

# East Germans uneasy about crumbling Berlin wall

By DONNA KELL  
the Herald

A week after the announcement that travel restrictions were lifted in East Germany - a country bound by the iron curtain of Communist rule since the Second World War - East Germans now living in Halton Hills have mixed reactions to this new freedom.

Heinz Dorst, an East German

from the small town of Croddendorf, now living north of Limehouse, said he was not surprised when he heard the Berlin Wall was opening up.

"It had to come down sooner or later. But I think right now, the West is making too much of it," the member of German-Canadian Club "Eintracht" (Harmony), said.

"They lifted the travelling restrictions, but it still doesn't fill your stomach," he said of the political reforms.

Christmas 1973, when he visited Croddendorf, there were no apples, oranges or bananas, "things we take for granted" every day.

Mr. Dorst said his sister and her family are still in Croddendorf, its population stagnant since the Second World War, and a town where only the privileged have telephones.

Mr. Dorst left Germany at age 19 to fight as a German soldier in Africa. He was in prisoner of war camps from 1943 to 1947 in the United States and France.

But he knows Germany well, and says the style of life in East Germany contrasts with that of West Germany.

Through television, the East has learned what riches lie in the backyard of their western neighbors, he said.

John Sommer, a Georgetown resident and an East German from the city of Leipzig, fears that East Germans could lose their "soul" and become as materialistic as their western neighbors, long for-

tified by American economic intervention.

"The East Germans are so modest. They have such a nice feeling for their family and friends."

And they conquered communism without submitting to the Americans, he said.

"If I were in the East, I would be too proud to join the West. They became democratic because of the guys with the big guns."

In spite of the charming uniqueness of West Germany, Mr. Sommer was thrilled to read in the newspaper that the two halves of his native country may one day be united.

Mr. Sommer thought he would wake up and find the whole thing had been "just a fiction."

It's been over 40 years since Mr. Sommer escaped East Germany to avoid certain death in a uranium mine. All that his family had as part of the landowning class was taken by the Soviet Dictator Josef Stalin.

"I've never been back to East Germany," Mr. Sommer said, "but now I'm very tempted to see what's going on there."

He feared that the Berlin Wall, built in 1961 to separate communist Germany from capitalist Germany, was "too entrenched."

But people demanded and won their freedom on the East side of the wall, Mr. Sommer said.

"Freedom and independence is probably something in us that is a genetic thing."



Heinz Dorst, an East German native, now living north of Limehouse, was not surprised to hear the Berlin Wall separating East and West Germany no longer restricts East Germans. Mr. Dorst is shown here with a silver plate given to him by the German army at Christmas, 1941. (Herald photo)

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