

Ich hab' noch einen Koffer in Berlin

I still have a suitcase in Berlin

Summary

This lesson differs from previous lessons in that it does not contain any grammar or exercises. The broadcast is designed as a sound collage to give you an impression of Berlin in years gone by and as it is today.

The sound collage includes:

1. A song/piece of music from the 1930s, recorded in Berlin:
Das Spatzenkonzert by Peter Igelhoff.
2. The famous song *Das ist die Berliner Luft*, sung by Lizzi Waldmüller in the 1930s.
3. A song by the Comedian Harmonists – a popular vaudeville group that appeared in variety theatres in the 1930s. Many of their songs, such as *Mein kleiner grüner Kaktus*, are still well known today. In 1934 the group was banned from performing because three of their members were Jews.
4. A radio broadcast by the German writer Thomas Mann (1875 – 1955), who emigrated to Switzerland in 1933. In 1939 he emigrated to the United States, and became an American citizen in 1944. Mann's address was broadcast on the 10th May 1945, two days after the capitulation of Germany. At the end of his address Thomas Mann says:

Deutsche Hörer!

(...) Ich sage: Es ist trotz allem eine große Stunde, die Rückkehr Deutschlands zur Menschlichkeit. Sie ist hart und traurig, weil Deutschland sie nicht aus eigener Kraft herbeiführen konnte. Furchtbarer, schwer zu tilgender Schaden ist dem deutschen Namen zugefügt worden, und die Macht ist verspielt. Aber Macht ist nicht alles, sie ist nicht einmal die Hauptsache, und nie war deutsche Würde eine bloße Sache der Macht. Deutsch war es einmal und mag es wieder werden, der Macht Achtung, Bewunderung abzugewinnen durch den menschlichen Beitrag, den freien Geist.

5. In 1949, four years after the end of the Second World War, Germany was divided into two states – the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). The city of Berlin was also divided. In 1961 the Berlin Wall was erected. On the 24th October 1950, US General Clay presented a freedom bell to the Berliners. It was hung in Schöneberg Town Hall and was rung every day at midday. On the 26th June 1963, US President John F. Kennedy arrived in Berlin and made his famous speech outside Schöneberg Town Hall, during which he spoke the memorable words:

Ich bin ein Berliner.

6. The Berliners are known for their sharp wit. The following dialogue, spoken in the Berlin dialect, demonstrates their sense of humour.

Berlinerin: Kannst du mal einkaufen gehen?
Berliner: Was soll ich?
Berlinerin: Einkaufen.
Berliner: Ich? Wieso denn das?
Berlinerin: Wieso denn nicht?
Berliner: Ich habe keine Lust.
Berlinerin: Ich auch nicht.
Berliner: Hör auf, ich glaube, das reicht nun, was?

7. Berlin has always been a multi-cultural city with many foreign residents. Until the Berlin Wall came down, many of the foreign residents came from Turkey. This is a translation of the Turkish dialogue you hear in the broadcast:

Türkin: Guten Tag.
Türke: Guten Tag. Was möchten Sie?
Türkin: Einen *Döner.
Türke: Bitte – hier.

* Döner: *a kebab – small pieces of roast lamb in pitta bread.*

8. The German singer and actress, Marlene Dietrich, became famous for her part in the film *Der Blaue Engel* (The Blue Angel), which was made in 1930. In 1936 she became American citizen. In 1941, after the United States entered the Second World War, she put on a US army uniform and entertained American troops stationed in Germany with her songs. Until her death in 1992 she lived in Paris. After German reunification she expressed the wish to be buried in Berlin. The recording of the song *Ich hab' noch einen Koffer in Berlin* was made in 1948.

These are the words of the song, sung by Marlene Dietrich: