

# Germany reunited as one sovereign nation, faces greater world role

by Rainer Apel

"This is one of the happiest moments in my life and a day of joy for the entire German nation," Chancellor Helmut Kohl said in a nationwide television and radio address a few hours before the merger of the two Germanys at midnight Oct. 2.

"After more than 40 bitter years of division, Germany, our fatherland, is being united again," Kohl said. He added that "everybody knows that a difficult path lies ahead of us," but he was confident such difficulties would be mastered in a few years thanks to the buoyant economy of West Germany. "There could not be a better moment for mastering the economic tasks of reunification."

Outgoing Prime Minister of the former East German state, Lothar de Maiziere, spoke after Kohl, saying that unification, the end of East Germany as a separate state, was a "farewell without tears" and one of joy, despite problems that remain.

It was a day of joy, indeed. To the tune of its two national anthems, the Germans celebrated their reunion as one sovereign nation-state on Oct. 3. The official state anthem, the "Song of the Germans," was accompanied by the second anthem, Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with its final chorus, the "Ode to Joy," performed in many cities of Germany that had organized official or semi-official events. Oct. 3 was declared a national "Day of German Unity" holiday for all of Germany.

Berlin, the German capital until the end of the war which was physically reunited on Nov. 9, 1989 when parts of the Berlin Wall came down, became the center of nationwide unity celebrations. Some highlights of the bigger events in Berlin, which were attended by an estimated more than 1 million Germans and foreign visitors during the three days Oct. 2-4, included:

- In a ceremony followed by a reception at the Allied Control Center building Oct. 2, the chiefs of the three Western military missions ceded Allied powers to the newly sovereign Germany. The mission chief of Britain—whose government has been most outspoken against German unity—Maj. Gen. Frank Corbett, happened to preside for the Allies.

- In the evening hours, a huge flag in the three German colors—black, red, and gold—was hoisted at the just-restored Berlin Reichstag building in a ceremony that was attended by political figures from both Germanys and other

nations. Several hundred thousand spectators attended.

- At midnight on Oct. 2, the liberty bell at Schöneberg town hall in western Berlin rang out to announce German unity. The bell is a copy of the famous Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

- In the Schauspielhaus concert hall in eastern Berlin, an official ceremony a few hours before midnight Oct. 2 ended the existence of the state of East Germany. Following a "farewell without tears" address by outgoing Prime Minister Lothar de Maiziere, the longtime Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra (now New York Philharmonic) co-conductor Kurt Masur conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the final "Ode to Joy" choral movement. The statue of Friedrich Schiller, the author of the ode, stands outside the concert hall.

- In the Berlin Philharmonic concert hall Oct. 3, a gala unity festivity with prominent guests from Germany and other nations featured a performance of a Bach cantata and the oratorio *Die Schöpfung* (The Creation,) by Josef Haydn.

- The 644 deputies of the new, united transitional German parliament—until national elections on Dec. 2—held their first joint session at the Reichstag on Oct. 4.

## Toward a higher morality

The spirit of these three days, highlighted by the high level of cultural activities, recalled that German unity is not a value in itself, but contains an appeal for a mission beyond mere German concerns. Prime Minister Lothar de Maiziere, himself a classical musician who plays the viola, addressed the issue of values in his nationwide television address on Oct. 3 when he said that the collapse of the communist ideology in East Germany should not cause disbelief in ideals in the future.

Concerning ideals, Germany can do a lot. As classical music and culture and the sciences, to which Germans have contributed so much over centuries, aims at something positive for all mankind, so is German unification of a broader weight for the world at this crucial moment of history. The news from the Persian Gulf, and the deep economic depression in the Anglo-American zone and the Third World, and the potential of a civil war in the declining Soviet empire, underline the seriousness of the world situation. It is widely

expected that Germany is committed to make a sizeable contribution—if not the decisive one—to help restore a positive course for mankind. Some expect that Germany, and no other nation, must make the decisive step.

### **Soviet emphasis upon Germany**

The Soviet Union, lacking concrete assistance from the United States, its longtime condominium partner, is casting nearly all of its hopes on the united Germany. The Germans are expected to help the Soviet Union out of its present internal disarray toward a stabilized economy in the second half of this decade. This is amply documented in the official remarks from Moscow on German unification.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov stated in his message of congratulations to the German nation, that its reunification is for the good of German-Soviet cooperation. This is of a “new quality” based on “the combination of the potentials of both sides,” he said.

Yuri Gremitskykh, the official spokesman of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, read a statement Oct. 2 to the media in Moscow that said: “The Soviet Union and the united Germany are entering a new stage of cooperation which must bring durable peace, stability, and enlightenment.” Interviewed on West German Channel 2 television that day, Gremitskykh declared that he welcomes German unification because of the perspectives for close cooperation with the Soviet Union “especially in the field of managing an economy efficiently, using materials efficiently, which is something we still have to learn, and I think we can learn that from the Germans who have built a very efficient economy.”

A few days before, Aleksandrovich Belousov, director of the Moscow Academy of Economic Sciences, had told a panel on East-West affairs in Ingolstadt, West Germany, that the economies of Germany and Japan should serve as a model for the Soviet Union after the first round of reforms.

On Sept. 29, a German-Soviet agreement was initialed in Bonn that cited space technology and reconversion of parts of the military industrial sector as preferential areas of cooperation. The agreement on 20-year long-term economic cooperation also mentioned machine-building, development and mass production of private cars, trucks, buses, and aircraft, shipbuilding, medical, and maritime research projects. The treaty on long-term cooperation that was initialed in Moscow between the Soviets and the Germans on Sept. 13, already defined that “the most modern technologies” be applied to improvements in the transport sector and transport links between the two states.

These agreements plus the two lesser agreements—on the continued stationing of Soviet troops in eastern Germany for a transition period of four years and on the joint home-building project for Soviet officers and their families withdrawn from German territory by the end of 1994 at the latest—will likely be signed in November when Gorbachov meets Chancellor Kohl in Bonn or Berlin.

### **German-Poland relations key**

It is all too apparent that there cannot be in-depth cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union if Poland is not serving as a bridge between the two. Poland is the easternmost of the old nations of Europe, and its economy must urgently be stabilized and improved. To westernize the Soviet Union is a task too big for the Germans alone. A development “spiral arm” running between Berlin and Warsaw will be crucial for the success of the Soviet reform experiment.

Chancellor Kohl made a first important step in that direction in November 1989 when he visited Poland; but just at that time, the transition communist regime of East Germany was close to total collapse and it decided to open the borders to West Germany and West Berlin. Ever since, the pace of developments in East Germany dictated a priority on German concerns, on German-Soviet talks, and on diplomatic consultations with the Western allies by Bonn. The issue of Polish-German relations was driven into the background—some say, too far into the background.

Had Chancellor Kohl and his diplomatic partners followed the proposal Lyndon LaRouche made in Berlin in Oct. 12, 1988, the entire development would have started with a development program for Poland, which would then have been extended to the western parts of the Soviet Union, East Germany, and the rest of Eastern Europe. Kohl and his partners chose another course, and stumbled into the turbulences of spring-summer 1989.

Chancellor Kohl has, however, never lost sight of the fact that next to German-Soviet relations, cooperation between Germans and Poles has a crucial importance. A few days before the formal unification of Germany, Kohl reiterated his firm intention to complete various initiatives toward Poland which had been frozen, and sign a long-term cooperation agreement with Warsaw early next year at the latest, after the Dec. 2 elections for all-German parliament.

At a pre-election meeting of his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party near Frankfurt on Sept. 22, Kohl declared: “We will not be able to walk into a peaceful future if the relations between Germans and Poles do not develop in a way similar to the partnership and friendship achieved between the former wartime enemies Germany and France.”

The Kohl signal was taken up promptly by senior Polish politicians. A criticism of the British attacks on German unification issued in Polish earlier by the new Polish Ambassador to Germany, Janusz Reiter, was published in German. Calling for a clear “emphasis on confidence in the democratic Germany in spite of the fact that its potency also causes certain fears,” Reiter took the British view head-on: “The British Trade Secretary [Nicholas] Ridley had to resign from office not only because he showed a shameful tactlessness, but also committed an unforgivable political mistake.

“It is about time now,” Reiter continued, “to demonstrate more confidence in the Germans. It cannot be our aim, to avoid dependencies from Germany, but our aim must rather

be to enter a world in which everybody depends on each other and all are profiting from that.

"Soon, we shall be neighbors to the European Community which is represented along our borders by Germany. Let us hope that this is only a period of transition that is preparing the day Poles and Germans become neighbors within the European Community."

Lech Walesa, now a Polish presidential candidate, also presented a positive view of German unification, when he wrote in a special supplement to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* Sept. 29: "The unification of Germany is the most visible evidence of the fact that the partition of our continent that was decreed at Yalta is over. We welcome with joy what has occurred without violence or bloodshed, because overcoming all the consequences which the accords of Yalta that were repressing the peoples had, has always been the objective of Solidarnosc."

"Up to this day, Poland was cut off from Europe by hundreds of kilometers of the communist fortress of East Germany, surrounded by death strips and watchtowers. Only a simple river is between us and Europe, now. And it is not the case that we are expecting aid in the form of alms from our new rich neighbors. We are rather counting on a cooperation that is of use for both sides."

Cooperation is making progress, though slowly. At the close of September, future economic Polish-German relations was addressed in hints coming from Bonn and Warsaw about a share that Polish construction firms would be given in the joint German-Soviet home-building project. Polish construction workers would be employed in the project, partly to compensate for lost contracts with Iraq, in an agreement reached in principle between the German and Polish housing ministries in talks in Warsaw Sept. 27. Details still have to be worked out in view of the fact that construction workers from Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Turkey are to be integrated in the initial phase of the DM7.8 billion project.

The German government will also try to guarantee employment for construction and other workers from Poland now working in Germany—about 20,000 in the East, 10,000 in the West. In this context, the two German governments issued a decree shortly before their merger on Oct. 3 that Polish workers with fixed contracts in eastern Germany are no longer required for the time being to show a visa for entry to Germany. This is a minor move, but important in the broader perspective of Polish-German relations.

An important, nascent development is the agreement signed Sept. 26 between the port cities of Duisburg and Gdansk. Covering port management methods, loading-unloading technology, direct coordination of transport flows between both ports, and the study of future flows of trade, the agreement involves "cooperation between the biggest inland port of the world (Duisburg, Germany) and the biggest port at the Baltic Sea (Gdansk, Poland)."

But commerce is not all: Deeper values have to surface

prominently to create a stable basis for German-Polish cooperation. The Polish Minister of Culture, Isabella Cywinska, who was in Bonn on Sept. 26, addressed the issue when she told journalists: "Sometimes, the artists can achieve more in politics than the laws."

Mrs. Cywinska said that she hopes the rapprochement of both states will "develop on the road of culture, rather than through the merchants. . . . One day, there may develop a real friendship of the type existing between the Germans and the French."

## The role of France

This touches the theme of what role France, having long-standing historic ties to Poland, There is no doubt that cooperation between Germany and Poland would not work if France objected. Throughout most of the 300 years between 1648 and 1945, the Polish issue has been a source of major frictions, sometimes even war, between France and Germany. French foreign policy after 1945, especially after the signing of the Franco-German Treaty of January 1963, has been improved, but frictions have remained to this day.

Because of this, it was important that Kohl recalled a period in European history that saw close cooperation between France, Germany, and Poland, when he gave his keynote address to the unification congress of the western and eastern German Christian Democrats in Hamburg Oct. 1. Kohl made direct reference to the spirit of the patriots that had gathered at Hambach Castle in May 1832—patriots from France, Germany, and Poland that were then united in their common struggle against the remains of the post-1815 Metternichian system of repression which was the historic model for the post-1945 system of Yalta. Kohl's emphasis on the Hambach event implied an appeal to revive the historic 1832 reunion of German, Polish, and French freedom fighters in the last decade of the 20th century.

Kohl paid special homage to Poland's Solidarnosc movement as having made reunification of Germany possible.

Kohl also said that "also for the united Germany, friendship with France will remain of vital importance." Kohl presented Franco-German cooperation on European affairs as the model for Eastern and Southeastern Europe. "For the building of a united Europe that is living in peace, German-Polish relations will have an outstanding weight. Without Franco-German friendship, the job of unifying Europe couldn't have been begun; without German-Polish partnership, it will not be possible to complete it," he said.

The German Chancellor paid tribute again to the Poles in his nationwide television address on Oct. 2, when he extended warm, special thanks to the "reform movements in Poland and Czechoslovakia which gave the people of East Germany the courage to stand up for their rights."

A lot has to be done to revive the Hambach spirit of 1832, but the cornerstones have been laid.