

#### 4. Debate Topics

The in-class debate is an assignment to help you review for the mid-term: it will help you articulate your own understanding of the readings, of the facts from quizzes and videos, and your own feelings on the historical, economic, and social issues. In class, we will form two teams. Half of the class will be *Ossis* and the other half will be *Wessis*. You are asked to defend your given *Ossi* or *Wessi* perspective. Take facts from readings, quizzes, videos, lectures, and combine them with how you think *Ossis* or *Wessis* feel. With your team, come up with a position and arguments to defend it; choose people to defend various viewpoints; prepare to debate with the other team next class

Debate topics to think about regarding how *Ossis* and *Wessis* feel on various issues:

1. Should the Wall have come down? Should it be rebuilt?
2. Was reunification a good idea? Was it done in the right way?
3. Was the gained territory of the East and the 1/5 additional population worth it?  
What are the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating the East?
4. Should those who did not experience the GDR have a right to debate about it?  
Pass judgments on it?
5. Do the *Ossis* have a right to feel left out and like "second class citizens"
  - a. Is some dissatisfaction among *Ossis* understandable? Are they just being *Jammerossis*? Are the West Germans justifiably labeled *Besserwessis*?
  - b. What stands behind the labels (*Ostalgie*, *Besserwessi*, *Jammerossi*) and are they fair, indicative of reality, helpful and informative or petty and destructive...?

6. German identity. Can there be one? Should there be one? Does the East-West situation throw it off?
7. Is it worthwhile and for the East Germans to talk about and explain their experiences in the GDR, and is it important for the West Germans to listen? Why? Why not?
  - a. That is, is the “double burden” all Germans now assume worth it?
8. Nazi-Holocaust legacy. Two views: further “penitence” (we have a “special responsibility”) or a desire for “amnesia” (1990 ended German “exceptionalism” and gave her the chance to make a new start). In terms of the GDR Past: Two approaches: 1. “Retribution” demanded by SED victims and 2. “Amnesia” preferred by *Mitläufer*. Which is better?
9. Are the monetary transfers (partly paid for by the Solidarity Tax (5%) on everyone – West and East) worth it? Is the *Aufbau Ost* a success?
10. Reactions to the exodus of Eastern Germans heading west: A brain drain or just a pain?