

Section of the Berlin Wall, Potsdamer Platz, Berlin (1973)

Abstract

As a direct response to the construction of the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961, Berliners in East and West often used the term “KZ” (concentration camp) to describe the situation in the GDR. Similarly, when the West German media reported on the failed escape and agonizing death of construction worker Peter Fechter on August 17, 1962, it referred to GDR border guards as “Ulbricht’s concentration camp henchmen” and “concentration camp guards.” In West Germany, the equation of the National Socialist and Communist dictatorships can be viewed within the context of an anti-totalitarian consensus. Yet this association was also made in the GDR, as evidenced by the oppositional “Manifesto of the Association of Democratic Communists,” which was published in *Der Spiegel* in January 1977. In it, the authors called the mine fields and spring guns at the inter-German border “concentration camp killing machines.” This picture shows a section of the Berlin Wall at Potsdamer Platz; the television tower on East Berlin’s Alexanderplatz can be seen in the background. The spray-painted message is simple and clear: “GDR – A Concentration Camp.”

Source



Source: In the background: the television tower, Berlin (East). Date: September 1973. Location: Berlin (West). Photo: Klaus Lehnartz.

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