

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The change of past and present in this diary is intentional. . . Insertions in brackets are additional notes to the text and not included in the original version.)

Today I begin to write a diary. It should not be a daily diary. I only want to note down the most important events in the next time. I'm feeling that soon anything will change.

**Sunday 8/20/89:**

Today we came back from our vacations on the Baltic Sea. On the car radio we heard about some events in Hungary, but the news was very obscure. The first thing I did at home was to watch the news on TV. Only the West German TV stations reported about the Pan-Europa-Festival in the Hungarian city of Sopron on the frontier to Austria, which was to be a meeting of Hungarian and Austrian pacifists. For this day the frontier fence would be open, and a lot of tourists in Hungary [Hungary was a popular holiday place for East-Germans] used this chance to go to Austria and then to West Germany.

The Hungarian frontier police did not oppose the movement across the border. Was that a sign?

**Sunday 9/3/89:**

Meanwhile thousands of tourists in Hungary used the chance to go to the West. On the frontier between the GDR [German Democratic Republic = East Germany] and the CSSR [Czechoslovakia] stronger controls are present because many people from East Germany want to use the chance in Hungary to escape to West Germany. Tomorrow, school begins. Some of my friends spent their vacations in Hungary on Lake Balaton. I hope they are at school tomorrow.

**Sunday 9/24/89:**

Today more news is reaching us from Prague. Hundreds or thousands of people [East Germans] are storming the FRG - embassy [Federal Republic of Germany] to get a chance to go to West Germany. The Czechoslovakian police tried to hold them back with billy clubs. There are too many to stop.

**Sunday 10/1/89:**

The situation in Prague is disastrous. Thousands of East Germans are camping in the FRG embassy. Only ARD and

ACC exchange student provides diary . . .

How One Fall Changed My Life

ZDF [West German TV stations] show the pictures from Prague. Our TV reports only that there are "Republic-fugitives" who are bad subjects and criminals in the West German embassy.

This can't be true!

**Monday 10/2/89:**

The West German Secretary of State Hans-Dietrich Genscher visited the embassy in Prague. From the balcony of the embassy, he told the people that they can leave for West Germany soon. After this sentence all people in the embassy garden are crying because of the glad tidings. I almost cried and it gave me the creeps when I saw the pictures on West German TV.

Today we had the first "Monday demonstration" in Leipzig [the second largest city in East Germany]. The people are dissatisfied with the policy of the communists. The peaceful demonstrators are proclaiming phrases like, "We are the people!" or, "We stay here!". The police take action against them with billy clubs and jets of water.

**Friday 10/6/89:**

At school we can't talk with the teachers about the last events. Everybody is afraid to make too many critical or unpleasant remarks about the situation in East Germany.

**Saturday 10/7/89:**

Today is Sebastian's birthday. On the computer we created our own flag: black-red-gold with a half Federal eagle and half hammer, compasses and car-wreath [the symbols of West and East Germany].

Today, the first demonstration in Mülhausen was held. Hundreds of people walked to St. Martin's church to the peace prayer. We were too afraid to go, because we had seen the pictures from Berlin where the police arrested people in Getsemaneh church.

Today is also the 40th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic. There was a big parade of the army

and other security forces in Berlin to praise our Communist beton-heads [colloquial speech for the old members of the communist government]. The Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was in Berlin. He criticized the policy of our government. Does he understand the East German people?

In Warsaw we have the same situation as in Prague. Hundreds of people are in the FRG embassy, too.

**Sunday 10/15/89:**

Today we have a new government. The younger communists under the leadership of Egon Krenz removed the old beton-head Erich Honecker and his senior guard. Egon talked on TV about reforms in the

GDR. But nobody trusts him. We have enough!

**Sunday 10/22/89:**

Today, I went to the first rally in St. Mary's church. I had to stay outside because the church was completely filled. But I heard the discussions between representatives of the people and the local politicians outside through loudspeakers.

Now we have also more freedom in the press. Some critical reports are no longer censored.

**Sunday 10/20/89:**

At the second rally at St. Mary's, the citizens openly criticized the Communist politicians and their policy. In Mülhausen, we have new movements also throughout the whole GDR. Social Democrats, Greens and environmentalists, and other citizen movements like New Forum, Democratic Departure are new political organizations independent from the authorities. And the old blue-flutes [colloquial speech for the members of the other parties in the Volkskammer parliament like Christian Democrats or Liberal Democrats] are also opposed to the Communist government.

**Thursday 11/9/89:**

On the 10 p.m. news, a report was given regarding a press conference of the government. The government decided,

"As of November 9th at 9 p.m., the checkpoints to the Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin are open for departure!"

Now the reports follow in rapid succession. The pictures on TV give me the creeps: the Trabant [the car\* of the East Germans, and a symbol of the reunion] too pass the checkpoints to West Germany and to West Berlin. Hundreds of people from entire Berlin are on the Berlin Wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate. The frontier police are powerless.

go to Marburg [a city 100 miles behind the frontier in the state of Hesse] where my grandma was born. We would like to visit our relatives there. It was the first small family reunion in West Germany and an event I never will forget.

**Saturday 12/23/89:**

Federal chancellor Helmut Kohl and the new GDR Prime Minister Hans Modrow [a Communist reformer] opened the Brandenburg Gate formally for the public.

confidence!

**Sunday 3/18/90:**

In the first free elections in the GDR, the Christian Democrats are the winners. The new prime minister, Lothar de Maiziere forms a coalition of all democratic parties and organizations in the parliament. Only the PDS [Party of the Democratic Socialism], the former SED [Socialist Unity Party of Germany - the Communist Party], is not in the government. Nobody wants to work with the old rulers even if they are reformed.

**Sunday 7/1/90:**

The first part of the Reunion Treaty comes into operation in which Germans in the still GDR get the Deutsch Mark. All balances are changed from East Mark into Deutsch Mark. Now economic unity can begin.

Political changes experienced first hand

By JEN GOODBURN  
Co-Editor

Christian Albrecht is ACC's own authority on East European politics.

Well, maybe that's a little too much to put on the 19-year-old shoulders of our exchange student from Mülhausen, but he can boast something that political science students across campus could only wish for.

As a resident of an East German city located only ten miles from the Berlin Wall, he witnessed an event that changed the political structure of Europe. Now that he's in Alpena, Albrecht has provided us with a diary of the events that led up to the Fall of the Berlin Wall.

"In the beginning, we were a little bit afraid because we didn't know what would happen," he said. "There were some little demonstrations in our city, but we were afraid to go to them, because we didn't know what would happen." Demonstrators across Germany were being

attacked by police at that time, and participants were he was in West Germany being charged with treason and put in jail. "We didn't know what to do. That was four years ago; I was 15."

It was impossible for the young people of East Germany to travel to the west. His family was forbidden to have contact with West Germany, as his father was involved in the military. Since he had never seen the west, Albrecht says he had no ideas of what it would be like.

He has a photo of his father at the Brandenburg

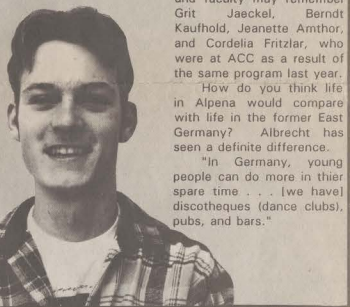
Gate. It was taken while time, and participants were he was in West Germany being charged with treason and put in jail. "We didn't know what to do. That was four years ago; I was 15."

"When I went to the west for the first time, it was normal for me because we were all young people. It was now normal. There were tears in the eyes of my parents because they were little children when the wall was built."

Albrecht is in Alpena as a result of the "Mülhausen - Michigan" exchange program sponsored by the Huron Shores Writing Institute. Second year students and faculty may remember Grit Jaesckel, Berndt Kauthold, Jeannette Anthorn, and Cordelia Fritzlir, who were at ACC as a result of the same program last year.

How do you think life in Alpena would compare with life in the former East Germany? Albrecht has seen a definite difference.

"In Germany, young people can do more in their spare time. . . . [we have] discotheques [dance clubs], pubs, and bars."



**Friday 11/10/89:**

There is only one topic at school - the opening of the frontier to West Germany and the fall of the Berlin Wall. No one is afraid of the Communist system any longer. The system is defeated!

**Thursday 11/16/89:**

With Immo I visited West Germany for the very first time. From this moment, the old time was forgotten. The border was 10 miles away from Mülhausen. And now, the street to Eschwege [the next county city behind the fence] is open! The frontier police let the cars pass without any checks. In the small city of Wanfried, two miles behind the frontier, I got the 100 Deutsch Marks of welcome money [every citizen of the GDR received 100 DM each year as a present from the government if he or she visited the FRG; some municipalities and states paid out 20 to 50 DM additional].

**Saturday 11/18/89:**

Today is Saturday. My parents and I would like to visit West Germany for the first time together. My dad also got a visa from the police [for the first time you needed a visa to go to West Germany, but after a week, no frontier police checked if you had a visa or not]. We want to

**Monday 12/25/89:**

On the first Christmas Day, we made a trip through the Eichsfeld [a region in the North of Mülhausen what was divided 30 years by the frontier]. Many cars, both from West and East Germany, were decorated with the German banner in black, red and gold. This Christmas is decorated in the black, red and gold of German banners instead of snow!

**Sunday 12/31/89:**

Today, we celebrate the first New Year's Eve in freedom. What will happen in the next year? We are all full of

**Wednesday 10/3/90:**

The Day of the German Unity!

The reunion of the two German countries is completed. Helmut Kohl is the first chancellor of all Germans. All of Germany is celebrating this event. Tonight I want to go to the festival hall on the Aue [a suburb of Mülhausen]. There is a great discotheque with DJ's from HR 3 [a Hesse radio station for young people]. At midnight we plan to hold fireworks.

Now we're one people, one nation! The future will show us the results of the reunion.



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