

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.
- 12 June: Ronald Reagan speaks at the Berlin Wall: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"
- 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 1918: "*Freedom is always 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 West 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. 100 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 East 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
- 18 Oct: Erich Honecker is relieved of all of his offices
- 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

Stasi's Guiding Principles (1950-1989) [Bornemann, *After the Wall*, p. 158]:

1. Every person is a potential security risk
2. One must know everything in order to be secure
3. Security takes precedence over the law

6 October 1989 demands in Leipzig (video documentary: "We worked our fingers to the bone..."):

1. free access to information
2. open political discussion
3. freedom of thought and creativity
4. right to maintain pluralist ideology
5. right to dissent
6. right to travel freely
7. right to exert influence on government authorities
8. right to reexamine our beliefs [not to adhere rigidly to doctrine]
9. we the people demand the right to voice opinions in affairs of state

7 October 1989 statements by Gorbachev:

East Germany's problems are nothing compared to those he faces in the Soviet Union
"Danger threatens only those who can't react to life's challenges."
"Danger lies ahead only for those who are blind to what is happening."

4 November 1989 slogans at "artists' demonstration" of 1 million:

Against monopoly socialism -- for democratic socialism
Revolutions are holidays for the people
A 360-degree turn in the state security system?
Skepticism is a citizen's first obligation
Stepping down is a step forward (*Rücktritt ist Fortschritt*)
Reforms, but unlimited (*unbekrenzt*, a pun on Egon Krenz)
Those who don't move, don't feel their chains
No power for anybody!
Privileges for All!
*To go is silver, to stay is gold
----- at other demonstrations:
Freedom/Liberty, equality, honesty (French revolution: liberty, equality, brotherhood)
One lie kills 100 truths
Glasnost and not sweet wine (*Glasnost und nicht Süßmost*)
The rule of law is the best state security (*Rechtssicherheit ist die beste Staatssicherheit*)

9 November TV News ("Aktuelle Kamera")

Schabowsky's announcement that people have the right to **apply** to travel to West
Brokaw's announcement that they can travel with no restrictions

28 November: Helmut Kohl's 10-point plan:

- I. immediate measures to help GDR (environment, communication, transportation)
- II. Changes in GDR constitution: free elections, market economy; common E+W institutions
- III. Emphasis on European context of path to unification: confederative structure

Three Phases of Transition=Wende=Turn

1. **Late Sept.** (25th): [Fulbrook: 26 Aug: human rights seminar -- rise of organized opposition groups]
start of large Monday demonstrations in Leipzig (movement becomes public)
[Fulbrook: 9 Oct. no force used in Leipzig; "reform from above"]
2. **9 Nov.:** opening of border to West [Fulbrook: changes in leadership after 9 Nov.: Krenz]
mass euphoria of free travel; uncertain direction of movement; nationalist revival
appeal of economic prosperity, allure of consumption/wealth
3. **31 Dec.** -- early hopes of reform clearly smothered under blanket of W. German manipulation
Neo-Nazis at Leipzig demos; New Forum no longer sponsored