

Events leading up to the "Turn" (*Wende*) in East Germany

- 1971 3 May Erich Honecker (b. 1912) succeeds Walter Ulbricht (b. 1893) as First Secretary of the SED
- 1978 March Honecker recognizes the Lutheran Church of East Germany as an independent organization
- 1985 11 Mar. Election of Gorbachev as general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- 1986 8 June: [for example:] GDR parliamentary elections: 99.74% turnout, 99.94% for National Front parties.
- 1987 7 June: GDR police clash with youths wanting to hear rock concert near wall
- 9 June: 3000 demonstrate in E. Berlin for demolition of wall, in support of Gorbachev.
- 7 Sept: Honecker in West Germany, agreement to promote exchange of experts
- 12 Oct: broad amnesty in E. Germany: 24,612 prisoners released; 1 Nov. easing of import restrictions
- 1988 17 Jan: 100 arrested during official commemoration of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht's murders; members of E. Berlin Church of Zion protest restrictions on speech and travel.
- Nov: *Sputnik*, popular Soviet news magazine, banned in GDR
- 1989 15 Jan: 80 arrested at demonstration during Lux-Lieb. anniversary commemoration. RL: "*Freedom is always [also] the freedom of those with dissenting opinions.*" vs. GDR: "Freedom is the insight into necessity"
- 2 May: Hungary begins demolition of fences at Austrian border
- 17 May: 98.85% reported voting for National Front candidates at local elections.
- Widespread allegations of fraud by opposition and church leaders monitoring elections.
- 5 June: *Neues Deutschland* (SED newspaper) defends 3 June massacre at Tiananmen Square in China
- 15 July: first reports of GDR citizens taking refuge in W. German embassies in Budapest, Prague, E. Berlin
- 13 Aug: W. German embassy in Budapest closed (181 sought sanctuary there)(130 emigrés in E. Berlin, 8 Aug.)
- 19 Aug: During pan-European scientific conference in Hungary ca. hundred GDR citizens cross to Austria
- 26 Aug: Initiative for Social-Democratic Organization started at human rights seminar
- 4 Sept: Hundreds demonstrate in **Leipzig** (*periphery vs. center*) for **freedom of travel**
- 7 Sept: 80 arrested in E. Berlin in demonstration against election fraud
- 10 Sept: First call for public reforms by **New Forum**
- 11 Sept: Hungary voids agreement with GDR to enforce visa restrictions of GDR citizens; in 3 days ca. 15,000 GDR citizens cross to West; New Forum "founded" (Havemann, Bohley, Reich)
- 18 Sept: 100 people arrested at Leipzig Monday demonstration
- 24 Sept: 80 representatives of various reform groups meet in Leipzig
- 25 Sept: ca. 8,000 demonstrate in Leipzig (for legalization of **New Forum**, freedom to travel); 12 arrests
- 2 Oct: police break up Leipzig demonstration of 10,000-25,000 persons; 3 Oct: visas for refugees in Prague
- 4 Oct: train on way to W. Germany with 10,000 GDR emigres from Prague stormed by Dresden residents
- 7 Oct: Gorbachev arrives in E. Berlin for 40th anniversary celebration, suggests change.
- "Danger threatens only those who can't react to life's challenges." Mass arrests to suppress mass protests.
- 9 Oct: ca. 50,000 demonstrate in Leipzig, **police do not intervene** (Honecker vs. Masur or Krenz?)
- 16 Oct: over 100,000 demonstrate in Leipzig, 10,000 in Dresden, 3,000 in Berlin. Police do nothing
- 23 Oct: 250,000 demonstrate in Leipzig
- 24 Oct: Egon Krenz succeeds Honecker, meets w/ New Forum leaders on 26 Oct.
- 27 Oct: Travel to Czechoslovakia w/o visa possible again (prohibited since 3 Oct.)
- 30 Oct: 500,000 demonstrate in Leipzig, 80,000 in provincial capital Schwerin (for example)
- 1 Nov: Krenz in Moscow, says unification of two Germanies is not "on the agenda of history"
- 4 Nov: Demonstration of **750,000- 1 million** in Berlin organized by Union of Artists; for freedom of expression, travel, association, and free elections. Criticism of SED; Stefan Heym, Christa Wolf
- 6 Nov 500,000 demonstrate in Leipzig; aged politburo resigns (Hager/Ideology is 77; Mielke/Stasi is 81)
- 9 Nov: border to W. Berlin is opened, tens of thousands cross (**role of media**: Schabowski vs. Brokaw)
- 20 Nov: demonstrations in many cities against leading role of SED, Krenz meets with W. German officials
- 28 Nov: Kohl releases 10-point plan for new all-German structure, a "confederation leading to a federation"
- 3 Dec: Party Central Committee, Politburo, General Secretary Krenz resigns
- 7 Dec: Gov't and opposition parties meet at Round Table; demand dissolution of Stasi, elections in May
- 8 Dec: Extraordinary SED Congress elects Gregor Gysi chair, Modrow and Berghofer vice-chairmen.
- 19 Dec: Kohl in Dresden, agrees with Modrow to form a "contractual community"
- "We are **the** people" → "We are **one** people/nation" ("*Wir sind das Volk*" → "*Wir sind ein Volk*")
- 31 Dec: New Year's celebration at Brandenburg Gate: now primarily demand for unification