

UPF International: The Fall of the Berlin Wall and its Influence beyond Europe

Eli Izumi
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UPF International - On July 14, 2022 at 10 am EDT, UPF International in collaboration with UPF EUME and UPF Africa held our 7th episode of the IG livestream series, "What's Your Cup of Tea?" This month we discussed the topic "The Fall of the Berlin Wall and its Influence beyond Europe," focusing on the deep history behind the wall and its fall as well as how it touched the lives of those who witnessed the event all over the world. With more than 30 viewers from various countries tuned in to participate, this timely livestream was done in preparation to welcome the upcoming Peace Road project that will be happening next week. The speakers were Eli Izumi from UPF International, Artan Kurti from UPF EUME, David Diop from UPF Africa as well as Claus Dubisz, a German citizen who witnessed the construction and fall of the Berlin Wall.

After briefing the audience quickly on the background of the Berlin Wall, the three co-hosts, Eli Izumi, Artan Kurti and David Diop reflected on how they could not imagine how difficult life must have been for the citizens of Germany at that time. Mr. Kurti mentioned that the fall of the Berlin Wall helped people to realize that "Communism clearly doesn't work but maybe democracy works." Underscoring this, Mr. Izumi added that "Democracy is not perfect, it is evolving... and it is something that we need to continue to work on." He stressed that though it has been implemented in many countries today, it

doesn't mean that those who practice democracy are superior in any way to those who don't; rather, it is a work in progress that we all need to come together and improve.

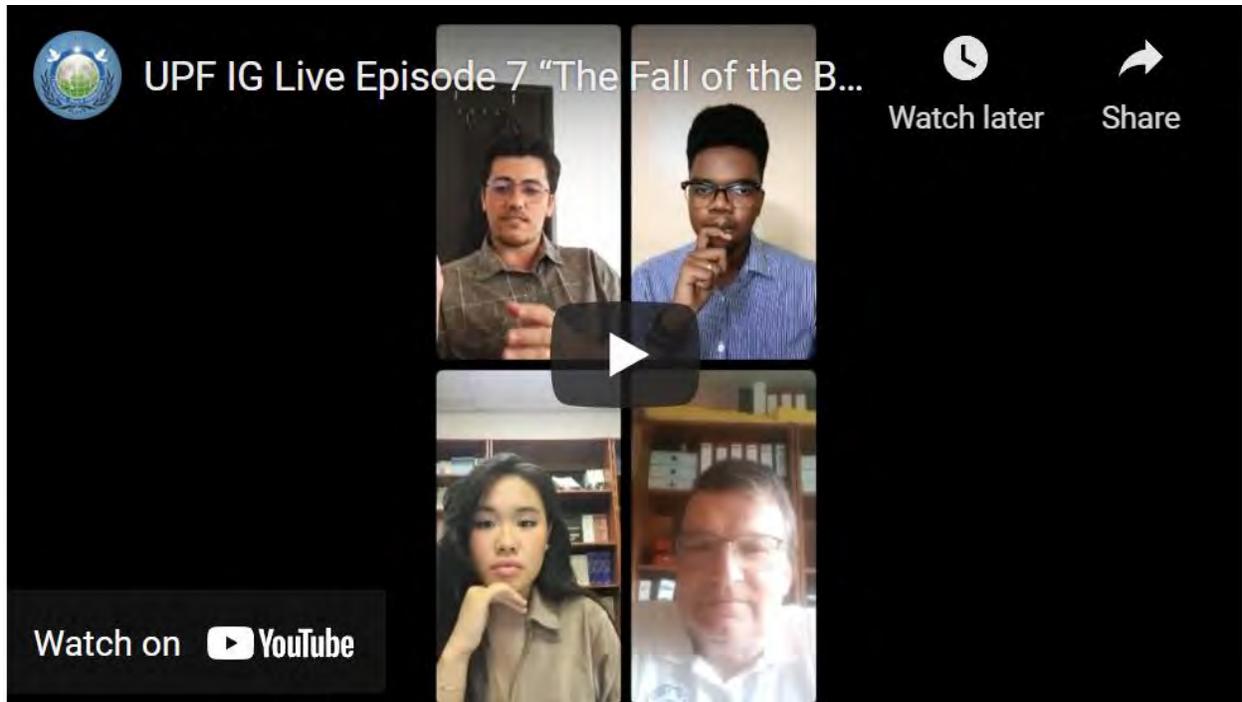
Mr. Dubisz took the audience down memory lane as he recollected his experience with an organization called "CARP," Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles, where facing a crowd of 300,000 demonstrators who were demonstrating against the invasion of Western culture, they led a demonstration of 100 people to counter their claims, saying that their idea of peace was actually not peace, it was subjugation to the Soviet Union. And then every year from then on, they held a big demonstration with the motto, "Communism divides, God unites."

He went on to explain that despite the fall of the Berlin Wall, there still remain quite a few differences between the parts that used to be "East and West Germany." He explained, "Many East Germans felt overtaken by the West....For example, regarding the Ukraine and Russia conflict, I think in East Germany you will find many people that say, 'Let's try to understand why the Russians do that.' In the West you will not find people like that. Because they (the East Germans) were educated for 40 years that Russia is our friend. I think it is becoming more and more financially equal, but the feeling of we are underprivileged (the East Germans) remains." He brought up the fact that although former chancellor Angela Merkel was from the former East German side, many East Germans do not recognize her as being an authentic East German, thus displaying the deep underlying sentiment that they still carry.

Co-host Mr. Diop explained about the influence of the fall of the Berlin Wall all the way in Africa. He gave the example of Tanzania which was divided at that time, where they were able to unite the country in a peaceful manner despite the many difficulties along the way.

Co-host Mr. Izumi asked about what lessons we can learn from the German reunification that can be implemented for the reunification of the Korean peninsula. Mr. Dubisz responded, "In South Korea there is a strong spirit that if we unite, we lose. Whereas some economists say that we unite, we win. But I think if you stick with just economy, it will not go well; it may not even happen at all. I think the other parts like culture and values need to be emphasized also.... So the main point is that if you stick to just economy, you will not see Korean reunification."

Lastly, all speakers conversed about and promoted to the audience the Peace Rally that will take place from July 26th to July 28th in Berlin, Germany.



Overall, it was a fruitful and intriguing livestream and we hope to have many more wise and well-versed speakers in the future. Please continue to support and follow our Instagram page and stay tuned for the next livestream in the fall.

