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AFTER  
THE  
REVOLUTION:

THE NEW  
POLITICAL  
LANDSCAPE IN  
EAST GERMANY

*Daniel Hamilton*

GERMAN ISSUES ■ 7

American Institute for Contemporary German Studies  
The Johns Hopkins University

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*Daniel Hamilton*

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GRAPHICS

© 1990 by the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies  
ISBN 0-941441-03-2  
ISSN 1041-9810  
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 90-82606

Additional copies are available at \$5.00 each to cover postage and processing  
from the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, Suite 350,  
11 Dupont Circle, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-1207

## FOREWORD

Since the peaceful revolution in East Germany last autumn which turned out the Communist regime that had ruled there for more than forty years, the East German political landscape has experienced kaleidoscopic change. New parties and new personalities, most of them completely unknown in the West, have emerged. Some of them now make up the East German government that resulted from the March 18, 1990 election to the *Volkskammer*, the first free elections in the eastern part of Germany for fifty-seven years.

Daniel Hamilton ranks among the few Americans qualified by experience and interest to describe and analyze the post-communist politics of East Germany. From 1982 until 1989, the years during which the East German revolution was gestating, he was Deputy Director of the Aspen Institute Berlin. In that capacity he traveled frequently to East Germany and organized many pioneering Aspen conferences which included political personalities, from the East German government and from the opposition as well. Since January 1990 he has been senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, to which the Institute is grateful for permission to publish this, the seventh number in our series of occasional papers, *German Issues*.

Publication is made possible thanks to a generous grant to the Institute for German-German and East German studies from the Ford Foundation. The Institute expresses its very real appreciation to the Foundation.

Robert Gerald Livingston  
Director

May 1990

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### We are the people!

The impatient cry that has echoed across East Germany, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), since the early fall of 1989 has become the symbol of the German Revolution. In a matter of weeks, the millions of East Germans who turned onto the streets to turn out their government accomplished what no Germans had ever achieved successfully before: an enduring, peaceful democratic revolution from below.

"It is as if someone had thrown open the windows, after all the years of stagnation, spiritual, economic, political, the years of staleness and fuf, of phrase-washing and bureaucratic caprice, of official blindness and deafness—what a change!" exclaimed East German writer Stefan Heym before over 500,000 East Germans who had gathered in early November on East Berlin's Alexanderplatz to celebrate their bloodless revolt. "Someone wrote me—and the man is right: in these last weeks we overcame our speechlessness and are now learning how to walk in an upright manner, and that, friends, in Germany, where previously every revolution had failed and where the people had always been subservient, under the Emperor, under the Nazis and later too."<sup>1</sup>

### Who were the people behind the German Revolution?

For most observers, the German Revolution was faceless. The people behind the people were unknown, representing a confusing mix of opposition groups, grass-roots reform movements and political parties. Even as the revolution marches ahead with breathtaking speed to free, democratic elections to the East German Parliament on March 18, 1990, and local and regional elections set for May 6, 1990, the political scene in the GDR has been shrouded in fog. In the seven weeks between the opening of the Berlin Wall and the end of the year, the number of opposition groups shot up to over 150, each with its own demands, policies and personalities.

In the run-up to the elections, a confusing array of 24 different political parties and groups campaigned for the 400 seats in the East German Parliament, the *Volkskammer*. Yet once the fog cleared over the East German party landscape under the pressure of popular cries for German unification, it was the powerful West German political machine that has emerged to dominate the scene. The fledgling political movements in East Germany were forced to align themselves along the West

German political spectrum as the Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Greens and Republicans from the West invested massive amounts of personnel, wealth, and ideas to take charge of the East German campaign in anticipation of an election that would decide which all-German party alliance would be best poised to shape and then govern a united Germany after all-German elections that could be scheduled within the next twelve months.

The election result itself was another shocking turn on the rollercoaster ride to German unification, as the East German Christian Democratic Union (CDU), a party that had collaborated with the Communists for 40 years, registered an impressive percentage of the vote. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière, the CDU then forged a Grand Coalition government with its smaller allies and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) to pave the way for constitutional changes that would allow quick unification.

The changes that swept through East Germany last fall were prompted in part by external events, particularly the decision of Hungary to tear down its portion of the Iron Curtain and allow East Germans to flee through the hole to the West. But the spark of revolution came from a marginal group of political activists living on the edges of East German society who gathered their courage in response to the thousands who wanted to leave and exclaimed, "We want to stay."

### THE ORIGINS OF THE EAST GERMAN OPPOSITION

The repressive nature of the East German regime had limited the East German dissident population to one of the smallest and least vocal in the Soviet bloc. Until the late 1980s there had been various loose groupings comprising a few hundred people throughout the GDR, each with different and partly conflicting aims and tactics, which had hindered the formation of an articulate, politically significant, organized opposition. Some sought emigration to the West; others chose to stay and press for greater civil liberties at home; still others joined together in single-issue groups concentrating on peace, environmental, or feminist goals. Until the late 1980s they remained on the margins of society.

There was little personal or ideological continuity between the informal groups that emerged and earlier attempts at political opposition, such as the workers' uprising and the challenges to land reform and collectivization in the 1950s. Rather, the common thread was the emer-

gence of a whole network of peace, human rights, ecological, women's, and "Two-Thirds-World" groups in the late 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>2</sup>

A second, weaker impulse came from Marxist circles that had been secretly discussing alternative societal concepts, often within the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the East German Communist Party, and during the 1980s increasingly under the shelter of the Protestant Church. Under Communist Party chief Erich Honecker elaborate theoretical critiques of "real existing socialism," as the GDR liked to characterize itself, were confined to a handful of highly publicized intellectual dissidents, most notably the late Robert Havemann. Havemann, the mentor of many opposition figures, had suffered greatly for many years for his assertion that Stalinism, as practiced in the GDR, the Soviet Union and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, "so absolutely and profoundly contradicts the nature of socialism that it has not only impeded the progress of socialism in the socialist states but has prevented the development of any society which one can unreservedly call socialist."<sup>3</sup>

Reforms in the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary, followed by limited signs of cautious reform in the GDR, also nourished the hope in the Church, the opposition, and the Communist Party itself that a broad, democratic reform of the GDR could be achieved. The expansion of travel opportunities, the publication of a joint paper by the West German Social Democrats and the East German Communist Party in August 1987, and the visit of Honecker to Bonn in October 1987 further encouraged the opposition.

Members of the GDR literary establishment, on the other hand, kept their distance from the Church-opposition counterculture and used the Church primarily and simply as a platform for their views. While literary and artistic dissent had been expressed by such figures as Volker Braun, Wolf Biermann, Stefan Heym, Reiner Kunze, and Christa Wolf, the literary establishment remained a privileged element of the relatively self-contained intellectual elite of East German society.

### The Role of the Protestant Church

After Erich Honecker worked out a *modus vivendi* with the Church leadership in 1978, the Church emerged as the sole organization in the GDR legally allowed to exist independently, with the right of free assembly, of the party and state machine. In particular, the eight Reform (Calvinist) and Lutheran Churches in the coordinating league (*Bund Evangelischer Kirchen in der DDR*) played a vital role as a haven for free discussion and a center of information for the informal dissident groups that emerged during the 1980s.

The Church was forced to walk a narrow line in Honecker's Germany. On the one hand, it was pushed by the state to conform, in effect to become a "Socialist Church." On the other hand, it was pulled by dissenters to serve as a focus of opposition to the regime, in effect becoming a Church *against* socialism. Although the Church served as the sanctuary in which a new solidarity emerged during the late 1980s, it feared being abused by certain groups who were moved less by faith in God than faith in Gorbachev. The Church leadership preferred to define its role as that of a "Church *in* socialism"—the implication being that the Church was willing to play a role within the socialist framework, rather than adopting an implacably hostile attitude—but that it expected to be taken seriously as a partner.

The Church served as an uncomfortable partner for the SED, pressing the regime to discuss openly the reasons behind the broad pressure to emigrate, establish some transparency in GDR regulations and decision-making, fill information gaps on the domestic situation in the GDR, end military training in schools, expand civil service options for those objecting to mandatory military service, and improve the limited possibilities for citizen participation in political life.

The Church's own efforts at a dialogue with the regime that would be founded on explicit communist recognition of the contributions of Christians to the solution of social and political problems lent weight to the demands of the informal opposition groups for greater citizen participation in the political process.

The Church also took an active role by providing shelter, working space and moral authority to the protest groups that gave birth to the revolution. The Church became the focal point of the growing popular demand for change, sponsoring daily protest meetings, large grassroots assemblies (*Kirchentage*), peace forums, peace marches, and vigils for political prisoners. The Gethsemane and Samaritan Churches in East Berlin, the Nikolai Church in Leipzig, the Church of the Cross in Dresden, and a host of other churches and activist pastors played important roles as magnets for the opposition. "Peace, Justice and Preservation of the Creation" became the slogan of a large ecumenical movement that resonated throughout the population during the past two years.

The role of the Church as sanctuary had a profound influence on the nature of the opposition. Christian belief and religious models of social engagement, together with the material and spiritual resources of the Church, played an important role.

It is no coincidence that such opposition groups as the East German Social Democrats and the Democratic Awakening were founded pri-

marily by pastors and others working for the Church. In addition, the regular weekly peace services in Leipzig formed the core of the mass demonstrations that eventually swept away the Communist Party.

### THE EVENTS LEADING TO THE REVOLUTION

The regime was able to contain the pressures for change rather successfully due to a combination of repression, forced emigration of opposition leaders, and carefully calibrated doses of openness in selected areas in ways that vented public frustration without blowing the lid off the system.<sup>4</sup> The pressures began to build again, however, following the great public disappointment with Erich Honecker's visit to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the fall of 1987. Instead of conveying a new spirit in German-German relations, Honecker and the Soviet Union used the visit to consolidate their own position that the GDR was a sovereign, second German state and a major element of peace and stability in Europe. After pocketing the political and psychological advantages of Honecker's triumphal visit in October 1987, GDR authorities cracked down on domestic challengers in a series of raids, arrests and expulsions soon after Honecker returned from West Germany. Security forces returned with vigor to the old patterns of repression. Various individuals were jailed or expelled on absurd charges of "treasonous contacts" or "riotous assembly."

This time, however, dashed expectations turned to anger. Church and opposition were galvanized to work more closely together to effect change. The result was massive protest in the form of remembrance and prayer services, which achieved the short-term goal of releasing all those arrested, although some were expelled to the West. The SED leadership reacted with a strategy of intimidation directed at the Church, expressed in the form of censorship of the Church press and demonstrative police controls before church services in East Berlin. The increasingly clear rejection by the regime of any reform policies and the growing gap between developments in the GDR and in other East European states sobered and focused the opposition groups to make more specific and radical demands.

The Church Synods also became crystallization points for the reform discussion. At the same time, a variety of informal groups produced a common reform concept in the form of Twenty Theses that was read by Wittenberg Minister Friedrich Schorlemmer in June 1988 at the *Kirchentag* in Halle, and which were clearly related to the reform theses Mikhail Gorbachev had prepared for the Soviet Communist Party conference.<sup>5</sup>

Behind closed doors, a rather vigorous reform debate was taking place within the party. Within the lower and middle ranks of the party, and particularly outside Berlin, in the district organizations, there were growing demands for reform. These arguments, however, found little resonance among the old guard in the top leadership in Berlin.

At the same time, the GDR-Soviet argument over reforms began to spill out into the public. In November 1988 GDR authorities slapped a formal ban on *Sputnik*, a Soviet press digest published in German with a large readership in the GDR. The journal had reprinted an article that struck at the core of East German ideology—and thus legitimacy—by suggesting a prewar collusion between Stalin and Hitler. This was followed by a SED Central Committee meeting in which Honecker berated the Soviet Union for tolerating historical revisionism by “bourgeois types gone wild.” He declared that the GDR would not switch course and “march toward anarchy.”<sup>6</sup> He further staked out his position by holding a summit with Romania’s leader, Nicolae Ceaucescu, the most Stalinist of East European leaders, and awarding him the GDR’s highest award, the Karl Marx Medal. Gorbachev reformers, in turn, began to hold regular informal meetings with reform-minded SED leaders such as Hans Modrow.

External developments began to affect the GDR situation critically. On March 14, 1989, Hungary took a fateful step signing a United Nations protocol governing the status of refugees. The protocol obligated Hungary, alone in the East bloc, not to force refugees to return home. On May 2, Hungarian soldiers began to tear down fences and fortifications on the border to Austria.

Another catalytic event then took place on May 7. Communal elections held in East Germany were marked by widespread fraud and manipulation. Church groups organized to monitor the election results at polling stations throughout the GDR registered widely divergent results between the official results and the actual vote count recorded by the director of each polling station, particularly regarding the no votes and the voting percentages. Egon Krenz, who was later to succeed Honecker, was the head of the election commissions which had overseen the elections. The resulting public outcry ended in the arrests of hundreds of persons. Church groups sent letters to each elected official, enclosing their own figures, pointing to the massive fraud, and calling for each official to resign their office and call for new free and secret elections. The regime’s refusal to agree to a recount or even to respond to the charges heightened the sense of popular outrage.

The politicization of the East German internal scene was again prompted by external developments. The SED clearly rejected the

changes in Poland and Hungary and openly sided with the ultraconservative communists in Prague, Beijing and Bucharest. The June 1989 declaration of the East German Parliament supporting the violent repression in Beijing provoked many in the population to active engagement in the opposition. The June 1989 report of the Politburo to the Central Committee also lashed out at Hungary and Dresden party chief Hans Modrow, who had emerged as the one prominent reform-oriented leader and a favorite of Moscow reformers.

By the late summer a new situation had developed. The return to repression, together with the fraudulent communal elections, developments in Hungary, the emergence of a noncommunist government in Poland, and the sudden power vacuum in the GDR created when the ailing Erich Honecker underwent surgery, emboldened the opposition to separate themselves from the Church and to form an independent political platform in the GDR. The belief grew that an organized opposition was needed in the GDR, as was the case in other communist countries, would be based outside the Church and would gather the potential of the critical forces in society.

The massive exodus of refugees was a further catalytic event sparking the revolution. For more and more East Germans, the daily experience of turning on West German television to see family and friends abandoning their country was too much to bear. The 1989 generation—the sons and daughters of the ‘68 generation—was leaving its parents behind. Jens Reich, a co-founder of New Forum, reflected on the personal emotions that had prompted many to join the opposition: “In 1987 our daughter married and went West. We had a fear of losing our other children to the West” unless change occurred at home.<sup>7</sup>

During the late summer a new solidarity became apparent among those who did not want to emigrate or escape but wanted to improve the GDR from within. The combination of those seeking to change the system with those seeking to escape the system through emigration created a new critical mass of unrest in the population that started alarm bells ringing within the SED leadership. As East German writer Monika Maron stated, the realization had dawned that “the Emperor has no clothes, and the latest fashions from Moscow are simply too revealing.”<sup>8</sup>

On August 13, the 28th anniversary of the building of the Berlin Wall, physicist Hans-Jürgen Fischbeck, representing the group “Renunciation of the Principle and Practice of *Abgrenzung*” (the term used to describe Honecker’s policy of shielding East German society from the West), called for the founding of a GDR-wide opposition movement to create “an identifiable alternative” to current regime policies before 400 participants at a prayer service in the Church of the Confession in East



Berlin. His appeal marked the beginning of a self-confident determination by opposition groups to work GDR-wide and to emerge from the shelter of the Church.

Fischbeck's call was followed within the next few weeks by the appeal to form an East German Social Democratic Party, the "Appeal '89" to form the New Forum citizens' movement, the formation of the groups Democratic Awakening and Democracy Now, and the creation of the "Bohlen Platform" that led to the formation of the United Left movement.

The suddenness with which diverse groups arose was based less on programmatic differences than personal rivalries and regional diversity. Only once—on October 4, 1989—did these groups appear together in public with a common call for a democratic restructuring of state and society and democratic elections under United Nations auspices.<sup>9</sup>

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OPPOSITION GROUPS

The particular origins of the East German opposition served to build identity among and between these groups, and formed basic characteristics common to most groups, despite their diverse viewpoints:

- **Non-violence:**

Opposition figures acknowledged that Latin American liberation theology, the teachings of the anti-Nazi theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and the tactics of nonviolence, as reflected for instance in the peace movement in West Germany and the civil rights movement in the United States, had an important influence on their thinking. The thousands of people who turned onto the streets to turn out their government were determined in their insistent chant "No Violence! No Violence!"

- **"Anti-Politics:"**

The East German opposition is also characterized by a strong sense of what the Hungarian writer Gyorgy Konrad has called "anti-politics":<sup>10</sup> these groups were oriented to issues of *Kultur* and society rather than of power; grass-roots-based instead of centrally organized; defensive instead of offensive; and focused on single issues. These characteristics represented a major problem for the opposition last fall—how to fill the vacuum of power created by the collapse of Communist authority.

- **Fragmentation:**

Fragmentation and personal rivalries have been serious weaknesses in most opposition groups. "We are divided above all by personal vanities and bickering," confessed Konrad Weiss of the citizens' movement Democracy Now. The various opposition figures had known each other and worked together in various groups for years. Often personal rivalry hampered common goals. Hans-Jochen Tschiche, one of the leaders of the New Forum movement, acknowledged that "many of our differences have to do more with personalities than with substance."<sup>11</sup>

- **Leadership Void:**

The East German opposition lacked a galvanizing spokesman such as Lech Walesa in Poland or Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia. The various opposition leaders lacked the same political quality and could not represent a "leadership-in-waiting" should the unthinkable—a change from the Communist leadership—actually occur. The tactics of the Honecker regime—to isolate dissidents internally through imprisonment, or to isolate them externally through expulsion—had severely hampered the development of an indigenous opposition leadership.

- **Intelligentsia:**

The vast majority of the opposition leaders are artists, writers, scientists, pastors. The repressive nature of East German society moved them to develop their own self-contained intellectual counterculture. The views and theories they had developed about a humane socialist alternative to Honecker's Germany had not been tested in public debate.

### THE EARLY AGENDA OF THE OPPOSITION: COMMON THEMES

Despite the fragmented nature of the East German opposition, it shared broad common themes as it burst onto the public scene in the late summer and early fall of 1989. Based on founding documents, proclamations, and private discussions, a description of the broad, common agenda of the opposition may be summarized as follows:

### A Humane, Socialist GDR

GDR opposition leaders distinguished themselves from other East European opposition groups by their reluctance to reject Marxist socialism. For the intellectuals leading the reform movement in the GDR, socialism had not failed, it had not yet been given a chance. While in Poland and Hungary the discussion about "another" socialism or a "third way" began to ebb by the end of the 1970s, in the GDR these considerations continued to play a large role into the fall of 1989. The basic consensus was that reform could not result in a "sell-out" of the GDR to the rich, capitalist West, and that social achievements such as low rents, free health care, cheap public transportation and an extensive network of social institutions would remain essential components of a reformed German socialism freed of its Stalinist structures.<sup>12</sup>

The opposition received support from leading cultural figures such as Stefan Heym, who declared "in reality it is not Marx who is dead, but Stalin, and it is not socialism that has failed, but rather only this particular form."<sup>13</sup>

One of the opposition movements, Democracy Now, chose as its emblem a butterfly: the symbol of a flourishing, vital democratic socialism that had emerged from the unsightly caterpillar of Stalinism. Filmmaker Konrad Weiss, one of the most prominent figures in Democracy Now, declared, "Instead of the word socialism we use the term 'society of solidarity' (*solidarische Gesellschaft*). Nevertheless, we want to develop a type of socialism that would present itself differently than its previously practiced forms."<sup>14</sup> The founding document of Democracy Now declares: "Socialism must now find its true democratic form if it is not to vanish historically. It must not vanish, because humankind, threatened and searching for sustainable forms of human coexistence, needs alternatives to Western consumer society, whose prosperity must be paid for by the rest of the world."<sup>15</sup> The East German Social Democratic Party also stated that it wanted "precisely that which is expressed in the vision of socialism: a just and social community."<sup>16</sup> Even the draft founding document of the Democratic Awakening, a centrist group, stated that a critical view of the existing socialist system did not necessarily mean a rejection of the vision of a socialist social order.

The most vocal leaders of the opposition groups were determined to realize their dream of a "third way" between consumer capitalism and Stalinist socialism. Bärbel Bohley, one of the founders of the New Forum movement, declared: "The exploitation of nature and humankind, as conducted in the West, cannot be our goal. We now have the chance to

conduct this discussion of values that could be brought by a social system beyond capitalism and real existing socialism." Following the collapse of the Communist Party in November, Bohley declared that the door was now open "to search for a new path between capitalism and socialism. We should try to find something new between both systems."<sup>17</sup> Friedrich Schorlemmer, one of the founding members of Democratic Awakening, declared that after the rule of ideology had been abolished the last thing anyone wanted was the rule of "big money." How the "third way" would be achieved, and what it actually should look like, remained quite vague. Here, too, the opposition agreed: "We don't have any specific concepts...the expectations of the people are immense."<sup>18</sup>

### A Democratic System

According to the opposition, a more humane socialism would be marked by the creation of a democratically structured political system and a state governed by the rule of law. This would include citizen participation in decision-making, separation of powers, a multi-party system and the exercise of political power through a government responsible to a democratically elected parliament. More power to regions, freedom of opinion and assembly, the end of pre-military training in the schools, abolition of the state security force, the *Stasi*, and the introduction of civilian service as an option to military service were other common aims.

Most opposition economic pronouncements called for the establishment of effective, democratically controlled as well as ecologically and socially oriented economic structures. What this meant in practical terms was unclear. A feature common to all groups was a lack of economists, businessmen or people with economic experience in government, which proved to be a severe handicap to the opposition once the Communist-dominated government collapsed. Under Honecker's rule, the entire economic system had been firmly in the hands of the party. Anyone wishing an economic or business career climbed the rungs of the party cadre ladder. This prevented the opposition from developing solid economic concepts for their views of a reform socialism. In fact, the first serious meetings between economic experts and opposition figures took place only in late November 1989, after Honecker had been deposed, after the Wall had been opened, and after it had become clear to many in the population that the opposition had very fuzzy notions about economic reform.

### The Rejection of Unification

A corollary to the call for a reformable socialism was the rejection of German unification. While most opposition figures acknowledged that relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and a reformed, democratic socialist GDR would be special, they took care to emphasize East German sovereignty. Leaders of the largest opposition group, New Forum, were particularly outspoken in their opposition to unification.

Stefan Heym again expressed this view clearly: "The fact is, two capitalist German states are not necessary. The *raison d'être* of the German Democratic Republic is socialism, no matter what form. It is to offer an alternative to the freebooter state with the harmless name Federal Republic. There is no other reason for the existence of a separate East German state."<sup>19</sup>

After the Wall was opened, Bärbel Bohley and a number of other opposition figures were dejected, not elated. Their dream of a new society, for which they had been persecuted by the Communists, had crumbled with the Wall. These idealists, committed to building a socialist utopia, would have preferred to keep the Wall up a while longer as they engaged in their new social experiment. Friedrich Schorlemmer, another opposition leader, unabashedly expressed this view: "The coexistence of two political and social systems will create great problems. Therefore I would prefer that the Wall, where there are no holes, remains a while longer." Bohley was more blunt: "The people are crazy, and the government has lost its mind."<sup>20</sup>

### EVENTS AFTER THE FALL OF THE WALL

By late November, the party was over—the Communist Party. Communist Party chief Egon Krenz's efforts to gain a breathing space in which to regain some sense of credibility with his people turned out to be his last gasp. Krenz and his associates had the wind knocked out of them by the force of retribution coming from the streets, and the Communist Party collapsed in a fit of self-incrimination.<sup>21</sup>

The power of the people also surprised most of the opposition. Those political activists who had sponsored East Germany's peaceful revolution had been so engaged because they dreamed of creating an East German alternative to West German capitalism and Stalinist socialism. Yet faced with the relentless exodus of tens of thousands of fellow

citizens, a crumbling economy, and a catastrophic health care situation, confronted daily with revelations of the old guard's systematic abuse of power, and casting an apprehensive glance at the economic disaster afflicting other reformist states in Eastern Europe, the East German people looked quickly for a short-cut to prosperity and democracy. That short-cut became unification.

The slogans and chants of "Germany, united Fatherland" were not motivated by nationalist dreams of a Fourth Reich but by visions of material comforts and democracy. The same Leipzigers calling for unification during the weekly marches in November also demonstrated their solidarity with the Prague Spring and Czech moves toward democracy in a minute of silence. As the West German newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* commented, "Speakers in Leipzig demanded reunification above all and exclusively because for them existing socialism has collapsed. Because they do not want to sacrifice their lives for five years, not one year, not one month more."<sup>22</sup>

Having pushed the people into the streets, the opposition began to follow rather than lead the spontaneous, angry revolt from below. In existence for only two months, opposition groups lacked the material, organizational and political resources, leadership personalities, and even the will necessary to fill the vacuum of power left by the collapse of Communist authority. Whereas in Poland the opposition and the Catholic Church had developed a strong civil society in tenuous coexistence with official society long before they assumed governing authority, and whereas in Hungary the opposition had developed over many years, the East German opposition was quickly overwhelmed by the immediate need to exercise political power.

As the exodus continued into January with no sign of slowing down, and as the opposition failed to present credible plans for East German recovery, the popular notion of reunification as reform was displaced by the notion of unification as salvation. Bungled efforts by the Communists to reestablish control in early January only added a more urgent, desperate tone to the popular call for unification. A deep-rooted fear had taken hold that East Germany's peaceful revolution could end badly unless East Germany was tied quickly and irrevocably to a stable and prosperous democracy. The revolution could only be saved, many believed, through quick integration with West Germany and the European Community.

Yet no leadership had emerged that could accomplish the task. The intellectuals of the democratic opposition who drew crowds onto the streets had emerged in the popular mind as bickering, woolly-minded

idealists whose visions failed to capture the hearts and minds of their countrymen. They had failed to produce national leaders who could articulate the hopes and fears of the population. They did little to instill confidence in the people that a democratically elected government in East Germany would act quickly and decisively to improve their lives. Without intimate association with West Germany, the public expectation is that a democratic East German government, of whatever complexion, could only dampen, not eliminate the massive outflow of East Germans to the West.

The Roundtable discussions between the East German government, the "bloc" parties (which had collaborated with the Communists for forty years), and the various independent movements and parties, moderated by the Church in early December and designed to exercise a democratic control function on the government during the run-up to the election, had lost much of their credibility and relevance by mid-January. The extent to which the Roundtable had lost its authority was made clear in early February, when a majority of participants at the Roundtable voted to ban Western assistance to East German political parties. The West German and the East German Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and their allies quickly announced they would ignore the decision.

### THE MARCH 18 ELECTION

"This weekend," said Stefan Heym, "the German Democratic Republic died."<sup>23</sup> East Germans voted decisively on March 18 for a West German after-life. A trustee government was elected executor of the estate to carry out the two words contained in the people's will: Unification Now.

Many had already voted—with their feet and at the wheels of their *Trabi* automobiles. The exodus of East Germans to West Germany had continued unabated. Even the election of a democratic East German government only dampened the outflow of East Germans to the West.

The Alliance for Germany, an alliance of the East German CDU, the small party Democratic Awakening (DA), and the seven-week old conservative German Social Union (DSU), each campaigning on its own, narrowly missed an absolute majority with 48.1 percent of the vote. The CDU registered 40.9 percent (164 seats), the DSU, with support regionally concentrated in the south, received 6.3 percent (25 seats) and the DA 0.9 percent of the vote (4 seats).<sup>24</sup>

The Social Democratic Party (SPD), which had been expected by many to emerge as the largest party in the new parliament, only received 21.8 percent (87 seats). The Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the former Communist Party, SED, was the third strongest party with 16.3 percent (65 seats).

Three liberal parties, running together as an alliance named "Federation of Free Democrats," received 5.4 percent (25 seats). The Alliance '90, a grouping of those grass-roots citizens' movements that had been largely responsible for turning the masses out onto the streets in the fall, only received 2.9 percent (twelve seats). The Democratic Farmers' Party, another of the former collaborationist "bloc" parties, received 2.2 percent (nine seats), and the alliance of the Greens and the Independent Women's Association received two percent (eight seats). All other 15 parties together received 1.4 percent (five seats).

The election turnout was high, 93.2 percent.

The election was marked by divisions between north and south, city and countryside, and intellectuals and workers. The southern area of the GDR, comprising Saxony and Thuringia, voted strongly for the CDU and the Alliance. In Thuringia the CDU received 53 percent of the vote and in Saxony 57.7 percent. The conservative DSU received its best results in Saxony with 13.2 percent and Thuringia with 5.6 percent. This is particularly interesting because before 1933 these areas were known as the cradle of social democracy.

The situation was reversed in Berlin and in northern areas such as Rostock, Neubrandenburg, and Potsdam. In Berlin the SPD won 35 percent, the communist PDS received 30 percent, and the conservative Alliance only 28 percent. The grassroots Alliance '90 also did better in Berlin (6.4 percent) than in the other regions of the GDR.

Another major division was between city and countryside. In communities of less than 50,000, the conservative Alliance registered an average of at least 50 percent of the vote. In larger towns it only received 40 percent. For the SPD and the PDS the opposite was true: both performed better in larger cities than in smaller communities.

In the "workers and farmers" state, it was above all the workers and farmers who had buried socialism. According to the *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen*, the conservative Alliance was elected by the majority of blue collar workers (59 percent) and employees (49 percent). The proletariat voted against the leftist parties. Support for the Communists was limited to intellectuals and bureaucrats who had profited most from the system.

Church membership was another important element in voting behavior. The relatively small group of Catholics in the GDR (6.5 percent of the population) voted with 75 percent for the Alliance. Among Protestants, (35 percent of the population), two out of three voted for the Alliance. Twenty percent of the Protestants voted for the SPD, while the PDS only received four percent of the Protestant vote. Forty percent of non-Church members voted for the Alliance, 23 percent for the SPD, and 21 percent for the PDS.

There were no major differences between the sexes or among the different age groups. The CDU or the Alliance was the majority party in each age group. The PDS did better with age groups up to 39 years, while the SPD did better with older age groups. Among the voters over 40, the Liberals were supported more often than among younger voters, where the Alliance '90 and the Greens received more support.

After having toppled the Communist regime in the first peaceful and successful revolution on German soil, how could the East German people have voted for a party that had collaborated with the Communists for forty years? The answer is that in the end, East Germans voted for none of the East German parties. They voted for the party alliance that was most closely aligned with the West German government. Those impatient with the speed of reunification voted for the parties of the Alliance: 60 percent of Alliance voters wanted quick unification, whereas two-thirds of the SPD voters believed the process required more time. Of those who voted for the PDS, 75 percent were in favor of unification, but not so quickly.

The people looked at the Communists, and saw thieves and despots. They looked at the "bloc" parties, and saw Quislings. They looked at the new indigenous opposition parties, and saw chaos. In the end they voted for Helmut Kohl. Kohl's promise of quick union thrust the CDU steadily into the lead and finally to a decisive victory. "*Nur Kohl hat die Kohle*"—Kohl is the only man with the moola—was the reigning phrase of the election campaign. (For detailed voting results see the chart on p.46.)

### THE SHADOW OF THE STASI

Honecker's ghost still hovered, however. Efforts to form a new democratic government to pave the way for quick unification were hampered by continuing allegations that some of the new political leaders, including as many as 40 members of the new parliament, had been informers for the *Stasi*, the security police.

New revelations fueled the anger of the masses. In a country of less than 17 million, the *Stasi* allegedly had had more than 85,000 full-time workers and had controlled over 100,000 informers. Files had been kept on 6.5 million people. At least half of the GDR's diplomats, including many still in Washington, D.C., had had ties to the *Stasi*.<sup>25</sup>

Tens of thousands of angry demonstrators returned to the streets at the end of March demanding a parliamentary investigation into possible ties between newly elected members of the East German Parliament and the *Stasi*. All 400 deputies were then subjected to investigations to ascertain whether they had had ties to the *Stasi*.

The *Stasi* connection claimed two leaders of the democratic opposition and cast doubts on a number of others. Wolfgang Schnur, chairman of the Democratic Awakening (DA), resigned his post only four days before the March 18 election after admitting he had worked as a *Stasi* informant since the 1960s. Ibrahim Böhme, the leader of the SPD, resigned soon after the election following accusations that he had collaborated with the *Stasi* for years.<sup>26</sup>

Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière himself was the target of claims he had been an informer for the secret police. Martin Kirchner, General Secretary of the CDU, was also forced to respond to allegations that he worked for the *Stasi*.

### THE NEW PARTY LANDSCAPE IN EAST GERMANY

In the run-up to the election on March 18, three broad electoral alliances, each composed of various parties and movements, have been formed. In addition, the Social Democrats, who were expected to emerge with a plurality of the votes in the election, and a variety of other, smaller parties campaigned on their own.

The key to understanding the new East German political landscape is to recognize the extent to which the West German political parties took over the tactics, organization, and to a large degree the substance, of the election campaign. The West German parties in essence usurped East German politics, as East Germany's embryonic parties find themselves surrogates of the sophisticated, powerful, and wealthy West German political machines.

Instead of being equal partners with their West German counterparts, leading East German political figures found themselves maneuvering for power inside the established West German political movements. Bärbel Bohley, one of the New Forum leaders, charged that the

West Germans had "hijacked our campaign, in the first and probably the only democratic elections our country ever had."<sup>27</sup>

### ALLIANCE FOR GERMANY

On February 5 the intensive efforts among conservative-centrist forces in the GDR and the CDU in the Federal Republic to forge an electoral alliance resulted in the formation of the "Alliance for Germany" consisting of the newly formed political parties Democratic Awakening (DA) and the German Social Union (DSU), and of the East German CDU, the former "bloc" party that had collaborated for 40 years with the Communists. The three parties agreed on a joint campaign calling for German unification and establishment of a "social market" economy. The West German CDU announced that it would support the Alliance in the election.

#### *Christlich Demokratische Union* (Christian Democratic Union) (CDU)

For 40 years the East German Christian Democratic Union (CDU) had been the largest of the collaborationist "bloc" parties associated with the Communists. Although the CDU was supposed to act as the political voice of Christians in the GDR, it essentially performed a transmission function relaying the policies and decisions of the regime to Christians to secure their support for communist policies. The extent of CDU submissiveness to SED policies was highlighted by CDU support for the Chinese massacre in Tiananmen Square in May 1989.

Because of the East CDU's position in the East German state, the West German CDU/CSU had limited contacts with it. As the Wall crumbled and communist authority collapsed, the East German CDU came under strong pressure from the West German CDU to leave the ruling coalition that was led by the Communists. The West German CDU remained reluctant to associate itself with its Eastern "counterparts" due to the East CDU's tarnished past, yet was eager to establish a working partnership with conservative forces in the GDR. Although Chancellor Kohl and West German CDU General Secretary Volker Rühle were averse to close contacts with the East CDU, other leading figures within the West German CDU, particularly those in West Berlin, argued that a conservative alliance could not succeed without a reformed East

German CDU. The West CDU finally opted to support the conservative Alliance. As East German CDU leader Lothar de Maizière acknowledged, the result was a "marriage for reasons other than love." In fact it was a shotgun marriage: The West CDU pressured the Democratic Awakening and the German Social Union to join forces with the East CDU.

The East CDU quickly fell under the shadow of the West German CDU electoral machine. The East CDU aligned itself with West CDU party positions and first and foremost with the persona of Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Kohl and his promises of quick unification became the focus of the CDU's successful campaign effort.

#### Personalities:

Lothar de Maizière, 50, the chairman of the East German CDU and the new East German Prime Minister, succeeded longtime CDU leader Gerhard Goetting as head of the party on November 2, 1989. Goetting was later arrested for fraud. De Maizière joined the party in 1957. He had been deputy president of the party since 1986, but had escaped the taint of corruption because of a reputation for honesty, engagement in the Protestant Church, and work as a defense attorney for a number of dissidents.

Soft-spoken and slight of build, de Maizière comes from an old Huguenot family driven from France in the 17th century for its religious beliefs, now spread out through both German states. De Maizière's father was a lawyer who helped raise money to rebuild the French Cathedral in East Berlin. One of his sisters is a pastor. An uncle was a former Inspector General of the *Bundeswehr*, his cousin is the press spokesman of the West Berlin CDU.

De Maizière began professional life as a viola player, working in several orchestras in the GDR, but was compelled to quit in 1976 because of an illness in his arm. He then shifted full-time to law, which he had studied through a correspondence course at Humboldt University.

De Maizière entered the cabinet of Communist Prime Minister Hans Modrow in November 1989 as one of the first Deputy Prime Ministers and Minister of the new Ministry of Church Affairs. Although de Maizière and his party jumped onto the bandwagon toward rapid unification, de Maizière's initial pronouncements as leader of the CDU had rejected unification and endorsed a reformed socialism: "The GDR is a sovereign, socialist state . . . socialism is a beautiful vision, we simply haven't tried it yet."<sup>28</sup>

Sabine Bergmann-Pohl, 43, President of the East German Parliament, is a lung specialist and devout Catholic, and a former member of the old parliament in which the CDU worked together with the Communists.

#### *Deutsche Soziale Union (German Social Union) (DSU)*

The German Social Union was forged in late January 1990 out of twelve existing political parties and opposition groupings with the direct assistance and support of the conservative West German Christian Social Union (CSU). The CSU immediately proclaimed the DSU its East German partner and offered electoral assistance. The DSU in turn called for immediate unification. The DSU was the product of fears by West German conservatives that the tacit truce that had been established between conservative and social democratic opposition groups would result in defeat of conservative forces in the GDR election.

The major groups that merged into the DSU included:

a) the small Christian Social Party of Germany (CSPD) of craftsmen and farmers, formed in December 1989, which called for private ownership, a social market economy in the GDR and a system of law safeguarding human rights;

b) the *Fortschrittliche Volkspartei*—Progressive Peoples' Party (FVP), which had been founded on December 14, 1989, as an alliance of forces rejecting further socialist experiments in favor of a market economy and a parliamentary democracy in a neutral Germany within the existing borders of the current two German states;<sup>29</sup>

c) the Free Democratic Union, founded on December 1, 1989, in the northern city of Rostock, which declared itself a bourgeois-conservative party committed to a social market economy and German unity. Immediately upon its founding the FDU turned to the West German CDU and CSU for support.<sup>30</sup>

The DSU was the most blatant product of West German political maneuvering and influence in the GDR. The party chairman admitted that the DSU party platform had been slapped together from the programs of the West German CDU and CSU without internal party debate. Unification headed the list of electoral objectives, followed by a social

market economy and a free democratic order. The DSU announced only one week after its founding that it had 35,000 supporters.<sup>31</sup>

#### **Personalities:**

The leading personality in the DSU is Hans-Wilhelm Ebeling, 56, pastor of the Thomas Church in Leipzig, one of the founders of the DSU and chairman of the party. The Thomas Church played a major role as one of the sites of weekly prayer services that formed the core of Leipzig demonstrations that shook the country last fall, although critics of Ebeling charge he had not given opposition movements timely support. Ebeling assumed the position of minister for aid to developing countries in the new democratic government of de Maizière.

Peter-Michael Diestel, 38, Secretary General of the DSU and a lawyer, is a specialist in agricultural issues. He became Interior Minister in the new government, with the rank of Deputy Prime Minister.

#### *Demokratischer Aufbruch (Democratic Awakening) (DA)*

Democratic Awakening was formed by a Church-based group which began meeting in June 1989. The group included a troika of pastors from the peace movement—Rainer Eppelmann, Edelbert Richter and Friedrich Schorlemmer—and lawyers such as Brigitta Kögler and Wolfgang Schnur, who had become known in the opposition scene for his defense of conscientious objectors for twenty years.

The party was founded out of frustration with the informal nature of existing East German opposition movements. According to Rainer Eppelmann, the founders felt it was time to move "away from spontaneity and toward commitment and firm structures."<sup>32</sup> Initial meetings of the group in late September and early October were elaborately organized in secret fashion to escape police harassment, yet were disrupted by the secret security forces, the *Stasi*. The group was able to meet without disruption only after direct intervention with the state authorities by Protestant Bishop Forck. A provisional board was then elected at a founding meeting on October 30 by representatives from all districts of the GDR. The formal founding of the party came at a party congress in Leipzig in mid-December 1989.

The party's founding congress in mid-December was marked by bitter conflicts between the left and right wing, particularly on unification and economic issues. A clear shift in the party's direction to the center-right was marked by calls for the "right of Germans to unity" via

confederation of both German states and then to a German federation freed of the blocs and demilitarized in the present borders, which would be negotiated with Germany's neighbors and with the Four Powers—the victorious powers of World War II, the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. The term "German state unity in a European peace order" emerged as a defining element of the party platform in place of the earlier, weaker formulation that the "special relationship to the Federal Republic of Germany" was "highly valued." The earlier "vision of a socialist societal order" was also struck from the party platform in favor of a "social-ecological market economy." The rightward turn led to a wave of defections to the East German Social Democratic Party.

The decisive turn to the right reflected party chairman Wolfgang Schnur's tactical consideration that the massive public pressure for unification, which became clear in late November and early December, would force the East German parties to orient themselves along the West German political spectrum if they were to succeed at the polls. Schnur and his supporters worked intensively for moral and material support from the West German conservative parties, even at the risk of a split with the party's left wing. Schnur traveled often to Bonn to garner support from the CDU and CSU, and announced in January that the Democratic Awakening was prepared to campaign not only against the Communists, but against the Social Democrats as well. The DA then joined the Alliance for Germany with the East CDU and the German Social Union.

The consequences of Schnur's actions were clear. Pastor Friedrich Schorlemmer, a co-founder of the party, left with the entire Wittenberg party organization and a variety of other members of the left wing of the party, including deputy party chairwoman Schröter and press spokesperson Christiane Ziller to join the SPD. Schorlemmer charged angrily that Schnur was cozying up to the conservative West German CSU.

The party was again rocked on March 14, only four days before the election, when Schnur resigned as chairman and admitted having worked for the *Stasi* security forces for years. Despite his earlier denials, detailed *Stasi* files revealed that he had worked for the *Stasi* since 1965, had a false identity as Dr. Ralf Schirmer and was registered as a *Stasi* agent in Rostock. A citizens' committee in Rostock presented 33 *Stasi* files about and from Schnur, including payment receipts for services rendered.<sup>33</sup>

These episodes threatened to doom the party. In the March 18 election, the DA received a minuscule 0.9 percent of the vote. The party remains alive mainly through its association with the victorious Alliance for Germany.

#### Personality:

Rainer Eppelmann, 47, a co-founder of DA, for the past 13 years minister of the East Berlin Samaritan Church, and a long-time activist in the peace and civil rights movements, has become one of the most familiar figures of the opposition. He was nominated by the party in February 1990 to join the Modrow "government of national responsibility" as a Minister Without Portfolio. When Schnur was forced to resign, Eppelmann became Chairman of the party. The long-time peace activist has now become Minister for Disarmament and Defense in the de Maizière government.

#### SOZIALDEMOKRATISCHE PARTEI DER DDR (Social Democratic Party of the GDR) (SPD)

"We have informed the state of our founding. We are not asking for legalization. We are legitimized by the citizens," declared the new Social Democratic Party in East Germany soon after its founding on October 7, 1989, in a parsonage in the village of Schwante north of Berlin. Forty people from all over the GDR signed the founding document and provisional statute that evoked the "traditions of democratic socialism of European socialists and social democrats," and set as its goal social democracy and an "ecologically oriented market economy with democratic control of economic power." The new party immediately sent a letter to Willy Brandt, Chairman of the Socialist International, applying for membership in the organization.<sup>34</sup>

The core group which founded the East German Social Democratic Party was, like opposition figures in other groups, a mixture of middle-aged leftist intellectuals and pastors who had come to political maturity during the late 1960s. Four activists—East Berlin historian Ibrahim Böhme, Pastor Markus Meckel from Magdeburg, Pastor Arndt Noak from Greifswald, and Martin Gutzeit from Brandenburg—had been meeting for three years before deciding to associate themselves with social democratic traditions. Although initially skeptical of party struc-



tures, they gradually became convinced that their views could be most effectively reflected in a party associated with the traditions of German and European social democracy. They appealed to the public for support at the end of August before the founding meeting in October.

The East German Social Democrats were keen to distinguish themselves from their counterparts in the West German SPD, and thus initially chose the acronym "SDP." The August appeal to form a Social Democratic Party in East Germany had been made without prior consultation with the West German Social Democrats. The initial reaction from SPD politicians in Bonn and West Berlin was skeptical. The East German Social Democrats immediately criticized their West German counterparts for succumbing to the "false hope" of working closely with the East German Communists to achieve reform in the GDR. Therefore, the first, tentative contacts between the two parties, which took place on October 24, were rather uneasy.

Initial problems, however, soon gave way to close partnership. Although the party had declared at the end of October that "we would reject any form of financial support" from its West German counterparts, it quickly reversed its position in anticipation of the elections. The West German SPD formed a committee in mid-January to give tactical advice and provide speakers such as Willy Brandt for the campaign. At the new Social Democratic party headquarters on the top two floors of the cavernous old Communist Higher Party Academy in East Berlin, Social Democrats from East and West worked side by side.<sup>35</sup>

Following their founding, the East German Social Democrats worked swiftly and systematically to build a coherent organizational structure, and quickly emerged as one of the leading political forces in the East. By any measure the SPD had taken a commanding lead in the election campaign, and seemed certain to be the determining force in any future East German government.

The SPD, it seemed, boasted a number of advantages over its political rivals. First, it succeeded in associating itself in the minds of the East German voters with the deep social democratic tradition that had remained alive in the GDR despite Communist dominance. Second, the Social Democrats had been forcibly absorbed by the Communists in the Eastern Zone of Germany in 1946, and so never became a collaborationist "bloc" party, as did the East German CDU and the LDPD, the "liberal" party, and thus were not tainted with a dubious past. Third, many East Germans attribute many of the changes that improved their situation in the 1970s to the policies of the West German Social Democrats. SPD leaders like Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt remain heroes

in East Germany. Finally, the SPD was the first East German party to be "adopted" by a West German partner, thereby enjoying a crucial head start in the election race.

By January 1990 the rising fortunes of the Social Democrats, who had now changed their name to SPD, began to attract SED members who were looking to jump the sinking ship of communism. Concern that as much as ten percent of the SPD membership was composed of "*Wendehälse*," or opportunistic turncoats from the Communists, prompted Böhme to call for a moratorium on membership from Communist ranks until after the March election.

The SPD's fortunes fell, however, with their position on German unification. When the party was formed in mid-October 1989, its goal was to retain two separate sovereign German states, with the long-term aim of establishing a "unified democratic Germany" in a demilitarized Europe. Sensing the swing in the popular mood toward unification, the party had announced by late November that it also advocated "the unity of the German nation," although not "a quick reunification in the sense of an *Anschluss* into the FRG." They called for a negotiated peace treaty with the Four Powers. By January the Social Democrats had issued a ringing endorsement of German unity, but "with the agreement of all our neighbors."<sup>36</sup>

Throughout the election campaign the SPD advocated a slower pace toward unification than the conservative Alliance. At its March congress the SPD agreed on a detailed plan for measured progress toward unification. The SPD had argued that the first day a democratic East German parliament convened, the two German parliaments should issue a joint declaration guaranteeing existing borders. The Four Powers and the two German governments should then meet to agree on the future security framework of a united Germany, having consulted neighboring countries. A CSCE European Summit would then ratify these decisions and work out a new pan-European security system eventually to replace NATO and the Warsaw Pact. On a parallel track, the two German states would establish a Council on German Unity to work out a treaty on unification and form joint parliamentary commissions. A draft constitution for a united Germany, modeled on the West German Basic Law, would be put to a referendum in both states. Elections to an all-German parliament would follow. The SPD message: Unity required years, not months.

This position proved to be the SPD's electoral undoing. The party was able to muster only 21.8 percent of the vote, only slightly ahead of the Communist PDS and only half as much as the East CDU. It had clearly miscalculated the mood of the electorate.

**Personalities:**

SPD Chairman Ibrahim Böhme, 46, one of the co-founders of the party, resigned on April 2, 1990, in the face of allegations that he had been a *Stasi* informer and amidst reports he had attempted suicide. Although the charges had not been substantiated, Böhme announced he was stepping down because he needed time to refute the accusations.

An orphan, Böhme had studied theater arts, drama and history, and underwent training as a bricklayer. His political career began in 1967 when he joined the SED. He quickly became an uncomfortable comrade by associating himself with the critical views of dissident Robert Havemann and expressing support for the Prague Spring of 1968. In the early 1970s he rose to district leadership of the Cultural Federation of the GDR. By 1974 his activities had become too provocative for the regime, and he was barred from further employment. After singer-activist Wolf Biermann was expelled from the GDR in 1976, Böhme left the Communist Party. In 1977 he was imprisoned without explanation for 15 months. He was forced by the regime to abandon his return to the theater after he initiated a public appeal for support for Solidarity in Poland in 1981. Since then he worked as cook, lumber yard worker, and a teacher of Vietnamese. He became active in an informal group under the shelter of the Church.<sup>37</sup>

Markus Meckel, 37, who became Acting Chairman of the party after Ibrahim Böhme's resignation at the end of March 1990, was engaged as a pastor in Mecklenburg until 1988. He was named Foreign Minister in the new de Maizière government. Meckel, together with co-founders Arndt Noak and Martin Gutzeit, had been active for many years challenging the Church hierarchy as well as the social and political policies of the regime.

Walter Romberg, 61, the Finance Minister in the de Maizière cabinet, was the SPD Minister Without Portfolio in the "government of national responsibility" formed on February 5, 1990. He is a mathematician from the Academy of Sciences, and a specialist in disarmament, security, and North-South issues. He was named to head the GDR delegation in the talks with the Federal Republic on monetary union.

Friedrich Schorlemmer, 45, pastor of the Wittenberg Church upon whose doors Martin Luther hammered his 95 Theses, and one of the co-founders of Democratic Awakening, left the DA to join the SPD after the DA swung to the right in December. He remains an active and articulate spokesman for the left within both the SPD and the GDR.

Richard Schröder, 46, another theologian, was elected as SPD parliamentary leader in the new parliament. Other prominent figures include younger activists Angelika Barbe, Steffen Reiche and SPD Board member Stephan Hilsberg. It is a sign of West German influence, however, that the party's biggest attraction was Willy Brandt, former West German Chancellor and Mayor of Berlin. Brandt is now Chairman of both the East German SPD and the West German SPD.

**DIE LIBERALEN (THE LIBERALS)**

The West German Free Democratic Party (FDP), which had been left behind in the scramble by West German political parties to establish partners in the East, worked intensively in January and early February 1990 to cobble together an East German Free Democratic Party, and then to press for a liberal alliance in the GDR between the new party, the German Forum Party, which had broken away from the New Forum citizens' movement, and a reformed LDPD, the former collaborationist "bloc" party still heavily tainted from its association with the Communists for 40 years. The FDP agreed to support the alliance, named the Federation of Free Democrats—the Liberals, (*Bund Freier Demokraten—Die Liberalen*) with personal, material and organizational aid. The three parties agreed in turn "to seek a unification with the Free Democratic Party (FDP) of the Federal Republic of Germany in step with the developments toward German unity in preparation for all-German elections."<sup>38</sup> The NDPD, the national-democratic "bloc" party, had applied to join the liberal alliance, but was turned down.

In the March elections the League of Free Democrats gained 5.4 percent of the vote, and opted to join the Grand Coalition led by Prime Minister de Maizière. The three strands of the liberal coalition are as follows:

***Freie Demokratische Partei in der DDR*  
(Free Democratic Party in the GDR) (FDP)**

This party was quickly forged in late January as an election surrogate for the West German Free Democrats. It had only a small membership of between 2,000-3,000, led by party chief Bruno Menzel, a physician from Dessau, and its only strength came from its association with the West German party.

**Deutsche Forumpartei (German Forum Party) (DFP)**

At the end of January, in the presence of West German *Bundestag* President Rita Süßmuth in Karl-Marx-Stadt, a faction of New Forum members largely from the southern GDR broke away to form the German Forum Party. They portrayed themselves as a mass centrist party in favor of the state unity of Germany and a social-ecological market economy. The new party activists declared their opposition to further socialist experiments as well as extremism from the right or the left. Thirtyseven-year old engineer Jürgen Schmieder was elected chairman of the party. Immediately after breaking away, the DFP delegates called for talks with Democratic Awakening and the other parties of the middle to form an electoral alliance. As negotiations proceeded to forge the Alliance for Germany, however, the DFP refused to join, and on February 12 agreed to join the liberal alliance in East Germany.

**League of Free Democrats—the Liberals  
(*Bund Freier Demokraten—Die Liberalen*)**

The Liberal Democratic Party of Germany, the LDPD, another of the "bloc" parties supporting the Communists during the 40-year history of the GDR, also scrambled to present an image of reform during the revolution that swept East Germany. At its congress on February 10, the party shortened its name to Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and agreed to join the liberal election alliance. The chief of the LDPD district organization in Rostock in northern Germany, Rainer Ortleb, 46, was named party Chairman. After the election, the party again changed its name to the League of Free Democrats—the Liberals, which had been the name of the broader liberal coalition in the election campaign.

**Personalities:**

Former LDPD party chief Manfred Gerlach had led the party in its support for the SED since 1954, and played a prominent role in the SED's campaign to abolish many private and quasi-private enterprises in favor of state ownership during the early 1970s. Gerlach was one of the first in the senior leadership of the regime to express publicly the need for change last fall, but was soon pushed into retirement.

Kurt Wünsche, 60, Justice Minister in the Modrow cabinet formed in January, had been Justice Minister under the Communists from 1967-72,

and was again named Justice Minister in the new de Maizière government.

As with the other Western-oriented parties, the most significant personality in the liberal camp is a West German politician, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. Originally from the city of Halle in East Germany, Genscher waged an emotional campaign. He was personally responsible for much of the Liberal vote, as demonstrated in the returns in Halle itself, where the Liberals received ten percent, double their national showing.

**PARTEI DEMOCRATISCHER SOZIALISMUS  
(Party of Democratic Socialism) (PDS)  
(formerly the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—  
Socialist Unity Party (SED)*)**

Following the opening of the Wall, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, for 40 years the single most influential institution in the GDR, was in a free fall; party membership collapsed from 2.3 million to under 700,000. Hundreds resigned every day. Many local and regional party organizations abolished themselves.

The deep split within the party was highlighted during the party congress held in mid-December 1989, which elected Gregor Gysi as its chairman, and which featured a bitter debate between adherents of the Honecker regime and ascendent reformist forces. An open split was avoided then, yet the division was apparent as the party extended its name to Socialist Unity Party of Germany—Party of Democratic Socialism (SED-PDS). A sign of the ascendent reformist forces was a further name change on February 4, 1990, to Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS).

Under the leadership of Gysi and Prime Minister Hans Modrow, the PDS ran an astute campaign with slogans such as "A Strong Opposition for the Weak" and "Don't Worry, take Gysi." While not opposing unity as such, the party capitalized on the fear of what unification might cost, playing on enduring stereotypes of capitalist exploitation and popular concerns about "Kohlinization."

The party did surprisingly well in the election, registering 16.3 percent of the vote and thus positioned itself to be the major party of opposition in the new parliament. As attention turned to an all-German political system, Gysi and Modrow indicated that the PDS could extend its activities into West Germany.

**Personalities:**

Prime Minister Hans Modrow, earnest and soft-spoken, who was tapped to save the party from collapse in November, emerged during the months after the opening of the Wall as the most trusted politician in the GDR, despite his Communist background. As chief of the SED district organization in Dresden, Modrow became increasingly visible through the 1980s as the one prominent reform-minded leader within the SED. Honecker certainly perceived Modrow as a rival. He excluded him from the ruling Politburo and lashed out at him on occasion for veering too far from prevailing orthodoxy. When Honecker left office and Egon Krenz proved unable to master the masses on the streets, Modrow was called in as Prime Minister to save the party from disaster. During his tenure he won respect for his attempts to prevent the German Revolution from turning violent and to stabilize the situation in the country.

In the March election the PDS clearly benefited from Modrow's popularity. On a sympathy scale ranging from +5 to -5, Modrow was rated the highest with +2.8 from all respondents. From PDS voters, Modrow was rated at +4.7; even those voting for the conservative Alliance for Germany rated him positively with +1.8. Thirty-five percent of all voters, even 18 percent of the voters of the Alliance, would have preferred Modrow as Prime Minister after the March election.<sup>39</sup>

Gregor Gysi, 42, former chairman of the East German Lawyers' Association, joined the SED when he was 20, and worked to defend various opposition figures, including Bärbel Bohley, under the old regime. Facing complete collapse, the party turned to Gysi in late November 1989 as a sympathetic figure who could personify the new generation, and who could convey a fresh approach to politics.

**BÜNDNIS 90 (ALLIANCE '90)**

In early February the three leading citizens' movements, Democracy Now, New Forum, and Initiative Peace and Human Rights, agreed to join together in an electoral alliance without assistance from West German counterparts. The Independent Women's Association and the United Left took part in the discussions, but decided not to join the Alliance. The Alliance, in the words of Ulrike Poppe, one of the leaders of the Initiative Peace and Human Rights, was to be "a corrective to the parties," addressing themes that the political parties were ignoring.

In the March election, Alliance '90 was rejected at the polls, recording only 2.9 percent of the vote. Shortly after the elections, the Alliance agreed to join with the East German Greens in a parliamentary group. The speakers of the group are Vera Wollenberger (Green Party), Jens Reich (New Forum), and Wolfgang Ullmann (Democracy Now).<sup>40</sup>

Three groups make up the Alliance '90:

***Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte*  
(Initiative Peace and Human Rights)**

The Initiative Peace and Human Rights is the oldest citizens' movement in the GDR, founded in 1985 by a collection of informal groups that emerged from the shelter of the Church. The Initiative has been particularly engaged in human rights activities and in pressing the regime for a rule of law. Members of the movement had been harassed, bugged, arrested, imprisoned and even temporarily expelled by the Honecker regime. The group initiated an unsuccessful call to ban West German political parties from participating in the East German elections.

**Personalities:**

Ulrike Poppe, a longtime opposition activist and co-founder of the earlier group "Women for Peace," is the most vocal of the group's leaders. Her husband, Gerd Poppe, a physicist, was nominated to be the group's Minister Without Portfolio in the emergency government formed in early February 1990, and was named the Initiative's executive director after the March election.

***Demokratie Jetzt (Democracy Now):***

On September 17, 1989, an independent citizens' movement was formed with an "Appeal for Interference in Our Own Affairs" that called for an alliance between Christians and critical Marxists to rediscover the "true democratic nature" of socialism. The basis of this was to be a "democratic restructuring in the GDR," which would include legal reform and a new media policy. The appeal had been crafted by members of the opposition groups "Initiative Peace and Human Rights," the "Initiative for Renunciation of the Principle and Practice of *Abgrenzung*," and various other East Berlin intellectuals.

Although the program and the methods of Democracy Now are similar to New Forum, the movement was founded separately due to personal conflicts.

Democracy Now quickly made a variety of proposals that were translated into political practice, such as the suggestion to create a four-sided table composed of representatives from the SED, the collaborationist "bloc" parties, the Church, and the reform and opposition movements, or to initiate a referendum on the future of Article 1 of the GDR constitution, which enshrined the leading role of the Communist Party.

Although skeptical of German unity at first, by mid-December 1989 the group had announced a three-stage-plan for German unity, which included the call for a popular referendum on the question of the state unity of Germany after political reforms in the GDR. During the election campaign the movement called for a measured approach to German unity.

#### Personalities:

Church historian Wolfgang Ullmann represented Democracy Now at the Roundtable discussions between opposition and government between December 1989 and March 1990, and was the group's Minister Without Portfolio in the Modrow "government of national responsibility." Other prominent figures include physicist Hans-Jürgen Fischbeck, who had been engaged in the Church-opposition counterculture for years, and film director Konrad Weiss, who became suspect in the eyes of the regime when he turned his interest to the taboo subject of fascism in the GDR, and who had also been working in informal groups under the shelter of the Church. Ludwig Mehlhorn, another co-founder, has assumed a particular role as an expert on relations with Poland.

#### *Neues Forum (New Forum)*

Founded less than a month before the GDR's 40th anniversary celebrations by a group of middle-aged, leftist intellectuals and defectors from the ruling Communist Party, New Forum was born in the popular reaction to the mass exodus of East Germans to the West. The grass-roots movement was founded by 30 representatives from 11 of the 15 GDR districts on September 9, 1989, in Grünheide, the home of the late Robert Havemann, the prominent critic of East German Stalinism. In their manifesto of September 12, the founders declared that they did

not want to go West, did not want German reunification, and did not want capitalism. Instead, they sought the "restructuring of the German Democratic Republic" toward a humane, democratic socialism.

The appearance of a group militantly bent on staying and changing the state from within attracted instant attention. The government's refusal to accept New Forum's application for approval as a political association gained the group broad recognition. Its name was spread through the GDR by West German radio and television, and even before it could become organized it had become a rallying cry for dissatisfaction catalyzed by the exodus. Among the chants that echoed loudest through the streets of Leipzig and Dresden during the first mass protests in late September and early October was "*Neu-es Forum! Neu-es Forum!*"

In its first declaration, the New Forum set as its goal to build a political platform "that makes it possible for people from all professions, social circles, parties and groups to participate in the discussion and solution to vital social problems in this land."

On September 21 the application of the New Forum to register as a legally approved political association was rejected by the Interior Ministry, initially because the group was a "treasonous organization," and later, because there was no "societal necessity" for such a group. That Monday, September 25, 5,000 people marched in Leipzig against the prohibition of *Neues Forum* in a demonstration that was the seed of the regular weekly Monday night protest marches which later swept the Communists from power.

Despite various warnings and police harassment of its organizers, the first country-wide meeting of New Forum took place on October 14, the week following the brutal repression of mass protests by security forces during the 40th anniversary celebrations. One hundred twenty delegates established a "Speakers Council," composed of two representatives from each of the 15 districts, and a standing coordinating committee.

During the entire period the shadow of the *Stasi* hung over the movement. New Forum activists would call each other each morning and night for protection: "The *Stasi* hasn't picked you up yet? Good! Talk to you tomorrow."

By mid-October the weekly demonstrations had swelled to the hundreds of thousands and spread from Leipzig to towns and cities throughout the GDR. New Forum's first successes beyond the demonstrations came in the provinces. Communist officials in cities such as Potsdam, Leipzig and Dresden announced that New Forum activities would be "tolerated" and agreed to discussions with New Forum representatives.

New Forum was finally approved by the East German Interior Ministry on November 8, the day before the Wall was opened. At the first legally approved public gathering of New Forum in Leipzig on November 18, demonstrators demanded the resignation of East German leader Egon Krenz, who was called an "election rigger and friend of the Chinese terror," a reference to Krenz's support for the Tiananmen Square massacre. By late November, Krenz had resigned. In early December the New Forum was granted office space in East Berlin. By this time over 200,000 people had signed the founding declaration and local groups had organized themselves in towns and factories throughout the GDR. These groups then elected representatives at local, district and state levels. At the same time a series of committees was established on subjects such as education, economics, history and the environment.

New Forum had always remained a broad movement without a clearly defined political agenda that went beyond challenging the Communist regime. The movement's strengths and weaknesses derived from its decentralized character.

The fissures within the organization became evident during New Forum's founding congress, held at the end of January 1990. The movement's election platform, the product of painful compromise between various forces, was rather confused and partly contradictory. The centrist forces prevailed, with much dissension, by having the congress officially endorse the idea of German unity, which, they argued, should be decided in a popular referendum in both German states, and then take place gradually, with the East maintaining some form of sovereignty for several years. The founders of the party suffered defeat in various areas. Mandatory quotas for women were rejected, as was a veto right for factory workers in management decisions.

Another sign of conservative ascendance was the election of two members of the conservative wing, Heiko Lietz from Schwerin and Werner Schulz from East Berlin, to represent New Forum at the Roundtable discussions between the opposition and the government. Only one member from the left wing, Reinhard Schult, was elected.

Delegates also decided to run as movement and not as party to remain a "grass-roots oriented" catch basin for diverse strands of society. They also argued that representatives of citizens' movements should be allowed to campaign and be elected to local and national parliaments: "The New Forum is a political platform for all citizens, women and men, who seek a resolute and grass-roots oriented democratization independent of parties. Party politics reduces our interests to

election campaign slogans and makes their realization dependent on election schedules. It divides citizens, women and men, into electoral blocs. There are, however, a large number of issues for which the spectrum of opinion cuts across the parties... Therefore citizens' movements such as ours must be in the parliamentary bodies. Without them a new stagnation could develop, which we have been witness to for decades... New Forum operates as a country-wide citizens' movement, organized in local and factory-based grass-roots groups and working committees... New Forum has become a broad, democratic grass-roots movement and remains the advocate of grass-roots democracy... We advocate all forms of direct democracy. We are for a constitutional right to popular plebiscites, referenda and initiatives."<sup>41</sup>

The New Forum platform came out in favor of reestablishing the former German *Länder* on GDR territory, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, their parliaments and their governments. The platform also advocated "a market economy that means as much market as necessary and as much social security as possible; secures the inclusion of ecology in all economic processes; and guarantees democratic codetermination of the workers." New Forum also approved the goal of "an economic and monetary union, regulated by treaty." A clause upholding the right to work was approved by an overwhelming majority, even though the platform also included both a job-stimulation and an unemployment insurance program.

Despite signs of a breakup, marked by defections to other parties, a diminished core of New Forum held together, largely due to the fear that the movement would fade into irrelevance or be absorbed by other parties and movements campaigning for the election.

The potential of New Forum, however, had always been its people power, the ability to turn the masses onto the streets. As the revolution entered a new phase, marked by electioneering and the drive toward unification, New Forum's influence dropped. By February 1990 New Forum itself estimated the number of active members at only 20,000 to 30,000, despite earlier numbers of over 200,000. The group shifted its efforts from the national level to the provinces.

The original founders of New Forum, now in the minority, remain true to their utopian, intellectual heritage when they look to the future. They see their task to be one of "therapy," to help the East German people regain self-assurance in a greater Germany, and to safeguard the interests of the East German people in the process of unification.<sup>42</sup>

**Personalities:**

Co-founders of the movement included artist Bärbel Bohley, physicist Martin Böttger, Robert Havemann's widow Katja, lawyer and former SED member Rolf Henrich, physicist Sebastian Pflugbeil, molecular biologist Jens Reich, bricklayer Reinhard Schult and the Director of the Evangelical Academy in Magdeburg, Hans-Jochen Tschiche.

The most vocal of the founding members of New Forum has been Bärbel Bohley, a 44-year old artist, a close friend of the late Robert Havemann, and co-founder of the earlier opposition group "Women for Peace." For her activities she has been jailed, expelled temporarily to Great Britain, and arrested on various occasions. Labeled the "mother of the underground" by the *Stasi* during the early 1980s, she became "the mother of the revolution" during the early fall of 1989, the symbolic figure of the non-violent overthrow of the GDR regime. Surrounded by the media, she was the personification of the GDR opposition.

Today, she is the personification of the bad conscience of the GDR. When the Wall was opened on November 9, her own dream of a socialist utopia vanished. "The people are crazy," she declared, "and the government has lost its mind." The people never forgave her for this statement. "I don't want to be governed by Bohley, I don't even want to be painted by her," declared one worker.

In response to questions about her future, she has replied that she is "adjusting to my new place. And that means again being in the opposition. Certain old issues have reappeared: that again one has to defend one's ideas, that again one is in the minority that has to fight to be heard, that again one is on the sidelines. That is painful, but I am beginning to feel comfortable again in this role. And to be honest, I never believed I could stand among the ranks of those who make the decisions...People like me were not made for politics. I am an absolute enemy of parties. I can't stand this straitjacket. They probably would have thrown me out of any party long ago."<sup>43</sup>

Other prominent spokesmen include Jens Reich, and Sebastian Pflugbeil, who was the New Forum Minister Without Portfolio in the Modrow "government of national responsibility."

**DIE GRÜNEN (The Greens)**

The Greens were formed on November 24, 1989, with a public call to form local grass-roots groups to deal with the catastrophic environ-

mental situation in the GDR. The initiators of the party included the independent Green network "Arche" as well as environmentalists from Church groups, from the East German Writers' Association and from the regime-sponsored "Society for Nature and Environment." Upon its founding the party portrayed itself as part of the Green movement throughout Europe.

In its founding document the Green Party describes itself as "ecological, feminist, and non-violent... anti-racist and anti-fascist." Its program ranges from immediate measures to cope with "ecologically catastrophic areas" in the GDR to "general and complete disarmament," the dissolution of the military alliances as well as the reduction of the GDR army (*Nationale Volksarmee*) to the "minimal necessary defensive level." It takes a skeptical view of unhindered economic growth and calls for a "new consciousness" and new forms of human relationships. In addition, the party declared that "Stalinist methods of dealing with people, the economy and the environment" must be overcome. "Above all we want to prevent the current movement of renewal in our land from becoming a society... of waste and a throw-away mentality under the pressure of an unreasonable, short-sighted need to catch up materially."<sup>44</sup>

The East German Greens have organized in each of the 15 districts in the GDR. They are a grass-roots organization with particular strength outside the capital of East Berlin. They have been receiving material and tactical support from the West German Greens, and have sought to channel that support to local Green campaigns outside East Berlin. The goal of the party is the creation of "an ecological, social, grass-roots and non-violent, humane society." It stresses the rule of law; freedom of religion, conscience, and opinion; equality of the sexes; and freedom of assembly as principles of an "ecologically oriented society." Initially it took a vague stance toward unification, pointing to a German confederation within a common European house "with open doors and without national borders, administered primarily according to ethnic criteria." But the party then moved toward support for unification.<sup>45</sup>

The Greens have been particularly vocal in their demands that the East German government return property taken from Jews by the Nazis. After the war, with nearly all of the country's Jewish population killed or abroad, the Communist government took over the property without compensating the owners. The Greens have also demanded that East German schools and media teach the public about anti-Semitic campaigns by the Communists in the 1950s.<sup>46</sup>

The West German Greens held discussions with a variety of East German movements and parties, including Democracy Now, New Forum, United Left, and the Democratic Awakening, before settling on support for the East German Greens. The Central Office of the West German Greens in Bonn printed 30,000 copies of the program draft of the East German Greens. It also decided to set aside DM 100,000 for the East German election campaign. The East German Greens were to receive DM 50,000, and the other DM 50,000 was to be distributed to a variety of other grass-roots groups. In West Germany, the Greens have been alone in their criticism of the West German political invasion of East Germany.

The Greens agreed to form an electoral alliance for the March elections with the Independent Women's Association. The two groups were listed together on the ballot, and received two percent of the vote. In a pre-electoral agreement, the Greens agreed to allocate one-third of the parliamentary seats won in the election to their partners, yet refused after receiving only eight seats. The Independent Women's Association disavowed the alliance, and the Greens joined the Alliance '90 in a joint parliamentary group.

#### Personality:

Mario Hamel, a co-founder and the most prominent of the Greens, is a long-time activist in East Germany's ecological counterculture, and has organized a variety of public protests, such as work stoppages at nuclear power plants, throughout the GDR. Although well-acquainted with other activists, such as those from the New Forum, Hamel and his colleagues charge other opposition movements with insufficient environmental engagement.

### INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

This group was founded in East Berlin on December 3 by over 1,000 women representing various women's organizations in the GDR who agreed to put their own considerable differences temporarily aside to unite for the defense of women's rights. Their initial, immediate demand was to be represented at the Roundtable discussion between government and opposition, which was to begin a few days later. "If we don't watch out and mix into politics, then we face the same fate as the women in the USSR and Poland," warned one activist at the founding congress. "Perestroika will pass us by."

The Association also joined with the Greens in an electoral alliance for the March elections. The Association demanded a standing parliamentary committee on women's issues, and "quotas in all areas of politics and the economy." The Association also called for the establishment of "modern socialism" in the GDR. Ina Merkel, scholar at the Humboldt University and one of the speakers of the group, asked: "Do we want to unite with the men in Bonn, to replace the dictatorship of the Politburo with the dictatorship of the Federal Chancellor's office? For the women's issue reunification means three steps backwards."<sup>47</sup>

The Association had joined the Greens in an electoral coalition, which it then terminated a few days after the March election. The Association charged that the Greens had broken their pre-election agreement to allocate one-third of the seats won in the election to the Women's Association. As a result, the Association is not represented in the new parliament.<sup>48</sup>

### VEREINIGTE LINKE (United Left)

The United Left is a loose amalgamation of small, informal, clandestine groups that had been working since the late summer within the Free German Federation of Trade Unions (FDGB), the state-sponsored union organization and at the universities. In its Bohlen Platform in September 1989 the group called for a "leftist, socialist alternative in the spirit of socialist democracy and freedom" in the GDR. It has described itself as a popular movement that could reach out to "unions and independent interest groups of workers, ranging from anti-fascist groups, autonomous groups, the new Communist Party, or the federation of independent socialists, to student circles."<sup>49</sup> It has also been represented at the Roundtable.

The group has resisted moves to unification, declaring its "decisive objection" to a process in which "Politburocratic repression would be replaced by capitalist exploitation." At the Roundtable discussions between government and opposition from December 1989-March 1990, it called for the GDR's identity as a "socialist state of the German nation" to be constitutionally enshrined.

The United Left also sought to capitalize on popular East German fears of being "sold out" to the West. At a demonstration in Leipzig the group distributed leaflets that declared the revolution to be "our struggle and we want to lead it to the end ourselves...What will become of us if we are unified? Would we in the not-too-distant future lose our jobs? Would we become the German Turks?" a reference to the millions of



Turks working in the Federal Republic, often in low-paying jobs that West Germans will not take.<sup>50</sup>

The group endorsed the separation of powers, party pluralism, provision for popular referendums, a federal structure, state ownership of the means of production, the right to work, codetermination between workers and management, an "ecological rebuilding of the industrial society," "overcoming the inequality of the classes," as well as women's emancipation, anti-Stalinism, anti-fascism, anti-militarism, anti-capitalism, anti-nationalism, and anti-racism.<sup>51</sup> Many were members of the Communist Party, which had been viewed early on as a potential electoral partner.

In the March elections the United Left and its electoral partners, the Carnations, could gain only one seat in the parliament.

#### **DIE NELKEN (The Carnations)**

The Carnations were formed by members of the SED in mid-January as a socialist party whose platform would integrate the writings of German revolutionaries Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg with those of Marx, Engels and Lenin. While endorsing a market economy, the party advocated retention of state planning to "secure the needs of the people."<sup>52</sup>

The *Nelken* joined with the United Left in an electoral alliance for the March elections.

#### **OTHER POLITICAL GROUPINGS**

##### **The Republicans and the Extreme Right**

The extreme right-wing Republican Party of West Germany has also sought to win support from blue collar discontent in cities like Leipzig. The East German Parliament barred the party and Franz Schönhuber, its founder, from entering the GDR, yet it remained active on the margins of the election campaign.

A small extreme right wing Party of Middle German National Democrats (*Mitteldeutsche Nationaldemokraten*—MND) has been formed with financial and material support from the West German rightist National Democratic Party (NDP). The party is opposed to the "abuse of the German people by the victorious powers," and "the devastating

influence of foreign cultures and the increasing infiltration of foreign elements," and calls for the withdrawal of all foreign troops and for a nonaligned, neutral Germany within the borders of the present GDR and FRG.<sup>53</sup> The party remains marginal.

Efforts to organize extreme right-wing political organizations have been accompanied by a variety of neo-fascist episodes that have cast a shadow over the revolution. A Jewish cemetery and a Soviet war memorial in East Berlin were desecrated with swastikas and fascist slogans, although a number of well-placed observers believe the East German Communist Party and the *Stasi* may have instigated these and other events to fan domestic and foreign fears of a resurgent Germany and bolster support for the Communists as an anti-fascist element in German society.

Some of the neo-fascist events were traced to the West German Republican Party, such as those on February 5, 1990, in Leipzig, when hundreds of skinheads and neo-Nazis smashed storefront windows and goose-stepped through streets, shouting "*Sieg Heil*" and anti-Jewish slogans.

Marginal youthful neo-fascist movements had already been in existence under the Honecker regime, although they remained a taboo subject in the "anti-fascist state." They tend to fall into two categories: skinheads and *Faschos*.

East German skinheads have adopted the bizarre dress and shaved heads of their West European counterparts. Some tend toward anarchism and some toward neo-fascism. They tend to be loosely organized and prone to spontaneous violence. There are several thousand skinheads in East Germany.

Young *Faschos* have no distinct appearance, but have organized themselves into secret political groups. They hate foreigners (which they consider Jews to be) and homosexuals, and admire strong totalitarian leadership. There are no accurate estimates of the number of *Faschos* in East Germany. They have combined the organization of citywide and regional networks with study of such books as *Mein Kampf*. Some of the underground groups go by names such as the Saxon Front and SS Division Walter Krüger. The latter group wears Nazi paraphernalia.<sup>54</sup>

Official East German statistics released after the November Revolution reveal that 185 individuals were charged with neo-Nazi activities in 1988, and 296 for the first eleven months of 1989. Authorities estimate the number of extreme rightists to be between 1,000-1,600.<sup>55</sup>

*National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands*  
(National Democratic Party of Germany) (NDPD)  
and the *Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands*  
(Democratic Farmers' Party of Germany) (DBD)

The other two "bloc" parties, the National Democrats and the Farmers' Party, were unable to overcome the fact that they were pure creations of the Communists themselves to bind farmers and nationalist currents to the Communist Party. Both were reduced to marginal parties in the March elections.

The Democratic Farmers' Party was able to retain enough farm support to win over two percent of the vote and nine seats in the new parliament. The NDPD suffered a devastating defeat, receiving only 0.39 percent, which translated into only two parliamentary seats.

#### THE NEW EAST GERMAN GOVERNMENT

On March 18, East Germans voted for a trustee that would work to abolish the GDR as quickly as possible. Negotiations lasted for three weeks before a Grand Coalition government, composed of the Alliance for Germany, the Federation of Free Democrats, and the Social Democratic Party was formed under the leadership of CDU Party Chairman Lothar de Maizière on April 12, 1990. The Grand Coalition gave the new government the necessary two-thirds majority in the parliament to effect constitutional changes to pave the way for German unity.

The Christian Democrats filled eleven ministerial posts. Seven cabinet positions, including the foreign and finance ministries, were occupied by the Social Democrats. The Liberals received three seats, the German Social Union two, and Democratic Awakening one. (For composition of the new government, see chart on p.48.)

Particularly interesting was the creation of a "Structure Ministry," the task of which is to replace the 15 administrative districts of the GDR with the old states, or *Länder*.

As the East Germans organized their government, West German leaders were planning the quick absorption of East Germany itself. Negotiations on a State Treaty confirming social, economic and monetary union with West Germany, and the "two-plus-four" negotiations between the two German states and the four World War II allies—the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France—followed quickly after the announcement of the new government.

#### THE REVOLUTION THAT ATE ITS PARENTS

On October 7, 1989, the ceremonies in East Berlin's ornate Palace of the Republic commemorated the 40th anniversary of a separate East German identity. Yet it was on the streets that night that for the first time—and for a brief time thereafter—a real East German identity emerged. It was the identity of a revolutionary movement, an unprecedented democratization from below, a new mass consciousness without leaders and strategies.

The regime wanted to celebrate 40 years of Communist achievement; the people wanted to celebrate 200 years of the storming of the Bastille. Four weeks later, the impossible had come true. As East German lyricist Wolf Biermann reflected soon after the Wall crumbled, "Just as the walls of the accursed state prisons under Louis XVI were razed by the enraged people, so will the walls be razed of a state that was itself a monstrous prison. But what to do with the stones? One would want to throw a few of them at the backs of those hated rulers. But it is better that they become souvenirs for Americans or be quickly used to rebuild for a better purpose."<sup>56</sup>

The spark of the revolution had come from the people behind the people, those activists who had worked for years on the margins of Honecker's Germany to build an alternative to that regime. Yet while the opposition and the people shared a common identity for a number of weeks, the breathtaking collapse of Communist authority created a vacuum in which the personal, material and substantive weaknesses of the opposition were laid bare. As one worker exclaimed to great applause on the streets of Leipzig in mid-December, "I have worked hard for 40 years, paid the rent on time, am still with my wife, I haven't seen the world, and my city is decaying. I won't allow myself to become a guinea pig again", particularly since the alternative, the Federal Republic of Germany, was standing next door.<sup>57</sup>

For a moment in history the East German people shared a sense of solidarity that enabled them to shatter Communist rule. Yet in the resulting political vacuum Germans from Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, Thuringia, and Berlin turned to older, deeper German regional identities. Within a matter of weeks the dissidents who had become revolutionaries now had to become campaign managers. It was a hopeless challenge. In the end, those groups who had sparked the revolution received less than six percent of the popular vote.

Six months after communism collapsed in East Germany, the faces of the German Revolution had become caricatures of the new situation: deposed Communist leader Erich Honecker, after three cancer operations, looked as dead as his regime; East German Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière, frail and reluctant, seemed to epitomize the state of East Germany as it anxiously demanded to be absorbed by the powerful and ponderous Federal Republic, itself personified by Helmut Kohl.

And Bärbel Bohley, the emotional moralist, the "mother of the revolution," was again in the ranks of the opposition. The revolution had eaten both its mothers and its fathers in the gradually disappearing republic.

**Elections to the GDR Parliament on March 18, 1990  
(Percentage of Popular Vote)**

DISTRICTS ( <i>Bezirke</i> )	Voter Turnout	PDS	SPD	Alliance '90	Fed. of Free Democrats (Lib)
Berlin	87.6	30.0	35.0	6.4	3.0
Cottbus	93.3	17.9	19.2	2.7	5.2
Dresden	93.4	14.8	9.7	3.7	5.5
Erfurt	94.2	9.8	18.7	1.8	4.5
Frankfurt	93.3	22.1	31.9	3.1	4.2
Gera	94.6	12.5	16.5	2.6	5.1
Halle	93.5	13.8	20.8	2.4	10.0
Karl-Marx-Stadt	94.7	11.3	15.6	2.1	6.0
Leipzig	92.7	14.4	21.5	3.3	5.4
Magdeburg	93.5	14.2	27.5	1.9	4.4
Neubrandenburg	93.9	25.8	21.2	1.6	3.0
Potsdam	93.9	16.6	34.3	3.8	4.9
Rostock	92.0	23.2	24.8	2.7	3.4
Schwerin	93.8	17.8	25.4	2.5	4.5
Suhl	95.8	12.6	16.1	1.9	4.1
<b>STATES (<i>Länder</i>)</b>					
Berlin	87.6	30.0	35.0	6.4	3.0
Mecklenburg	93.0	22.4	23.9	2.3	3.6
Brandenburg	93.5	18.4	28.9	3.3	4.8
Sachsen-Anhalt	93.5	14.0	23.6	2.2	7.7
Thüringen	94.7	11.2	17.4	2.0	4.6
Sachsen	93.7	13.3	15.1	3.0	5.7
<b>ELECTION RESULTS</b>					
	93.2	16.3	21.8	2.9	5.3

Sources: ADN International Service, March 23, 1990; Wolfgang Gibowski, "East Germans Voting for Freedom in a United Germany," unpublished lecture given at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, The Johns Hopkins University, March 23, 1990; Deutsche Presse Agentur Dispatch, reprinted in *Die Tageszeitung*, March 30, 1990.

Alliance for Germany	Greens/Ind Women's Association	Other	CDU	Democratic Awakening	German Social Union
21.6	2.7	1.4	18.4	1.0	2.2
48.3	2.0	4.7	42.8	0.8	4.8
59.9	1.8	4.7	45.0	1.1	13.8
60.9	2.0	2.3	56.6	1.9	2.4
32.0	2.2	4.4	27.8	0.7	3.5
58.8	2.0	2.5	48.9	1.7	8.2
48.4	1.6	3.0	45.1	0.6	2.8
60.7	1.6	2.7	45.0	1.0	14.8
50.6	1.9	3.0	39.8	0.7	10.0
46.9	2.0	3.1	44.2	0.7	1.9
38.6	1.8	8.0	36.0	0.5	2.0
34.9	2.1	3.3	31.2	0.8	2.9
37.8	1.9	6.3	34.3	0.7	2.8
42.3	2.4	5.0	39.8	0.6	2.0
60.4	2.3	2.6	50.6	1.0	8.9
<b>STATES (<i>Länder</i>)</b>					
21.6	2.7	1.4	18.4	1.0	2.2
39.3	2.0	6.4	36.4	0.6	2.3
38.5	2.1	4.0	34.0	0.8	3.7
47.8	1.8	3.0	44.7	0.6	2.4
60.2	2.1	2.4	53.0	1.6	5.6
57.7	1.7	3.5	43.6	0.9	13.2
<b>ELECTION RESULTS</b>					
48.1	2.0	3.5	40.9	0.9	6.3

**THE EAST GERMAN GOVERNMENT OF APRIL 1990**

PRIME MINISTER: Lothar de Maizière, Christian Democratic Union (CDU)

MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE: Klaus Reichenbach (CDU)

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Markus Meckel, Social Democratic Party (SPD)

MINISTER FOR REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS: Manfred Preiss (Federation of Free Democrats - BFD)

MINISTER FOR ECONOMICS: Gerhard Pohl (CDU)

MINISTER FOR FINANCE: Walter Romberg (SPD)

MINISTER FOR TRADE AND TOURISM: Sybille Reider (SPD)

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Kurt Wünsche (BFD)

MINISTER FOR NUTRITION, AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY:  
Peter Pollack  
(Independent, proposed by the SPD)

MINISTER FOR LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS: Regine Hildebrandt (SPD)

MINISTER FOR DISARMAMENT AND DEFENSE: Rainer Eppelmann (Democratic Awakening - DA)

MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND SPORT: Cordula Schubert (CDU)

MINISTER FOR FAMILY AND WOMEN'S AFFAIRS: Christa Schmidt (CDU)

MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Jürgen Kleditzsch (CDU)

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORTATION: Horst Gibtner (CDU)

MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, NATURE PROTECTION,  
ENERGY AND REACTOR SAFETY: Karl-Hermann Steinberg (CDU)

MINISTER FOR POST AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS: Emil Schnell (SPD)

MINISTER FOR CONSTRUCTION, URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND  
HOUSING: Axel Viehweger (BFD)

MINISTER FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY: Frank Terpe (SPD)

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE: Hans-Joachim Meier  
(Independent, proposed by the CDU)

MINISTER FOR CULTURE: Herbert Schirmer (CDU)

MINISTER FOR MEDIA POLICY: Gottfried Müller (CDU)

MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION: Hans-Wilhelm Ebeling (German Social Union - DSU)

## ENDNOTES

1. See Heym's remarks to the November 4 rally in *Die Tageszeitung*, November 9, 1989.
2. See Hubertus Knabe, "Politische Opposition in der DDR," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, January 5, 1990.
3. Quoted in Mike Dennis, *German Democratic Republic: Politics, Economics and Society* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1988).
4. For more background on the regime's "steam valve" policies, see Daniel Hamilton, "Dateline East Germany: The Wall Behind the Wall," *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1989.
5. "Wider eine Gesellschaft der Gleichgültigen und Verantwortungslosen. Zwanzig Thesen zur Erneuerung und Umgestaltung," reprinted in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, July 13, 1988.
6. See Hamilton, op. cit.
7. Comments made at a discussion sponsored by the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies of The Johns Hopkins University, February 6, 1990.
8. Monika Maron, "Der Kaiser ist ja nackt," *Zeit Magazin*, February 18, 1988.
9. *Die Tageszeitung*, October 18, 1989.
10. See Knabe, op. cit.
11. See the comments in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, December 2-3, 1989.
12. See Knabe, op. cit.
13. See Stefan Heym's essay, "Ist die DDR noch zu retten?" in *Die Zeit*, October 13, 1989.
14. Ibid.
15. Reprinted in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, October 3, 1989.

16. Reprinted in *Berliner Morgenpost*, October 29, 1989.
17. Quoted in *Der Tagesspiegel*, November 15, 1989.
18. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, December 2-3, 1989.
19. See Heym's essay, "Aschermittwoch in der DDR," in *Der Spiegel*, December 4, 1989.
20. *Die Tageszeitung*, November 14, 1989; *DDR Journal zur Novemberrevolution* (Berlin: *Die Tageszeitung*, January 1990), p. 126.
21. See Daniel Hamilton, "The Party is Out; a Street Party Shapes Up," in *Los Angeles Times*, December 8, 1989.
22. See *Die Tageszeitung*, November 23, 1989.
23. Quoted in *Time*, April 2, 1990, p. 30.
24. For more detailed results of the election, see *ADN International Service*, March 23, 1990; Wolfgang Gibowski, "East Germans Voting for Freedom in a United Germany," unpublished lecture given at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, The Johns Hopkins University, March 23, 1990; *Deutsche Presse Agentur Dispatch*, reprinted in *Die Tageszeitung*, March 30, 1990.
25. *Wall Street Journal*, March 13, 1990. For detailed documentation of the range of Stasi activities, see the collection of original papers and documents gathered by the Roundtable and published under the title "Ich liebe euch doch alle..." *Befehle und Lageberichte des MfS, Januar - November 1989*, edited by Armin Mitter and Stefan Wolle (Berlin: Basis Druck 1990).
26. For an account of the allegations against Böhme, see *Der Spiegel*, March 26, 1990, pp. 26-32.
27. Quoted in *International Herald Tribune*, February 13, 1990.
28. See de Maizière's interview in *Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt*, November 24, 1989.

29. Ibid.
30. Quoted in *Frankfurter Rundschau*, January 27, 1990.
31. See *Die Tageszeitung*, March 13, 1990.
32. Quoted in *Die Tageszeitung*, October 18, 1989.
33. See *Die Tageszeitung*, March 15, 1990.
34. See *Die Tageszeitung*, November 18, 1989.
35. *Die Tageszeitung*, November 2, 1989; *New York Times*, February 9, 1990.
36. *Frankfurter Rundschau*, October 14, 1989; *Berliner Morgenpost*, December 5, 1989; *International Herald Tribune*, January 15, 1990.
37. *DDR Journal . . .*, op. cit., p. 67.
38. See *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 13, 1990.
39. See Wolfgang Gibowski of the *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen*, "East Germans Voting for Freedom in a United Germany," unpublished lecture given at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, The Johns Hopkins University, March 23, 1990; also *Deutsche Presse Agentur Dispatch*, reprinted in *Die Tageszeitung*, March 20, 1990.
40. *ADN International Service*, March 24, 1990.
41. "Programmerklärung des NEUEN FORUM," author's copy. For a review of the New Forum conference, see *Die Tageszeitung*, January 29, 1990.
42. Remarks by Jens Reich at an AICGS symposium, February 6, 1990.
43. See *Die Tageszeitung*, February 26, 1990.

44. See *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 12, 1990; *DDR Journal . . .*, op. cit., p. 85. For a comment on the popular East German attitude to ecological issues, see Daniel Hamilton, "Back to a Wasteful Future for East Germans," *Los Angeles Times*, April 22, 1990.
45. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 31, 1990.
46. *International Herald Tribune*, December 2-3, 1989.
47. *Die Tageszeitung*, December 5, 1989.
48. *ADN International Service*, March 23, 1990.
49. Reprinted in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 12, 1990.
50. Ibid.; *Washington Post*, December 19, 1989.
51. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, September 21, 1989.
52. Ibid.
53. *Der Morgen*, March 26, 1990.
54. See *Christian Science Monitor*, March 26, 1990; *Die Tageszeitung*, January 3, 1990; *Die Tageszeitung*, January 20, 1990.
55. See *Berliner Zeitung*, various editions, Dec. 11-19, 1989; *Die Zeit*, January 12, 1990; *Die Tageszeitung*, January 20, 1990.
56. See Biermann's essay in *Die Tageszeitung*, November 11, 1989.
57. Quoted in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 13, 1989.