

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

OCTOBER 3—DAY OF GERMAN UNITY

10 THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT GERMAN REUNIFICATION



Reunification celebrations in Hanover in 2014.

With German Unity Day (October 3rd) happening on Monday, Germans are looking forward to a three-day weekend. But did you know these facts about reunification and German Unity Day?

Germany was divided for almost half a century after the Second World War, with the eastern part becoming a socialist ally of the USSR, while the west was a democratic ally of the USA.

On October 3rd 1990 that finally came to an end when east and west were officially reunified.

1. The fall of the Berlin Wall was an accident

Despite increased pressure on East German authorities to increase freedom of movement between East and West, no one woke up on November 9th 1989 expecting to see people tearing down the wall that evening. In fact, on that day the government had decided to placate protesters by announcing new, laxer travel regulations.

But thanks to Günter Schabowski, the newly appointed government spokesman, history took a different turn.

Schabowski had been put in charge of the press conference, but hadn't been properly briefed on what to say.

Asked by a reporter when the regulations were to come into effect - officially on the following day, and the process would include a long visa-application process - he hesitated, before responding: “Ab sofort” – “Right away.”

Within hours, tens of thousands had gathered at the wall, and the rest was history.