

7/4/53.

CAMERA: ROBT. A. HECOX

STORY: BORDER CHECK

LOCATION: GERMANY

LENGTH: 400 ft.

PLUS X Stock

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Following recent "peace" overtures by Soviet Government following Stalin's death and advent of Malenkov, a check of the East West German border was made here to discover if the "peace" overtures descended to this level of world politics.

It has been almost one year since the border was hermetically sealed by the East Zone Soviets and Volkspolizei. Just after the signing of the peace contract between the 3 Western Powers and Germany in May 52 the East authorities began to plow up strips of ground, cut down trees and string barbed wire from the Baltic Sea to Czechoslovakia to keep East Germans from escaping their oppression and keep the West out.

Today the wire and plowed ground and cutover strip are still there. At the southern end of the border where East Germany, West Germany and Czechoslovakia meet skies are sunny and W. Germans go along the road which forms the border as they always have done. No Czech guards are to be seen but they are hidden back in the trees and hills on their own side of the border watching.

At Helmstedt, in the centre of the long border, where most all traffic with Berlin goes down the autobahn it was apparent that some easement in the usual delaying tactics had taken place. Usually there is a backlog of trucks two miles long waiting here. In spite of the fact that traffic when these shots were taken was extremely heavy over the Easter holiday there was no sign of this long line of trucks. Traffic, for Helmstedt, was moving rapidly.

At the Northernmost tip of the border extending into the Baltic Sea is a desolate beach guarded by a high barbed wire fence. W. German police in Soviet type uniforms patrol the East side. They are accompanied by German shepherd dogs and carry carbines. There is no relaxation of their watching either. The border is still sealed as if nothing had changed.

Roll 1

Open with shot of ox team driven by farmer man and wife passing along woods road from Czech border near Eger (Czechs) where East, West Germany and Czechs meet. Although it is here at jx 20 yds inside woods these people go on about their business but they are a little afraid of any strangers. Shot of man with cart going down road which is in W. Germany. The edge of the road is Czech territory; as can be seen he keeps

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his own side of the road but there is no sign of a hostile border guard here. On the hillside in the bg may be seen a ruined house in Czech territory. This house belonged to Germans during their occupation of the country and has since been deliberately blown up by the Czechs.

There is a closeup of a stone memorial to one Georg Nurschl. He was a W. German customs man and was killed by unknown assailants on this W. German-Czech border in 1951. There is then a shot of the border sign in bg with stone closeup in right frame. Final shot is a long lens scene of a group of ruined houses in Czech territory also once German owned. A watch tower might possibly be discerned in the wooded area at far bg on hill top.

### Roll 2

Two W. German customs police and civilian stand at Czech border in Eger area looking into Czechs. Here the Czechs have torn up the road and thrown up a mound of earth and a pole barrier. One cop looks through glasses at former German owned house in Czech territory which undoubtedly now houses Czech border guards perhaps even now looking down on these W. Germans. The 3 turn and walk away from border.

Last half of the roll includes long lens and medium lens shots of Russian E. German side of Helmstedt check point on autobahn to Berlin. Gate is opened and truck from Berlin passes through. There is no backlog of truck as there usually is here. Scenes of the lifting of the blockade were made here.

### Roll 3

Various shots at Helmstedt autobahn checkpoint. No truck backlog. Trucks, people and motor scooters clear through. Line of passenger cars is long only because of extremely heavy Easter weekend traffic to and from Berlin.

### Roll 4

Opens with shot of desolate beach at Travemunde on Baltic on north end of East-West German border. On other side of barbed wire walks East German Volkspolizei with dog and carbine patrolling border. Shots of West Germans on Easter Sunday holiday coming down barbed wire fence and passing sign which warns all to 'halt' at this East-West German border on the Baltic. They are curious about border but pay not too much attention to the Volkspolizei who has just passed on other side of fence. He sits back of rush fence watching but unseen. Long lens of two E. German police in distance on bikes riding up to border to relieve guard already there. They may be seen riding across field filled with fence posts for hundreds of yards in depth strung with barbed wire. Next long lens shot shows two guardsmen just relieved returning on bikes across the same field. As the camera follows them it shows a concrete pillbox on the border behind a sign reading "Zonen grenze" (zone border)