

Tearing Down Propaganda: A Case Study on the “What You Should Know About the Wall” Brochure

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary history is full of remarkable Cold War resources which were not given considerable attention at their times due to the perception of them as *ridiculous words of enemy*. Although they were not classified documents in the depths of national archives, they were not considered important or serious to be studied alongside more popular materials. This study supports the re-discovery of such propaganda materials with a general belief that international propaganda studies can realize their historical significance, when the ideas that once labelled them as products of enemy have disappeared. With this aim, this study presents a qualitative case study on the *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure, which was an early example of the official East German brochures on the Berlin Wall in English. It was written to inform the citizens of other countries about the situation in Berlin after the construction of the wall from the East German perspective. Nevertheless, it was not possible for this brochure to create a popular understanding among the English-speaking target groups who live in the Western countries. Even though the brochure had potential of persuading its target groups in favor of the East German causes through its well-prepared turn of expression or responses to critiques, there were certain disadvantages for achieving its purpose. In this context, this article questions why this brochure was not able to justify the construction of the Berlin Wall among the English-speaking target groups in the West. In this way, it focuses on this remarkable but understudied propaganda material and contributes to the Berlin Wall literature and international propaganda studies.

Anahtar Kelimeler: August 13, Berlin Wall, Cold War, East Germany, propaganda.

Propagandayı Yıkma: “Duvar Hakkında Bilmeniz Gerekenler” Broşürü Üzerine Bir Vaka Çalışması

ÖZ

Soğuk Savaş döneminde yayımlanan bazı yazılı kaynaklar, *düşmanın saçma sözleri* olarak damgalanarak hak ettiği akademik ilgiyi görememiştir. Bu kaynaklar, arşivlerin derinliklerinde keşfedilmeyi bekliyor olmasa da buldukları dönemin şartları açısından çalışılmak için yeterince değerli veya ciddi görülmemiştir. Damgalayıcı kalıpların etkisini yitirmesi gereken bu Soğuk Savaş sonrası dönemde, çeşitli sebeplerle önemli olabilecek bu kaynakların akademik anlamda uluslararası propaganda çalışmaları çerçevesinde ele alınması önem taşımaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmada Berlin Duvarı hakkında İngilizce yazılan ilk resmi Doğu Alman broşürlerinden biri olarak tarihsel önem taşıyan *Duvar Hakkında Bilmeniz Gerekenler* broşürü incelenmektedir. 1962 yılından beri ulaşılabilir olmasına rağmen, akademik çalışmalarda neredeyse görünmez olan bu kaynak, uluslararası toplumu Berlin Duvarı'nın inşasının başlamasından sonraki süreç hakkında bilgilendirmek için yazılmıştır. Broşür, kullandığı dil ve yaygın eleştirilere verdiği yanıtlar bağlamında insanları Doğu Alman tezi lehine ikna etme potansiyeline sahip olmasına rağmen, Batı'daki hedef kitlesi arasında beklenen etkiyi yaratmamıştır. Bu çalışma, broşürün amacına ulaşmadaki başarısızlığını, karşılaşılan dezavantajlara dikkat çekerek uluslararası propaganda çalışmaları kapsamında anlamaya çalışmaktadır ve duvarın propaganda yoluyla zayıflatılması ve güçlendirilmesi konusuna odaklanarak literatüre katkı sağlayacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 13 Ağustos, Berlin Duvarı, Soğuk Savaş, Doğu Almanya, propaganda.

Introduction

The Berlin Wall was a unique building with an illusion that those looking from the west saw a prison wall, while the officials doing the same from the east saw an embodied victory. This illusion was created by the propaganda campaigns which operated on both sides of the wall in order to support the views against the “reds” or “communists” of the East (newspapers.com, 1961, August 13;

newspapers.com, 1961, November 20; Shields, 1961, August 19) or the “fascists” or “imperialists” of the West (German Propaganda Archive, 1998; German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Both campaigns sought to justify their arguments over the wall and produced many propaganda materials for this purpose. The *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure was one of these materials which attempt to justify the wall.

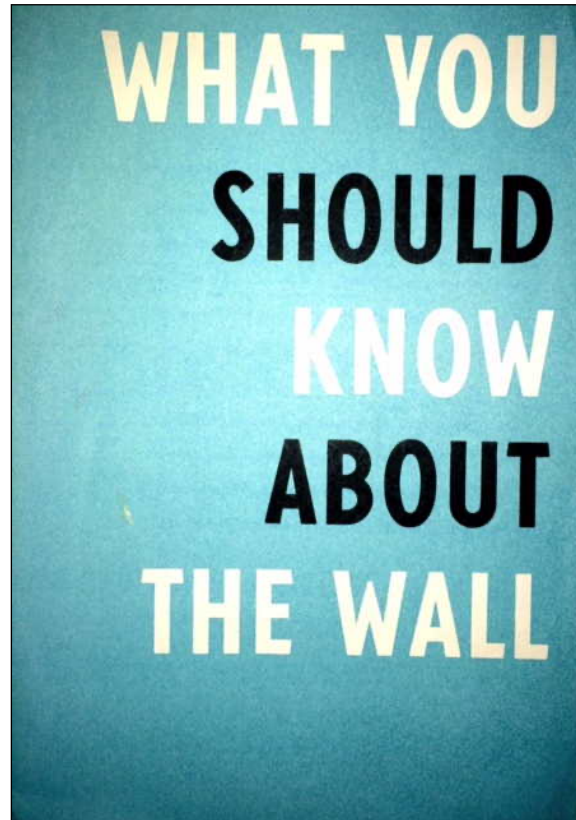


Figure 1. The Cover of the Brochure (German Propaganda Archive, 2001)

The *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure was published in English in 1962 by the East German authorities in order to inform the international community on the situation in Berlin after the erection of the Berlin Wall. It was reflecting the official East German perspective on the wall in answering questions in its ten titles: “Where, exactly, is Berlin situated?”, “Did the wall fall out of the sky?”, “Did the wall have to come?”, “What did the wall prevent?”, “Was peace really threatened?”, “Who is walled in?”, “Who breaks off human contacts?”, “Does the wall threaten anyone?”, “Who is aggravating the situation?”, and “Is the wall a gymnastic apparatus?” (German Propaganda Archive, 2001).

In terms of international propaganda studies, the brochure seems like a promising propaganda material which would influence how people think of the Berlin Wall for having a clear purpose, addressing specific target groups, and carrying an open message. In this respect, it aimed to report the post-wall atmosphere in Berlin, addressed to the English-speaking world, and defended that reaching an agreement which would serve peace is still possible even after the wall (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Apart from them, the meticulously written language of the brochure was also noteworthy to understand its potential. With the awareness that the text will address to the people who live beyond the Iron Curtain, socialist discourses tried to be avoided. It means that there was no emphasis on “comrades”, “socialism”, or “working class” unlike *On the 13th*, an East German pamphlet on the Berlin Wall written in 1963 (German Propaganda Archive, 2009a). The language was also significant, while the brochure was answering certain critiques from West Berlin and trying to create a positive image of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). In this sense, it focused on the

contradictoriness of these critiques and reminded hostile words which are told against the GDR. For example, West Berlin Mayor, Willy Brandt was cited for his words “We want to be the disturber of the peace” and the West Berlin Senate was mentioned for its sending “respects” to the people who East Germany accepts as provocateurs (German Propaganda Archive, 2001).

After the publication of the brochure, the Berlin Wall continued to be mentioned in the West in the contexts of the violation of laws, the humanitarian plights, or the violence of the East German guards and police (newspapers.com, 1962, August 10; Thomas, 1963, August 12). It meant that neither the brochure nor the propaganda campaign it belongs to could not achieve to popularize the East German arguments in the West, despite the promising features of the brochure. In this sense, this article tries to understand why the brochure could not justify the Berlin Wall among its English-speaking target groups in the West. In order to answer this question properly, this article is divided into some sections. The *East German Emigration and Steps towards the Berlin Wall* section focuses on the historical background of the construction of the wall with a particular emphasis on the East German emigration and economic issues in order to understand the propaganda environment the wall and the brochure were born. Under *Rise of the Berlin Wall and the Propaganda Wars in Media*, the emergence of the propaganda and counter-propaganda discourses after the erection of the wall are highlighted in order to understand how the wall was responded on both of its sides. *Method* explains the qualitative research methods this study benefited. It also emphasizes the resources that were accessed during data collection process and made this research possible. In the *Analysis* section, the study examines the brochure and other accessed resources and centers upon three disadvantages the brochure had due to the time period and the particular expressions and characteristics inside the pages. Finally, *Findings* offers the result of the whole analysis and reaches the conclusion that the brochure did not achieve its objective, because the propaganda environment was not suitable, the brochure had threatening expressions and it implied the wall was a desperate decision.

Surprisingly to a nonconfidential sixty-one years old resource, the *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure did not attract academic attention except the studies of Berger and LaPorte (2008, p. 546; 2010, pp. 101-102) who mentioned the brochure as a Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) pamphlet that aims to respond negative British public opinion about the wall and justify it, Diliberto (2022, pp. 23-25) who considered the brochure as a Stasi propaganda material, Cantrell et al. (2018, p. 124) who quoted a section from the brochure to exemplify how the wall was viewed in the East, and Derenčinović (2001, p. 148) who gave a reference to the brochure in order to express the developments in East Germany between 1949 and 1961. Although the number of these studies are limited and their main area of study is not the brochure, no academic resources about the brochure were discovered apart from them. Thus, this article will contribute to the Berlin Wall literature in particular and the post-Cold War era researches of understudied Cold War materials in general.

East German Emigration and Steps towards the Berlin Wall

The construction of the Berlin Wall was a response to decades of migration flows from the east to the west in Germany. Between 1949 and 1961, around 3 million people, almost one-sixth of the population of East Germany, left the country for the West (Miegel, 2002, p. 11). Their emigration was not only harming the prestige of the East as a socialist and liveable country, but also shaking the national economy critically. East Germany was losing 3.5 billion Deutsch Marks annually and could not fill the place of young and high-skilled citizens who emigrated (German Propaganda Archive, 2001; Schollosser, 2008, p. 341). The country “no longer wanted to stand by passively and see how doctors, engineers, and skilled workers were induced by refined methods unworthy of the dignity of man to give up their secure existence in the GDR and work in West Germany or West Berlin” (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Thus, the East saw the emigration as something needs to be prevented in order to protect the economy and the stability of population numbers and engaged in some strategies to do so.

One of the first strategies was the Berlin blockade of the Soviet Union. After the American, British, and French authorities introduced a common economic system and a new single currency in

their occupation zones in the west of Germany, the Soviet forces began a blockade that cut off all ground traffic between Berlin and the west of Germany in 1948. The use of new Deutsche Mark caused moving of old Reichsmarks to the East and risked bringing down its already unstable economy. In this sense, the blockade was an attempt to stabilize the economy. The response of the Western powers, whose experts believed the blockade is an attempt to force them to withdraw from Berlin, was an airlift plan to supply the city (Крамник, 2008). Through the airlift, they were able to protect their positions and sustain the needs of 2.2 million Berliners. In a way the Soviets could not foresee, the blockade also contributed to bring Germans in the western zones and their former enemies Westerners together and strengthen the idea of 'West Germany'. Thus, the Soviets ended the blockade in May 1949 without achieving a development over the ongoing German or Berlin questions (Spencer, 1998, pp. 389-391).

In May 1952, the border between the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) was closed only three years later the countries were founded. Berlin remained as the sole gate East Germans can pass to the West side (Defrance, 2020; Rottman, 2008, p. 9). In order to deal with the emigration flows, Walter Ulbricht, the leader of the SED intended to seal this gate, too and started his efforts to persuade the Soviet Union in 1953 (Harrison, 2011). Nevertheless, the Soviet leadership did not approve the idea in order not to add new tensions to the Cold War (Koehn, 2001) and defended that such an action would mean the acceptance of a failure and harm the image of socialist nations (Harrison, 2011).

While the East German Uprising was approaching in 1953, East Germany lost another 185,000 people of its population to West Germany in the first six months of the year. The East German regime saw this emigration flow as an economic matter and slowed down the collectivization efforts and loosened economic controls. These strategies contributed the sharp decline in the number of emigrants in the second half of 1953, but they could not prevent the West powers to use the East German Uprising to announce the weakness of the socialist regime. Following years, East Germany continued to face emigration and lost hundreds of thousands of its population through the 1950s. It ensured until the socialists felt obliged to do what they try to avoid: Building a wall in 1961 (Ingimundarson, 1994, pp. 463-478).

In the fall of 1960, East Germany took a series of unilateral decisions to make the border difficult to cross, but the border could not be sealed without the Soviet military support which would deter any potential reaction (Harrison, 2011). Thus, further steps were taken to convince Moscow. Ulbricht used the 'socialist ally' card and implied the Soviet leadership that the border needs to be sealed for the survival of the socialist ally of Moscow. The Soviet Chinese rivalry was also benefited, and Khrushchev began to consider that building of a wall would show China how Moscow is able to stand against the West. Finally, Ulbricht asked Khrushchev to seal the border in March 1961, but he was asked to wait for an answer until the Khrushchev-Kennedy meeting in June (Koehn, 2001). After Khrushchev left the meeting with the new US President Kennedy without reaching a settlement over Berlin, he approved the request of Ulbricht (Koehn, 2001; US Department of State Office of the Historian, 2008).

Even though Ulbricht declared that nobody intends to construct a wall in June 1961 (Lacey, 2015, p. 1), the Soviet permission and support were granted for the secret operation to seal the border, *the Operation Rose*, in the following month (Harrison, 2011; Kempe, 2011, p. 324; Steury, 2011;). After that, Ulbricht and Khrushchev addressed the representatives of the Warsaw Pact in order to guarantee their support on the issue and strengthen the deterrence against potential reactions. Then, the East German and Soviet officials began to work on how the daily life will continue after the Operation Rose and they decided on the details of the changes on the movements of the transportation means and people (Harrison, 2011).

Rise of the Berlin Wall and the Propaganda Wars in Media

Berliners woke up to see soldiers and barbed wires around a sealed border on August 13 (Harrison, 2011). A night before, East Germany, backed by the Soviet Union, began to construct barriers around West Berlin's 110-mile circumference (Kempe, 2011, p. xviii). As the construction area was in the Soviet zone, the American officials in Berlin did not intervene in their actions (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Even though there were rumors of a potential change in the status of the border, many East Germans were not expecting its closure. For this reason, they were surprised, but also feared from the possibility of a military conflict (Ross, 2004, p. 32). Actually, there were reasons to fear when the American and Soviet troops began to deploy near the border on the opposite sides. During these tense moments, any wrong action could have caused a war. Nevertheless, Khrushchev and Kennedy agreed on the removal of their troops from the border and ended one of the tensest developments of the Cold War in Europe peacefully (US Department of State Office of the Historian, 2008).

The Western and Eastern German officials wanted to direct people to listen their own discourses through media as early as possible before their believing in counter-discourses. For this reason, the wall has become a propaganda theme since the first hours it started to be constructed. *The Declaration of the Warsaw Pact States* began to be heard in the East German radio stations at 04.00. Their broadcasts highlighted the application of new protective measures at the Berlin border as a result of the hostile Western responses to the peaceful East German actions (Lacey, 2015, p. 7). The East German radio stations *Berliner Rundfunk* and *Deutschlandsender* referred to the wall as a defensive action against the American spying (Schlosser, 2008, pp. 342-343), when the East German authorities called it as a measure to protect the country from the negative influence of falling capitalism (History, 2010). The SED also described the wall as a symbol of power rather than weakness (Ross, 2004, p. 33), because the East Germans were able to take action on August 13 just like they stood against the Nazis and Nazism before (German Propaganda Archive, 2009b). As the party explained in a pamphlet later, the "successors" of Hitler and Himmler were stopped on that day (German Propaganda Archive, 2009a). In accordance with this discourse, the building was officially named *Antifaschistischer Schutzwall* or "anti-fascist protection barrier" in East Germany (Hohensee, 2018).

On the other side of the barrier, the West German radio programs laid the situation at the border to audiences for the first time at 10.20. Their initial report was about the locations of the Soviet soldiers, tanks, and tents, but their following reports included the violence of the East German guards and polices at the border. By 18.30, the voice of Willy Brandt, Mayor of West Berlin, was heard from the radios. Brandt evaluated the development as the annexation of East Berlin and the violation of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (Lacey, 2015, pp. 9-10). The voices of the West Berlin radio stations *RIAS* and *Sender Freies Berlin* were also angry. According to them, the wall was the evidence that Germany is weak and being used in the superpower rivalries, when the Germans could not defend their own interests or do anything apart from watching the Soviet and the SED efforts in the construction of the wall. Significantly, *RIAS* also addressed the same arguments that it put forward during the Berlin crisis in 1948 and 1949 and reflected the wall as a symbol of oppression and unskillfulness of the communist system in East Germany. Further, *RIAS* commentator Hans-Peter Herz compared Ulbricht to Hitler and stated that Ulbricht is violating the 1945 Potsdam Agreement and the four-power order, that divided Germany and Berlin into four occupation zones among the American, British, French, and Soviet forces, just as Hitler violated many agreements in the past (Coy, 2011, pp. xvi, 197; Schlosser, 2008, pp. 343-373).

Similar to the West German media, the Western media channels in English brought the issue to the fore in negative contexts. Early as August 14, the British newspaper *The Daily Express* headlined "Sealed at Gunpoint" (Reid, 2021). In the following month, the American-centered journal *Time* wrote about how the four power agreements are being violated and how "Red Boss" Ulbricht keeps unhappy citizens behind the wall (*Time*, 1961, p. 18). *Daily Sketch*, another British newspaper, focused on the lack of freedom in the eastern side of the wall. The photograph on its cover showed an East German soldier who jumped over the barbed wire from the East to the West and said that "Now I

am a free man” (Reid, 2021). Thus, the Berlin Wall started to have a bad reputation in the English-media just after the beginning of its construction.

Method

This article is explanatory research on the field of international propaganda. In order to develop suitable answers to its research question, it benefits from two qualitative research methods: Case study analysis and record keeping. Case study analysis is intending to explain the organization of a series of events or an entity through data collection (University of Sargodha, 2021). Within the scope of the content of this article, case study analysis is necessary, because it provides to focus on the developments, personal and media statements, and propaganda materials by the time the Berlin Wall was erected. Record keeping is another qualitative method, and it aims to benefit from existing reliable materials in doing research. Through this method, formerly published data would be used in the construction of a new research (University of Sargodha, 2021). In this context, record keeping is primarily used to analyze printed resources like brochures, booklets, and arguments in the German Propaganda Archive of Calvin University and news of the 1960s that are now accessible online. This method enabled this study to analyze and compare these resources and understand the language and turn of expressions of the *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure better. The usage of these two methods together provides the necessary methodological background to start the data collection process of this article.

In order to collect data, the article addresses the *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure as its key document, when it also collects and analyze data from several primary and secondary materials that were accessed from academic journals and books, online propaganda and news archives, encyclopedias, theses databases, and official webpages along with a few informative internet resources and a think-tank study. Among them, the German Propaganda Archive has a key position for this article. The archive provides open access to full-text or partial display of several documents like the *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure, the *Zehn Jahre Deutsche Demokratische Republic* booklet (*Ten years of the German Democratic Republic*), the *Da schlug's 13* brochure (*On the 13th*), the *Sonderargumentation zum Schlag gegen den deutschen Militarismus* argument (*A special argument on the strike against German militarism*) or the *GDR Review* magazine that made the writing of this article possible.

The 1960s newspaper collection of *newspapers.com* and the archive of *the Guardian* and *Time* also contributes a lot to this article to obtain data about the early reactions to the construction of the Berlin Wall. They provided access to various Western newspapers from different regions and countries such as *Time* (New York, the US), *The Akron Beacon Journal* (Ohio, the US), *The Boston Sunday Globe* (Massachusetts, the US), *The Guardian* (London, the UK), *The Windsor Star* (Ontario, Canada), and *Tallahassee Democrat* (Florida, the US). These newspapers were not chosen to reflect any political or regional preferences. The reason they are involved to this study is the limitation of this article to collect data from free-accessible digitalized newspapers that reacted early or carried the early reactions about the construction of the wall to their pages mainly early as August 1961. Through these collected data and the methods, the article attempts to understand the failure of the brochure in its own propaganda environment.

The preparation process of this article did not require the ethics committee decision.

Analysis

In East Germany, propaganda was in a key position that the country would have collapsed without it. Propaganda was lapped in both domestic and international areas, because it was providing the obedience of its citizens at home and granting approval of the international community abroad. As these areas were seen complementary to each other, the country needed almost universal approval (Bytwerk, 1999, p. 411). In this sense, East Germany had to explain the reasons behind the necessary

steps which led the construction of the Berlin Wall and expect to persuade international target groups. The *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure was written with this objective.

The brochure was a clear propaganda material in terms of its target groups, purpose, and message. It was addressing to the English-speakers around the world by saying “what would be the considerations of a citizen of a foreign state if he wanted to gain clarity about the problems in West Berlin” (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). It was expressing the situation in Berlin following the construction of a ‘necessary’ wall, and making a call for peace that would end all tense developments (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). For non-socialist international readers who live beyond the Iron Curtain, it avoided using a socialist terminology and expressed tolerance to readers’ ideologies with the words “Perhaps YOU don’t want socialism. That is your affair” (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). It also wanted to show how the West German discourses are hostile to East Germany by citing Brandt’s words “We want to be the disturber of the peace” or expressing “Bonn propaganda describes the wall as a “monstrous evidence of the aggressiveness of world communism”” when it was explained that the wall was actually created by “the anti-national, aggressive NATO policy” (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Despite these characteristics, the brochure was not successful in the Western countries and the Berlin Wall continued to be remembered as an unpleasant symbol of humanitarian tragedies, violated laws, and police and guard violence (newspapers.com, 1962, August 10; Thomas, 1963, August 12). The failure of the brochure cannot be attributed only to the Cold War mentality on how enemy words are approached. It would mean any propaganda material in the east side of the Iron Curtain were destined to be unsuccessful during the Cold War. In order to investigate further reasons, this article benefits from record-keeping and case study analysis methods and analyzes the propaganda environment of the brochure and the expressions of the text through comparing it with other materials.

Firstly, the brochure was analyzed in terms of its propaganda environment. Initially, it should be noted that the publication month of the brochure is unknown. In German Propaganda Archive (2001), Randall Bytwerk expresses his guess for the month as February 1962, but explains that the brochure was not clearly dated. For this reason, it should be accepted that the brochure might be published in a date between January 1962 (five months after the Operation Rose) and December 1962 (seventeen months after the Operation Rose). On this point, the Western media contents show that five to seventeen months would be too late to shape the opinion of the international community. From day one, the West developed its own discourse and it was, unsurprisingly, not parallel with the official East German point of view. Among the Westerners, the Berlin Wall was engraved as a symbolic, material, psychological, and political form of asymmetric violence. It also became a topic of art and literature in the West in the expression of anger against “barbarism”. (Defrance, 2020). These negative discourses were also being fueled every day by several media outlets throughout the world (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). For many parts of the world, it was possible to follow the developments in Berlin almost in the heat of the moment through several newspapers in English (newspapers.com, 2020). At one point, as it can be seen in the day-to-day development of 1961 in *Chronik der Mauer* (2001), media channels and officials of the Western powers, West Berlin, and West Germany began to unite their voices to criticize the wall for its representing illegality and violence of a failed socialist system early as August 1961. In this context, it should have not been easy to have a strong impact on the international community who had already read or heard about how the East Germans bombed a group of young people at the border (Kellett-Long, 1961) or how the East German security forces were expanded (newspapers.com, 2011).

Unlike the fast spread of the negative Western discourses, East Germany did not seem in a hurry to direct a pro-wall propaganda towards the international community. When the *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure met with its international readers in 1962 (German Propaganda Archive, 2001), it faced with the reality that its arguments had already been responded by the Western propaganda. For instance, the brochure was referring to the wall as “the protective wall of the GDR” against the fascists (German Propaganda Archive, 2001), but a daily Canadian newspaper, *The Windsor Star*, had already carried the story of an old woman who questions the ‘protective’ status of the wall on August 19, 1961. The woman was living in the East and asking whether the wall is

protecting her from her grandchild across the border (Shields, 1961). Thus, the international readers had already known the Eastern German emphasis on the wall as a protective barrier was challenged, even by their own citizens. When the brochure demanded respect for the wall as a state border through explaining that it is not “a gymnastic apparatus” (German Propaganda Archive, 2001), it was known that even some East German polices and soldiers had passed the border in order to take refuge in West Berlin (Chronik der Mauer, 2001; Rottman, 2008, p. 8). Moreover, the brochure was not the only late material for the international community. Although East Germany had a propaganda channel like *GDR Review*, a monthly propaganda journal in several languages for foreign readers (German Propaganda Archive, 2010), the issue of the Berlin Wall was not treated here until 1962. When the issue was finally mentioned, the journal supported the East German arguments through representing the wall as a preventive measure against a potential danger which would cause another world war (Hillaker, 2014, p. 30). Then, East Germany did not benefit from all of its media capabilities to address to the English-speaking groups earlier and people who cannot understand German had remained under the heavy influence of the Western discourses and, possibly, had developed an initial perspective on the developments in Berlin. Thus, the brochure born disadvantaged in this propaganda environment.

Secondly, this study evaluated the language of the brochure and observed the presence of both peaceful and threatening expressions. In general, the brochure was trying to represent East Germany as a peace-loving and a well-meant country. For instance, the Bonn government's accusation of aggression against East Germany was responded by asking “Have you ever considered it to be a sign of aggressiveness when someone builds a fence around his property?”. It was also stated that East Germany offered several proposals that would serve peace and if they were followed “the situation in Germany would not have been aggravated and, consequently, there would have been no wall” (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Later, the brochure agreed that it would be better if there is no wall, but the wall was the result of the non-cooperative and destructive actions of West Germany and West Berlin. East Germany does not also see the wall as pleasant in terms of separating people from each other, but remaining separate due to a wall rather than a war was a far better situation. This view also attempted to be supported through giving place for the opinion of Paul Reynaud, former Prime Minister of France, who commented that the closure of the border by the GDR decreased the risk of another world war. In this context, the brochure implied that the East German authorities make a call for reaching an agreement which would serve peace, despite the recent hostile developments over Berlin (German Propaganda Archive, 2001).



Figure 2. The Map inside the Brochure (German Propaganda Archive, 2001)

Although the brochure stressed the peaceful intentions of socialist East Germany, it concluded with a different message with a map and a sentence which can be evaluated as threatening for two reasons. Firstly, the choice of color in this map, which shows East Germany and its neighbors, can be considered as a subliminal message. Here, West Germany was colored in black, when the neighbor socialist states were in blue (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). If blue represents allies, black is likely to represent its opposite, non-allies or even enemies and it is not a friendly message to make a call for peace. Secondly, the focus of the map and a sentence in the previous page gives a clear warning to West Berlin. The map highlights the position of West Berlin surrendered by the East German territories and “He who lives on an island should not make an enemy of the ocean” is written close to the map (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). When it is considered, the West saw Berlin as “a democratic island in a communist sea” (Spencer, 1968, p. 383), here, the intentional focus on the *island* of West Berlin within the *ocean* of East Germany does not seem like a peaceful expression. For these reasons, the brochure might mean that East Germany wants peace, but it is also ready for war. This message overshadows the East German intentions to be seen as a peaceful nation. Further, East Germany was a communist nation and from a Western point of view, communism was seen as closely related to the destruction of the Free World and the expansion until the creation of a communist world (Garthoff, 1994, p. 10). When the communist rules had been already stigmatized in negative sense, adopting such discourses could not be the proper way to address people beyond the wall.

Finally, there are some contradictions about the expressed success of the Berlin Wall and East Germany in the brochure. Throughout the pages, the East German authorities tried to show how capable they are in terms of having a “safeguarded and strengthened” frontier, “bringing about the danger of a conflict”, preventing “West Berlin’s becoming the starting point for a military conflict”, and erecting “the wall as an antifascist, protective wall against them” (West Berlin Senate’s “espionage centres, their revanchist radio stations, their fascist soldiers’ associations, their youth poisoners, and their currency racketeers”) (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Nevertheless, these capabilities were overshadowed by disclosing the wall’s being a desperate decision after a series of undesired developments. For instance, the brochure stated that the wall did not “fall out of the sky”, because the developments like the application of the two-currency practice in 1948, the formation of

“the West German separatist state” in 1949, or the repetition of the annexation of East Germany as the official target of the West German government caused its erection (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Since these developments were not shaped with mutual agreements between West Germany and East Germany, they actually showed incapability of East Germany. The brochure might have been intended to represent East Germany as the innocent side and the target of hostile actions of West Germany and the West, but regarding unwanted developments creates a weak image of East Germany.

The brochure also argued that West Berlin was transformed into a sabotage center of the revanchists, *RIAS* and ninety agent organizations against East Germany and other socialist countries. It denied the claim of the West Berlin Senate that East Germans walled themselves in and defended that these external actors were walled in. Nevertheless, the brochure informed the readers that the destructive Western actions still continue at the East German border, despite the presence of the wall (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). The East German border security facilities were bombed; border guards were attacked and got shot; tunnels were prepared for passing of spies and railway wagons were harmed, while these “provocateurs” were not brought to justice and praised by the West Berlin Senate (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Although this part reflected East Germany as a sovereign state whose rights were disrespected and violated, it accidentally showed the incapability of the country to prevent the actions of the *fascists*. Then, it would have been unexpected to persuade the target groups that the *anti-fascist barrier* was able to keep the country safe from the actions of the *fascists*. The Berlin Wall was also unlikely to be recognized as a success in this sense, too.

Findings

This article reaches three reasons to answer why the *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure could not justify the existence of the Berlin Wall to its target groups in the West:

Firstly, the propaganda environment was not suitable for the emergence of the brochure. It was published five to seventeen months after the erection of the wall, and the time was too late to take advantage of creating a positive first impression about the wall. The analyzed Western media channels showed that the Western media were so active and carried day-to-day developments in Berlin with their English-speaking readers. When they had been spreading negative events and comments about the wall since August 1961, East Germany was not benefiting from all of its propaganda capacities. Not only this brochure, but also multi-language magazine *GDR Review* did not mention of the wall until 1962. Thus, the brochure was published in a disadvantaged environment.

Secondly, the brochure was threatening for a material that makes a call for peace. The brief summary of the brochure is that the construction of the wall was seen as a necessity, but there was still a desire for a peaceful settlement in which no wall will be needed. Nevertheless, the same brochure ended with a warning. A map which showed West Germany in black, and a statement read “He who lives on an island should not make an enemy of the ocean” points the island of Berlin inside the East German ocean signals that West Germany and West Berlin to be careful (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). This warning might mean that East Germany wants peace, but it is also ready to fight, and it cannot be expected such a message would be internationally welcomed.

Finally, the brochure accidentally implied that the wall was a desperate decision. The wall was represented as the result of East German capability to deal with external interventions from the other side of the frontier. Nevertheless, regarding the undesirable developments of the 1940s and the 1950s reveals that East Germany could not hinder the progress that concluded with the rise of the wall. Considering that the real capability would be the prevention of these developments, the reached result is not consistent. Moreover, when the brochure informed that the destructive activities of the West are still continue at the East German border, it is implied that the wall is not completely successful to protect East Germany from such activities. Thus, it was explained to the readers that the wall does not serve its purpose, while the same wall was being praised.

Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

There is no guarantee that all propaganda materials become well-known or achieve their purpose to transform their arguments into popular views. In some cases, target groups do not basically adopt them for some reasons. This article was about one of these materials, *What You Should Know About the Wall*, a remarkable brochure with little impact, and it questioned why this brochure was not able to justify the construction of the Berlin Wall among the English-speaking target groups in the West. As a result of the research, this article argued that the brochure was a well-prepared propaganda material in terms of its language, content, and clear objectives, but it was not published in the right propaganda environment in which it would shape the perspectives of its propagandees easily, was not always peaceful for carrying some threatening messages, and was not consistent for reflecting the wall as a success and a desperate action simultaneously. For these reasons, it was seen that the brochure was born disadvantaged to compete with the well-spread Western discourses and failed to persuade its target group over the idea that the construction of the wall was a necessity, and it serves to protect East Germans against fascists properly. As history showed that the Berlin Wall continued to be recalled in negative contexts in the Western discourses, the brochure did not achieve its main purpose.

This article also showed that the historical significance of some understudied Cold War materials like the *What You Should Know About the Wall* brochure might be revealed through approaching them outside the *allies-enemies* mindset of the Cold War. In this case study, the brochure was seen significant as one of the earliest East German propaganda materials in English about the Berlin Wall. The study on this brochure contributes to international propaganda studies and welcomes future research on the materials which might be remarkable for particular reasons but had remained understudied among many others. Researchers who study on historical issues are generally directed to study archival materials, but studying what is open and accessible also contributes to the field of international propaganda.

Author Contribution Statement

The author contributed 100% to this article.

Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this article.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Soğuk Savaş sırasında Demir Perde'nin herhangi bir tarafında üretilen yazılı materyaller, diğer tarafta yaşayanlar tarafından ideolojik, dikkate değmez ve hatta gülünç kaynaklar olarak görülebilirdi. Bu materyaller, otuz yıl önce sona eren bir dönemin ötekileştiren kalıplarından uzaklaşarak uluslararası propaganda çalışmaları kapsamında yeniden ele alınmayı hak etmektedir. Bu çalışma, *Duvar Hakkında Bilmeniz Gerekenler* adlı broşür üzerine bir vaka çalışması yaparak bu amaca hizmet etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Söz konusu broşür, Berlin Duvarı'nın varlığını diğer ülkelerin vatandaşlarına haklı göstermek için Doğu Almanlar tarafından yazılmıştır. Bu konuyla alakalı kaleme alınan ilk İngilizce broşürlerden biri olduğu için önemlidir; ancak akademik anlamda gerekli ilgiyi görmemiştir.

Duvar Hakkında Bilmeniz Gerekenler, 1962 yılında basılmış ve İngilizce bilen dünyaya hitap ederek, Berlin Duvarı'nı bir gereklilik ve bir başarı olarak yansıtmayı amaçlamıştır (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Broşür, gerek kullandığı dil ve eleştirilere verdiği yanıtlar açısından, gerekse net bir amacı, mesajı ve hedef kitlesi olması açısından ikna potansiyeline sahip bir propaganda örneğidir. Buna rağmen, amacına ulaşamamıştır ve Berlin Duvarı, Batı'da çoğunlukla olumsuz bağlamlarda anılmaya devam etmiştir (newspapers.com, 1962, Ağustos 10; Thomas, 1963, Ağustos 12).

Soğuk Savaş, Batılı zihinlerde sosyalist rejimlere karşı bir *öteki* veya *düşman* algısı yaratsa da, bu algı, tek başına propaganda materyallerinin başarısını veya başarısızlığını açıklamaya yetmez. Bunu kabul etmek, Soğuk Savaş döneminde hiçbir sosyalist propaganda materyalinin Batı'da başarılı olamadığı söylemekle eş değer olacaktır ve elbette, bu doğru değildir. Bu amaçla, bu makale broşürün Batı'daki hedef kitlesi içinde neden başarısız olduğunu araştırmaktadır. Broşürün başarılı olamamasının sebeplerini, broşürün kendi içinde ve dönemin propaganda ortamında arayarak, propaganda ortamının elverişli olmadığı, broşürün tehditkâr ifadeler içerdiği ve duvarın çaresizce alınan bir karar olduğunu ima etmesi sonuçlarına ulaşmaktadır.

Yöntem

Bu makale açıklayıcı bir araştırma olup nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden vaka çalışması ve kayıt tutmadan yararlanarak *Duvar Hakkında Bilmeniz Gerekenler* broşürü üzerine hazırlanmıştır. Kullanılan veriler, çevrimiçi arşivler, gazeteler, akademik dergiler ve kitaplar, ansiklopediler, tezler ve resmi internet siteleri gibi kaynaklardan toplanmış ve makalenin araştırma ve yazım süreci, buralardan edinilen birincil ve ikincil kaynaklar sayesinde mümkün olmuştur.

Analiz ve Bulgular

Bu makaleye göre, *Duvar Hakkında Bilmeniz Gerekenler* broşürünün, Berlin Duvarı'nın varlığını hedef kitlesine haklı göstermemesinin broşürün özellikleri ve dönemin propaganda ortamıyla alakalı üç sebebi vardır:

Bunlardan ilki, broşürün doğru bir propaganda ortamında doğmamış olmasıdır. Broşür, duvarın inşasının başlamasından beş ila on yedi ay sonra basılsa da fikirleri şekillendirebilecek bir kaynak olmakta geç kalmıştır. Geçen sürede, İngilizce yazılı medya, Berlin'deki gelişmeleri, Doğu Alman yetkililerinin sınırdaki şiddet içeren tutumlarını dâhil, neredeyse anında okuyuculara aktarma olanağı bulmuştur (Kelleth-Long, 1961; newspapers.com, 2011; newspapers.com, 2020). Uluslararası okuyuculara ulaşabilmek için tüm medya imkânlarını kullanmayan Doğu Almanya ise bu yarışa geç girişmiş ve kayda değer olan bu broşürü, Berlin Duvarı'yla ilgili çoktan izlenim edinmiş olan bir uluslararası kitleyle paylaşmıştır.

İkincisi, broşür, barış vurgusu yapan bir materyale göre oldukça tehditkârdır. Sayfalar boyunca, duvarın Batı'dan yayılan düşmanca eylemlere karşı bir gereklilik olduğundan ve iki taraf arasında yaşanabilecek çatışma olasılığını engellediğinden söz edilmesine rağmen, duvarın varlığının gerekli olmadığı bir barış ortamına duyulan özlem dile getirilmiş ve buna yönelik bir çağrı yapılmıştır. Bu dostça çağrıya rağmen, broşürün sonunda Batı Berlin açıkça uyarılmıştır. Batı Almanya'nın, müttefik Doğu Alman komşularının aksine, siyahla gösterildiği bir haritada, Batı Berlin'in Doğu Alman toprakları tarafından çevrelenmiş konumu kastedilerek *adada yaşayanın okyanusu kendine düşman etmemesi gerektiğine* dikkat çekilmiştir (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Verilen mesaj, broşürün barışçıl çağrısıyla ters düşmektedir ve bu uyarının Batı'da hoş karşılanabileceği düşünülemez.

Üçüncüsü, duvarın bir başarı örneği olduğunun iddia edilmesine karşın, onun aslında çaresizce alınan bir karar olduğu ima edilmiştir. Duvarın inşasının bir gereklilik olduğunu sık sık tekrarlayan broşür, bu sonuca giden gelişmeleri iki farklı para birimi kullanılmaya başlanması, Batı Alman devletinin kurulması ve Batı Alman hükümetinin resmi hedefinin Doğu Almanya'yı ilhak etmek olduğu gibi sebeplere dayandırmıştır; ama bunları sıralarken aslında geçmişte bu gelişmeleri engellemeye gücünün yetmediğini de açıkça ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, broşürde duvarın sağladığı fayda konusundan söz ederken de çelişki vardır. Resmi adı *faşist karşıtı korunma engeli* olan duvarın inşasına rağmen, Doğu Alman sınırında Batı'nın yıkıcı faaliyetlerinin devam ettiği belirtilmektedir (German Propaganda Archive, 2001). Yani, duvarın faşistlerden korumakta tamamen etkili olmadığı açığa vurulmaktadır. Bu şekilde, duvarın inşasının, geçmişte ve şimdi engel olunamayan gelişmelere karşı mecburen alınmış bir karar olduğu okuyuculara gösterilmiştir.

Sonuç, Tartışma ve Öneriler

Yapılan araştırma sonunda, iki temel sonuca ulaşılmıştır. Bunlardan ilki, *Duvar Hakkında Bilmeniz Gerekenler* broşürünün iyi seçilmiş ifadeleri, eleştirilere yanıt veriş biçimi ve berlirli bir amacı, mesajı ve hedef grubu olmasından dolayı umut vaat eden bir propaganda materyali olmasına rağmen başarısız olmasının bazı sebepleri olduğudur. Yapılan analiz sonucunda ulaşılan sebepler, broşürün doğru propaganda ortamında yayımlanmaması, tehditkâr mesajlar içermesi ve Berlin Duvarı'nın çaresizce alınan bir karar olduğunu ima etmesidir. Makalenin ulaştığı diğer sonuç, kendi dönemlerinde yargılanmış veya ihmal edilmiş Soğuk Savaş materyallerinin, uluslararası propaganda çalışmalarına sağlayabileceği katkılarla alakalıdır. Bu çalışmada, iki kutuplu dünya düzenine ait *Duvar Hakkında Bilmeniz Gerekenler* broşürünün, Berlin Duvarı'nın inşasını meşru göstermeye çalışan İngilizce yazılmış ilk resmi Doğu Alman broşürlerinden biri olması sebebiyle önemli görülmüştür. Broşürün temel kaynak olarak ele alınması, hem ondan söz eden kaynakların oluşturduğu kısa literatüre hem de uluslararası propaganda çalışmasına katkı sağlamaktadır. Tarihle ilgilenen araştırmacıların çoğunlukla arşiv belgelerine yönelmesi beklenirken, bu çalışma, uluslararası propaganda alanına katkı sağlamak için bilinen ve erişilebilir materyallerin de anlaşılması ve çalışılması gerektiğini savunmaktadır.