

Time Line 1989/90

This time line presents a selection of dates that marked important events during the social upheavals of the Peaceful Revolution

(This list is not exhaustive.)

1989

2 May 1989

Hungary begins to take down the border defences along its border with Austria

7 May 1989

Local elections in the GDR. Opposition groups prove that the results were manipulated and from then on demonstrations against the electoral fraud are held in East Berlin on the seventh day of every month.

4 September 1989

First Monday demonstrations in Leipzig. 1,200 people gather in front of the Nikolai Church demanding rights such as freedom of travel and democracy.

9/10 September 1989

The founding proclamation of the New Forum (Neues Forum) signals the so-called "Awakening".

Further civil rights movements are established.

11 September 1989

Hungary officially opens its western border to the GDR's citizens, risking a complete break with the leadership in East Berlin

30 September 1989

West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher announces to East German refugees in the West German Embassy in Prague that they will be allowed to leave.

Press information

3 October 1989

The East German government bans travel without a passport or visa to Czechoslovakia, in an attempt to halt the mass exodus. Special trains take refugees from the embassies in Prague and Warsaw through the GDR. There are skirmishes with the police as the trains pass through cities such as Dresden.

7 October 1989

40th anniversary of the GDR. Thousands of protestors, mainly young people, demonstrate in front of the Palace of the Republic in Berlin. The protest demonstrations spread to other cities in the GDR and are broken up by force and likewise on the following day.

9 October 1989

70,000 people take to the streets in Leipzig, despite a fear that the security forces will suppress the Monday demonstration. The police, military and combat groups do not intervene.

11 October 1989

The government party, the SED, requests that people stay in the GDR and announces that it is ready to enter into a “dialogue” on further developments.

16 October 1989

The number of participants on the Monday demonstration doubles. The security forces do not intervene.

18 October 1989

After 18 years in office, Erich Honecker is forced to resign. Egon Krenz becomes the new SED general secretary. In his televised speech he first uses the term “Wende” (“turning point”).

24 October 1989

The Volkskammer (East German Parliament) elects Egon Krenz as head of the State Council and the National Defence Council. In the evening, 12,000 people demonstrate in Berlin.

Press information

30 October 1989

300,000 people take part in the Monday demonstration in Leipzig.

4 November 1989

The largest unofficial demonstration in the history of the GDR takes place in Berlin.

7 November 1989

The entire East German government and the Council of Ministers under Willi Stoph resign.

8 November 1989

The Politburo of the Central Committee, the supreme authority of the SED, resigns. West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl agrees to economic and financial aid for the GDR under the conditions that the SED gives up its monopoly on power, allows political opposition, and guarantees free elections.

9 November 1989

The Wall falls, triggered by the imprecise announcement of new travel regulations at a press conference. Ten thousand East Berliners rush to the Wall and border guards are forced to open the crossing points.

17 November 1989

Hans Modrow becomes the new Prime Minister of the GDR. He rejects the idea of reunification and suggests a comprehensive "Vertragsgemeinschaft" (union by treaty) between the two German states.

28 November 1989

West German Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl announces his Ten-Point Programme for the gradual unification of the two German states.

4/5 December 1989

Demonstrators occupy State Security buildings throughout the country and secure the Stasi files.

Press information

7 December 1989

The central “Round Table” holds its first meeting. During protracted negotiations, which last until March 1990, basic conditions for democratization are established.

19/20 December 1989

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Prime Minister Hans Modrow meet in Dresden, to negotiate a “Union by treaty” between the two German states.

At a CDU rally in Dresden, the people enthusiastically applaud Kohl.

22 December 1989

The Wall is opened at the Brandenburg Gate. The first concrete segment is removed from its anchoring at half past midnight.

23 December 1989

Offices issuing GDR travel permits close permanently in West Berlin. West Germans are allowed visa-free travel and are no longer required to exchange a set amount of money

1990

15 January 1990

Thousands of Berliners demonstrate in front of the headquarters of the Ministry for State Security in the Lichtenberg district of Berlin and eventually occupy the building. The last bastion of SED power collapses.

1 February 1990

After his return from Moscow, Prime Minister Hans Modrow presents his plan for German unity under the title: “Germany, concordant fatherland”. In a four-step plan, the two German states are to join together in the form of a German “federation” or “union“.

10 February 1990

At a meeting with the West German chancellor and foreign minister in the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev announces that the Soviet Union accepts the German people’s decision to live in one state.

Press information

12 March 1990

At its sixteenth and final meeting, the central “Round Table” is opposed to the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic by simply adopting West German basic law. The unification process should be designed so that the citizens of both states keep their right to self-determination and have equal status.

18 March 1990

The ‘Alliance for Germany’ wins the “Volkskammer” (East German Parliament) elections with 50 % of the vote.

1 July 1990

Currency union is introduced. The West German Deutschmark becomes the official currency in the GDR.

31 August 1990

The “Unification Treaty” is signed in East Berlin.

3 October 1990

Germany celebrates “Reunification Day”.

2 December 1990

Elections for the Bundestag and the Berlin State Parliament take place for the first time in reunified Germany.

www.mauerfall09.de / www.fallofthewall09.com / www.revolution89.de

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