory are once again rooted in the contemporary context of Russia 2009. As already alluded to the last two decades since the fall of the Wall have not been kind to the majority of the Russian population, and the connections existing between that environment and the text are quite apparent,

⁸⁵ “20 years ago it would have been difficult to imagine that the country which was leading the charge for the unification of the world under the flag of democracy and the market economy, would themselves begin to erect a wall, in order to isolate themselves from their neighbours.”

⁸⁶ “The images of the cold war, appearing on the pages of newspapers, as a result of even unimportant tensions between Moscow and the western capitals, demonstrates that a change in mentalities never occurred.”

particularly when focusing on the aspect of stability, and the associated economic troubles.

The want for stability on the part of the author, as evidenced by his desire for a return to a Soviet-era dynamic, is an interesting manifestation when considering the nature of the contemporary Russian environment. One of the positive impacts, attributed to the presidency of Vladimir Putin during this time frame was the imposition of a greater degree of stability, resulting in the emergence and development of the Russian economy. The author however does not at any point refer to Putin or his policies in either a positive or negative sense, instead simply building a case for a return to a more Soviet style era dynamic in international relations. It is quite possible that this avenue is being proposed on account of the then downturn in the Russian economy, and a consequential lack of confidence on the part of the author in the capacity of the current Russian political and economic system for success. This also however would suggest that the stability as epitomized by Putin is not looked on as favourably as that, which was a product of the Soviet Union, a dynamic which is alluded to in a much earlier statement by Dobrenko: “the country is entering the ‘European house’ by simulating a ‘market economy’, ‘democracy’, and ‘postmodernism’. In reality, it remains exactly the same country as before, split between the reality of its own powerlessness and poverty, and the myth of its ‘greatness.’” Not only though does she propose the ineffectiveness of the Putin reforms, but simultaneously alludes to the extent to which deficiencies in the contemporary environment that result in a longing for a previous “greatness,” can be interpreted more than

anything as a product of the severity of the current situation resulting in a distortion of perception of a past time and the associated quality of life.

Regardless of the legitimacy of this past greatness, the trend within the text is most certainly in that direction.

Turning now to the evolution of memory, there is the much larger question of how this article can be located in relation to those which have come before it. In many ways the article can be seen to be a progression of the theme witnessed in the previous era, whereby this article continues to recognize the fall of Wall in a very negative light as a result of the turbulent years Russia has endured. However, whereas in the previous era the association between the two were not as overt, in this case the level of associated dissatisfaction and the negative connotations are quite clear. It is also apparent that the aspect of absence is a commonality shared by both of the articles, in this era evident in the absence of any reference to the Russian domestic situation, instead remaining consistently in the realm of international events. Much like the absence of result in the previous era, the inherent blame throwing and criticism of the actions of other nations would seem to suggest an initiative to avoid acknowledging the extent of the difficulties being experienced on the Russian home front, the only allusion to it appearing in the form of a solution – the call for a return to the past greatness of the Soviet era – to an unspoken problem. Interestingly enough this impression and general trend are similarly touched on and reinforced in a later article in *Der Spiegel* from 2009, which briefly touched on the focus of the fall of the Wall in Russian memory, and espoused a very similar conclusion: “Auch in Russland wird des Berliner

Mauerfalls vor 20 Jahren gedacht - aber nicht immer mit wohlwollenden Worten”
(Nr 45, 108).⁸⁷

And so it is that context has once again played a significant role in defining the manner in which the fall of the Berlin Wall is remembered in Russian textual media memory. As much as more than ever before the Wall is acknowledged as having had a considerable effect on Soviet society, it still remains very much at arms-length, whose significance to Russian society in 2009 lies in the opportunity it presents for voicing discontent in regards to the socio-economic hardships being experienced by the vast majority of the Russian population.

Assessment

At the beginning of this chapter it was proposed that there may be a possible confluence of memory occurring based on the similarities of “Wall moments” which appear in each account. The scope of any confluence in memory within the source material does not however extend beyond these memory snapshots. Instead both of the sources contained accounts of the fall of the Wall, which in many ways exhibited some surprising deviation when we compare them to past articles. The German account through its use of allegory presented a surprisingly mature, and almost tame approach to remembering the Wall. It was

⁸⁷ “In Russia the fall of the Berlin Wall 20 years ago is also being remembered – but not always with such favourable words.”

established that this turn of events was a product of the context in which the article was produced, however it is arguable that this “maturity” was to an extent suggested under the guise of the predictions of Germany defining its future identity through its participation and role in the EU and in doing so if not remedying, at least appeasing the issue of identity. What was entirely unpredicted appeared in the form of the author’s critical assessment of East German representation within German identity and the positive exposure which he granted the forgotten East German. The account in Ogonek in contrast capitalized on the opportunity to indirectly voice displeasure with the current state of Russian affairs through the criticism of global trends and the call for a return to the perceived stability which characterized the Cold War. Similar to the previous era in Russian memory, the fall of the Wall was indirectly illustrated as a negative event through the recognition of some of the consequences stemming from its demise, such as the delicate void which appeared in the absence of ideology. Of greater significance was the author’s use of the theme of walls as a means of linking contemporary issues of isolationism, and nationalism, as well as the perceived failings of globalization, with the anniversary occasion for remembering the fall of the Wall.

It is clear that the accounts themselves have not produced the type of confluence in memory which was originally anticipated at the beginning of the chapter. Instead the context in which the account appears has emerged as the dominant factor in defining the content. It must however be noted, that as much as there was no overt convergence of memory, the similarities in the moments

recounting the fall of the Wall itself cannot be ignored. Although it is not acknowledged within the confines of this investigation, obviously there are a plethora of other actors and factors acting on the memory of the fall of the Wall outside of the confines of the source material. What these moments demonstrate is that as much as the contemporary context here has influenced the context resulting in the content of the article focusing on issues beyond that of the fall of the Wall, there is outside of the influence of context a confluence occurring of memory of the fall of the Wall itself. This reality as well as the above findings will be discussed in greater depth in the conclusion.

Conclusion

Seems like it was only yesterday...

SPIEGEL: Herr Präsident, Sie erleben den 20. Jahrestag des Mauerfalls mit anderen Staatsgästen in Berlin. Wo waren Sie am 9. November 1989?

Medwedew: Ich erinnere mich nicht, weiß aber noch sehr genau, wie schlagartig sich unser Leben änderte. Ich war damals Assistent an der Universität St. Petersburg, mir war klar, dass dieser Wandel nicht allein die Deutschen betrifft, sondern ganz Europa und letztlich auch das Schicksal unseres Landes. Der Hit der Scorpions "Wind of change" wurde zur Hymne jener Zeit. Die Berliner Mauer war ein Symbol für die Spaltung des Kontinents, ihr Fall vereinigte ihn wieder. Manche unserer Hoffnungen von damals erfüllten sich, manche nicht.⁸⁸

(Spiegel 46/2009)

The German rock group “The Scorpions”’ super hit “Wind of Change” was in fact not written until 1990, first appearing on their 1991 album “Crazy World,” and although popularly associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall and frequently featured in tributes, documentaries and anniversary celebrations for November 9th, the song’s lyrics refer specifically to the changes which were occurring in the Soviet Union at that time. In many ways much like the fall of the

⁸⁸ SPIEGEL: Mr. President, you are witnessing the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, along with other state guests in Berlin. Where were you on the 9th of November 1989?

Medvedev: I don’t remember, but I still recall how abruptly our lives changed. At that time I was the assistant at the University of St. Petersburg, it was clear to me that this transformation not only affects the Germans, but the whole of Europe and finally the destiny of our country. The Scorpions hit “Wind of Change” was a Hymn for that time. The Berlin Wall was a symbol for the division of the continent, its fall reunited it once again. Some of our hopes from that time were fulfilled, some not.

Wall itself, the song has transcended its original content and significance and has become elevated to the level of the symbolic – the sound track to Major’s “end of an era (228)” metaphor that the fall of the Wall has evolved into.

The above comments by the now former president of the Russian Federation, Dimitri Medvedev, and his memory of the Berlin Wall coming down, are remarkable in the face of everything which has been established during the course of this investigation. He emphasizes the significance of the fall of the Wall for not only Germans, but Europeans and Russians as well, while also making mention of how sudden and abrupt the change was. As the dissection of both the source material and the history behind the fall of the Wall has demonstrated, this quite simply was not the case, as not only was the fall of the Wall part of a larger progression of change occurring over a period of time, but more importantly for the majority of Russians it was at the time of little consequence as they were far more occupied by the more immediate changes taking place in their own country. His final words that the Wall was a symbol, whose demise united a continent is also an interesting statement, particularly in comparison to the most recent Ogoniek article from 2009 and the implied atmosphere of resentment by many Russians towards the fall of the Wall, owing to its perceived role as a prior catalyst to the economic predicament a large portion of the Russian population found themselves in. It is ultimately not that Medvedev’s statements are inherently false or contrived, but rather it is significant that the perspective and memory details he offers have deviated considerably from any original memory of the fall of the Wall, and fall much more in line with that which is definitively

Western, in some ways similar to that contained within the German articles. Regardless of its origins, or the process which created this recall, Medvedev's comments would seem to be indicative of the type of memory evolution and confluence this paper set out to find.

This investigation however at no point reached that conclusion. The stated goal of this project was to track the two distinct memory streams emerging from the ideological divide of East and West over a twenty year time frame, "in order to investigate the entity of textual media memory, and ultimately the extent to which there may indeed be a significant evolution of the two textual media memory streams of the former Soviet Union, now Russian Federation, and the two Germanys, now the Federal Republic of Germany." The tracking of the news media accounts of the fall of the Wall within *Ogonek* and *Der Spiegel* has demonstrated that to an extent there was a narrowing and increasing similarity of the two memory streams, particularly in light of how great the distance between the two originally was.

We instead witnessed the importance of the role of context in defining the specific accounts in each era, and the corresponding effect it has on memory in characterizing the content of a memory account through the introduction of issues contemporary to the time in which the account is located. To that end, looking at the German accounts, they were predominantly characterized by the question of German identity – past identities, East West integration, and the construction of a new unified German identity – all became prominently associated with the fall of the Wall, and its memory. This inclusion in each respective era was seen to be

both as a result of the process of removing an event from its context as it appears within the text as a means of distorting it and introducing exterior elements, as well as a product of the contemporary context making its way into the text through the various conduits, which were products of this removal from context. This was the case of the 1989 account, in which the absence of any specific context within the text dictated that it essentially was removed from its exterior context, allowing for this absence to be in turn occupied by the introduction of the themes of German unity and its past incarnations. These themes then not only reappeared in subsequent eras, but also allowed for the introduction of further external topics to the memory of the Wall.

The German source material in 1999 accordingly reflected both the influence of its contemporary context, as well as a continuation of the embedded themes previously introduced. Its content was highlighted by both the question of drawing on past history in establishing a new common identity, as well as the difficulties inherent in East-West identity representation and the question of legitimacy or “authenticity” in regards to any East German identity contribution. The 2009 Spiegel article similarly continued the trend, however in a much more reserved style, providing the most intriguing example of contemporary context entering into a memory account, in the form of the retelling of the fall of the Wall through three select characters, which functioned as an allegorical narrative of the identity question within the article. That the issue was addressed in such an indirect and subdued fashion was again reflective of German society in 2009,

which had more than ever before come to terms in regards to crafting a new common German identity.

Similarly, the Russian sources were both defined and affected by the context in which they were located, resulting in the unexpected revelation that in 1989, despite the implications of the fall of the Wall to the Eastern Bloc, there was very little news coverage allotted to the events of November 9th in the face of the Gorbachev reforms and the massive transformation which occupied Russian society. Once again subsequent eras reflected this trend whereby context would continually influence the content of Wall memory accounts. The 1999 source, for example, was characterized by an absence of result in regards to the impact the fall of the Wall had on Russian society, and its indirect connection to the rather poor socio-economic situation many Russians had endured over the past decade. The format and sarcastic tone of the article however alluded to the presence of this socio-economic reality through the promotion of a feeling of hostility towards the fall of the Wall and reinforcing the negative light in which it was viewed. 2009 in contrast displayed a far more overt hostility towards the Wall again corresponding with the exterior context of the economic downturn and hard times within Russia, however in this instance the negative perception of the fall of the Wall was most apparent in the targets and type of criticisms, specifically a call for the return to the stability that was a characteristic of the Soviet era.

One of the most interesting and unexpected aspects of this investigation was the extent to which memory of the actual fall of the Wall in both sources and

in all eras was both sporadic and unpredictable. The only constant would seem to be that the purpose or message of the article, again based on the contemporary context in which the article appears, dictated the usage and inclusion of specific Wall moments. We can however look to the evolution of the compression of these moments as an aspect which was not only evident, but to an extent reflective of the type of trend towards a memory confluence and increasing similarity of content. In *Der Spiegel* from 1989 for example the actual content covering the fall of the Wall was fairly detailed, although characterized by a focus on western interests. By 1999 this coverage had already become compressed and elevated to the level of the symbolic, while realistically functioning only as a backdrop to the greater issues present in German society at that time. Similarly the Russian accounts beginning with both the absence in *Ogonek* from 1989 as well as the fairly detailed and neutral description provided in *Komsosmoslaksya Pravda*, evolved into much more compressed snap shots come 1999 and even more so by 2009. What is fascinating is that the overall trend – *Der Spiegel* 2009, is somewhat of an aberration in this regard – is that as these accounts become compressed, they become not only more general, but are also characterized by a greater degree of similarity, best exemplified by the symbolic, snapshot-type moments, which appear in the Medvedev dialogue, and although historically inaccurate, represent a very general, generic type of memory.

The evolution of memory as seen in the accounts of *Ogonek* and *Der Spiegel*, was a distinct one, characterized by the contemporary issues in each respective era which defined them. Although this investigation did not confirm

any clear memory convergence of the Russian and German memory streams, as embodied in the articles of the source material, it was able to successfully achieve a number of the outlined goals of this project. Specifically the dissection and highlighting of the role context occupies in the dynamic of textual media memory, and most importantly illustrating and exhibiting the evolution of this textual media memory, the factors which can contribute to it, and the role of news media in determining its course.

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