

Just before dawn



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

One could see big optimism on the faces of the people that had gathered and formed a big crowd. Many People had gathered around the wall. Young and old, Males and females, tall and short people had all come to witness this big fete. Cheers and the jubilant mood could be sensed from afar. This was it. The day that the wall, the famous or rather infamous Berlin wall demolition would officially start. A little flashback would go a long way in explaining the source of excitement in the crowd that had turned up for this great day in Germany. The Cold War between the Communist East and Capitalist West had big consequences on Germany. In 1961, the construction of the Berlin Wall, or ‘ Iron Curtain’ was initiated to divide Germany in two. The construction took place over a couple of years and I personally couldn’t believe that the leaders were not seeing the mistake they were making. The technology had not advanced very much during this era, so the construction process was slow.

This was the infamous Berlin wall that had divided Germany into two and whose demolition and consequent unification of the country ultimately led the country to be what it is today: a great country. Every morning the workers would set out in their ragged clothes with no smiles on their faces. Most of the workers were heavily built: and the few who were not so big were the foremen and the engineers. The latter would normally shout instructions over the deafening noise of the construction machines. “ We have to finish the foundation up to this part before it is dusk” one of the foremen would shout to the visibly tired workers who were drenched in sweat after a long day of work. Though one could not openly say it, it was a sad reality. I remember vividly one morning while doing the occasional patrol I noticed

what looked like a sack of garbage from afar. It was near the wall and when we got closer it is when it dawned on us it was a human body. From the broken limbs, scratched face, and tattered clothes it became apparent that the man had died while trying to cross the wall. It was even sadder since this was a young man who should have had a long life ahead of him. The horror and sadness was on workers, faces and ours too for everyone to see. This is what the wall had brought. Division and death in our community.

The excitement and anticipation in the crowd was overwhelming to a level that I had never seen before in my life before. Young men could be seen lifting their girlfriends so that they could catch a glimpse as some could not see far forward due to the sheer size of the crowd. One could be forgiven for thinking that it was a concert of some famous superstar due to the cheers and excitement. After the first small section came down, streams of people could be seen running both sides and hugging random people. One man randomly hugged me; and I could feel his happiness diffuse into me. A thick gray powder engulfed the atmosphere and one could barely see a few meters away. All the same people kept running haphazardly oblivious of the risk they were facing, just in case a section of the wall fell on them. Maybe it was the excitement that had really taken over the people and they cared less about their safety as a result. From where I stood, which was of course some safe distance from the wall and the demolition process, I could see; though not clearly, some young men standing on the wall and doing some happy dance which was not close to being even coordinated. I smiled a little and remember thinking that was what living in the moment was.

‘ Where will we be working if the wall is brought down, we will lose our jobs’ one of the older members of our troop could be heard asking with a concerned voice? We simply ignored him and continued to watch the unfolding events here. The demolition of the wall had evoked different emotions among the people witnessing it. There were long lines in front of telephone booths obviously of excited people excited to tell their families in other regions that the wall was finally coming down. An ecstatic young girl with long flowing hair and a brown trench coat was jumping up and down while speaking on the phone in a booth close to where we stood; presumably she was speaking to her parents informing them of the collapse of the Berlin wall. Many young people were anxiously waiting for their turn outside the booth while inaudibly murmuring to each other.

“ Make sure there are not casualties from these happenings” this was our troop leader commanding us to ensure that we kept people from the dangerous parts of the wall. This sprung us into actions and immediately headed to where there were people joining on the demolition of the wall. One young man carrying a big stone which he was struggling to carry from the rabbles near the wall attracted my attention and questioned him about the safety of it. He grinned, revealing his yellow teeth and informed me that this was a souvenir that he was intending to keep. I guess it was a happy moment for everyone and I let him carry the stone at home. In an attempt to get people off the wall, water cannon were brought and this forced people to get down. However, one young man got handed an umbrella which he uses as a water shield and long spouts of water bounce off it and into the night. A few women stood on a pile of stones with tears freely flowing down their

pretty faces. One of my colleagues felt like crying and ducked inside a building to hide him so we don't see only to find one of our other colleagues already weeping.

This marked the unification of the once divided Germany Ever since; the unified Germany has continued to grow economically, socially and politically. This separation had a big influence on us eventually acknowledging the importance and the need of being together. Festivals and sports have been embraced ever since as they help in promoting more integration. The ever smiling faces of people in the busy and crowded streets of cities in this country say it all that needs to be said about this country. I find myself unknowingly smiling when I watch the small children playing in the football fields. This is my country, my unified country. Germany has defied all odds to become one of the global leaders in various fronts.