



1-1-1985

Berlin

Spencer W. Kimball

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Recommended Citation

Kimball, Spencer W. (1985) "Berlin," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 25 : Iss. 1 , Article 16.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol25/iss1/16>

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Berlin

Friday, August 26, 1955: I arose very early as was my custom. No one was around. I strolled out across the street, around the block, for several blocks and wept at the sight of the devastation. I plunged into a reverie and fell into the mood to write it down and returned to the typewriter:

Ten years now since the world war tragedy!

High fences

Rusty fences

Proud, haughty fences around the former grand estates leveled in
humiliation

Windblown gates unkept now hang and creak on rusty hinges

Ghosts of yesterday

Ghost houses, ghost yards

Broken swimming pools remind of luxury of the forgotten rich

Proud estates, spectre houses, all so still

No playful shouts, no children laugh

Silent walls, silent houses, silent death

Empty mailboxes—no letters ever more for them

Buildings leveled, pride leveled, innocence suffering

Naked pockmarked walls, and weeds that grow from toothlike
stabbing jaggedness indicating where—

Chipped walls

And glassless windows, cold and open to storm and sky

Boarded windows

Bricked-up windows

Jagged chimneys pierce the skies

Iron bedsteads hang

Plumbing pipes reach into space like dragon claws

Berlin

55

Twisted steel
 Doorways without walls
 Arches without buildings
 Porches and doorways, nothing else, porches and doorways
 Ceilings of splintered wood, shattered plaster hanging
 like cobwebs
 Stairways lead to no place

Here are trees
 Tall trees that lean, one sided
 Amputated limbs and trunks but not by saw
 Jagged stumps of arms that point at—whom?
 Grotesque figures stand against the sky, pointing
 into space accusingly

Excavations like graves
 Excavations which are graves where rodents play and insects find
 their homes
 Bricks are here
 Broken bricks and pulverized
 Piles of bricks that cover bones of people never found

Rubble
 Foundations upended
 Rotting wood
 Twisted steel
 Destruction, devastation, desolation
 Broken fountains
 Shattered statues
 Creaking shutters
 Rustiness
 Ugliness
 Jaggedness
 Screaming jaggedness.
 Walls, chimneys, trees, all grotesque writhing apparitions
 Persons? Things? Dragons?
 Disfigured deformed giants slumped in misery and shame

Pockmarked trees, gaping wounds healed over
 Vines climbing naked trunks to cover broken limbs of
 torn and battered trees

Green ivy trying hard to cover nakedness of gaping walls
Ivy trying! trying!
Small trees, ragged shrubs growing untended from the rubble
Grass atop the jagged walls holding brave little flowers
 struggling for existence
Nature trying to sweeten sourness
Squirrels scampering
Tiny birds twittering
To bring back life to deadness

—Spencer W. Kimball

Spencer W. Kimball was the twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This journal entry was edited by Edward L. Kimball, son of President Kimball.