

40th Anniversary of the GDR (October 7, 1989)

Abstract

While the 40th anniversary of the GDR was still being celebrated with great fanfare on October 7, 1989, the foundations of the state were already beginning to crumble. GDR citizens openly demonstrated in the streets for free elections and democracy, and the peaceful revolution took its course. Only a short time later, on October 18, Erich Honecker resigned as head of state and party, and a month later, on November 9, the Berlin Wall was unexpectedly opened. The end of the GDR was sealed.

Source

Translation of transcription

October 7, 1989. In the presence of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the GDR leadership celebrates the 40th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic. It is a grandly staged spectacle, with parades, marches, and flag-waving crowds. In reality, though, it is a last hurrah before the end.

While GDR leader Erich Honecker is being celebrated by his guests, demonstrations break out in the streets. The people of the state are tired of the SED regime and hope for free elections, the opening of the borders, and the right to travel. Their hopes are fulfilled. On October 18, Honecker resigns, and on November 9, the Wall finally falls. Germany is reunited, its forty-year division overcome.

Source: October 7, 1989 – 40th Anniversary of the GDR. History Vision (history-vision.de), Clip-ID: JHT000018D (1989).

history-vision.de

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