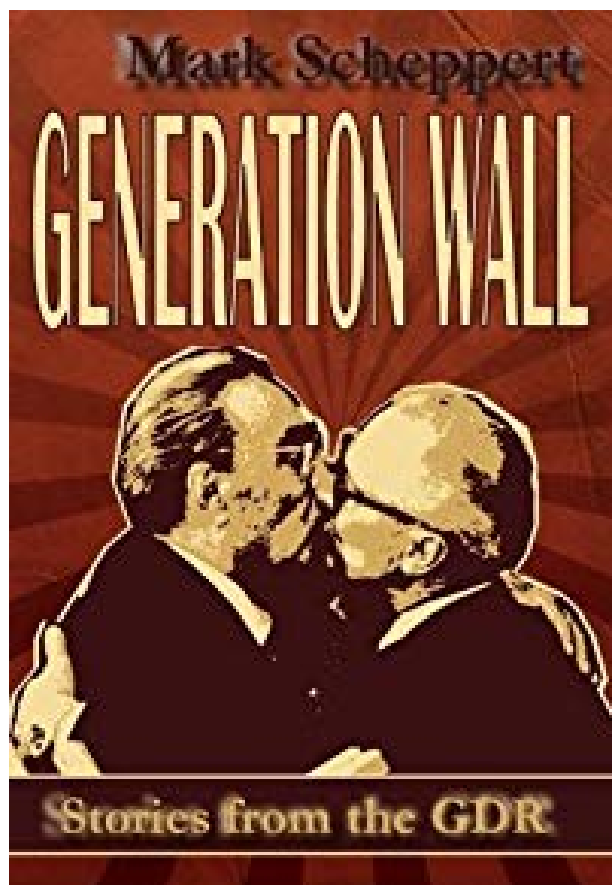


Generation Wall: Stories from the GDR



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When I started writing these stories in 2008, I pledged to create something NEW and EXCEPTIONAL about the German Democratic Republic that does not exist so far and reflects the feelings of my generation. Why? Well, it was odd. Nowhere in these supposedly typical literary monuments for this dematerialised country, I could picture myself. I did neither belong to this generation of “Zonenkindern” (“Children of the occupation zones” by Jana Hensel), nor did I live in “Sonnenallee” (“At the shorter end of sun alley” by Thomas Brussig or in a “Turm” (“The Tower” by Uwe Tellkamp). My youth, my experiences and my fights with this strange place called GDR did not occur in these books. And certainly not my emotions that I associated with this time. Bizarre. Was I so different? That could not be true. Once again I had this sinister feeling that until today we, the Osis, have not found our own voice that is able to tell the stories of our past with dignity and self-confidence, humorous but sober, without playing something down, kitsch, nostalgia or glorification and definitely far away from coming to terms with the political past. I thought that in this reunited Germany, there has slowly grown an image of the GDR that has nearly nothing in common with the GDR I lived in. Has a piece of me indeed vanished with the GDR? My experiences and memories were still alive, but to keep them, I needed to write them down. I had no idea how difficult it turned out to be to reflect this time as I planned – witty, honest but also cautious and avoiding typical patterns. I tried hard not only to remember but to connect past and present, to find out what the heritage of the GDR did to the Germany of today. Moreover, I wanted to know in how far the former living in the GDR has influenced my personal development. I knew what I was looking for, the tiny little things, the precise ones, the details that maybe can show the whole situation. My family with all its strange rituals, my friends with all their mad ideas, school, sports competitions and my

personal surroundings – all those parts form the whole thing. And not to forget – this strange feeling to be submitted to the merci mechanisms of a totalitarian state – that was coming up for the first time at this age. The right genre for all this, were fast-paced short stories. I did not intend to create a literary monument, but something that entertains and draws the reader into the plot. What came out were 16 stories with 16 typical events. But they are also connected. Minor characters of one story become main characters in others. Some themes occur twice or will be intensified at a certain point. Finally, the whole affair is created in each reader's mind leaving enough space for personal connections. My greatest wish with this book is to create a whole feeling, a whole experience that covers my view on the GDR, as I am convinced that I am not the only one that is different. I would like to share and conserve the memories that shaped me, but at the same time are somehow universal. I believe that many Osis find themselves in these stories and all the other readers will gain insight into the ordinary days of a world they did not become acquainted with. In occasion of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, these stories describe a different view on this vanished country and will hopefully fight oblivion. Mark Scheppert