

# Other Side Of Wall Bleak, Depressing

Detlef Kratz is a native of Germany and has lived in Canada for the past two years. He left Germany mostly to get away from the military draft but also to "see things a bit".

His impression of Canada is that "It's not too bad".

He intends to become a naturalized Canadian as soon as his five year waiting period is up. His English is quite fluent even though he has been here only two years, but he says this is because he used to visit relatives in London.

Presently working for Shelley Sawmills at Shelley, B.C. he decided the people of Prince George might be interested in a trip he took to East Berlin three weeks ago. Here is the 22 year old Kratz's story.

By DETLEF KRATZ

When you cross a border in the Western World, what do you feel? Most people don't think anything of it. You don't notice that you are entering a different area because the people on the other side are much the same as you.

But crossing the border between East and West Berlin is a different story.

In Canada or the United States there is no huge wall or the mines and soldiers with German Shepherds and machine guns.

I took a taxi from Berlin Tempelhof Airport to Check Point Charlie. ...

A small sign says that I am on the end of the American Sector and that I am about to enter the East Sector, the German Democratic Republik.

A little building houses Canadian, English and American soldiers who watch the border, which is a wall, and you are unable to look on the other side.

Nobody asks me where I am going or what I want to do over there. There is an opening for cars and people who work on the other side. There is a big

tower on the communist side in which armed soldiers watch a few miles of the wall.

I am walking between the Wall and the tower and see a big sign which tells me that I am entering the German Democratic Republik and it welcomes me to have a pleasant stay.

The pleasant stay begins with a customs office.

## A Low Employee?

I have to fill out a paper which states where I come from, what I want to do in the German Democratic Republik, how much money I have or if I am a Low Employee.

Then they take my passport and give me a number.

A lot of people are waiting, sometimes for hours to get their passport back. Communist posters on every wall of the room declares "We are the friendly Republik who like peace and freedom and a good living standard for everybody."

Well, who doesn't want this? But do they have it?

Everybody who is waiting with me is quiet and when they talk it is in whispers. From time to time they call numbers out, but I still continue waiting. After an hour or so, they call my number and I walk to the counter. A policeman asks me what I want to do in their country.

I answer, "Just a visit." He tells me to put my baggage on the table. I do so. He tells me to open everything up.

## Leave Progress

He looks inside and sees my magazines and newspapers -- the Progress and the Georgia Straight. He orders me to leave the Progress on the table and to keep the Georgia Straight. I ask why.

He answers "That's our rule and if you don't like it, then we

may have to ask you a few more questions."

After looking over all my things for about 35 minutes he gives me a visa to stay in the German Democratic Republik.

Then I go to the next room. Here I have to exchange five West Mark or five dollars for their money whether I like it or not.

I come out of the building and have to cross a big fence which is 15 feet high so that nobody can hand anything over it.

Next comes another wall and a small house where I have to show my passport again. I finally enter the German Democratic Republik.

All I see is old houses, no traffic and very few people. I ask a man for directions to Mauerstreet.

## A Little Scared

He looks a little scared and says, "Straight ahead, don't you see that is the end of our sector. There begins the place where the really free live, something we will never have."

Then he leaves me. He shows the feeling of a German who lives in imprisonment.

I start walking down the street and just see old houses, plastered with Communist posters telling the people that they are

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