

The Two German States in the United Nations (September 19, 1973)

Abstract

The Basic Treaty [*Grundlagenvertrag*], which regulated relations between the two German states, ended East Germany's international isolation. On the occasion of the two states' entry into the United Nations, both foreign ministers emphasized—although with different arguments—Germany's special role in securing peace.

Source

I. Speech by Otto Winzer, Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, on the occasion of the acceptance of the GDR into the United Nations, made before the General Assembly on September 19, 1973

Honored Mr. President,
Honored Delegates,

The acceptance of the German Democratic Republic into the organization of the United Nations is a historic and happy event in the life of our people. It is a highpoint in the process of the German Democratic Republic's equal participation in international life. Normal relations under international law and on the basis of the principles of the charter of the United Nations have been created between the majority of the member states of the organization of the United Nations and the German Democratic Republic. This is without a doubt an expression of the favorable developments that have taken place in recent years in the international relations of states and peoples. Thus, it is not presumptuous to maintain that the acceptance of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, located in the heart of Europe, as two sovereign states independent of each other with different social orders into the organization of the United Nations is yet another significant step on the road to the improvement of the situation in Europe and internationally.

On behalf of the government of the German Democratic Republic, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to you, honored delegates, and the governments that you represent here in the General Assembly, that our socialist state can take its legitimate place here today in sovereign equality among the members of the organization of the United Nations. We feel very obliged to the honored delegates for the heartfelt and moving words that were directed toward the German Democratic Republic, yesterday and today, during the plenary session of the General Assembly.

The German Democratic Republic was founded in October 1949. The path to this historic day today was long and difficult, but successful at the same time. The people and the government of the German Democratic Republic took this path unwaveringly and with firm convictions that their cause is a just one. They have broken once and for all with the aggressive and militaristic policies of the former imperialistic German Reich, which bears the main burden of responsibility and guilt for two world wars that brought nations immense sacrifice and untold suffering. The existence and membership of the peace-loving socialist German Democratic Republic in the organization of the United Nations therefore corresponds completely with the noble aims of its charter.

The German Democratic Republic is profoundly aware of the responsibility and the solemn duties that it

receives along with acceptance into the organization of the United Nations. The charter of the United Nations designated the maintenance of world peace and international security as its primary and highest aim.

[...]

Source: *Neues Deutschland*, no. 260, September 20, 1973; reprinted in *Europa-Archiv*, Series 24/1973, pp. D 672–D 673.

II. Speech by Walter Scheel, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, on the occasion of the acceptance of the Federal Republic of Germany into the United Nations, made before the General Assembly on September 19, 1973

Mr. President,

Forty-seven years ago, almost to the day, Germany entered the League of Nations. Eight years had passed since the end of the First World War. German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann was welcomed by his French colleague Aristide Briand with the following words: “Gone by is the series of painful and bloody encounters with which all sides of history have been soiled [...] no more war, no bloody and brutal solutions to our disputes. [...]” Stresemann answered that “[...] If we wish to elevate ourselves, then we cannot accomplish this by fighting against each other, but instead only through cooperation with each other [...].”

A dialogue of expectations and hopes, supported by the best of goodwill. A fleeting chance for peace. And only a few years later it was lost.

This time, twenty-eight years have passed since the end of the war. Now there are two German foreign ministers standing before the delegates. This is a display of the fate of my people: cause and victim of the war, divided not of their own doing, now living in two countries and uncertain of a common future.

Do you understand why we hesitated to take the step of joining the United Nations? It is painful to look the political reality of the division of one’s own country in the eye. We feared that such a step could give the impression that we had become resigned, as if we had given up all hope for unification. We were worried that the barriers between the people in Germany might grow still higher through the membership of both parts of Germany.

Now we have a new point of departure. The two states in Germany have regulated their relations with each other in the Basic Treaty of December 21, 1972. For Berlin, the Four-Power Agreement was concluded with the participation of both states in Germany on September 3, 1971. This agreement paved the way not least for Berlin (West) to share in our participation in the United Nations.

Our goal is clear: the Federal Republic of Germany will continue to work toward peace in Europe, in which the German people will regain their unity in free self-determination.

[...]

Source: *Bulletin* (Press and Information Office of the Federal Republic), no. 114, September 20, 1973; reprinted in *Europa-Archiv*, Series 24/1973, pp. D 673–D 674.

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