



“Papers,
please!”



Stiftung
**Haus der Geschichte
der Bundesrepublik Deutschland**

Tränenpalast

BRD

erer Staaten

Welcome to the Tränenpalast/Palace of Tears.

This is where history actually happened. This departure hall was part of the border crossing point at Friedrichstraße Station – a border in the heart of Berlin, a divided city in divided Germany. Here, travellers often had to queue for hours and pass through strict controls before they were allowed to leave the GDR (German Democratic Republic). Generally, only very few East Germans were allowed to leave the country at all.

What did it look like here at the time? What impact did the division of Germany have on people living in the East and in the West?

Discover for yourself!

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KEY

 = STATIONS

 = ACTIVITIES

 = PLEASE TURN THE PAGE.



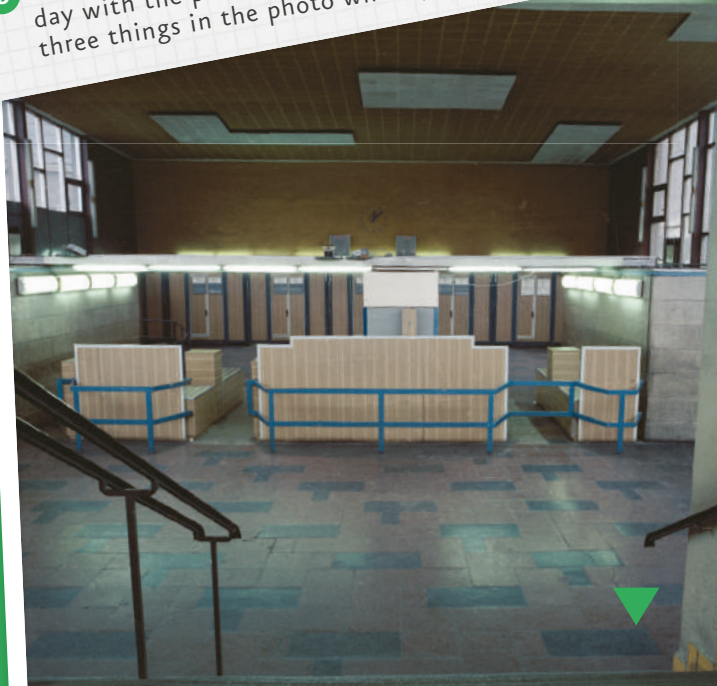
1

The Palace of Tears



a People gave this departure hall different names, including "Palace of Tears", "Bunker of Tears" and "Temple of Tears". Why? Write down some reasons.

b Look around the room. Compare the situation today with the photo from the past. Circle at least three things in the photo which you recognize.





2

Escape to the West

Until the early 1960s, many people left the GDR. Because this was illegal and punishable with imprisonment, the escapees tried everything they could to remain undetected.



- a Sieglinde Feistkorn managed to escape. Look for her suitcase, in which you will find the depicted objects. What do you think: Why did she take these particular things with her?



- b Listen to her story. Why did the family flee?
- The supply situation was bad.
 - Sieglinde was not allowed to take her school-leaving examination.
 - Sieglinde did not see a future for herself in the GDR.
 - She did not have the freedom to travel wherever she wanted.




- c Imagine what thoughts might have crossed Sieglinde's mind while she was preparing for her escape, and complete:

Too bad that ...

I'm looking forward to ...

I hope I can ...

...

- d What would you take with you if you had to flee today?
-
- 



3

Building the Berlin Wall



To block off the only remaining escape route to the West, the GDR rulers had a wall built right through the middle of Berlin in August 1961. Anyone now trying to flee risked their lives.



- a Watch the film. Name three stages in which the division of the city was completed.

1
2
3

- b To your right you can see concrete blocks from the Berlin Wall. Look for the block that was specially processed for use. Examine it carefully: What material are the pieces on top of the block made of? What was their function?



Pieces of ...

What for?



- c** Above the blocks you can see a black and white photo with border guards and an injured person. It is 18-year-old Peter Fechter. Note down what happened to him in 1962.

- d** The snapshot by photographer Wolfgang Bera became a symbol worldwide of the cruelty of the GDR border regime. Think of reasons for that. How do you feel looking at the picture today?



4

“Papers, please!”





In these booths the GDR passport officials checked the departing travellers.

Travellers from ...

Berlin (West)

DDR*

BRD*

anderen Staaten*

*Deutsche Demokratische Republik/GDR
*Bundesrepublik Deutschland/FRG
*other states

- a Tick the boxes: Who was allowed to travel to the West via the Palace of Tears without major restrictions? The signs to the left of the door can help you.



- b Take a look at the inside of the booth. What was the function of the following things? Match the pairs.

1. MIRROR ON THE CEILING

2. NARROW CORRIDOR AND
RAISED CHAIR FOR THE
INSPECTOR

3. STAMP

4. DOORS WITHOUT
HANDLES

The traveller needed it
in his passport to get
the exit permit.

The traveller was
to be checked from
every angle.

The traveller was not allowed to
leave the booth by himself.

It was to show the traveller
who was in control.

- c** The traveller had to enter the booth alone. Describe how he or she might have felt.

.....

.....

.....

.....



40 JANUIRE D D R



5

**The peaceful
revolution**





In autumn 1989, more and more East Germans took to the streets, demonstrating for freedom and political change. Within months, the political situation in the GDR changed profoundly.

a In 1989, these film sequences went around the world. Describe the atmosphere in the pictured scenes.



Clashes at a demonstration
(East Berlin)



Refugees climbing the fence of the West
German embassy (Prague)



The rulers celebrating the 40th anniversary of the GDR (East Berlin)



Demonstration (Leipzig)



b People took to the streets for freedom.
Match each description to the corresponding human right.

1. I CAN TRAVEL FREELY WHEREVER AND WHENEVER I LIKE.

Freedom of speech

2. I AM FREE TO COME TOGETHER WITH OTHER PEOPLE IN PUBLIC.

Freedom of movement

3. I CAN COMMUNICATE MY OPINION OPENLY.

Freedom of the press

4. MY PRIVATE LIFE IS PROTECTED AGAINST GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION.

Freedom to travel

5. I AM FREE TO LIVE WHEREVER I WANT.

Right to privacy

6. NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ARE NOT CONTROLLED BY THE STATE.

Freedom of assembly

c Circle the human right which is most important to you.



- d** To your left you see sets of keys which East Germans left behind in Prague. What would your thoughts be in a situation like that?

Tick the boxes:

- I am happy because I can finally go.
- I would rather go back home, but I might be punished.
- Will things really be better in West Germany?
- I am sad because I might never see my friends again.





The GDR rulers disapproved of friendships between East Germans and West Germans. Overnight, the fall of the Berlin Wall opened up new opportunities to get together.

a Listen to Silke Möllmann's story. During the time of the German division, what was most difficult for her in her relationship with Jan?

- The distance between them
- Not being allowed to travel to the West
- The farewell itself
- The uncertainty about whether they would see each other again


b How did the story of Silke and Jan continue?

Three horizontal white bars with yellow borders, intended for writing the answer to question b.



- c** As for Silke and Jan, the fall of the Wall meant a new start for many people. In Karl-Wilhelm Geissel's suitcase you find another story. What did the fall of the Berlin Wall mean for him?



- 
- d** Put yourself in the position of the people who planned the exhibition: Why do we tell these stories?



Notes

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Foundation Haus der Geschichte der
Bundesrepublik Deutschland

Tränenpalast
Reichstagufer 17
10117 Berlin

Opening times:

Tue – Fri 9 a.m. to 7 a.m.

Sat – Sun 10 a.m. to 6 a.m.

Concept and editing:

Foundation Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik
Deutschland

Design:

capito – Agentur für Bildungskommunikation GmbH

Fotos:

Stephan Klonk / Foundation Haus der Geschichte
Axel Thünker / Foundation Haus der Geschichte
BStU (p. 4)

Printed by:

LASERLINE Berlin GmbH & Co. KG