

THE
WALL
BETWEEN
US

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For anyone who ever needed to escape.

Ministry for State Security



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Journal written by Anja Schumann.

Recovered from Anja Schumann after her
arrest on 7 October 1961.

This journal belongs to Anja Schumann,
aged $12\frac{3}{4}$.

Do not read!

SUNDAY 13 AUGUST
(EARLY MORNING)

It is exactly seven minutes past two o'clock in the morning but I can't sleep. Not after everything that has just happened. It's official. The whole world has gone CRAZY!

So, I was asleep (of course I was asleep – it's the middle of the night!) when I heard noises. At first it was just part of my dream (dreams are strange), but then there were engines and banging and voices and I thought it must be morning, but it was still dark so that didn't make any sense, so I got up and went to the window and saw soldiers in the street!

I counted:

Fifteen soldiers (in East German uniforms),
Eleven Volkspolizei (East German police),
Four trucks (army),
Two cars (police).

There was a lot of noise. Truck engines, and people talking and shouting. I could hear sirens in the distance, and when I put my face to the window and looked along the street, I could see a tank at the far end, under the street lamp.

A tank!

The soldiers in front of our apartment were rolling a big tangle of barbed wire right down the middle of our street, cutting it in half all the way along! It is exactly forty-six paces from my side of the street to Monika's side (I check every time I go across, which is every day), and the border runs exactly along the middle, twenty-three paces from each side. We joke about crossing the border to see each other every day, but how will we do that if there is barbed wire in the way?!

The police were standing with their backs to our side so they could face the buildings on Monika's side while the soldiers put out the wire. The police were holding rifles and shouting at people (too many to count!) who were coming out of their apartments to see what was going on, but lights were switching on

in all the windows and more and more people were coming out on to the street.

People from our side were going out too, but the police and soldiers ignored them because no one from our side could get past the barbed wire anyway.

Mama and Papa came into my room and told me to get away from the window, but I didn't want to because I could see Monika (12¼) across the street, standing at her window, watching what was going on. Aunt Trudi and Uncle Konrad were right beside her, like a mirror of us in my bedroom. Otto was there, too. He's always sneaking over to stay with Monika at night and I know it's because she puts food out for him even though she says she doesn't. Anyway, he's my cat but I don't mind sharing – Monika isn't just my cousin, she's my best friend in the whole world.

So, then everyone in the street started getting angry. Not at first. At first they were just asking questions, but then they started getting louder and shouting at the police. I could hear them right through my window, asking why the soldiers were putting out the barbed wire, but then the police pushed them away. I saw one man get pushed right over on to the pavement, and one woman was

screaming so loudly the police dragged her away and put her in a car. It was hard to tell, but I think it was the woman from the apartment next to Monika's. Frau Beck, I think is her name. Anyway, it was really scary. I hope she's all right.

When things calmed down, most people went back inside their apartments and the soldiers moved along the street, taking their trucks and leaving a trail of curly barbed wire behind them. I can still hear them in the distance, and there's more shouting further away.

I'm supposed to be going back to sleep but all I can think about is:

- 1) How will I see Monika if there's barbed wire right along the middle of the street?
- 2) How will Otto get back home? (Papa says Otto will be fine. He says cats are cleverer than the devil and that they can find a way through anything.)
- 3) How will Uncle Konrad get to work?
- 4) What's going to happen now?

Papa said this is 'An Important Historical Moment', so I'm going to write down as much as I can in my journal so that I remember everything.

SUNDAY 13 AUGUST
(EVENING)

Went out on to the street for a better look. Mama and Papa wanted me to stay inside but all the trucks are gone and there are only a few soldiers on the east side (Monika's side), so they said I could go. Anyway, they wanted to look too, so they couldn't exactly stop me, could they?

The barbed wire looks even worse from close up. It's as tall as I am and the spikes are *really* sharp (I touched one and nearly cut myself!). There were lots of people on both sides looking at the wire and talking about what happened last night. They said the East German soldiers put barbed wire all the way around West Berlin to stop East Berliners from coming here. They said there were crowds all over Berlin, shouting and getting angry.

Frau Weber (from next door) said she'd heard about a woman who tried to get over to our side of the wire last night but got tangled up in it and had to be pulled out and she was all cut and bleeding. Poor woman! It's horrible even to *think* about being tangled up in all those spikes!

Monika was outside but we couldn't talk because

she was on her side of the wire (east) and I was on mine (west) and there were lots of people shouting to each other. And there were soldiers on her side, stopping people from getting too close. All we could do was wave and smile. It was exciting, but also sad. I wonder how long the wire will be there for? Hopefully not for long. I'm sure someone will tell them to take it down because Mama and Papa said lots of families will be separated like ours – some even worse – and that's not right. Families shouldn't be split up.

Just now, after supper (bread and butter and slices of grilled sausage that were juicy and delicious!) we watched the news on the television and they showed a map of Germany with Berlin all the way over in the East. There was a thick line around West Berlin. The newsreader said the barbed wire goes all the way around West Berlin now, just like the thick line on his map. It looks like we are just a small island on one side of East Germany. It's a bit scary. They said the East German government put up the barrier because all the people there want to come here. Lots of people have already come here which means they don't have enough people in the East to do jobs and things. Instead of making a barbed-wire fence to keep people in, I think they should just make it nicer in East

Germany. If it was really nice, then people would want to stay.

Papa said a secretary at the office has a husband who is in East Berlin for work, so now he's probably stuck and he will have to stay there for ever. Does that mean Monika will never be able to come over to our side?

There is some good news – Otto came back! He must have found a way through the barbed wire. Papa was right when he said cats always find a way through.

P.S. I cut this out of the newspaper. (Papa said I was allowed.)

13/08/1961

THE BORDER IS SEALED!

Early in the morning of 13 August, tanks rolled, floodlights blazed and the streets of Berlin were filled with soldiers. East German police strung barricades right across Berlin, separating East from West. Their machine-gunners were given orders to shoot anyone who tried to cross into the western sectors of the city. Families have been divided and friendships have been shattered.

In the early hours of the morning and throughout the day, West Berliners came out in their thousands to wave torches and shout challenges at the East German police. East Berliners also came out in protest, but police drove them back from the barricades using tear gas and smoke bombs. Sub-machine guns were levelled at the crowds, and one West Berliner was bayoneted in the leg after he came too close to the barricade.

Some citizens of East Berlin managed to make a final bid for freedom – there have been reports of women and children dropping from apartment windows into the helping hands of West Berliners, and of youths climbing over the barricades. One East German schoolboy made a dash for freedom. He slipped through the barbed wire and disappeared into the West German crowd that was cheering his bravery.

East Berlin is now guarded by two armoured divisions, 10,000 armed police, and 2,000 armed militia. Reports suggest that East German workers have already begun to fortify the barricade.

TUESDAY 15 AUGUST

I can't believe what's happening. I feel angry and want to shout at someone. It's the summer holiday and I want to play with Monika but all I can do is wave to her through the barbed wire or from my window. We wave every morning and every night. In the afternoon we go on the street and try to talk through the barbed wire, but it's hard and we have to shout all the time. We played catch, throwing a ball over the wire, but a soldier on Monika's side came over and told her to stop. There are always soldiers at the end of the street on Monika's side. Sometimes they walk up and down to check the wire and tell people to get back.

Monika says Uncle Konrad can't work in West Berlin any more. Dieter (aged 14 $\frac{3}{4}$) from further down the street said he'd heard that some people from East Berlin can have a pass to come to our side, so I said maybe Uncle Konrad can get one. But Papa told me it's not true, and that the people in charge of East Berlin want to make sure everyone stays there. People from the East who have families here in the West might come over and not want to go back. And Papa works at the British base, so he should know.

He says it has 'caused a stir'.

P.S. I copied this map from the newspaper today. I'm really good at drawing so it looks amazing. I drew it in pencil first, then went over in pen and didn't even smudge it much. Anyway, it makes West Berlin look like a tiny island in the middle of East Germany! I also wrote some things Papa told me about why Berlin is split in two.

- In 1945, after the war, Germany was split into East and West.
- East Germany is controlled by the Soviet Union (Russia).
- West Germany has a French part, a British part and an American part.
- The capital Berlin (where I live) is right in the middle of East Germany and is split into four sectors: the French Sector, the British Sector and the American Sector, which are in West Berlin (where I live), and the Soviet Sector which is in East Berlin (where Monika lives).
- East Germany (Monika!) is called the German Democratic Republic (GDR).
- West Germany (me!) is called the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

