

'Flag raised over the Reichstag' from Pravda

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Flag raised over the Reichstag

At midnight on 3 October, the GDR ceased to exist. The black, red and gold flag of Germany was raised high in front of the Reichstag in Berlin. Cartographers throughout the world will now have to work on a new map, where, instead of two German states in the centre of Europe, there will be only one — Germany.

On the wire — Berlin

Messages have been sent from all corners of the globe to congratulate Germany on its reunification. Amongst these was a telegram of congratulations to the German people from the President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev. He expressed his hope that relations between the USSR and the new Germany would be marked by a spirit of friendship and good neighbourliness.

Celebrations began yesterday during the last session of the People's Chamber, where the air was filled with a sense of celebrating the end of an era. The Parliament summed up what it had achieved. It has distinguished itself on a grand scale. Since it was elected, the Chamber has passed 164 laws and 93 resolutions. The Parliament's main objective was to unify the two German states in as short a time as possible. That objective has been achieved.

The West German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the East German Prime Minister, Lothar de Maizière, spoke on television last night. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was played in celebration at the Schauspielhaus Hall. Celebrations went on into the night on both sides of the Brandenburg Gates, which formerly marked the border between the two halves of the city. The celebrations were concluded with a firework display.

The press noted that, unlike the scenes at the Brandenburg Gates when the border opened last autumn, the mood was bereft of euphoria. People were feeling uncertain about what tomorrow might bring.

The lives of citizens of the former GDR are changing dramatically. Old certainties are being questioned and new laws and ways of doing things are being introduced.

It is a complicated process to make an entire country disappear. All state bodies are being abolished: the People's Chamber, the Council of Ministers, the ministries, the administrative departments. The National Army is being wound down and its soldiers now wear the uniform of the Bundeswehr. They will be integrated into the Bundeswehr-Ost territorial army, which is not in NATO. The National Police is taking on a new look. The headquarters for the police force of the new Germany were established in West Berlin even before the reunification. Hundreds of thousands of people who served in the former state are being furloughed for six months. Supposedly, after filling out the extremely detailed forms and undergoing a rigorous selection process, some will be accepted for positions in the German civil service, in Land administration bodies. The remainder will have to retrain.

Today's newspapers are familiarising East German residents with the country of which they will henceforth be citizens.

The eastern part of the country has entered the reunified Germany with some serious economic problems. Industrial output has fallen significantly in comparison with the same period last year.

The economic situation in the west of the country is in stark contrast to what is to be found in the east. There has been a sharp rise in production in western Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany, particularly in the food-flavouring industry. Supply to the former East Germany has seen a sharp rise. In comparison with the same period last year, supply increased almost ninefold in July alone, and output in this sector increased as a result by 17 %.

The final aspects of the international dimension of German reunification have been settled. The American, British and French military commanders in West Berlin have ceremoniously relinquished their authority.

Germany has assumed full sovereignty.

German reunification sees the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the German people and of Europe.

Although the location of the legislative bodies and Government of reunified Germany has yet to be decided and, for the time being, they remain in Bonn, this city on the Rhine awoke today to find itself no longer the Federal capital.

On the wire — Bonn

Its status has officially been transferred to Berlin. However, to the credit of the people of Bonn, this loss did nothing to spoil the mood of those gathering on the night of 3 October, the day on which the reunified Germany was born.

There was literally no room to swing a cat on the Marktplatz. Tens of thousands were gathered there. As midnight approached, the orchestra and choir performed Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* on the stage in front of the town hall. This was followed by a magnificent firework display over the city. Sponsors of the event provided some 20 000 glasses of free beer and the newspaper *General-Anzeiger* handed out 40 000 Bengal lights on the square.

There was much merrymaking in the jolly style so redolent of the Rhine region, but without any euphoria. According to television reports, there were similar celebrations in other cities.

The celebrations are still going on today. Thanksgiving services were held in churches, giving praise to God, while there was merrymaking and concerts on the streets and squares. Ministries are closed, as are all offices, banks, schools and businesses. The newspapers are filled with inspiring leading articles looking back over the last 45 years since Germany was divided. Commentators are trying soberly to consider reunified Germany's future, which promises to be fraught with difficulties. 'It will take time,' writes Mr Fak, one of the editors of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 'before the Germans feel any form of kinship with one another.' Forty years of division have led to more alienation than one would expect, considering the elation displayed on 9 November last year (the day on which the border opened between the two Germanys).

There really is much to be done. And a great variety of things. But back to the issue of the capital city. It is preoccupying many people here. The Oberbürgermeister of Bonn, Mr Daniels, has announced that Bonn intends to insist that it be the seat of the Government and the Bundestag of the reunified Germany. The all-German Bundestag will continue its session in Bonn on Friday.