

FRONT PAGES FROM HISTORY

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Daily Times, Chicago - Wednesday May 2 1945

It was early in the morning of the second day of May 1945. Three Russian soldiers entered the building of the Reichstag, for so many years the centre of political power in a city that once was proud and invincible, defiant, bullying, arrogant; Berlin. Now clouds of thick, acrid smoke and flames rose everywhere, the result of a hurricane of fire. The Soviets had hurled thousands of artillery shells into the city since the start of the big offensive to destroy during ten days previous. Allied bombers had dropped thousands of bombs. Destruction was everywhere. Death was everywhere. And also pain, desperation, hunger. It was a city almost obliterated.

The three soldiers went up to the roof

of the emblematic building carrying a red flag with a simple star and the symbol of the Communist Party: the hammer and the sickle. There were fires everywhere, broken windows and furniture, shouting and confusion. The soldiers reached the top of the building and unfurled and planted the flag. In the streets below military vehicles, tanks, dead bodies, rubble, and a few bewildered bystanders who were accidental witnesses of a very symbolic gesture.

Sometime afterwards Marshall Zhukov, chief of the Soviet General Staff, called Stalin from Berlin and told him that the city had surrendered. And Stalin himself told the news to the world.

Everywhere, newspapers were prepar-



ing special editions. Like this one from the Chicago Daily Times: Extra!, Extra!, Berlin falls to the Russians!

In an urgent dispatch from London the newspaper reported the following: "Premier Stalin announced tonight the fall of Berlin. The announcement of the complete conquest of Berlin was made by the Moscow radio which declared that 70,000 Germans had been captured in the clean up of the city. The battle of the German capital began April 21. Stalin's order described the capital as the centre of German imperialism. He said the German garrison defending Berlin had laid down its arms today and resistance has ceased".

It was the beginning of the end of the war. At least in Europe.