

**“Bei uns ist immer was los!”**

## **OCTOBER 3—DAY OF GERMAN UNITY / TAG DER EINHEIT** **How Oktober 3 became German Unity Day?**

**November 28th, 1989**

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced his ten point plan for "Overcoming the division of Germany and Europe."

East Germany's economy was in crisis by this point, explained Dr Stefan Bollinger, Professor of Political and Social Science at Berlin's Free University.

"In the autumn of 1989, most people wanted to change the model of socialism" that governed the GDR, he told The Local.

West Germany and the USA "saw this chance and they used it," he said.

Kohl was reluctant to see "a reformed eastern bloc, or a democratic-socialist GDR, whose reforms [the West] would have to support economically" - so he laid down a clear set of aims for the GDR and its union with the Federal Republic.

"The basis was clear," Bollinger explained. "The SED [Socialist Unity Party of Germany] would have to relinquish its power, and the GDR would be moved in the direction of capitalism."

"Only then was Bonn [the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany at the time] prepared to help."

**February 10th, 1990**

Kohl travelled to the Soviet Union to personally meet with Mikhail Gorbachev.

"The journey to Moscow took place at a time when Gorbachev no longer commanded a spirit of reform, either in his own country or in the Eastern Bloc," said Bollinger.

Kohl wanted to confirm that the USSR would allow German reunification to proceed.

**March 18th, 1990**

The first free elections took place in the GDR. The ruling SED government was overwhelmingly defeated by an East German counterpart of Kohl's Christian Democratic Union party (CDU).

This election and changeover of power was "one of the most important stages" in the reunification process, said Dr Arnd Bauerkämper, Professor of Historical and Cultural Science at Berlin's Free University.

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