

AD REMOVED

[◀ Back to Article](#)[🖨 Click to Print](#)**TIME**

Friday, Mar. 03, 1967

East Germany: End of a Concept

With a sudden surge, the members of East Germany's Volkskammer (People's Chamber) sprang to their feet. As the country's Communist ruler, spike-bearded Walter Ulbricht, 73, looked on, the 434 Deputies thus signaled their unanimous approval of a new law that aims at making the division of Germany a spiritual as well as a physical reality. Into East Germany's law books last week went a statute giving the 17 million people under Ulbricht's rule a new citizenship in "the first peace-loving, democratic, socialist German state."

Until now, even though West Germany and East Germany issued separate passports to their citizens, the legal concept prevailed that all Germans, regardless of whether they lived in West or East Germany, shared the same nationality. East Germany's own 1949 constitution endorsed that concept, and West Germany still maintains it. But Ulbricht's new law puts to death that idea in his so-called German Democratic Republic. From now on, a citizen of the G.D.R. is only that; he no longer shares a common nationality with his brothers in West Germany. Behind the law, of course, is Ulbricht's aim to split the Germanys so far apart that any basis for reunification will eventually be destroyed.

[🖨 Click to Print](#)**Find this article at:**<https://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,843449,00.html>

Copyright © 2014 Time Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Add TIME Headlines to your Site](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Customer Service](#)