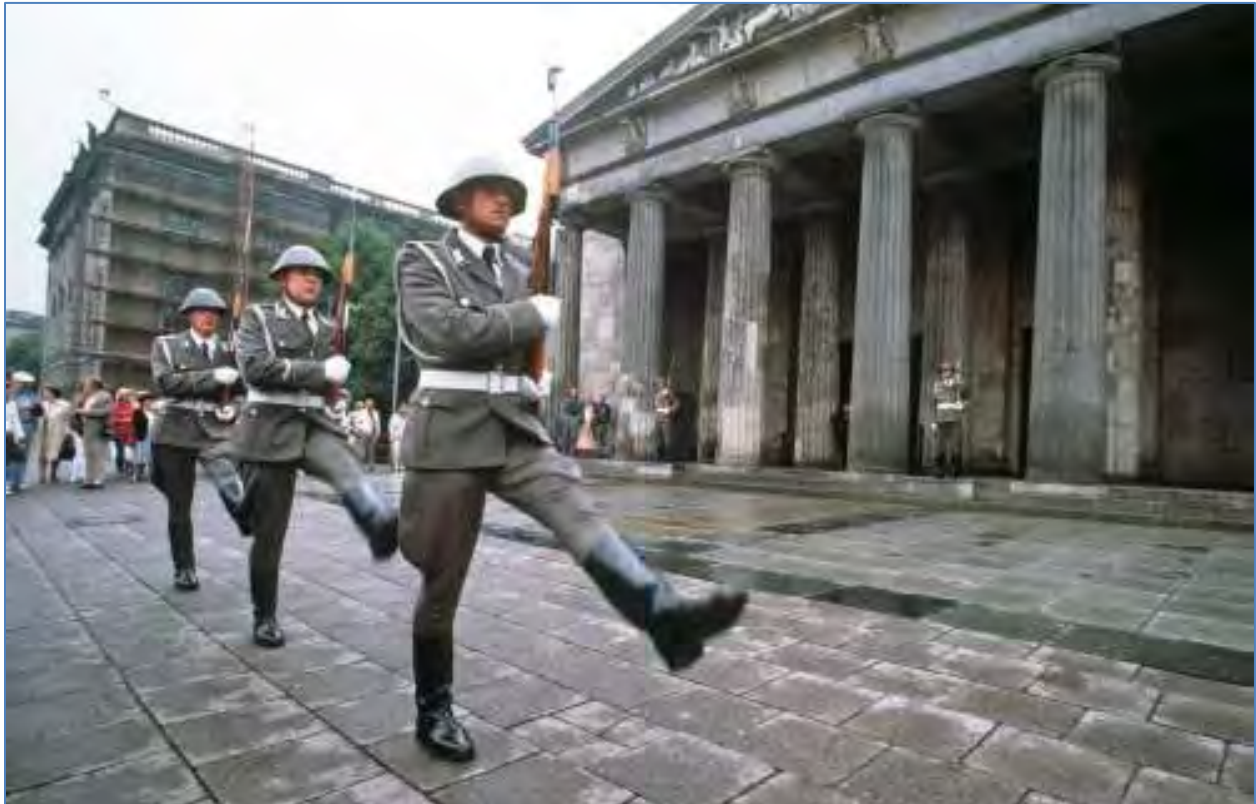


## CAUSA Work in Real Life - My Personal CAUSA Educational Experience

Thomas Schuhmann  
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As I studied German and English literature in order to become a teacher, I sometimes cannot help but wonder why my life led me into the profession of a security guard, teaching me to raise my fists up and staring things straight in the face instead of beating around the bush.

Let me first express my gratitude to the man of my heart, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, because he is a forgiver and on the same wavelength as a Catholic poet who I much admire, Reinhold Schneider. Schneider wrote something like: "I learned the best things in life from my enemies."

Because I grew up with my grandmother and her three daughters, I became oversensitive in life, a freak, very far from being the "Real Man" we used to sing about in CARP.



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My life had turned into a catastrophe; I became self-destructive, in the wake of my rock and roll idols. When Rev. Moon matched me to a Brazilian factory worker, he seemed to tell me in plain language: "Buddy, you're a dreamer, so you need a hard-working wife, otherwise you will starve." You know how arrogant students can be, heads deep in books, mistaking themselves for another Dostoevsky or whoever. In reality, they often live in an ivory tower, estranged from life.

When German unification came in 1989, sentimental pictures, cries of hurrah, brotherhood in action could be seen on TV and the mass media. Everybody was hysterically joyful, having experienced the walls of Jericho tumbling down just like in the Old Testament.

I felt bored in the West and decided to become a teacher in Brandenburg, surrounded by the old structures of the GDR. My project sank like the *Titanic*, but I felt so sorry that I could not befriend those people who resented me and prayed for them. I gave all my books away as presents before I left.

Back in West Germany, all those guys you really didn't want to meet came over, tough guys who were soldiers, spies, Stasi (East German State Security) people, and rather well-prepared, they took over the jobs in the security industry, ready to rumble. What did I learn from them? I learned to work 12 hours shifts non-stop for the last 20 years, living between madness and desperation. My wife, however, stuck it out with me. It takes a Messiah to spot such a woman; I for sure would not have been able to look into the deep and find her.

The German unification that came as a God-given miracle was soon soured by our politicians who connived and bamboozled their East German brothers who lacked experience. Soon there were millions

of court cases when old landowners claimed their properties in the East, and people were forced out of their living circumstances. The pride of the East Germans in their best companies was destroyed. West German hucksters came over and sold old cars, old computers, and insurance policies to their brothers and sisters and were only interested in cashing in. Is it any wonder these poor neighbors felt betrayed by their greedy capitalist other half?

That's why those East German guys I met wanted to restore their pride. "You can't take away our suffering, you can't take away our memories, and we even don't want to share them with you, we lock you out."

My first seven-year course as a security guard was when those Easterners threw me for a curve. What do you do when your cunning archenemies suddenly become your superiors? They didn't believe in God, had built their own power structures, and didn't love the music I adored. So here are a few reflections of the other side of German unification, which became my personal CAUSA educational experience.

The toughest cookie I ever met was an ex-officer of the NVA (East German National People's Army) who had completely swallowed East German state doctrine. His unspoken accusation was always: "Westerners haven't seen any suffering (in the last 40 years up to 1989), but are spoiled and arrogant!" And of course: "We suffered for 40 years under the Soviets and paid dearly for Nazi crimes, while the Americans blew smoke up your rear ends." He was always testing my nerves. Would I lose control and hit him? Then he could fire me with a smile, as he was my boss at our security company.

During nightshifts he proudly explained he would have stood up for his duty anytime, and would have shot someone trying to escape in the back. He used to shout: "Nobody around here has any guts!" He had internalized the East German system and reproduced it in the West. In the beginning, our team consisted of a mix of West and East Germans, but gradually he replaced West Germans with East German ex-officers, until he could marginalize us. His resentment and thirst for revenge also had a personal reason. Although he had proved his Prussian sense of duty many times, his wife did not agree. She needed a warm bed, and one day when he came home unexpectedly, he found her with another man and divorced her.

He used his leadership position to demand things from others: one employee's wife worked in a supermarket, so he had to become the "mother of the company," another one had to repair computers, another one repaired cars, another one burned music CDs; those who "only" worked were threatened. Two other former East German soldiers served as his "ears" and eavesdropped on our nightly conversations.



They were rewarded by receiving more working hours, while those who talked too much received less. The manager of our company had said: "Before I fire him, I'd rather fire every one of you!" So my boss was allowed to handle things his own way, was backed up by the other East Germans, while the West Germans were in a constant jam.

I had demonstrated as a CARP member for German unity, and tried to become a teacher in the East, but failed the final examination there. Then our son died and I had to decide how to finance the family, so I became a security guard. I had read somewhere that you can compensate internal pain and frustration by traveling a hard road, so I was grateful for the hardship and military discipline. At that time, I neither had the insurance for legal protection nor was there an employee union. To make things more complicated, we were subordinate to another security company, so we were in the servant of servant position.

At that time, another ex-officer from the NVA joined us, only for two weeks, but he was very different. He smoked his "ciggies," but always looked serious. "I have smelled gun powder," he said, but did not talk about it. As he bore a certain similarity to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, I joked with him and sometimes greeted him: "There goes our Komsomol member!" which made him grin and opened him up.

Actually, he had shocked me from the start, because the first thing he said was: "My name is such and

such and I used to work for the Stasi.” Then he smiled and said: “You would have found out sooner or later anyway.” I immediately loved his honesty which was so different from the forms of cunning nearly each East German I met displayed. He added: “After some time working for the Stasi, I realized its true purpose. It was to protect the party leaders from their own people. Whenever there was a party convention, we had to seal them off from the common folk, because they had ordered the best food and the best prostitutes as usual and nobody was supposed to know. That’s how I lost faith in socialism. The double standard made me puke.”

Compare him to another ex-officer from the East who used to lament to me: “This damn unification destroyed earning my generalship!” Some years later, a former West German soldier explained to me: “Didn’t you know that over there, they had only lieutenants and generals? This was the Communists’ way of giving them an incentive to stay and believe in the system. In the West German army they would have all occupied lower ranks or would not even have been accepted for enlistment. That’s why many of them are so angry and end up as security guards.”

I remember another former East German soldier who carried a grudge because unification had destroyed the bonus he would have received after 12 years’ service. He used to attack me verbally by insisting the NVA would have overrun the West and in two hours would have stood at the French border. I responded: “So what! Then you would have escaped to France in order to leave your stinking system!” We both laughed.

I jotted these memories down on a recent work day that had given me time to reminisce. For those who still believe in state socialism, invite some East Germans for a few pints. They might even tell you what happened when they read their Stasi files. Things like, “Well, I took my gun [which became available after the NVA was disbanded] and paid a visit to my neighbor who had informed on me to the police. I had taken him for my best friend.”

I guess you just have to “Take It Inside”:

*Try to understand  
Before you judge  
Now I'm the kind of man  
That looks before he touch  
But I ain't never touched nothin'  
That didn't hit me back, oh no*

*And the way we live is the way we die  
How bad do you want it?  
How hard do you try?  
You don't ask no questions  
You don't find out why  
As you watch your life pass you by  
You've got to take it inside*

*Take it inside  
Take it inside  
Take it inside...*

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Photo at top: *Changing of the guard in East Berlin, January 1989.*