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There is No Revolution to Make Without Women

HERstory and Dynamics of the
Democratic Change of 1989 in the GDR



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-1989-1104-045
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I. PERSPECTIVES ON THE ISSUE

1. Introduction and Methodological Considerations

This contribution results from a two-year-cooperation between colleagues from organisations in Espoo/Finland, Marseille/France, Łódź/Poland, Málaga/Spain and Berlin. It is aimed at adult educators in Europe as well as citizens interested in the topic. The text is available in German and English.

The focus lays on two questions: 1. What characterises the democratic upheaval or the "peaceful revolution" of 1989? What happened in autumn 1989 BEFORE the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9th November? 2. What contribution did women make during the turbulent period of demonstrations, when initiatives were found, vigils, fasting actions, discussions about the future of their country took place, when the political rulers lost control and the Stasi was more and more dissolved?¹

In the thematic part I is firstly discussed why the seemingly stable power in the GDR could be shaken so quickly. To put it simply, four lines of development are identified. Then the dynamics and events of the democratic upheaval, starting from the municipality elections of 7th May 1989, are taken into consideration. By doing so, the contents and demands of the newly founded groups, such as the "Neues Forum" (New Forum) and "Demokratischer Aufbruch" (Democratic Breakup), will also be addressed. These chapters 2.1. and 2.2. are deliberately more detailed, as it became clear during the project that there is rather a little knowledge about what happened in 1989 and before in other European countries. Just this is shown by the perceptions of adult learners from the partner organisations, which are summarised in chapter 3. The engagement of women and the emerging independent women's movement in the GDR before 1989 is embedded in the descriptions in chapter 2.1. The diverse activities of individual women during the upheaval of 1989, the mergers to form local women's initiatives and the republic-wide Independent Women's Federation (UFV) are outlined in chapter 2.3. The structural perspective of a feminist political approach is emphasised, as it is expressed in the statements of "Lila Offensive" (Purple Offensive) and UFV. In this the demands differed from those which were often articulated from feminist circles in West Germany. At the same time, the feminist upheavals from women in the GDR were unique, compared with the movements in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. In order to promote the power of imagination and so that the description is not too abstract, three women, feminists and non-feminists, are portrayed more closely: Erika Drees, Samirah Kenawi and Ingrid Köppe. They have achieved remarkable things, but their degree of popularity is quite low. All the explanations lead to reflections on paradoxes of memory politics and the criticism of a romanticizing narrative of German-German unity. Finally, parts II and III contain didactic suggestions for educational work with adults on this issue.

The presentation is preceded by a few thoughts on remembering, the memory politics and the HERstory approach.

I thank all colleagues of the project, especially Ilona Niinikangas, Alice Jury-Tounay, Magdalena Tomczak and Pedro José Leiva Padilla for their suggestions and feedback. My special thanks go to Prof. Edyta Pietrzak for bringing the HERstory perspective to our project.

1 >Stasi< stands for >Staatssicherheit<, the secret service of the GDR. Sometimes the phrase >MfS< is used. This means >Ministry for State Security<.

Interpretations of the past: Remembering and Memory Politics in the Present

History is generally seen as the reality that happened in the past. People look at it from different perspectives. This applies to scientists as well as to contemporary witnesses, people of different generations, cultures, genders, political attitudes and lifestyles. The view of the past can be controversial, although this does not have to be motivated solely by different views. The interpretation of things that have happened can also be an attempt to influence public opinion and thus the attitudes of citizens in a desired sense: "Interpretations of the past are always also a political issue."² And politics is made with interpretations of the past, **historical politics**. It is about "power over heads"³, about shaping the future. This is not necessarily a matter for politicians alone. Part of the "field of forces" surrounding the thematisation of history are also representatives of memorials and memorial sites, historians working in science, museums, but also publicists, journalists, actors in educational work, etc.

This can also be observed for the topic "1989". The choice of words used to describe the events is already politically charged, to the extent that it is intended to give validity to certain perspectives on the events in the public discourse. Although the term "Wende" (Turning Point) has found its way into general linguistic usage, it is particularly rejected by those who have actively brought about social change. They want the events to be understood as a "peaceful revolution", and because this seems too profane in the written, it must have been a "peaceful revolution"⁴. Others are content with "revolution" or use neutral terms such as "democratic upheaval" or simply "1989". The corresponding Wikipedia article is titled "Wende und friedliche Revolution" ("Turn and peaceful revolution").

There is often spoken of a **culture of remembrance**. The term refers to the cultivation ("culture") of the memory of the past. This is understood in less terms as an individual phenomenon than as a collaborative act. Maurice Halbwachs speaks of a "collective memory".³ This remembrance represents a process of social understanding and the negotiation of interpretations of historical events and is rather attributed to actors of civil society. This implies that there is a variety of different historical images that occasionally come into friction in public controversies or in a "historian's dispute". Accordingly, the distinction between historical politics and memory culture is often marked along the lines of the "speakers". Politicians, on the one hand, tend to make statements on historical politics. Representatives of organisations, associations, foundations, publicists, writers and artists, on the other hand, could be classified as belonging to the field of the culture of remembrance.⁵ In this view, however, power relations are only assumed for the area of political institutions. However, if one follows the assumption that social discourses are also permeated by strategic communication, ambitions of influence and priority in the play of forces, then the culture of remembrance itself is charged with historical-political charge, be it in democratic intention through the consideration of different positions, be it through the preference of a limited selection of offers of interpretation.

2 Steinbach, Peter, <http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/zeitgeschichte/geschichte-und-erinnerung/39789/geschichte-und-politik> (retrieved on 05.04.2019)

3 Ibid.

4 Example: The website of the Federal Foundation for the Study of the SED Dictatorship, <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/> (retrieved on 29.05.19)

5 see e.g. Wünsch, Thomas

This discursive situation and the influence it has on producing perspectives on history, as well as conversely interpretations of the discursive context itself, should take those into consideration who reflect on history - and reveal its own approaches. And whoever appropriates representations of history as recipient should in turn critically analyse not only what is represented, the contents, but also the chosen methods and levels of observation. This sounds more complicated than it is.

With these assumptions an even more fundamental distinction is transported: People quickly get an idea - of other people, of history. To visualize this sensitizes oneself to the **difference** between **history** and the **image of history** and opens one's eyes to the diversity of narratives and ways of looking at things. This is at the same time an exercise in democratic virtues such as critical thinking, the desire for knowledge, tolerance of ambiguity and frustration, as well as a kind of reflection in which controversies are not omitted, but a cultivated approach is nevertheless possible.

In the following, to distinguish between history as the event in the past and the way it is envisioned in discourse, for the latter the concept of **memory politics** will be used. This takes into account the fact that perspectives on history are permeated by elements of 'image production'. This also captures the fact that efforts to enforce interpretations with references to history and to shape public discourses are not reserved solely for representatives of political institutions, as the concept of historical politics suggests.

Acceptance of the diversity of perceptions, modes of experience, lifestyles, social situations, cultures, convictions, etc. is also inscribed in the **HERstory** approach. Often forgotten "overlooked" women who have nevertheless quite made a difference come into view. The usual attention to individual personalities or biographies is, however, linked here with elements of structural theory, insofar as 'female history' is seen as a **political issue** and embedded in social conditions. The 'overlooking' of women and their achievements, indeed the obstruction of development through which these achievements are produced, is understood as a component of patriarchal structures, which are produced individually through socialization such as behavioral orientations AND social arrangements of division of labor, access to property, and positions of power. In this respect, the exclusion of gender issues in the reflection of history is itself regarded as a gender-specific form of historical politics or politics of remembrance.

The author of this article is linked to the issues under discussion in various ways: As a former activist and eye-witness, as an adult educator, and as a person who occasionally undertakes an excursion into the scientific reflection of an issue.

2. “1989” – More than just a Wall Opening

2.1. Trends towards Destabilisation in a Stable Society Reasons for the SED Leadership's Loss of Power⁶

A treatise on “1989”, which acknowledges the complexity of the events and stimulates a deeper understanding, would have to a) consider a longer time horizon (since the end of the Second World War) and b) extend the spatial horizon of investigation to European and global or geopolitical

⁶ ›SED‹ stands for ›Socialist Unity Party of Germany‹, the leading party of the GDR. There were also other parties. But they were insignificant and dominated by the SED.

constellations.

If not only individual events were to be listed mechanically, but shall be examined dynamics and hence considered interdependencies, such a broadening of prospect would be indispensable. Due to the limited resources of our Erasmus+ project, which focuses on the exchange of educational methods, this step could only be considered, but not achieved. Nevertheless, a cursory reference will be made to developments that, taken together, made the democratic upheaval of 1989 possible. To simplify matters, I'll distinguish between four 'lines of movement': a) economic and social developments, b) political and geopolitical moments, c) activities of those willing to leave the country, and d) those committed to opposition.

Economic and Social Developments



Bundesarchiv - Bild 183-N0625-0020
Foto: Schaar, Helmut | 25. Juni 1974

Picture: potash plant in Merkers, 1974, Source: Helmut Schaar, [Wikizero](#)

It is often pointed out that the GDR was economically in a disastrous state. This is attributed to the way of organisation of the economy as a centrally controlled planned economy, but also to wrong economic policy decisions. In addition, international interdependencies and dependencies on influence were present.⁷ The control of an entire economy by means of plans was associated with several problems: It is argued, for example, that there were too few incentives in companies to achieve higher productivity among employees. In addition, there was a fundamental information problem. However, since information flowed inadequately and incentives in a market economical sense were lacking, this also counteracted the innovative capacity of the economy⁸. This became apparent even in the course of the reform project "New Economic Policy of Planning and Control" (NÖSPL). It failed, owing to several reasons, also because the thereby freer development of creative forces ultimately ran counter to the SED decision-makers' desire for control and steering. The design of the GDR economy according to a planned-economy functional logic also faced the difficulty that in the competition between economic and social systems, "socialism" and "capitalism", the standards always also were determined by the knowledge of the "other side". In

7 Substitutionally see description by Steiner, André, ›Von Plan zu Plan. Eine Wirtschaftsgeschichte der DDR‹, Berlin 2007

8 Steiner, André, ›Der Weg der DDR in den Untergang‹, 28.09.2010, https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/wirtschaftswissen/wirtschaftsgeschichte-der-weg-der-ddr-in-den-untergang-11043750.html?printPagedArticle=true#pageIndex_0 (retrieved on 10.05.2019)

the Federal Republic, for example, the social aspects of the market economy were emphasized, whereas GDR citizens and government oriented themselves to the standard of living of the West German population. These circumstances as well, the supply bottlenecks and the unfulfilled consumer wishes, made for a constant nuisance. These shortcomings, as well as the unrest in Poland in 1970, are supposed to have induced the SED leadership under Erich Honecker to proclaim from 1971 the "Unity of Economic and Social Policy" in order to improve the material and cultural standard of living. This included a comprehensive housing programme and social benefits for women and mothers.

Social policy however had its price. On the one hand for the Soviet Union, because the GDR economy received support from there from the end of the 1950s to the middle of the 1980s: Raw materials were purchased at prices below those of the world market. Conversely, the GDR found buyers in the USSR at prices higher than those of the world market⁹. However, the **oil price crises** of 1973 and 1979 also become noticeable with a delay in time in the Eastern bloc with rising crude oil prices, so that the Soviet Union significantly reduced the quantity of oil supplied to the GDR.¹⁰ Furthermore, the anticipated increase in productivity by social progress failed to materialise. Worse still, growth rates declined. Expenditure on improved living conditions exceeded economic output. Foreign debt increased, partly because crude oil had to be purchased in foreign currencies. The development in debt occurred in the context of a global debt crisis and was furthermore strengthened by the rise in interest rates worldwide. The GDR leadership was not prepared to raise prices for basic foodstuffs nor to lower wages and pensions. A remedy could be found in the **billion-euro loan** guaranteed by the Federal Government of West Germany in 1983, a "purchase of time". The motive has often been puzzled about: Why would Franz-Josef Strauß have been willing to come to the aid of the so called "class enemy"? According to Ernst Eichenbichler, his aim was "to destabilize the systems through short-term support in the long term and thus to contribute to the collapse of the Eastern bloc".¹¹

However, the thesis of the **"bankruptcy of the GDR"** has already been **refused**. It had a prominent witness in Gerhard Schürer, Chairman of the State Planning Commission 1965-1989, as expressed in the "Analysis of the Economic Situation in the GDR" (October 30, 1989). It spoke of the impending insolvency of the GDR. The foreign debt had thus amounted to 49 billion DM in foreign currency.¹² This corresponded to about 26 billion US dollars.¹³ However, the Bundesbank's 1999 balance of payments for the GDR showed liquidity reserves of 29 billion DM in foreign

9 Ibid.

10 What is probably only known to those who are particularly interested is the fact that the GDR leadership then turned its attention to lignite as an energy source. As a result, investments in other sectors, such as the service sector, were not possible or only possible at a later date. Priewe, Jan in the discussion event "Unprecedented Shock Therapy": The Introduction of the Market Economy in East Germany, 29.10.2015, recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxM5357rh9Y> (from min. 21 ; this is an amateur video)

11 Eichenbichler, Ernst, ›Milliardenkredit für den Feind. Der Aufsehen erregende Strauß-Deal mit der DDR‹, Bayrischer Rundfunk, 27.07.2012, <https://www.br.de/nachricht/inhalt/strauss-kredit-ddr100.html> (retrieved on 16.05.19)

12 Schürer, Gerhard / Beil, Gerhard / Schalck, Alexander / Höfner, Ernst / Donda, Arno, Analysis of the economic situation of the GDR with conclusions, presentation for the Politbüro of the Central Committee of the SED, 30.10.1989, http://www.chronik-der-mauer.de/system/files/dokument_pdf/58553_cdm-891030-analyse-oekonomische-lage.pdf , p. 4 (retrieved on 16.05.19)

13 mdr-Zeitreise, ›Wie pleite war die DDR?‹ <https://www.mdr.de/zeitreise/war-die-ddr-pleite100.html> (retrieved on 16.05.19)

currency for 1989, which covered 59.3% of the debt. Net indebtedness to Western countries had amounted to 19.9 billion DM in foreign notes and coins.¹⁴ Thus, a net foreign exchange debt of the GDR in 1989 of about 10 billion US dollars can be assumed. It was thus far below that of the FRG. In 1990, the year of reunification, the GDR's national debt per inhabitant was DM 5,384.00, whereas that of the West German population was DM 15,000.00 per inhabitant.¹⁵ The GDR economy was liquid in 1989 and fulfilled its payment obligations to the Federal Republic.¹⁶

However, the authors of the above-mentioned situation analysis had predicted that the GDR would become insolvent over the next few years.¹⁷ The GDR economy's lack of innovative strength and thus its ability to develop, as well as foreign economic factors, were expected to lead to a further deterioration of its economic situation.¹⁸

In general, the supply bottlenecks, difficult working conditions in the companies and the lower standard of living compared to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) are seen as the cause for the waves of emigration and the democratic upheaval in 1989.¹⁹ Here, however, the thesis is to be put forward that in the course of economic and social policy, which aimed to raise the standard of living, a kind of **middle class** has emerged **in the GDR**. The largely secure living conditions with regard to food, clothing, work, housing, the health system, basic care in old age, and not to forget the prosperity of time, opened up the possibility of posing questions that went beyond the safeguarding of existence and primary needs. What critically engaged people moved from the mid-1970s onwards was fueled by humanistic values. It was about peace, justice, human rights, freedom, ecological issues, gender justice, overcoming paternalism – about participation. A lasting thorn in the flesh of those who had established themselves in socialism à la GDR was the Berlin Wall and thus the barred path to the West. **Freedom of travel** was a central reason motivating people to flee the republic and leave the country. The widespread dissatisfaction and "complaining culture" unfolded as a result of **unfulfilled consumer desires** – nourished by the view to the West and the considerable purchasing power overhang – but also as a result of the comparison between **proclaimed socialist aspirations** and **perceived inadequate reality**. The state and society of the GDR were not without a few who felt a lack of opportunities for development, not only of a material nature, but also with regard to the areas of freedom which had been found to be clearly too narrow. This was influenced by political and geopolitical factors. The interplay between the certainly existing state of prosperity and various crisis phenomena formed the 'background music' for the changes that got underway in 1989 and in the course of which the irrevocable believed lost its

14 Deutsche Bundesbank, ›Die Zahlungsbilanz der ehemaligen DDR 1975-1989‹, August 1999, <https://www.bundesbank.de/resource/blob/689284/7410029db56fb56ea6ce81816f8017ee/mL/zahlungsbilanz-ddr-data.pdf> p. 58-59 (retrieved on 16.05.19)

15 Mai, Karl, ›War die DDR bankrott und total marode? Fiktion und Wirklichkeit 1989‹, <http://www.memo.uni-bremen.de/docs/m2706b.pdf>, p. 6

16 says economist Karl Mai, ›Die Legende von der Pleite der DDR‹, 19.04.2012, <https://www.nachdenkseiten.de/?p=12924> (retrieved on 16.05.19)

17 Schürer, Gerhard et al., l.c., p. 12. The paper recommends taking up further loans from the Federal Republic of Germany in the amount of 2-3 Marks - in order to avoid dependence on the International Monetary Fund.

18 Mai, Karl, l.c.; Prof. Jan Priewe and the former substitutional Prime Minister and Minister of Economics of the Modrow government, Prof. Christa Luft, also gave a differentiated assessment in talks with the former Prime Minister of the GDR, Dr. Lothar de Maizière, at the event "'Unprecedented Shock Therapy: The Introduction of the Market Economy in East Germany' on 29.10.2015, recording <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxM5357rh9Y> (from min. 15; this is an amateur video).

19 Prominent: Steiner, André, ›Von Plan zu Plan. Eine Wirtschaftsgeschichte der DDR‹, Berlin 2007

power at a surprising speed. This happened in the context of political and geopolitical developments.

Political and Geopolitical Moments



Picture: Pope John Paul II and US President Ronald Reagan, Source: [Wikipedia](#) Picture: Michail Gorbachev, Source: [Wikimedia](#)

If one takes the European specific concomitance into consideration, notably both the election of Poland's Karol Józef Wojtyła to Pope John Paul II in 1978 and the inauguration of Mikhail Gorbachev as head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, this marked turning points towards an opening of Eastern European, socialist societies. In the Catholic Poland, the election of a compatriot as world leader of her church was a great encouragement - the power of the party was relativized by the spiritual power of the Pope. John Paul II also actively supported the trade union movement **Solidarność** ("Solidarity"). Michail Gorbachev's statement is handed down: "Everything that has happened in the last years in Eastern Europe would not have been possible without this Pope".²⁰

Gorbachev's policy of **glasnost (transparency)** and **perestroika (transformation)** was aimed at reforming socialism with the introduction of market-economy elements and greater participation by the people. He distanced himself from Stalinism and initiatives for disarmament and détente emanated from his politics, such as the agreement on the complete dismantling of all nuclear medium-range missiles (INF Treaty). Gorbachev's policies stimulated hopes of change in a substantial part among the GDR citizens.

Gyula Horn, **Hungary's** Foreign Minister 1989-1990, brought about openings of a very concrete kind and pioneering the "fall" of the Berlin Wall on 9th November 1989. On 27th June 1989, he and his Austrian counterpart Alois Mock cut through the barbed wire fence near the city of Sopron in a public and symbolic manner. Previously, on 2nd May, the Hungarian government had announced that it would dismantle the border fortifications between Hungary and Austria. The border controls were maintained for the time being. What was the motive for this kind of freedom of movement? Hungary signed the Geneva Convention on Refugees in March 1989. It came into force on 12th June 1989. The country had thus committed itself not to extradite refugees if they were threatened with persecution in their country of origin. The background was that several thousand citizens had already fled from Romania under the Ceausescu regime to Hungary, many with the aim of migrating to Western European countries. By signing the **Geneva Refugee Convention** and

²⁰ Schwabe, Alexander, ›Revolutionär nach außen, Traditionalist nach innen‹, 03.04.2005, <https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/nachruf-revolutionaer-nach-aussen-traditionalist-nach-innen-a-349452.html> (retrieved on 17.05.19)

strengthening rule-of-law procedures, Hungary met a condition imposed by Western creditors so that the country could obtain new credits.²¹

Another step towards opening the "Iron Curtain" was the **Pan-European Picnic** near Sopron, Hungary, in the afternoon of 19th August 1989. Under the patronage of Otto von Habsburg from the Paneuropa Union and the Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Pozsgay, it might have been a test of whether Gorbachev would tolerate the opening of the border fortifications at the very interface of the political systems. It is estimated that 700-800 GDR citizens used this picnic to cross the border to Austria. From September 11, Hungary had opened the border to GDR citizens who had already come into the country.²²

The changed foreign policy situation and the cracks in the camp of the "socialist brother countries" that became apparent weakened the position of the SED leadership. It was increasingly isolated and apparently saw no allies in Poland and Hungary.²³ Moreover, it showed no willingness to reform and opposed Gorbachev's efforts towards glasnost and perestroika. A generation change was overdue, especially since Erich Honecker was absent due to illness in August and September 1989 and also had health problems in July.²⁴ Repression continued to be directed against dissidents, especially if the protest was made public outside the church. But this was echoed in Western media, which in turn radiated into the territory of the GDR (the public West German radio Deutschlandfunk was even available in the so called "Valley of the Unsuspecting"). The demonstrations received a broad and socio-political pressure effect through both civil society movements, the outlanders and those who stayed and wanted to change the GDR.

Exit Waves

In 1975, the GDR leadership signed the **Helsinki Final Act** bringing to an end the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. In it, it had committed itself, among other things, to respecting human rights and fundamental freedom.²⁵ Citizens who wanted to leave the GDR and move to the Federal Republic of Germany referred to this. From 1977 onwards, they were enabled to apply to

21 Kowalczyk, Ilko-Sascha, ›Endspiel. Die Revolution von 1989 in der DDR‹, p. 348. Hungary, like Poland and Czechoslovakia, had been receiving loans from the International Monetary Fund since the 1970s. See also Brada, Josef C./ Schönfeld, Roland / Slay, Ben, The Role of International Financial Institutions in Central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of Comparative Economics* 20 (1) 1995, p. 49-56 und Csaba, László, Hungary and the IMF: The Experience of a Cordial Discord. *Journal of Comparative Economics* 20 (2) 1995, p. 211-234. To which other countries, such as Romania and the former Yugoslavia, this also applies and how this influenced their economic and political development would have to be examined separately.

22 Nagy, László, ›Das Paneuropäische Picknick und die Grenzöffnung am 11. September 1989‹, from: Potsdamer Bulletin für Zeithistorische Studien, Nr. 23-24/2001, p. 24-40, <http://www.chronik-der-mauer.de/material/178896/laszlo-nagy-das-paneuropaeische-picknick-und-die-grenzoeffnung-am-11-september-1989?n> (retrieved on 17.05.2019). Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl expressed his delight at the opening of the border on 11 September 1989 and promised "... generous financial aid and support for Hungary's aspired EU accession".. Kowalczyk, Endspiel, l.c., p. 353. The opening of the border was also made possible by Mikhail Gorbachev's official abolition of the so-called Breshnev Doctrine in 1988, after which the states of the Eastern bloc could no longer become militarily active in order to influence the political conditions of a ›brother country‹.

23 Schürer, Gerhard, ›Persönliche Aufzeichnungen über die Sitzungen des SED-Politbüros am 17. Oktober 1989‹, in: Hans-Hermann Hertle, ›Der Fall der Mauer. Die unbeabsichtigte Selbstauflösung des SED-Staates‹, 2. ed., Opladen 1996, p. 430-437 and <http://www.chronik-der-mauer.de/material/180976/gerhard-schuerer-persoenliche-aufzeichnungen-ueber-die-sitzung-des-sed-politbueros-am-17-oktober-1989> (retrieved on 17.05.2019)

24 Schürer, Gerhard, ›Persönliche Aufzeichnungen‹, l.c.

25 ›40 Jahre Schlussakte von Helsinki‹, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 30.07.2015, <http://www.bpb.de/politik/hintergrund-aktuell/210407/ksze-schlussakte> (retrieved on 17.05.2019)

leave the country. There were larger waves of migrants in 1984, 1988 and above all in 1989. Between 1949 and 1989 a total of about 3.5 million people left the GDR, 2.5 million of them until the construction of the Wall in 1961. Thus, 1 million people turned their backs on the GDR in various ways after the building of the Wall to its end.²⁶ This posed a problem, as many skilled workers and academics left, making for a "brain drain". But the regime also came under pressure because this was also being discussed in the West German media. Spectacular were the invasions of the territory of the FRG embassies in Warsaw and Prague by people wishing to leave the country in early August 1989 and the mass flight via Hungary to Austria. The **unrest**, that swept the country through the emigration activities also incited opposition activists to regroup and deliberately address themselves to the public. Those willing to leave the country and those who resisted came together in the Leipzig Prayers for Peace – which from September 1989 merged into the weekly Monday demonstrations and gave new vitality to the democratic upheaval.²⁷

Dissidence and the Emergence of Countervailing Power



Picture: "Glasnost (Transparency) in State and Church", Protestant Church Congress 1987, Source: Jugendopposition.de

In the GDR, the lie 'ruled'. Unadapted behaviour too often resulted in sanctions. The borders were only open to the East. The **hunger for life** and **creativity** were limited by paternalism, internalized fainting experiences and lack of opportunities for free development. However, you may imagine the GDR society to be more alive than is commonly assumed. Especially in the 1980s, various forms of protest and alternative lifestyles developed towards socialist humility. This became apparent a) in the emerging youth cultures, b) in music, theatre and literature, c) in the activities of SED fellow members and d) in an increasingly broad spectrum of opposition activists.²⁸

Hippies, "**hitchhikers**", "customers", "rockers", "bums", punks and others developed free spaces for themselves beyond the official, standardized and often joyless. Punks coined the formula "too much future" (in contrast to "no future" of Western fellow punks) and thus complained about the planned life in which everything seemed "secured" until the last breath. The young people expressed their criticism in songs, performances in backyards, blues masses, official and unofficial

26 Brunhold, Robin, ›Abstimmung mit den Füßen – Die Ausreisewelle der 80er Jahre und Flucht aus der DDR‹, <https://www.geschichte-lernen.net/ausreisewelle-und-flucht-ddr-80er-jahre> (retrieved on 18.05.2019)

27 The regular peace prayers have been held in Leipzig since 1982. They were initiated by the pastor Christoph Wonneberger, who was inspired by the Political Night Prayers in Cologne around the theologian Dorothee Sölle.

28 The presentation in this section and the following chapter 2.2. is borrowed in parts from Kowalczyk, Endspiel, op.cit.

concerts, self-made films, exhibitions in apartments and at many "Feten". Bands such as Silly, Pankow, Freygang, Feeling B or "Die Firma" (in which even unofficial employees of the "Firma", the state security service, were dominant) often transported a shrill, yet poetic attitude to life that hardly suited the empty, since the 1970s increasingly materially oriented future vision of socialism.

Among young people and young adults, of course, there were also increasing numbers of supporters of **political right-wing** and **right-wing extremist** views. Racism, anti-Semitism and neo-Fascist ideas were also a reality in the GDR of the 1980s. This became visible with the attack of skinheads on a concert of "Element of Crime" and "Die Firma" on 17.10.1987 in the Berlin Zionskirche. This triggered a broad debate - but hardly in the media controlled by the state.¹

In the world of **theatre, painting, music and film**, too, 'parallel worlds' in the sense of a culture that was relatively independent of state influence had selectively formed. An example of this is the "Zinnober" theatre group founded in Berlin in 1980. They encouraged others in the country to do the same. Books were cheap in the GDR - although not necessarily the titles they wanted - just as theatre and art were accessible to everyone. This gave **literature** the role of addressing perspectives on reality that were not discussed in official media. The citizens of the GDR were generally well versed in reading "between the lines". Books like "Kassandra" by Christa Wolf (1983), "Hinze-Kunze-Roman" by Volker Braun (1985), his play "Übergangsgesellschaft" (1988) or works by Heiner Müller and Christoph Hein (and many others). "Kassandra" was published in West and East Germany. The novel questions patriarchal rule based on violence and oppression. This appears in contrast to female wisdom and solidarity among women. The work was integrated into the debates of the peace and women's movement, which was flourishing in the GDR and was quite alive in the FRG, and which was also accompanied by criticism of current politics.

Not only in youth cultures, artistic and literary circles, but also in the communist **SED party** itself there were efforts to change the situation. There had been "dissidents" during all four decades. Robert Havemann, Rudolph Bahro and others are prominent for this. In the second half of the 1980s – the Perestroika years – a circle of 15-20 academics had formed at the Humboldt University Berlin who were working on a concept for "**modern socialism**". These included Rainer Land, Dieter Segert, Michael Brie and others. For their part, the scientists were in contact with employees of the Academy of Sciences and other universities in the state. Almost all of them were members of the SED. The starting point was the insight that the state and society of the GDR, but also of the other states of the "socialist camp", would no longer exist without a fundamental reform. The aim was to "reconstruct the basic idea of socialism on the basis of a theory of modernity", i.e. to "theoretically redefine the economic, social and political foundations of a democratically constituted socialist society."²⁹ The concrete ideas turned out to be quite diverse.

After all, there were efforts in the environment of the **Protestant Church** in the GDR in particular to thoroughly change the political structure of the GDR. Generally, the active did not see themselves as members of the (political) **opposition**. Rather, it was spoken of a "critical distance" to the state. The term "opposition" has been applied to them retrospectively since the 1990s. The major churches – Protestant and Catholic – had a special status in the GDR. They represented an institutional structure with other mental "foundations" than the socialist ideology, with their own

²⁹ Land, Rainer, »Eine demokratische DDR? Das Projekt „Moderner Sozialismus“«, without year, <http://www.rla-texte.de/texte/1%20Evolution/Moderner%20Sozialismus%20mit%20Exkurp.pdf> (retrieved on 18.05.19)

hierarchies, rules and regulations and financial support of the Western churches, on which the state had only limited influence. The churches had their own infrastructure of training centres, publishing houses, magazines and bookshops. They also offered employment opportunities for opposition activists when they were de facto banned from working. And they 've got rooms!

While in the 1950s the student communities were still harassed, in the 1970s in the context of the churches individual places of encounter developed, in which social, political and philosophical topics were discussed quite frankly and a kind of debate culture was practiced, as it was not possible for instance at assemblies of the Party or the youth organization "FDJ". This concerned the "**Open Work**" with young people, which was initiated by some committed pastors in Braunsdorf near Rudolstadt, Leipzig, Dresden, Jena and Berlin. Such places were also the Protestant and Catholic student Christian communities. The ecumenically oriented "Aktion Sühnezeichen" (Action Reconciliation) invited to a critical reflection of German history, in particular of National Socialism, and offered in the encounter with young people from Eastern European countries opportunity to practice what is today called European thinking.

Annually since 1980 so-called peace decades took place in many congregations, in which the armament in the world was thematized and was prayed for peace and reconciliation. At the beginning of the 1980s, peace groups in the GDR also came together to form the network "Konkret für den Frieden" (Concretely for Peace). From 1982-1986 a public peace workshop was held once a year, where the now numerous peace, women's, environmental, third world, homosexual and other groups introduced themselves to the visitors, came into contact with each other and debated current political topics. In the run-up to the Berlin Kirchentag in 1987, the "Kirche von Unten" (Church from Below) was formed, an association of critical spirits who demanded, among other things, "glasnost in state and church", less expenditure by the church on representative buildings and the introduction of a civilian alternative service. The activities of "the groups" were made possible by the support of individual pastors. However, they also regularly led to conflicts with church workers who did not see this opening as conjoined with the church's mission. The permanent tensions with the church leaders resulted among other things from the fact that they saw themselves as mediators between state bodies and the grassroots groups. The State Security Service had also succeeded in placing not quite few unofficial employees within the ranks of the churches. This could not stop the developments towards overcoming the "Ancien Régime" of the GDR.

The "**Ökumenische Versammlung für Frieden, Gerechtigkeit und Bewahrung der Schöpfung**" (**Ecumenical Assembly for Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation**) was central to the upheavals of 1989. Following the Council tradition of the churches (Council – meeting, gathering) in 1983 in Vancouver / Canada, a global, common reflection on urgent socio-political questions was called. However, the call was not directed as in former times only to church dignitaries, but in democratic intention to all Christians. The idea was adopted in the GDR in 1986. Reflections on justice, peace and environmental



Source: [Wikipedia](#)

protection were brought together in numerous church congregations and grassroots groups. It was discussed how Christians in the GDR should become active in these areas. For this purpose papers were developed in numerous congregations and working groups. These were the subject of discussion during three plenary assemblies in February and October 1988 and April 1989. The focus was on questions of democratisation, freedom and the rule of law in the GDR. Tens of thousands of Christians are said to have been involved in this process.³⁰ This movement resembled a "school of democracy" in which social and political questions were discussed together, diversity of opinion was trained, compromises were negotiated and the actors were able to practice free speech. According to the historian Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, the conciliar process contributed "... to the politicization in the run-up to autumn 1989. Essential demands made in writing in autumn 1989 can be found in the papers of that meeting, in some cases even the written formulations are identical."³¹

Under the 'roof' of the Protestant Church, numerous **groups who criticised the political situation** were active in the 1980s, from which from the summer of 1989 onwards coalitions emerged that contributed significantly to the democratic upheaval. Since the end of the 1970s the initial point was **peace**. This reflected the situation of the Cold War between the social systems and formed a counterpoint to further armament (the stationing of Soviet SS20 and American Pershing II missiles) and a policy of deterrence. The committed found themselves in agreement with the peace movements in West Germany and took up their impulses, such as the Political Night Prayer. After the NATO double decision had found approval in the German Bundestag in October 1983, the East German independent peace movement also became disillusioned. A little later, from 1985 onwards, human rights issues came to the fore. The Czechoslovak civil rights movement Charta 77 and the Polish independent trade union Solidarność provided orientation for this. In Berlin, the "**Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte**" (**IFM (Initiative for Peace and Human Rights)**) was founded, which was both a non-state group and the first group to act independently of the Church. IFM actors made strategic use of the Western media to achieve greater reach - and to protect themselves from state repression. The focus was on demands for the realization of civil human rights, i.e. freedom of opinion, press and assembly, the rule of law and freedom to travel, but also concrete human rights violations in the GDR. Similar groups also developed in other cities, such as the Working Group on Human Rights and the Working Group on Justice in Leipzig.

In contrast, the Berlin "**Gruppe Gegenstimmen**" (**group of dissenting votes**) also focused on social human rights, took up the topic of the global debt crisis, and organized actions in connection with the 1988 meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in West Berlin. Half of the founding members were unofficial members of the MfS (Ministry for State Security).

In addition, there were numerous **environmental groups** that drew attention to the sometimes disastrous ecological conditions. An investigation into the consequences of uranium mining in 1988 caused a sensation, tree planting campaigns took place and the 'Kirchliche Forschungsheim Wittenberg' encouraged the "Mobile without car" campaign.

30 Detailed information provides Brown, Stephen, The conciliar process for JPIC and the New Germany, The Free Library. 2002 World Council of Churches 02 Aug. 2019
<https://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+conciliar+process+for+JPIC+and+the+New+Germany.-a087425985>
 (aufgerufen am 25.05.19)

31 Kowalczyk, »Endspiel«, l.c., p. 235; concerning the role of the churches in GDR p. 195-235

The (im)possibility of free exchange of ideas, of a spiritual exploration of reality, of the development of ideas and actions is a sensitive yardstick for the democratic ability of communities. The socialist unified press, the ideologically filtered information and manipulation of the state media called actors who wanted to create forums of enlightenment and debate into action. The magazines "Grenzfall", "Umweltblätter", "Kontext", "Streiflichter" and "Friedrichsfelder Feuermelder", among others, were printed and distributed in the so-called '**Samizdat**' (**self-publishing**). The 'radix newspapers' were published on selected topics³², and those who were lucky could regularly read the reader "dialog" with excerpts from articles from the western press. The reader was compiled by Roland Jahn, who had been expelled from the GDR in 1983 as co-founder of the "Friedensgemeinschaft Jena" (Jena Peace Community) and who from then on supplied the activists in the GDR with equipment from West Berlin and made it possible for the ideas and actions of the committed to be disseminated via Western media.³³ If for the events especially in October 1989 the contribution of the Western media to the course of developments is taken into consideration, then this is also connected with the person Roland Jahn. In such a sense, the Western media also formed an alternative GDR audience with its own personal underpinnings - thanks to the system contrast equipped with a power, that could not be developed through samizdat publications.



Picture: Samirah Kenawi, Frauengruppen in der DDR der 80er Jahre. Eine Dokumentation, S. 91

Women also came together in their **own groups**. The existence of these associations in the GDR in the 1980s was unique in Eastern Europe.

- 32 The printings were produced in the apartment of Charlotte and Peter Bickhardt in Berlin. In literature (Kowalczyk, ›Endspiel‹, l.c., p. 246 and Wienserski, Peter, ›Window to Freedom‹. The radix leaves. Underground publishing and printing house of the GDR opposition) is the group of eye-witnesses not described exactly. The room in which the machines stood and the printings were produced was directly behind the author's personal room, and the production itself was part of family conversations. Even brothers and sisters knew about it, too, and everyone kept silence. It should also be mentioned that those activities were tantamount to a psychological imposition for Charlotte Bickhardt; she has ›proven her nerves‹ for something that was brought to her from outside. Peter Bickhardt, on the other hand, was trained in the unconventional, as long as it was connected with a Christian-humanistic concern. When he gave his blessing to a gay couple from Prague in the church of Berlin-Kaulsdorf in 1983, he was probably one of the first priests in Europe to do so.
- 33 In addition, an astonishing number of books published in the West also circulated in the GDR. Václav Havel's "Attempt to Live in the Truth" was, as it were, the 'Bible' of those who oriented themselves to rehearsing the upright walk. Especially among women, "The Small Difference - and its Big Consequences" by Alice Schwarzer was passed on.

In 1982, a new military service law came into force, which provided that women could also be drafted into the army. In response, "**Frauen für den Frieden**" (**Women for Peace**) were formed in Berlin and Halle. They inspired women in eight other cities to do the same.³⁴ Women's issues included disarmament, peace education, conscientious objection to military service, and discussions about the stationing of Russian and US medium-range nuclear missiles (SS-20 missiles and Pershing II). They invited women's groups to national meetings, held once a year in varying locations from 1984-89. The meetings served the purpose of networking, exchange, stimulation and information – and to pave the way for an independent women's movement. Women were also present at these nationwide meetings who saw themselves as **feminists**, did not belong to the "Women for Peace" group, but were not bound by the Church either. At the same time, **women** who were **affiliated to the church** and who were striving for changes in church and society became involved. As recently as 1978, the synods of the Protestant Church had agreed to the equal ordination of women. Patriarchal views, thinking in hierarchies and an outdated image of woman were still widespread in religious contexts. The women took inspiration from feminist theology developed in the USA and also perceived in West Germany. Finally, representatives of **lesbian groups** also articulated themselves at the nationwide meetings. The "Homosexuelle Interessengemeinschaft Berlin" was set up as early as 1974. At the beginning of the 1980s, corresponding groups met in various cities either under the roof of the Protestant Church or in clubs.

Like 91% of women in the GDR, the active members of these various movements, which had gradually developed into a counter-movement to the existing movement, were in education or profession, thus had their own income and were relatively economically independent. Nevertheless, GDR women with gainful employment, housework and child-rearing had been assigned a triple burden compared to men. The incomes of 'women's occupations' were significantly lower than those of the classic 'male' occupations. The number of women in management positions, including the Politbüro, the party's highest decision-making body, was very low. The actors of various groups took a **patriarchal critical view** towards these gender-specific setbacks. Others, especially the "Women for Peace", argued **politically** when they took offence at arms races, indoctrinations in education, lack of publicity, free co-determination, surveillance, a climate of fear, arrests and / or deportations to the West, small-mindedness and 'unity thinking'. This could well lead to debates that the 'spirits rubbed against'. Opportunities were also offered by the forums used by the other opposition groups, especially the church congresses and peace workshops.

Women also brought out their own publications. They traded under names like "violet band", "ms. different" and further. In May 1989 a Leipzig group announced the publication of the magazine "Zaunreiterin".

As the situation in the GDR continued to deteriorate, especially from the summer months of 1989 onwards, **feminist-oriented women**, too, came to realise that criticism had to be **more politically oriented**. However, the assumed political-feminist opposition can only be a kind of 'analytical walking aid', since it does not cover the broad spectrum of opinions and positions. In the autumn of 1989 it was to become clear that just the combination of patriarchal criticism and political-structural thinking that aimed 'at the whole' could unfold an analytical force that was probably characteristic

34 Kenawi, Samirah, ›Frauengruppen in der DDR der 80er Jahre. Eine Dokumentation‹, Berlin 1995, p. 22

of the emergence of feminist-oriented GDR women. An example of this is the Lila Offensive group's assessment of the situation.³⁵

2.2. The Upheaval of Society's Power Relations: Ideas and Events in 1989

"Many have overcome their fears and are no longer intimidated. That was important."³⁶

In 1989, a dynamic set in that had been preparing itself for a longer time. People denied the system by leaving the country or by raising their voices. Protest was increasingly brought into the public eye, took on more organised forms, and finally had a broad social impact. At the time, very few of the actors had seriously believed that there would ever be a real change in the entire situation.

Municipality elections were held in the GDR on 7th of May 1989. In contrast to earlier elections, in several cities the public counts were systematically observed by citizens, the results collected and then compared with the results published in the newspapers. This was the case, for example, in Jena. Two people at a time visited a previously planned polling station, noted down the results and then came to a parish. There the figures of 2/3 of the polling stations determined in this way were compiled, and on this basis later the falsification of the published election results was proven.



Picture: "Never enough from election fraud", unofficial demonstration, Source: Bundestag.de

The **election fraud** meant a considerable loss of legitimacy for the SED leadership. From then on, protests against the election fraud took place on Alexanderplatz in Berlin every 07th of a month. They were very swiftly stopped by the police and the state security service. Arrests were also made. During the summer holidays of July and August 1989, numerous GDR citizens set off for Hungary. It had become known through the Western media that Hungary had begun to dismantle the border fortifications. Quite a few took the opportunity to flee illegally through the forests to Austria. The aforementioned **Pan-European Picnic** on 19th August and the opening of the border for GDR citizens who had been already in the country on 11th September triggered further

35 Fraueninitiative "lila offensive", Standortbestimmung (2. Arbeitspapier), <https://www.lilaoffensive.de/chronologie.html> (retrieved on 18.05.19) Für die Darstellung der verschiedenen Frauengruppen und Strömungen see Kenawi, I.c., p. 7-35 und Mieth, Ingrid, Die "Frauen für den Frieden" - Ost, <https://www.digitales-deutsches-frauenarchiv.de/themen/die-frauen-fuer-den-frieden-ost> (retrieved on 17.05.19)

36 Christoph Wonneberger, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jVsDaYRJKk> (retrieved on 18.05.19)

emigration flows. After 11th September, the GDR authorities had no longer issued travel visas for Hungary. This led to occupations of the German embassies in Warsaw and Prague (no travel visas were required for Poland and the CSSR). They were quickly overcrowded. The GDR government under Erich Honecker agreed to leave for the FRG. But soon more people wanted to reach the embassy grounds in Prague. Now also the border to the CSSR was closed. This caused even more anger among the population. The 19 trains with the embassy refugees were led over the territory of the GDR into West Germany. When they passed Dresden, in the night from 4th to 5th of October 1989 there were tumultuous, violent scenes by the army, police, state security on the one hand and citizens on the other. During these and the following days there were more than 1300 arrests. Since the beginning of 1989 both army units and the paramilitary combat groups of the GDR had been trained for "civil war-like conditions". The State Security Service had also prepared internment camps for about 86,000 people.³⁷ Demonstrations, expressions of sympathy for the emigrants and arrests also took place in other cities such as Karl-Marx-Stadt (today Chemnitz) and Plauen. On Saturday, 7th October, one of the first big demonstrations of autumn 1989 took place in Plauen.

In Berlin, on the other hand, the **40th anniversary of the GDR** was celebrated with international guests, including Mikhail Gorbachev, and great effort. At the same time, a demonstration was formed at Alexanderplatz to protest against the electoral fraud. The rapidly growing crowd was pushed into the Prenzlauer Berg district by the police, secret service, and combat groups. They called out "Gorbi, Gorbi", "**Democracy – now or never**", "Allow New Forum" and others. 2000-3000 people had already gathered there in the Gethsemane Church. Against the unarmed, non-violent acting civilian population of the demonstration as at the church the task forces proceeded extremely brutally on these and the following days, among them also against uninvolved residents and passers-by. There were about 1200 arrests. Those affected experienced humiliation, physical and psychological violence. Due to the proximity to West Berlin, the pictures and reports were published promptly in the Western media. Many, even SED members and 'loyal' GDR citizens, were shocked.

The turmoil was not limited to a few places. In more than 21 cities people demonstrated and demanded democracy, freedom and the admission of opposition groups like the New Forum (see below).



Picture: Demonstration in Leipzig on 9th October 1989, Source: Heinz Löster, Source: revolution89.de

37 Kowalczyk, »Endspiel«, l.c., p. 386, 376, 391-93

In **Leipzig**, peace prayers had taken place in the Nikolaikirche every Monday evening since the beginning of September. These meetings had succeeded in doing what otherwise always failed, but now gave the protesters greater effect: those who wanted to leave the country and those who wanted to democratize the GDR from within came together. After the political prayers the people gathered on the square in front of the church and demonstrated for freedom of assembly and travel. The banner became famous with the slogan "For an open country with free people". The number of participants in the demonstrations grew from week to week. On 2nd October they were said to have been 25,000 participants.

The demonstration on **9th October** heralded the **society's opening and the end of the SED regime**. It took place under the 'melody' of the so violent events the weekend before in Dresden, Berlin and other places. Furthermore, the 'Chinese solution' was present for those who took part, when on 4th June demonstrators were shot at on Tiananmen Square in Beijing and about 100 people died. Many rumours were circulating, such as that the hospitals of Leipzig were additionally equipped with blood, that tanks were standing in front of Leipzig, that the combat groups were actually equipped for the fight, etc. The rumours were that the hospitals of Leipzig were also equipped with blood reserves. A very exciting, loaded atmosphere. At least 70,000 people have nevertheless dared to make use of their human right to demonstration and freedom of expression. They sang the International, chanted "Gorbi, Gorbi", "No violence", "We are the people", "Stasi into production", and others. About 8000 policemen, soldiers and members of the combat groups are said to have been ready for action. But there was no violence. This is what it must feel like when a **wonder** happens. Often exactly this word had been used by participants afterwards. This was made possible by intensive efforts on the part of opposition actors in the human rights and justice groups to achieve non-violence. The "**Call of the Leipzig Six**" by SED district secretaries, a cabaret artist and the Gewandhaus music director Kurt Masur had a particularly strong effect. It was read out in the churches where the prayer for peace took place. From 6 p.m. it had been broadcast via the Leipzig Stadtfunk. It says:

*"We all need a free exchange of views on the continuation of socialism in our country. That is why today the above-mentioned promise all citizens to use all their strength and authority to ensure that this dialogue is not only conducted in the district of Leipzig, but also with our government. We urge you to be prudent so that peaceful dialogue becomes possible."*³⁸

The **peaceableness** of the demonstrators and the commitment of responsible Leipzig citizens met with a reluctance to make decisions on the part of the rulers. Apparently such a large number of people had not been expected. No directives came from Berlin, so that the head of the SED party leadership Leipzig and the police president decided against the use of force. The demonstration was filmed from the tower of a church; later on the pictures were published on West German television.

The change was now unstoppable. After the 9th October the regime was still in power. But **the fear was gone**. A "demonstration boom" set in. People from many cities in the GDR took to the streets, discovered their country and stood up for democracy, a social and ecological society. On the following Mondays 120,000, later up to 300,000 people took part.

38 Aufruf der Leipziger Sechs, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedliche_Revolution_%28Leipzig%29 (retrieved on 18.05.19)

New Groups: From Opposition to Citizens' Movement

The increasingly clear articulation of dissatisfaction in the country, the emigration movement of the summer of 1989, state repression, lies and the "keep it up" of the rulers led to radicalization among the opposition activists, which in turn became a catalyst for change. They reorganized themselves and deliberately sought out the public. Michael Arnold from Leipzig wanted to initiate a movement in June 1989 by spreading the call "Democratic Initiative - Initiative for the Democratic Renewal of Society". Hansjörg Weigel, initiator of the Christian Peace Seminar Königswalde, spoke in July in favour of founding an opposition party. In other cities and especially in the Berlin area, the formation of a Social Democratic Party, the New Forum, the "United Left", the groups "Democracy Now" and "Democratic Awakening" was called for almost simultaneously. All were united by the desire to stimulate social dialogue, to bring about political transformation, to overcome powerlessness, to allow opposition and thus political diversity and to uphold human rights. The monopoly of power of the SED was to be broken.

The Neues Forum (New Forum) was particularly popular. The founding assembly had taken place on 09th/10th September. With the call "Aufbruch 89 – Neues Forum" (Breakup – New Forum) the group searched for the West-eastern public. The first sentence has meanwhile been quoted frequently: *"In our country, communication between state and society is obviously disturbed."* On the basis of this finding, it was established that this "... *paralyses the creative potential of our society and hampers the solution of the local and global tasks that lie ahead.*" In the horizon of the authors there was not only a correction of the existing 'socialist' system or the adoption of West German conditions. It was also about questions of humanity. So they said:

"On the one hand, we would like to see an expansion of the supply of goods and a better supply, on the other hand, we see their social and ecological costs and plead for the renunciation of unrestrained growth. We want scope for economic initiative, but not a degeneration into an elbow society. We want to preserve what is tried and tested and yet make room for renewal in order to live more economically and with less hostility to nature. We want orderly conditions, but not paternalism. We want free, self-confident people who act in a community-conscious way. [...] We want to participate in export and world trade, but we do not want to become the debtor and servant of the leading industrial nations nor the exploiter and creditor of the economically weak countries.

"39

Thereon, in the autumn months of '89 groups of the New Forum were formed in many cities of the GDR. This was also due to its platform character. The New Forum wanted to offer a framework to bring people into conversation. The GDR had previously been a self-contained society in many ways. In today's words: It consisted of numerous parallel societies. "**Aufbruch '89**" (Breakup '89) therefore also meant **discovering one's own country and its people**, joining forces and bringing about changes locally and for society as a whole. It meant speaking in an increasingly more open and free way about the realities in the GDR. The participants were able to express their own experiences of reality. One could find oneself with one's experience in what others said and published. An opposition to the state of the GDR could easily draw its arguments from the tension between socialist demands and often grey reality; from the discord between baroque, at the same

39 Kowalczyk, »Endspiel«, l.c., p. 364-65

time awkward ideological-socialist language and the world of living that did not coincide. The fact that this gap disappeared is part of the liberation experiences of the democratic upheaval still before the opening of the Wall on 9th November.⁴⁰

In the course of the democratic change, the "Neues Forum" (New Forum) was to experience some moulting. The concrete work also varied greatly from region to region.

What did the **other groups** stand for? Was there a "**third way**" between experienced socialism and existing capitalism for discussion? The "**United Left**" advocated communist and anarchist (in the sense of self-organisation) ideas of society. In September/October 1989, others such as "**Demokratie Jetzt**" (Democracy Now) aspired to a democratically purified socialism: "*What the socialist workers' movement strived for in terms of social justice and social solidarity is at stake. Socialism must now find its actual, democratic form if it is not to be lost historically.*"⁴¹

The theologian **Friedrich Schorlemmer** saw the time for a "creative socialism". At the large-scale demonstration initiated by **theatre people** in Berlin on 4th November, speakers declared their support for "*socialism, not Stalinism, the right one, which we finally want to build for our benefit and for the benefit of the whole of Germany*".⁴² Artists such as Bärbel Bohley, Toni Krahl, Gerhard Schöne, Frank Schöbel, musicians of the rock groups Silly, Karat, City and Pankow as well as others had already signed a resolution in Berlin on 18th November.⁴³ The signatories pleaded for a "*public dialogue with all forces*" and opposed the "*growth of right-wing extremist and conservative-national elements in our country as well. [...] Cowardly waiting provides all-German thinkers with arguments and preconditions. The time has come.*"⁴⁴



Picture: Demonstration in Berlin on 4th November 1989, Source: [Wikimedia](#)

Other groups also regarded unification with the West German state as irrelevant. In the speech on the founding of the **SDP (Social Democratic Party of Germany)** on 7th October 1989, the pastor and later foreign minister of the GDR (April-August 1990), Markus Meckel, had spoken out in favour of concluding peace treaties between the two German states and the victorious powers of

40 On the role of media during the upheaval in the GDR, see Bickhardt, Sophia, in: ›Diakonia. Internationale Zeitschrift für die Praxis der Kirche‹, (22) 5 / 1991, p. 340-44

41 ›Demokratie Jetzt‹, Aufruf zur Einmischung in eigener Sache, cit. ac. Sabrow, Martin, ›Der vergessene "Dritte Weg"‹, APuZ 11/2010, p. 7

42 cit. ac. Sabrow, l.c., p. 8

43 cit. ac. Kowalczyk, Endspiel, l.c., p. 369

44 Ibid.

the Second World War in order to attain the full sovereignty of the GDR in this way. The unification of the two German states should only be pursued within the framework of a pan-European unification process. Actors of the group "**Demokratischer Aufbruch**" (Democratic Breakup) expressed similar views.

In the weeks following the opening of the Berlin Wall on 9th November 1989, there was an increasing gap between those who, as members of the opposition and now 'citizens' movements', were driving developments forward and those who were swiftly in favour of freedom of travel and consumption and who wanted to see this realised in a united Germany. The historian Martin Sabrow distinguishes between the "**civil rights and democracy movement**" on the one hand and the "**people's movement**" on the other.⁴⁵ He sees therein one of the reasons for the absence of a "third way". Nevertheless, the statements he quoted from the leaflets, appeals, programme proposals and positions so numerous produced in 1989 prove that a direct line cannot be drawn between waves of emigration, demonstrations, democratic opening and the fall of the Berlin Wall with the later unification of the two German states.

Historians who depict this '**interpretation of unity**' refer to the example of the city of Plauen.⁴⁶

However, this is rather a statement about the **diversity** of demands and political orientations that became apparent in October 1989. Whatever the case may be, social upheavals are usually complex events that rarely take a 'streamlined' course.

So it is not by chance that the call "**For our country**" of 26th November 1989 caused a sensation. More than 1.1 million people signed it. In this way, this document received the greatest popularity during the upheaval of 1989. In a nutshell, it contrasts "*the development in our country of a society based on solidarity, in which peace and social justice, freedom of the individual, freedom of movement for all and the preservation of the environment are guaranteed*" OR a "*sell-out of our material and moral values begins*" with the result that the GDR is taken over by the Federal Republic.⁴⁷

The fact that this appeal triggered controversial debates also indicates a differentiation of political views. The orientation towards freedom, democracy, the rule of law, the protection of human rights, towards media that keep themselves as free as possible from manipulation, reflect diversity, offer impulses for change and invite to dialogue, the right to travel and to meet stood increasingly in the foreground.

The question of **unification** became an issue not least due to the "pressure of the street".⁴⁸ Ecological issues were also important. Even the "Demokratische Aufbruch" (Democratic Awakening), which attracted rather conservatively oriented citizens and later became part of the

45 Sabrow, I.c., highlighting also the differences between the groups of actors involved in citizens' movements

46 Kowalczyk, ›Endspiel‹, I.c., p. 401, with reference to regional differences, p. 551

47 Appeal ›Für unser Land‹, Neues Deutschland, 26.11.1989, <http://www.chronik-der-mauer.de/material/178900/aufruf-fuer-unser-land-neues-deutschland-26-november-1989> (aufgerufen 20.05.19)

48 Konrad Weiß has drawn up a "three-stage plan of national settlement" for the group "Democracy Now". It was published on 14.12.89. Among other things, it provides for democratisation, economic and ecological consolidation of the GDR, social and socio-political reforms in the Federal Republic, double membership of the FRG and the GDR in the European Community and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, dormant membership in the Warsaw Pact and NATO as well as an "internationally binding obligation to participate in the emergence of a new world economic order based on solidarity". https://www.ddr89.de/dj/drei_stufen.html (retrieved on 20.05.19)

"Allianz für Deutschland" (Alliance for Germany), bore the attributes "social" and "ecological" in its official name and its first logo. Vocabulary that referred to great social drafts – such as the word socialism – disappeared more and more from the repertoire of future drafts. This not only reflects the changed dynamics since the opening of the border, but is also due to the fact that in the turbulent time of upheaval, in which time itself seemed to have crossed over, there was hardly any time for reflection, theoretical penetration and intensive discussion. The main challenge for the actors was to organize themselves.

In the following weeks everything changed except time - but the events exceeded the usual sense of time. The dissolution of the GDR regime began. On **18th October** Erich Honecker was deprived of his power by Egon Krenz, and on 13th November Hans Modrow was elected Prime Minister. The SED gave up its claim to leadership. Already in late summer there had been a proposal to set up a Round Table according to the Polish model. Representatives of the official parties and mass organizations as well as of the newly founded citizens' movements were to come to an agreement on pressing issues until a new government was formed through democratically legitimized parliamentary elections. On 7th December the constituent meeting of the Central Round Table (ZRT) took place in Berlin. Subsequently, Round Tables were formed throughout the country. Topics of the ZRT were, among others, the clarification of the violence on 7/8th of October around the Gethsemanekirche, the dissolution of the secret service, the preparation of the People's Chamber elections etc.

From 20th to 22nd December 1989, the French President **François Mitterrand** visited the Modrow government. Like his British counterpart, Margret Thatcher, he had spoken out against unification and only wanted it to be realised in a process of European integration. Federal Chancellor **Helmut Kohl** had anticipated his trip by staying in Dresden on 19th December. There he was received with frenetic cheers. In front of thousands of Dresden' citizens, Kohl said: "My goal remains – if the historical hour permits – the unity of our nation."⁴⁹ The date for the People's Chamber election was early brought forward from May to 18th March 1990. From then on there was an election campaign between unequal protagonists going on, since the "Alliance for Germany" of the conservative forces received massive support from its West German sister parties, which were operating on a foreign state territory. The "alliance" emerged as the clear winner, and the elected government under Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière negotiated the international and bilateral treaties on German unification and authorized the Privatisation Trust Agency (Treuhandanstalt) to privatise the GDR's 'public property'. On 1st July 1990, the West German Deutsche Mark became legal currency in the GDR under massive criticism from West German economists. The GDR's accession to the realm of application of the West German Basic Law was completed on 3rd October 1990. The opposition groups and subsequent citizen movements were politically marginalised.

49 Kohl, Helmut, Chancellor's Speech at the rally in front of the Frauenkirche in Dresden, Bulletin of the Chancellor p. 150-89, 22.12.1989, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/bulletin/rede-des-bundeskanzlers-auf-der-kundgebung-vor-der-frauenkirche-in-dresden-790762> (retrieved on 20.05.19)

2.3. "Women are the Best and most Beautiful Thing the GDR has Brought in Forth in All its Facets."

The homage to the actress Walfriede Schmitt quoted in the title may seem full-bodied but it does instigate appreciation of the often ignored contribution of women in the democratic upheaval of 1989/90. Quite a few of the events were decisively triggered by their courage. This is especially true of women from opposition groups. Bärbel Bohley, Katja Havemann and Ulrike Poppe have become widely known. Some 'insiders' will also be familiar with the names Marianne Birthler, Vera Wollenberger / Lengsfeld, Jutta Seidel, Erika Drees or Katrin Eigenfeld. Only a few women were present in the "first row", which certainly also reflects the power relations in the groups and the not uncommon intrigues in and between them. If you took a closer look, you could see that many women were active in the second or third row as "the wife or partner of ...".



Picture: Apr. 200 women came together in the Gethsemane church, Berlin, 23/11/1989, Source: Kerstin Baermann, [Lila Offensive](#)

It may well have been of subordinate relevance to most women who took part in the activities that they became involved as women. This would have been in line with GDR socialisation, according to which it was taken more for granted that women 'get involved' and, for example, take up technical occupations than is the case in Western countries to this day. Others, however, had been uncomfortably touched by the not always subtle exclusions and turned away. In the 'general' historiographical treatises on the democratic upheavals and the revolution of 1989, the contribution made by women is hardly taken into account. The Independent Women's Federation (UFV) is also mentioned only marginally, if at all. This shortcoming has been recognized in isolated cases. Some exhibitions with portraits of women protagonists from 1989 have been shown in the meantime.⁵⁰ In addition, there is 'women's literature' which focuses on women's initiatives before and during the

50 E.g. ›Starke Frauen der Friedlichen Revolution 1989‹ Berlin, 2012 and 2014 and "Frauen der Friedlichen Revolution 1989. ›Zwanzig Porträts aus Mecklenburg-Vorpommern‹, 2014. The panels of the exhibition "Revolution ist weiblich" in Leipzig, 2009, are accessible online at <https://www.archiv-buergerbewegung.de/ausstellungen/6-revolution-ist-weiblich> (retrieved on 19.05.19). Information provides also the exhibition done by Irena Kukutz and Tina Krone "Wir müssen schreien, sonst hört man uns nicht!" Frauenwiderstand in der DDR der 1980er Jahre, https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/fileadmin/robert-havemann-gesellschaft/archiv/oppositon_bis_89/Slider_Frauen_fuer_den_Frieden/frauenwiderstand_plakate_1bis19-1.pdf (retrieved on 30.05.2019).

upheaval.⁵¹ If actors from "1989" are honoured, then in the style of a kind of "special role". Integrative representations are still missing even in 2019.

If the view on the events of 1989 is guided by a **HERstory** or gender-sensitive perspective, the example of "1989" also clarifies that **there is no revolution to make without women**.⁵² They were involved in many ways. As co-founders, initiators of actions and demonstrations, as (co-)authors of appeals, as printers of flyers, as courageous people who positioned themselves publicly when this was still dangerous, as supporters, as organisers and contact persons.

It was on 4th September 1989 that Katrin Hattenhauer and Gesine Oltmanns unrolled the poster "For an open country with free people" in front of the Nikolai church in Leipzig. The New Forum was registered on 19th September 1989 by Bärbel Bohley and Jutta Seidel. The fasten campaign in the Gethsemane church in Berlin from the beginning of October 1989 was initiated by Angela Kunze-Beiküfner. On 15th October 1989, a meeting of around 800 theatre people took place in the Deutsches Theater (German Theatre). The occasion was the attacks around the Gethsemane church on 7th and 8th October. The actress Johanna Schall had invited. At this meeting the actress Jutta Wachowiak proposed to register a demonstration for a democratic GDR. She had been inspired to do so by Jutta Seidel. The demonstration took place on 4th November 1989 in Berlin. From December 1989, those who were responsible for the attacks were cornered by Ingrid Köppe at the Central Round Table with precise and sharp questions. The first storming of a Stasi headquarter, in Erfurt, was a concerted action undertaken by women and initiated by the medical doctor Kerstin Schön. In Plauen, the photographer Adelheid Liebetau captured the demonstrations with her camera. She later became involved in the New Forum and Bündnis 90. The list could be extended considerably.

In addition, there were women who took advantage of the opportunity and founded **new initiatives** from existing women's groups in cities such as Magdeburg, Erfurt, Dresden, Weimar, Leipzig and Berlin. Groups like the "Lila Offensive" (Purple Offensive), founded in Berlin on 11th October 1989, and – at least partly – the women's initiative Leipzig, founded on 22nd November 1989, had in turn arisen from the realization that women's political interests could hardly be asserted through groups like the "Neues Forum" (New Forum) or "Demokratischer Aufbruch" (Democratic Breakup). In the short description of the "Lila Offensive" it says: "After having looked into the programmes of the citizens' movement and conversations with its representatives, the women came to the conclusion that the only way to formulate and implement women's political goals is to have their own representation of interests"⁵³ This also explains the delayed public appearance of the women's groups in comparison to the other citizens' alliances since September 1989.

Those involved in women's politics distinguished themselves from the official GDR mass organisation "Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands" (Democratic Women's Federation of Germany). They were mockingly and self-confidently regarded as antiquated and the abbreviation "DFD" translated into "Dienstbar - Folgsam - Dumpf" (subservient – obedient – dull). Instead, the predominantly young women sought alliance with other groups and founded the **"Unabhängigen Frauenverband" (UFV) (Independent Women's Federation)**. With this organisation two things

51 See Hampele-Ulrich, Kenawi, Miethe, Sänger

52 The title of this text is chosen in homage to Ina Merkel's manifesto ›Ohne Frauen ist kein Staat zu machen‹ (There is no state to make without women)

53 ›frauen in die offensive! Kurzbeschreibung‹, 2009, <https://www.lilaoffensive.de/> (retrieved on 16.05.19)

were to succeed: Basic democracy in and between the individual member women's groups as well as political representation of interests as an umbrella organisation in concert with the other parties and citizen-moved formations. So to speak, a structural tension was thereby programmed. The first large meeting of the UFV in the Berliner Volksbühne on 3rd December 1989 was still untroubled by this. It had been decisively initiated by the women of the "Lila Offensive".



Picture: Inaugural Meeting of the UFV, Berlin, 3rd December 1989, Source: Uwe Peltz, [Lila Offensive](#)

The 1000 or so women questioned the manifesto drawn up by Ina Merkel entitled "*There is no state to make without women*". It was disillusioned that "*women were present everywhere as pioneers and comrades-in-arms, as victims of the mass exodus and as victims of the attacks. But in the elaboration of future social strategies for the renewal of socialist society women are again left out*".

The approach was decidedly political. It was not a question of helping women's particular interests to become a reality, but of making them politically capable in an "*alternative social concept*". Ina Merkel proposed to make herself strong for "*1. a modern socialism on German soil in a common European house, 2. for an ecological reorganisation of the economy, 3. for democracy, self-administration and the public sphere, 4. for a multicultural society, 5. for solidarity between all social groups*".⁵⁴

The text thus bore the signature of a woman who, as an SED member, belonged to the reform groups of the communist party. In fact, the UFV was a reservoir of very different actors. Among them were those of the independent women's movement of the GDR, i.e. committed "women in the church", "lesbians in the church", women from the opposition groups. Among them were also activists from the Academies of Sciences and the Humboldt University, who as a rule were "SED-socialized". The participation of the latter impaired the acceptance of the UFV among the other civic movements, among them also former activists among the "Women for Peace" (who got involved in the new political movements in autumn 1989). In addition, to put it politely, there was a tendency to 'alienate' feminist considerations both among the civic movements and in the society of the GDR.⁵⁵

54 Merkel, Ina, ›Ohne Frauen ist kein Staat zu machen‹, 03.12.1989, <https://www.ddr89.de/ufv/UFV16.html> (retrieved on 20.05.19)

55 Rainer Land and Ralf Possekel have sociologically approached the phenomenon of strangeness between SED reformers and citizens' movements. See Land / Possekel

When the Central Round Table was constituted in Berlin on 7th December, the UFV was represented by Dr. Ina Merkel and the actress Walfriede Schmitt. A Women's Political Round Table was affiliated to the Central Round Table, whose participants referred to the 'social achievements' under the now changed conditions after the opening of the border on 9 November. Round tables arose throughout the GDR, at which representatives of the UFV asserted their interests.

As a political union, the UFV faced the elections to the GDR parliament, the People's Chamber, on 18th March 1990 and therefore entered into an electoral alliance with the "Green Party in the GDR". In order to obtain an official status for it, a formal founding meeting took place on 17th February 1990. The programme once again formulated the political claim: "Feminist politics aims to abolish gender relations as rank and power relations."⁵⁶



Picture: Poster of the Unabhängigen Frauenverband referring to the parliamentary elections on 18th March 1990; Artist: Prof. Anke Feuchtenberger; Text: "All Women are courageous! strong! Beautiful!" "Independent Women's Federation – Also for Women and Children a secure future in the European House"

As a result of the parliamentary elections in March 1990, the UFV could not win a mandate. In the elections of the then West East German parliament, the Bundestag, in December 1990 it received a seat. Christina Schenk became a member of parliament. In 1991, one member each could move into the Berlin House of Representatives and the state parliaments of Saxony-Anhalt and Saxony. But the parliamentary work was not successful. The UFV became meaningless in the united Germany. It was dissolved in 1998.

The experiment of a feminist political representation of interests was unique if one compares the democratic upheavals in all of Central and Eastern Europe. In their political and structural-theoretical approach, the women showed their influence of the GDR; the emancipatory claim in turn showed inspirations taken from the West German women's movement.⁵⁷

In the following, three women will be portrayed who played a decisive role in influencing the democratic upheaval of 1989: Erika Drees, Samirah Kenawi and Ingrid Köppe.

56 Schenk, Christina/Christian, ›Zu den politischen Forderungen des UFV‹, 1990, <https://www.digitales-deutsches-frauenarchiv.de/akteurinnen/unabhaengiger-frauenverband-ufv#actor-biography> (retrieved on 23.05.19)

57 Similarly also Miethe, ›Frauenbewegung in Ostdeutschland als Teil osteuropäischer Dissidenz?‹ In: Berliner Osteuropa Info. 12/1999: p. 18-22

Portraits



Foto: [Christoph Kuhn](#)

Dr. med. Erika Drees, 15.09.1935 – 11.01.2009, grew up in Breslau (from 1945 Wrocław). In the course of the end of the war she had to flee together with her mother, grandmother and four siblings. Her father had 'stayed in the war'. She was deeply influenced by the experience of the escape. "Nonviolence, peace and human rights" were decisive for her.⁵⁸

She studied medicine in Kiel and Berlin (West). Active in the Protestant student community, she was also in contact with students from student communities in the GDR. She criticized the conditions of this state and other Eastern European countries. In the summer of 1958, at the age of 23, she was arrested during a visit to the GDR. She spent nine months in prison; she had been investigated on suspicion of espionage. She was not rehabilitated until 1996.

Despite these experiences, she moved to Bernburg in the GDR in 1960 after completing her studies. Her motive, she said, was to help build a "fairer, non-capitalist social order"⁵⁹. In 1975, she moved to Stendal with her husband and three children. There she worked as a neurologist in a polyclinic. Later she founded the Social Psychiatric Centre Stendal.

Erika Drees has been active in many ways for peace, justice and environmental protection. She was involved in "Women for Peace" and "Peace Concrete". She was involved in the Ecumenical Assembly's meetings and working groups within the framework of the Conciliar Process. In the summer of 1987 she signed the appeal "A hope learns to move, justice to all, peace to peoples, liberation of creation". (The text is not available online.)

Drees was particularly active in the "Bürgerinitiative Energiewende" (Energy Transition Citizens' Initiative) to take action against the construction of the Stendal nuclear power plant. At the state demonstration on 1st May 1988 she had carried her own poster with the inscription: "For zones in Europe free of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy, because nuclear power units are time bombs".⁶⁰

58 Biography Erika Drees, <https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/erika-drees/biographie-erika-drees/> (retrieved 15.05.19)

59 <https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/erika-drees/biographie-erika-drees> (aufgerufen 15.05.19)

60 Janko, Silke ›Zum dritten Todestag... Zivilcourage: Ein Leben jenseits von Anpas(ssung)«, https://www.volksstimme.de/nachrichten/sachsen_anhalt/719467_Zivilcourage-Ein-Leben-jenseits-von-Anpassung.html, 03.01.2012 (retrieved on 15.05.19)

It was precisely because of its commitment against nuclear energy that she was sentenced to imprisonment and administrative penalties and intensively monitored by the Ministry of State Security.

At the Concrete for Peace VII seminar in Greifswald in February 1989, she proposed to found an association for the renewal of society.⁶¹ Two events in the following months had consequences for her resistant behaviour: The falsifications of the results of the local elections on 7th May 1989 and the fact that representatives of the GDR government credited the violence against demonstrators on Tianamen Square in Beijing on 4th June 1989. In response, Drees and other committed initiated peace prayers in Stendal, which began in July 1989. In August 1989, she participated in the formation of the "Neues Forum" (New Forum) and was one of the first signatories of the founding appeal "Aufbruch 89" (Breakup 89). She was a member of the Spokespersons' Council of the New Forum. At the first registered, free demonstration in Stendal on 6th November 1989, she called for free elections, freedom of the press and freedom of opinion, but also recalled suffering and poverty in the Third World. For her, freedom and justice as well as the preservation of creation belonged inseparably together.

When she was to be awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1991 for her contribution to the reunification of Germany, she rejected it on the grounds that, in her view, German unity was not a real liberation for the East German population. In 1999 she accepted the Solbach-Freise Foundation Prize for Civil Courage.

She continued to fight peacefully against rearmament and nuclear energy after 1990. In 1991, she was co-initiator of the citizens' initiative "Freie Heide" (Free Heathland) against the "Bombodrom" (bombing release area) of the Federal Air Force in the Northwest of the Brandenburg region. In 2002, together with others, she gained access to the site of the nuclear weapons storage facility near the community of Büchel and placed banners there. She was sentenced for trespassing and property damage. In 2003, she was serving a six-week prison sentence in the "Roter Ochse" correctional facility in Halle.⁶² The Robert Havemann Society published its speech at the main court hearing (in German).⁶³

Interview with Erika Drees, 2005:

Interviewer:

What was the New Forum for you?

Erika Drees:

It was a climax in my life or the climax as far as the public side of my life is concerned. This experience that suddenly a lot of people [...] took part, that there was such a wave of movement towards a democratic development or a more honest life.[...] This still carries me.⁶⁴

61 <https://www.ddr89.de/personen/dreep.html> (retrieved on 15.05.19)

62 <https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/erika-drees/erika-drees-im-gefaengnis/>, <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/wer-war-wer-in-der-ddr-%2363%3B-1424.html?ID=625> (retrieved on 15.05.2019)

63 (Shortened) Speech by Erika Drees at the main hearing in Stuttgart, 25. Sept. 2002. Richter Nicol, https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/fileadmin/robert-havemann-gesellschaft/themen_dossiers/1989_-_Die_Friedliche_Revolution/Neues_Forum/drees_1202.pdf

64 contemporary witness interview with Erika Drees 2005: ›Was bleibt vom Neuen Forum?‹, <https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/erika-drees/> (retrieved on 15.05.2019)



Foto: Samirah Kenawi

Samirah Kenawi was born and raised in East Berlin in 1962. She did an apprenticeship as a carpenter and graduated from high school. She then studied wood processing at the Technical University of Dresden. After completing her studies, she worked as a research assistant at the Forestry Institute in Eberswalde, north of Berlin.

Already in the 1980s, i.e. during the GDR era, she was active in various non-official women's groups that were largely independent of state influence. In autumn 1989, Kenawi was co-founder of the group "Lila Offensive" and a little later of the Independent Women's Federation (UFV).

In 1990, she headed the Berlin office of the UFV. It is also her merit having created the archive of the GDR women's and lesbian movement "GrauZone" (Grey zone) since 1992. She thus continued what she had already co-founded in 1988 in the women's group Fennpfuhl, at that time with the intention of creating a source of information for women in the GDR. In 1995, she published a documentary on women's groups in the GDR which is still considered a standard work today.

Kenawi's criticism of patriarchal oppression and her understanding of female emancipation were politically grounded. The position paper of the "Lila Offensive" states: "This kind of oppression has a cross-class and cross-system cultural dimension. Women must become aware of this fact. Only they can take the initiative to change the situation."⁶⁵

In autumn 1989, the time seemed favourable for this. But Kenawi soon realised that the devised concepts of a better society needed an equally better economic system. She began to teach herself Silvio Gesell's theories and those of economists such as Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Friedrich August Hayek, and others. "Gradually, my search for social alternatives turned into an alternative study of economics "⁶⁶ Her special focus was on money and the credit money system. She published an online freely accessible history of money and summarised her thoughts in the book "Funny Money. The Ruling of Nothingness over Reality".

65 Lila Offensive, ›Standortbestimmung‹, 2. Arbeitspapier, <https://lilaoffensive.de/chronologie.html> (retrieved on 17.05.19)

66 <http://falschgeldsystem.de/samirah-kenawi/> (retrieved on 17.05.19)



Foto: [Rainer Mittelstädt / Wikipedia](#)

Ingrid Köppe was born in Berlin in 1958.

In 1976, she graduated from high school and studied teaching (Russian and German) at the Pedagogical University in Güstrow. After refusing her permission to expatriate the songwriter and musician Wolf Biermann, she came under pressure at the university and abandoned her studies in 1977. She worked as a librarian assistant and studied library sciences in Leipzig from 1978-81. Köppe worked in a library in Berlin-Weißensee, then as a postman and Fleurop messenger.

In 1983/1984, she joined a leaflet campaign against the nuclear armament of the Warsaw Pact. In 1989, she took part in protests against the election frauds (municipality elections). In autumn 1989, she took part in the "Neues Forum" (New Forum); from December 1989 to March 1990 she represented the group as its spokeswoman at the Central Round Table. She has made a name for herself for her clear, often sharp and targeted questions, among others, to former officers of the State Security Service.

In January 1990, she participated in the occupation of the Stasi headquarters in Normannenstraße in order to prevent the secret service from continuing its work and all the documents from being destroyed.⁶⁷ From May 1990, she was a member of the Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen / UFV parliamentary group (Alliance 90 / The Greens / UFV) in the Berlin City Assembly.

In September 1990, there was a new occupation of the Stasi headquarters in Normannenstraße. This was now in connection with the Unification Treaty between the governments of both German states. The occupiers, among them Ingrid Köppe, were in favour of not blocking the Stasi documents and transferring them to the holdings of foreign secret services, but making them accessible to the general public for the personal and social processing of the SED dictatorship. Some of the actors even went on hunger strike. They were successful insofar as the office of Federal Commissioner for Stasi Files was created. To this day, citizens can apply to inspect files.

In 1991, Ingrid Köppe signed the appeal "No Third World War! - We women demand that the majority of this world have their say." She also called for conscientious objection.

⁶⁷ Only much later did the suspicion arise that this occupation was staged by the State Security Service in order to divert attention from the mass destruction of files on electronic data carriers. On the „political thriller“ of the Stasi dissolution: Bästlein, „My file belongs to me!“
<http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/zeitgeschichte/deutschlandarchiv/54147/oeffnung-der-stasi-akten?p=all> (retrieved on 25.05.19)

From 1990 to 1994, she was a member of the Bundestag for Bündnis '90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90 / The Greens). She submitted a draft of the Stasi Documentation Law and acted in the investigative committee to clarify the events surrounding the former GDR organisation "Commercial Coordination", i.e. the state-organised trade between East and West German companies "apart" from the existing embargo between the two states. Köppe submitted her own final report, which, however, was classified as secret by the majority of the committee members (corresponding to the parliamentary groups represented in the Bundestag). It became public in 1994 and can be researched. A preliminary investigation was initiated against Ms. Köppe on "suspicion of a breach of a special duty of secrecy"⁶⁸, but was discontinued again. Shortly afterwards, in 1995, she was to be awarded the Federal Cross of Merit. She refused to accept it, as the award was "contrary to the real contempt of the concerns of the citizens' movement in the Federal Republic of Germany"⁶⁹

After her retirement as a member of the Bundestag, Köppe studied law at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) from 1996-2000. She works as a lawyer in Wriezen (Brandenburg).

Günter Gaus: "What was the best thing about the GDR?"

Köppe: "I don't know whether the GDR is specific. But the best thing for me was always friends and security in these friendships, the ability to communicate, yes, I think this friendship - that was the most important thing for me."⁷⁰

68 Ingrid Köppe, https://www.chronikderwende.de/lexikon/biografien/biographie_jsp/key=k%25f6ppe_ingrid.html (retrieved on 17.05.2019)

69 Köppe, Ingrid, Biographical information from the manual ›Wer war wer in der DDR?‹, <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/wer-war-wer-in-der-ddr-%2363%3B-1424.html?ID=1843> (retrieved on 17.05.2019)

70 Günter Gaus: Ingrid Köppe, Dissidentin, in: Günter Gaus: Zur Person, 1990, p.93 - Interviewtermin 6.3.1990, <https://fontanefansschnipsel.blogspot.com/2018/02/gunter-gaus-ingrid-koppe-dissidentin.html> (retrieved on 17.05.19)

3. European Perceptions

Within the framework of European cooperation with colleagues in adult education, the upheavals of 1989 were also the subject of exchange. The partners collected their perceptions of the events against the background of the reporting in their countries Finland, France, Poland and Spain and interviewed adult learners from the environment of their organisations.

Remembering 1989s events in Finland

by a staff member of the Helinä Rautavaaran Museo, Espoo near Helsinki, Finland

The 1989 has been considered as a mad year in Europe. As winds of change blew in Europe, the people in Finland were enjoying the fruits of financial liberation and discussing the events in Europe. "The Finns were following the political uprising in Europe but there were very few protests or demonstrations. The Finns were mostly occupied by events happening in Finland" writes well known political journalist Unto Hämäläinen in his book "1989 Finland in the mad year of Europe".

In 1989 I was finishing my school in Tampere. Tampere, an old industrial town was at that time the second biggest city in Finland. The old factories producing paper, cloth, forestry equipment and other items for export were in full steam. The opening of the Finnish economics meant the beginning of the new type of new generation of young and urban professionals called yuppies in their designer clothes and expensive hobbies and taste of luxury.

Behind the sleek appearance dark shades appeared. During months of July and October 1989 the antiracist feelings in Tampere turned into acts of terror when series of fire attacks were made against migrants living in the city. The SMP party (the mother party of now existing True Finns) was accused of causing the antiracist atmosphere and acts of terror. Luckily no human lives were wasted. In addition to fire attacks there were also pamphlets on white supremacy spread in different parts of the city.

For a long time I had been an active girls scout but had recently given up my old hobby due to close connections with nationalism and patriotism. 1989s marked a new era in my life: in the past year I had started working voluntarily in a fair trade shop and got involved with environment movements. During the summer 1989 I had been working voluntarily in biodynamic garden in Sweden and considered organic gardening as one of my future careers.

How did the European events show in my life in 1989s? I was getting more occupied with events outside Europe: the uneven distribution of wealth, the results of colonialism leading the developing countries as sources or raw material, the plight of indigenous peoples in the Amazons.

In 1988 I was staying with a friend of mine in the West Berlin and made a day trip to the east side of the city. The atmosphere reminded me of Estonia where I had visited before. I remember being called to watch the collapse of Berlin wall in the small colour television my family had. I remember the joys and amazement of the people climbing on the statues. The real meaning of the changes on European political map became more visible to my eyes in the next summer when I was travelling in Prague and Budapest and met active students who had been demonstrating against old power and who were sharing the memories while sipping cheap wine after sun set in Karlu most bridge in Prague. Looking around me and seeing young people from all walks of life and corners of the Europe coming together made me realise that I am living in important moment in the history of Europe. I felt more like a by watcher but the young people around in the summer night had really been making history –they were the agents of change and I could tell that.

Perceptions of “1989” by French citizens

Catherine, 56 years old

To me, the biggest event of 1989 is the destruction of the Berlin wall. It was a real surprise to us, we thought that the frontiers between west and east will remain forever and that communist regimes will sustain. We read from writers that the access to freedom in communist countries were limited and the opening of the wall gave us hope for them.

West Germany was one of the biggest economic states in Europe. Thus, merging with a significantly poorer state and accepting the challenges of a diversity of opinions and backgrounds within a single country, was seen as an act of solidarity and courage. It gave us hope that people can help each other as neighbours. It meant that everything was possible.

The image of Mstislav Rostropovich playing cello in front of the Berlin wall filled me with emotion, I will forever remember it.

Philippe, 58 years old

Nothing comes in my mind when I think about East Germany in 1989, I don't have a good memory of dates.

The opening of the Berlin wall ? It was a real surprise for me, it happened very fast. It was unbelievable for us to imagine West and East Germany united, because at the time the world was separated in two parts, and the people were scared that one of the two parts launched a world war with nuclear weapons. It was the big fear at the time, just like terrorism or climate change today.

Rememberings of a Spanish man

Manuel Rios, 84 years old, Málaga

Manuel had the day the Wall fell 54 years old. Now 84, he lives in Malaga.

Manuel had worked as a truck driver in Germany for many years, today he remembers with nostalgia the Rin and his experiences there. There he was given what he calls the "operator's license" (he drove an electric wheelbarrow, in Spain it is commonly called "Torito" because of its robust structure and its two long shovels like bull antlers).

He explains the great difference that existed between the two Germany at that time, he sums it up in one sentence: "Pedro: it's like the north and the south of Spain, in the north they never lack work and they always earn more than us, that's why they took my factory to Morocco, because even there they earn even less than here working the same thing" (When he returned from Germany, he tells us that he started working in the Sweeps factory).

That day in 1989; "I cried for two reasons: Because at last there would be freedom, one could travel, this would no longer be a confinement; and I felt great joy. But I also cried because I understood that my socialist ideals were breaking down and the hardest was yet to come".

In his flat he followed the events on television. "My son Juan, who was older and had become independent, came home and we talked about it, but I didn't go out, the next day I had to work," he resume.

At first, when Manuel saw it on television, he thought that a new war had broken out, but later he realized that it was the opposite, it was a peace that still endures today. It was the end of the German separation, and coincided with the end of the Cold War, a war that without becoming so, had frightened much of the Spanish population, especially those who had already lived through several wars.

On the changes that brought all that in Spain and more specifically in Andalusia, Manuel indicates that as told, it was said that borders in the future would disappear, and we would be invaded by German power sooner or later. Today he smiles and says that although it has been peacefully, Germany has the whole of Europe in the palm of its hand.

A few years ago he visited Berlin, since he still has good friends from his time in Germany; and he tells us that paradoxically, Berlin was reborn after the collapse of the great symbol of oppression.

4. Future-oriented History. HERstory and Paradoxies of Memory Politics⁷¹

The GDR is often associated as '**grey**' and a kind of monolithic block. What applies to the buildings does not necessarily apply to the people. After the society's opening it became apparent how 'colourful' the GDR was. Accordingly, this is reflected in the retrospects and reflections – especially when one talks to individuals, whether they were once opposition actors, whether they were people who participated in the parties and institutions of the GDR, or whether they 'only' arranged and adapted themselves. This also applies to the upheavals of 1989, but only to a limited extent to their appreciation.

The **narratives** are dominated by the "fall" of the Berlin Wall and the unification of both German states on 3rd October 1990. In not a few accounts it seems as if the actors of the upheaval had this in mind above all – if not, then only because they could not imagine it at that time. This is true, especially for those who have chosen the "exit option" and went to Western Germany. This is also true for actors in Plauen as well as other places, especially in the south of the GDR. It is not true if the statements to the contrary and the programmatic orientation are taken note of, for example, by citizens' movements. This is also the case with the "Lila Offensive" and the Independent Women's Federation (UFV).

With the narrative of German unity the course of events, the ideas of the participants are subsequently **smoothed out**. In this way, the citizens' movements and their approaches to a real German **Democratic** Republic – and how they differed from the existing Federal Republic – are ignored. They are appreciated as those who set the revolution in motion, contributed to its often peaceful character and gave it a direction. The romanticising, teleologically charged "success story" of the happy unification can obviously only be broken by asserting the failure of the once oppositionists and later citizens' movements' activists. Again, this is hidden by the 'linear' view on the events.

This is especially true if the **women's movement** is taken into consideration: For women who were accustomed to the GDR standards of, among other things, gainful employment and childcare – despite all the criticism – the civil freedom they had achieved was not necessarily accompanied by improvements in terms of gender justice or gender equality anyway. On the contrary, soon after the unification, the §218 (Law on Abortion) had to be addressed.

⁷¹ The explanations in this chapter have a more essayistic character. The use of documents is largely dispensed with.

The narrative of the "Peaceful Revolution"⁷² and the "German Unity" derived from it, as it were, in a compellingly logical way, offers not only a "smoothed" view of the actors and the events. It also implies the **decoupling from** another, no less profound process: the **socio-economic unification** and thus the effects of the introduction of the D-Mark and the restructuring of the GDR economy including privatisations. An indication that this might be based on the memory politics was provided by a discussion led by the former Mayor Governor of Leipzig, Hinrich Lehmann-Grube, and the former director of the Leipzig Contemporary History Forum at the 2009 History Fair in Suhl, organised by the Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur (Federal Foundation for the Study of Communist Dictatorship in East Germany). Mr. Lehmann-Grube had spoken out in favour of broadening the horizon by at least 2-3 years. Why? After 3rd October 1990 "70% had suffered a total uprooting of their social and economic existence". This should also be addressed. However, Mr Eckert had insisted that the focus should be on the year 1989 only. Otherwise "we are only exposing ourselves to ridicule".⁷³ This decoupling is fatal, because the process of unification that has not been 'mastered' shapes today the view of many on the upheavals of 1989.⁷⁴

Another aspect provokes the loss of knowledge: the upheavals of 1989 are celebrated as the arrival in (representative) democracy. And rightly so. But yet pitfalls lurk: **Democracy must also remain in motion**, must renew itself, for example in the discourse on history as a critical questioning of the present in the interest of shaping the democratic future. A perspective on the past that is oriented only to the status quo of the present will, however, run empty in the apology of the existing and run the risk of ignoring realities.

The interest in the last years of the GDR offers enormous **opportunities for learning**, especially in view of current crises. It is worth taking a look at the programmatic considerations such as the documents of the Conciliar Process or the writings that emerged during the upheaval of 1989/90. They have often been drawn away from reality or lacking in political ability. But not a few of them can also be interpreted as invitations to political wisdom. For ethical standards such as the advocacy for "peace, justice and the integrity of creation", which not only give responsibility a direction of thought, but also set the sting between ideal and reality, become recognizable. A sting that triggers movement and sharpens the sense that some things could be realized differently - and not necessarily as a 'factual constraint'.

The reflection on and critical examination of the ideas of this time could also release creative energies for the still outstanding overcoming of **dividing lines**, which characterised the society of the GDR and which live on in the context of today's milieu and discourse borders. This corresponds with the challenge of discussing questions of **guilt and responsibility** in a dictatorship. An exchange on these issues has so far only begun. This can still be felt today.

72 The debate as to whether "1989" was a revolution was circumvented in this contribution, just as the word "Wende" was not used. It was certainly not a peaceful revolution, especially when one thinks of the events in Dresden and Berlin. Nevertheless, the high moral value attached to peace (in society and in the world) and the signs of peace set by the various sides in the autumn of 1989 are worthy of historical appreciation. The debates about the 'correct' use of the terms are sometimes of unintentional humour, for example when the adjective "peacefully" is written with the big letter of one's own name in all seriousness and a kind of 'discursive (non-)belonging' is derived from it.

73 Bickhardt, Sophia, Bericht. Geschichtsmesse „20 Jahre friedliche Revolution und deutsche Einheit“, Suhl 2009,; in the order of Landeszentrale für politische Bildungsarbeit Berlin, unpublished

74 As a follow-up project is planned, the focus of this contribution is also essentially limited to "1989". This is not intended to be a remembrance policy accentuation.

The study of **programmatic considerations**, as developed by the women of the "Lila Offensive" or the Independent Women's Federation, could in turn help to overcome the 'attention deficit' for actors of the various political hues in the 1989 upheaval. It can also sensitise interested parties in both Western and Eastern Europe to feminist political ways of thinking that take the social framework as their starting point. If this broadening of perspective is omitted, the **power relations** that result from these de-thematisations will be reproduced. If the horizon is broadened in this way, however, the picture of the GDR and its 1989 bourgeois revolution becomes less 'grey' or 'black-red-gold' and more colourful. This also offers links for European discourses and learning beyond the national horizon. This is exactly what has happened in our project.

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6. About the Author

Social scientist (Diplom), project head of The weltgewandt Institute for Intercultural Civic Education

Political and social engagement:

1980-1986 Aktion Sühnezeichen/DDR, Working group "Hungary",

1986-1987 Initiative for Peace and Human Rights, Working Group Law,

1987-1989 Protestant Student Community Jena, Working Group Society, activities on the situation in Romania (among others),

1988-1989 "Women in Talk" Jena, Work group single living: "Lieber allein als in böser G'mein", preparation and participation of the 6th 'national' women's meeting in Jena from 26th to 28th May 1989,

1989: Engaged in the organised, citizens-led observation of the counts of the municipal election results, Jena 07.05.1989,

Petitions concerning political assessments of employees in pharmacy's in Berlin 1985, concerning electoral fraud in the parliamentary elections in Berlin in 1986, concerning electoral fraud in the municipality elections in Jena in May 1989, and others, participation in non-official peace seminars and with own transparencies on official and non-official demonstrations,

1989 Participation in the Monday demonstrations in Leipzig from the 2nd half of September onwards, Co-founder of the women's initiative Leipzig (Fraueninitiative Leipzig) on the 22nd November 1989, representative of the women's initiative at the Round Table of the Leipzig district, participation in the working group "structure" of the Independent Women's Association (UFV).

Visiting lecturer at the Institute for European Ethnology of the Humboldt-Universität Berlin on "The GDR 1989: On the Presence of a Footnote"; concept, organisation and moderation of public discussion events on the GDR and on "1989" on behalf of the Berlin' state agency for civic education 2008-2016,

Training of social, mental and cultural border crossings as a hitchhiker (a 'youth culture') in the GDR, in Eastern and later Western Europe; the encounters motivated to run European educational projects.

II. NOTES ON THE EXERCISES FOR EDUCATIONAL WORK

The exercises listed below were carried out as part of the "Connecting Memories. The Power of the Past and the Future of Europe" and tested together by the project partners. The 2-year's cooperation (2017-19) for the exchange of good practice was funded by the Erasmus+ programme for adult education of the European Union. Involved have been Members of Association Hors Pistes (Marseille, Frankreich), Helinä Rautavaaran Museo (Espoo, Finland), Akademia Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna w Łodzi (Łódź, Polen), A.M.E.F.E. (Málaga / Spanien) and weltgewandt. Institut für interkulturelle politische Bildung e.V. (Berlin, coordinating organisation).

The instructions and exercises offer suggestions in terms of content and didactics for creative educational work on sometimes sensitive historical topics:

M1: HANDS ON: Getting to know each other through objects

M2: THOUGHT HATS: Different perspectives on one issue

M3: STORYTELLING: When stories make history

M4: MEMORY OF THE PLACE

M5: HAND MAPS: social auto-ethnography

M6: THE RUMOUR: communication with HUMOUR

M7: METHOD REFLECTION: Dictionary and the words we use

III. EXERCISES / TRAINING MATERIAL

M 1 HANDS ON: Getting to know each other through objects

by Helinä Rautavaaran Museo, Espoo / Finland

Exercise Title: Hands on workshop: experience the anthropological participatory tools and educational methods

Recommended group size/type: 5-20

Recommended time: min. 30 min.
Preparation time: -

AIMS and objectives (general, concrete) Getting to know each other through the objects. Objects can tell a lot about their owners and owners can tell a lot about themselves and their culture through objects.

Resources required: -

Introduction: We started from the objects we carry on. Everybody chose an significant object they had with them and told about themselves through that object to a pair and the other way around. Then the pair introduced the object to the group as he/she did it. This method is very nice, because it enables one to tell as much he/she feels comfortable. It is also good for the beginnings.

Trainer activity:

- let everybody tell as much as they want to, variation is ok
- make sure that everybody gets their space

Participants activity:

- ask questions about the object
- listen carefully, make notes, if necessary

M 2 THOUGHT HATS: Different perspectives on one issue
by A.M.E.F.E / Málaga

Exercise Title: DICTATORSHIP AND TRANSITION: **Discovering perceptions**

Recommended group size/type: 10 – 15

Recommended time: 1,5 HOUR

Preparation time: 15 MINUTES

AIMS and objectives (general, concrete)

1. Reproduce the processes that take place in our minds when we make individual decisions.
2. Helping work teams to make collective decisions
3. Fostering parallel thinking
4. Foster thought in all its breadth
5. Separating ego performance

Resources required: 6 COLORED CARDBOARDS TO MAKE THOUGHT HATS: WHITE, BLACK, RED, YELLOW, BLUE, GREEN.

Introduction:

- When making decisions, the human being considers a series of logical reasons, inconveniences, advantages, facts, emotions and intuitions that lead him to take a certain alternative. This sophisticated decision process is complicated when it has to be taken collectively, when each individual pulls to his side not wanting to assume the perspective of others.
- In this sense, the thinking hats helps us to have control over the different types of thinking that occur in work meetings, making them more efficient.

reflected on.

2. *Simplifying and dividing in phases the different thoughts that take part in the decision making.*

3. *In each phase, a specific thought is attended to, causing all the participants to concentrate in a coordinated way on the one that is*

2. Participants are divided into 5 groups and each group is given a hat. Hats represent:

- *White hat. Objective thinking*

Objective: To gather all the information deemed necessary for the topic in question.

- *Green hat. Creative thinking*

being studied.

4. The trainer distributes to each group a thought hat.

5. The trainer keeps the blue hat for:

- To direct and control the different phases.
- Collect and write down the ideas that appear in the different phases.
- Moderate conversations and assign participation shifts avoiding that someone speaks out of turn or that someone has a thought that does not correspond with the hat being worked on.

Preconditions:

The participants have visualized the previous video, and should reflect and use hats to express their ideas and thoughts about the topic being discussed.

Objective: To generate ideas that give solution to the challenge.

- Red hat. Emotional thinking

Objective: To express emotions, intuitions and feelings related to the work context. To legitimize and give visibility to the most irrational aspects without the need to justify them.

- Yellow hat. Constructive and positive thinking.

Objective. Identify the benefits, strengths, advantages or gains of the work context, an idea or an objective.

- Black hat. Critical thinking.

Objective: To identify the disadvantages, weaknesses, negative aspects and situations that make an idea or work context unviable.

- Blue hat

Target. Prepare the action plan with all the information gathered.

3. Reflection and debate: "The people who do not know their history are doomed to repeat it."

M 3 STORYTELLING

by Association Hors Pistes, Marseille (France)

TITLE When stories make history

Time needed to share the tool 45 minutes

Equipment & materials needed ? Paperboard, pen

Objectives of the tool

- Raise awareness on how big events in history are connected to people's own life and memories

- Allow the sharing of experiences among participants
- Confront points of view on one specific event

The facilitator asks the participants to think about one event / one period in History. Then he asks to think about micro-moments of emotions or small anecdotes, for example :

- Key moments that you've lived during this period
- When you first heard / became aware about it
- When you heard testimonies / experiences from others

Description of the tool « step-by-step »

These moments should be timed and dated.

Then, the facilitator sticks on a wall a timeline and asks the participants to stand up, tell their story and stick it on the appropriate date on the timeline.

M 4 MEMORY OF THE PLACE

by Akademia Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna w Lodzi (Łódź, Polen)

The aims of workshop:

- Understanding what supports the awareness of a place, which element can move on to the collective memory, common knowledge and private memories,
- What tangible and intangible elements (as values, feelings, attitudes, individual choices) influence the perception of the cultural environment?
- Understanding what and why we accept it as our own knowledge (for the most people, part it is own experience or experience of close people, similar to ours)
- Understanding how the sense of the place is shared
- Understanding the group process important for a negotiation

Activities:

1. Explanation what is the genius loci

2. Inspiration and introduction to the workshop:

Example: In Search for the Lost Quarter in Lodz, see the [short movie](#).

3. Participants are invited to build small groups and to choose a place known to them all.

Participants specify:

- what they know about the place chosen together?
- decide what are the roots and ground of this knowledge, from who / where it comes from; it is objective, subjective, private, official, another knowledge?
- classify the types of sources and contents
- make a selection of the element describing the place and decide which of them is the most important and least important; they determine why
- decide if due to the choice of the above two factors, this place should be changed (a change could be understand as a total change, or reversal of orders, values, or as a slight modifications, improvements, corrections, adding something, subtracting something etc.)
- looking for one symbol for this chosen place.

M 5 HAND MAPS: social auto-ethnography
by Helinä Rautavaaran Museo, Espoo / Finland

Exercise Title: *Hand maps - kädenkartat*

Recommended group size/type: *4 – 200 (if bigger than 10, divided into subgroups until joint presentation and discussion)*

Recommended time: *1.5 – 3 hours*

Preparation time: *0,5 hours*

AIMS and objectives (general, concrete)

- *Presenting oneself and getting to know each others' background*
- *Creating and sharing phenomenologically inspired information, concepts and food for discussion and thought*
- *Enhancing bodily, sensory- and experience-informed input in group planning or in therapy*
- *Artistic expression, creativity*
- *Doing auto-ethnography*
- *Getting to know and adjusting oneself or a joint organism into a new environment*
- *Get help in remembering*

Resources required:

- > *Presentation tools: Chalk- or whiteboard or data projector for the facilitator*
- > *Note-books and pens for the participants*
- > *Paint (handpaint) or water colour, colour pens, paper or cardboard, glue and collage material for participants*
- > *tape, white-tack, pins etc. for displaying the handmaps*

Introduction: Mind-maps are a common tool for planning in groups or individually. It is related to finding new insights and viewpoints to an old issue. In this method they are challenged by more embodied approaches to problem-solving. Full-size body-maps

are used, usually, with artists as facilitators, to deal with difficult embodied issues, experiences or trauma. It involves drawing or painting in pairs or as a group. Hand-maps are a lighter version of body-maps. They can be painted individually, but it is recommendable to work in pairs, one being the client and the other the assistant with a pen doing the initial drawing. The "production" and the presentation can be divided in two different sessions.

Trainer activity:

The trainer a) does the introduction and gives the instruction for the data-gathering part, which may include beforehand thought questions b) assists the groups during their work – for example telling memorized experiences – and answers to questions c) does the timing d) gathers the groups and divides them in pairs e) delivers the material for artistic work on handmaps f) does the timing g) assists in displaying the works h) gives turns to present the works

Preconditions:

- enough spaces for all to enjoy the results as an art exhibition.
- It is best to work as peer to peer groups, skip power relations
- It is advisable to share time equally when talking/ listening in groups or pairs

Challenges that may occur: The trainer needs to be easy/ experienced with visual art. The participants may suffer handicaps that prevent painting or drawing (the trainer may need to encourage). More introvert people may want to work by themselves. The room may become restless if the group talking or painting is too big. It is good to consider beforehand what is the culture related to sharing tools: is a help-yourself-table with colours better than delivering them to each pair.

Participants activity:

The participant listens and joins his/ her pair or group in talking and listening (or goes out for a sensory walk etc.) b) the one who is counselor listens while the client talks about the embodied memory. (or describes what he/ she has sensed during the walk in a group) c) they change turns when the trainer tells so. d) After the "data-gathering task" the client puts his/ her hand on a paper and the counselor draws a line around the hand. They change roles for the new drawing.

e) They continue drawing where inside the hand the memory is felt or depict the happening that has left traces; outside of the hand they depict the circumstances that have been experienced or lived in. Colours or different materials are used to express feelings and other senses f) The works are attached on walls (or laid out on tables) for everybody to contemplate for a while. g) Everyone shares his/ her own experience or memory or other source of knowledge depicted in the works, within the time span given by the trainer. h) If the tool is used for planning, discussion follows.

M 6: **THE RUMOUR**
by A.M.E.F.E / Málaga

Exercise Title: **THE RUMOR: Communication with Humour**

Recommended group size/type: 15 or more

Recommended time: 1,5 HOUR

Preparation time:

Preparation time:

Preparation time: 10 MINUTES

AIMS and objectives (general, concrete)

- Show communication difficulties.
- Analyze the influence of questions and information dialogue.
- Show the importance of the listening attitude in communication.
- Improvise scenes about proposed characters and situations.
- Check how the information is distorted from the interpretation that each one gives.

Resources required: **OBSERVATION SHEETS. SUMMARY TABLE SHEETS.**

Introduction:

- There are two groups of 5 or more participants each, which are located in a separate room, different from the class. The tutor previously indicates to this group what their task should be.
- Previously also, the tutor selects a group of participants who will act as observers during the exercise.
- He brings them together, gives them a copy of the observation sheet in one direction or in two directions (depending on the colleague they are to observe), and briefly explains how to make the observation.
- Each observer looks at only one of his colleagues. During the exercise they are placed in the class among the other classmates.

- The rest of the class remains in the classroom. For this exercise it will be convenient to arrange the room so that observers and the rest of the class are in a circle with the trainer's table in front of them.
- Everyone is asked to remain very attentive. They are explained briefly what the exercise will consist of, and that they should pay attention to how each of the members of the group accurately repeat or distort the story they are going to hear.
- It is very important that everyone remains absolutely silent during the experience, and without making any kind of gestures, grimaces, laughter, smiles, etc. They should behave as if the class were empty, so as not to influence their classmates.

Trainer activity:

1st phase: communication exercise without feed-back (no questions asked)

It is a question of studying how the fact that questions cannot be asked influences communication and the transmission of information.

1. The trainer moves the first participants to the class. He tells the farmer's story; he must be faithful and exact: for this, it is best to read it as it is.

2nd phase: communication exercise with feed-back (with questions)

In this second phase, questions can be asked of the informant. The aim is to study how the questions influence communication and the transmission of information.

This indication should be given to the five participants in the exercise.

2. The trainer moves on to the first of the five participants.

Participants activity:

1st phase: communication exercise without feed-back (no questions asked)

- The first participant, tells the story to the second, once told sits.
- The second participant tells the story to the third, and so on until all the participants pass.

2nd phase: communication exercise with feed-back (with questions)

- The first participant tells the story to the second, in his or her own way, and answers questions.
- The second participant tells the story to the third, and answers their questions, so on until all the participants pass.

Phase 3: Commenting on the results

The three most frequent deformations are usually:

a) Reduction of the message

The receiver tends to reduce the amount of information received. The message loses

He/she reads the story; he/she answers their questions.

4. The trainer should make sure that members of the two experience groups do not communicate with each other and ignore the story before they hear it in class.

Phase 3: Commenting on the results

5. The trainer puts his results on the board, following the box that appears in the SUMMARY TABLES.

6. Reflect on the results and open a dialogue/debate on the subject.

Preconditions:

Observers must be trained beforehand. Also, students who are a bit clever and capable of doing well should be chosen for observers.

It is very important that there is absolute silence in class and that everyone is faithful not to make gestures of any kind.

richness of detail, becomes shorter, more summarized.

b) Sharpening

The receiver highlights some points of special importance to him.

• *Interpretation*

The recipient interprets the message from his or her own feelings and values, modifying and sometimes misrepresenting the sender's intention and the content of the message.

• *Dialogue/Debate:*

a) How the possibility of asking questions influences communication.

6. What do those who participated in the experience think? How did they feel?

7. What do the observers and the rest of the class think? What significant things have they noticed?

b) What application does all this have for our class?

What are the effects of not asking for fear of the teacher or for fear of others laughing at you?

M 7 METHOD REFLECTION: Dictionary and the words we use
by Association Hors Pistes, Marseille (France)

TITLE	Dictionary and the words we use
Time needed to share the tool	
Equipment & materials needed ?	Paperboard, pen
	Raise awareness on the different meanings of words in different languages (translations can be tricky !)
Objectives of the tool	Take some distance from the vocabulary we use Find a common ground for the meaning we give to these words, within the group
Description of the tool « step-by-step »	<p>The facilitator asks the participants to search for definitions of a few words in the national dictionary of their language. Then, they should translate it word by word in english.</p> <p>The words can be chosen according to the topic to approach, for example : citizenship, nationality, culture, identity, history...</p> <p>When sharing with the rest group, we exchange on the different definitions : how it is similar or different, how it is interconnected and how we can conceptualise the comparative analysis of the meanings with a schema.</p> <p>We can close with a more theoretical session on language barrier and intercultural communication.</p> <p>At the end, the group should agree on common a definition for the key topics of the project (either select one of the national definitions or create their own), so that they start on a common ground and a good mutual understanding</p>

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Picture page 1: Bärbel Bohley, Jutta Seidel, Christa Wolf at the first official free demonstration in Berlin, 4th November 1989, source: Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-1989-1104-045 / Link, Hubert / CC-BY-SA 3.0, CC BY-SA 3.0 de, [Wikimedia Commons](#)



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