

Berlin reunification essay sample



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The 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent reunification of the city was a historical occasion that changed the region and the world for ever. In the attempt to understand the significance of this occasion, subsequent sections of this paper will provide various issues touching on Berlin Wall. First will be activities that led to fall of the wall, followed by the American influence, then by reasons that necessitated declaration of Berlin as Germany's capital, and finally the effects of reunification in the city's cultural, religious, economic and political life.

The later years of 1980s were marked by slow disintegration of socialist experience in Eastern Europe and other practicing countries in the world. The division of Berlin city between the capitalist west and socialist east was not spared either. Towards the end of 1989, Hungary, a communist country relaxed its borders with Austria, which resulted to over 10, 000 Eastern Germany tourists flocking into Austria (Taylor, 2006, p. 140). This was a great opportunity to escape from the restrictive East Germany, considering that freedom of movement to other countries, especially West Germany was tightly controlled. At the same period, people in East Germany consistently demanded for relaxation in the freedom of movement. Indeed, demonstrations by East German residents was a common place. In October 1989, Eich Honecker who had governed East Germany for many years resigned amid people's demonstrations for a change in way things were run in the country (Turner, 1992, p. 150). He was replaced by Egon Krenz who was not totally able to control the volatile situation in the country. Indeed, change in leadership without political and economic reform agitated by the

people led to exacerbated the situation further. The residents were getting impatient with the day.

People were consistently agitating for “ wanting out”, meaning that they wanted to live the king of life that their western European colleagues were living. Authorities, too, were seeing the life in the communist-run countries as getting worse compared to the improvements in capitalist nations, which led to the relaxation of movement rules. Other than agitating for the freedom of movement, people in East Germany were also agitating on the improved living conditions in their country. This sentiment was especially strong on the people that saw economic and political reform as one of the surest way of getting from the crisis that engulfed the country. To this group, the freedom of movement meant being able develop political and economy ties with West Germany. It was therefore necessary to open Berlin Wall’s crossing gates to the population in East Germ, any. In the end, East Germany authorities were faced with increasing pressure from their own people to embark on opening the crossing points. The poor economic situation in the country was also becoming a catastrophe that many the authorities so the need of controlling.

There was also a great deal of pressure that was coming from other countries in the world. This meant that East European authorities faced the pressure of dealing with with need for reform that were coming from within and the international pressure—both led to giving up on the resistance and letting people cross the wall into West Germany. Eventually, Eastern Germany authorities allowed the masses to travel to West German. This resulted to multitude of people running to the wall for crossing. Guards at <https://assignbuster.com/berlin-reunification-essay-sample/>

the Berlin Wall were overwhelmed and had no other choice other than letting people cross.

The news spread quickly all over the region, which resulted to the people running to get souvenirs (wall pieces), which resulted to increased destruction of the wall. At the same time, authorities in East Germany were demolishing some sections of the wall in the attempt to have construct more crossings. Finally, large portions of the wall was destroyed, which resulted to the the complete fall of Berlin Wall. this was of great significance in the entire Germany because it resulted to the reunification of the city and the entire country. To the rest of the world, the fall of Berlin Wall signified the end of communism in its most strong areas, and thus provided hope that other nations in the world practicing communism would finally go back to market economy.

The US was heavily involved in the fall of Berlin wall. In fact, the United States had been against the construction of the wall in 1960s, and had equally agitated for the destruction. President Ronald Reagan famously called on Mikhail Gorbachev of Russia to tear down the Berlin Wall. This remark was made when President Reagan was visiting the region in 1987, two years before the wall finally came down. Given that the United States was among the countries occupying Germany after the end of World War II, it was obligated in ensuring that people in the country were living better lives. Considering that the purpose of occupying Germany had been achieved through the complete destruction of forces that had participated in the WWII, the Berlin Wall was now seen by the US as the only remaining obstacle to the complete unification of the country.

In addition, the United States was interested in seeing the end of communism in the region, just like other capitalist countries. This meant providing all the support needed to ensure that West and East Germany had united into one country. By 1989, it was evident that both countries had to merge for the eastern part to benefit economically. It was also evident that the merger between the two parties would have resulted to the East dropping its political and economic ideologies in favor of the ones practices by West Germany. In this regard, the United States was ready and willing to support the fall of Berlin Wall and the country's reunification. The United States diplomatic corps in Europe were therefore well equipped with the necessary support to ensure the country's reunification. Rather than go it alone in their delicate process, the US joined hands with other countries in the Western Europe that were also interested in seeing the country unite. These attempts finally paid well as the Berlin Wall, long seen as stumping block was dismantled, freedom of movement restored, and the country finally got united gain.

Upon the reunification of West and East Germany, the city of Berlin was one again declared as the capital city. Government operations, including the nation's parliament were moved to Berlin. During the country's division through Berlin Wall, West German had taken city of Bonn as the capital city, whereas East Germany had their part of Berlin as the capital (Galante, 1965, p. 80). There are differing reasons that led to the use of the city as capital to the newly unified country. First, having Berlin as the capital was a natural decision for country leaders to undertake. This is considering that Berlin had been the capital even before the split. Moving the capital to another location

after unification would not have healed the country as did Berlin decision. Secondly, having been the capital city of Germany before, Berlin had the necessary infrastructure that could have supported government activities. Though some of them had been destroyed during the war days, they would have required renovations to be used again. This is an easy task compared to another decision that could have led to another city becoming the capital.

In such a case the country would have faced greater costs that would have delayed or slowed down the reunification process. Thirdly, owing to the many years of division that German republics had experienced, the choice of another city would have resulted to an acknowledgment that the country was still divided and there was no way of making things better again. By choosing Berlin, leaders succeeded in sending a message that Germany was ready to unite and work together as one country. This was a total vote of confidence that people of both sides had over the new leadership of a United country. Fourthly, naming Berlin as the country's capital led to the country providing hope for the masses that lived in Berlin. These were the people that paid heaviest cost of the country's division.

Naming their city as the united country's capital was tantamount to showing confidence and hope that the worst in the country was over, and now was the time to move ahead with other developments. This marked the beginning of a new country that was committed to future development of its people, whether they were from former East or West. Another factor for choosing the Berlin as the capital must have been the city's location. Moving center of government to the area that was less stable meant that the leadership at that time was interested in overseeing the country gain its

footing. Considering that East German and environs were the less economically successful areas in the country, having the government close to them provided confidence that someone was concerned with their plight. In addition, moving the center of government to the less stable area was to serve as show of power, that the government was interested with the development of all areas.

As mentioned in the introduction, the fall of Berlin wall and the subsequent reunification of the city and German republics had greater effects on the society. Economically, considering that East German had to drop the use of communist practices, the region started reemploying the free market way of running the economy. As a result, the the former east saw many of the former state owned establishments get privatized. This was meant to reduce the burden of government and streamline production. people from both former east and west Germany were invited to take part in the ownership of the factors of production, which was hoped to increase quantity and quality of economy output. Residents of the former east Germany benefited from the improvement of economic and political conditions in the country. The improvement of political freedom meant that they could participate in the country's political process. This was facilitated by the expansion of democratic space in the unified Germany. The freedom of movement that had previously been controlled by eastern German authorities was finally a thing of the past. As a result, people from both sides of the city could visit each other and even choose on places to live. This newly won freedom helped in quicken the speed of reconstruction of the city and lives.

The increased interaction of the peoples in the new Germany also meant the beginning of merging of the Germanic culture that had been diminished in the east. The University of Berlin once again took its place as the center of celebrating Germanic culture (Schneider, 2005, p. 115) as activities that had been moved to other cities in the country were relocated back to the city. This was a great plus to the people of Berlin and the entire country. The freedom of worship that had been restricted in the East was also completely relaxed, which meant that the people were more free to participate in religious activities of their choice. The fall of Berlin and the subsequent reunification of the country from the two halves was thus an important phenomenon for the country. The biggest beneficiary of this occurrence were the former residences of East Germany, any that found their personal, economic and political freedom expand significantly. For those in West Germany, their biggest victory was being able to cross onto the other side with little restrictions. The entire German republic was finally able to unite and go ahead with economic and political development that had been dented by the erection of Berlin wall.

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