

Chronology of Events

1971

- 3 May 1971 Walter Ulbricht asks to be relieved of his post as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED. Erich Honecker is elected new First Secretary
- 15–19 June 1971 At the Eighth Party Congress the idea of a 'socialist human community' is dropped
- 24 June 1971 Erich Honecker elected chairman of the National Defence Council
- 5 August 1971 Honecker meets Brezhnev and Podgorny to discuss further co-operation between the GDR and the USSR
- 17 December 1971 Honecker's 'no taboos' speech

1972

- 26 May 1972 Traffic Agreement signed between GDR and FRG
- October 1972 New SED plans to solve the housing problem by 1990
- 8 November 1972 The way is cleared for West German journalists to open offices in East Berlin

- 21 December 1972 Basic Treaty signed as a first step towards 'normalising' relations between GDR and FRG

1973

- 21 February 1973 A new regulation against foreign journalists slandering the GDR, its institutions and leading figures
- 1 August 1973 Walter Ulbricht dies at the age of 80
- 18 September 1973 East and West Germany are accepted as members of the United Nations
- 2 October 1973 The Central Committee approves a plan to step up the housing programme

1974

- 1 February 1974 East German citizens are permitted to possess Western currency
- 20 June 1974 Günter Gaus becomes the first 'Permanent Representative' of the FRG in the GDR
- 7 October 1974 Law on the revision of the constitution comes into effect. Concept of one German nation is dropped and closer ties with the Soviet Union stressed

1975

- 1 August 1975 Helsinki Final Act signed
- 7 October 1975 Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Aid between GDR and Soviet Union
- 16 December 1975 *Spiegel* reporter Jörg Mettke expelled after another *Spiegel* reporter publishes a story on compulsory adoption in the GDR

1976

- 29–30 June 1976 Conference of 29 Communist and

- Workers' Parties in East Berlin. Euro-communist ideas put forward by Spanish and Italians and published in *Neues Deutschland*
- 10 July 1976 33 East Germans from Riesa make public their petition calling for support in their bid to leave the GDR
- 31 August 1976 Dr Karl-Heinz Nitschke is arrested in connection with the Riesa petition, and all other signatories are urged to withdraw their applications to leave the GDR
- September 1976 Reiner Kunze's critical work, *Die wunderbaren Jahre*, appears in West Germany with the permission of the East German Copyright Office. Kunze is subsequently expelled from the Writers' Union
- 29 October 1976 Erich Honecker is elected Chairman of the Council of State
- 16 November 1976 The singer/writer, Wolf Biermann, is deprived of East German citizenship while on a concert tour in West Germany. The following day the Biermann petition is sent to Honecker. Some supporters of Biermann are subsequently arrested
- 18 November 1976 Stefan Heym decides not to attend a writers' meeting in West Berlin for fear he will not be allowed back into the GDR
- 26 November 1976 Havemann placed under house arrest. In December the East German Foreign Ministry requests West German journalists working in the GDR to refrain from contacting him
- 22 December 1976 The West German television reporter, Lothar Loewe, is expelled from the GDR

1977

- 14 April 1977 The writer Reiner Kunze and his family leave the GDR for West Germany
- 23 August 1977 Rudolf Bahro arrested after extracts from *Die Alternative* appear in *Der Spiegel*
- 26 August 1977 Professor Hellmuth Nitsche (who wrote to President Carter on human rights violations in the GDR), Dr K.-H. Nitschke (Riesa Petition), Gernulf Pannach, Christian Kunert and Jürgen Fuchs (who protested against Biermann's expatriation) are released from prison and go to the West
- 4 October 1977–9 March 1978 Belgrade follow-up conference to Helsinki. Lengthy criticism of communist states' record on human rights, particularly from the USA delegation
- 7 October 1977 Clashes between police and young people on the Alexanderplatz in East Berlin after a rock concert. Reports of some deaths
- 12 December 1977 The writer Hans Schädlich leaves the GDR for West Germany. He lost his post at the Academy of Sciences after protesting against Biermann's expatriation
- 30 December 1977 *Der Spiegel* publishes the first part of the 'Manifesto', allegedly written by middle-ranking and senior SED functionaries calling themselves the League of Democratic Communists of Germany. After publication of the second part the *Spiegel* office in East Berlin is closed down by the East German authorities

1978

- 31 January 1978 Before the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva, the GDR claims that GDR law allows restrictions on civil rights such as freedom of movement and retaining GDR citizenship
- 6 March 1978 In discussions with the League of Evangelical Churches in the GDR, Honecker acknowledges the church as an independent organisation with social relevance in socialist society
- 29–31 May 1978 Eighth Congress of the Writers' Union not attended by many who signed the Biermann petition
- 14 June 1978 Conference of Governing Bodies of the Evangelical Churches agrees on its letter to the parishes, objecting to the introduction of pre-military training in schools
- 30 June 1978 Bahro sentenced to eight years' imprisonment
- 1 September 1978 Pre-military training introduced as a new subject in schools for fifteen and sixteen-year-olds

1979

- 5 April 1979 GDR citizens are no longer permitted to pay for goods with Western currency at Intershops. Currency must first be exchanged at a bank for coupons. Some East Germans express their disapproval on West German television
- 14 April 1979 A new regulation requires Western journalists to obtain permission to conduct interviews of any kind
- 26 April 1979 Heym's statement on the East

- German Copyright Office published in the West
- 9 May 1979 House arrest for Havemann ends, but proceedings started against him for alleged currency offences
- May–June 1979 Havemann and Heym are fined heavily for publishing work in the West without permission. Heym is expelled from the Writers' Union together with eight others who protested against these moves. Heym gives a statement on the legal case against him and the West German television reporter who records it is expelled from the GDR
- 28 June 1979 Reform of the Penal Code, increasing maximum penalties for agitation against the state, establishing illegal contacts, public vilification. Law on taking up illegal contacts extended to apply to GDR writers who publish critical work in the West. Removal of 'subjective element' from para. 106
- 6 October 1979 Nico Hübner and Rudolf Bahro are released from prison as part of an amnesty to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the GDR. They both go to the West
- December 1979 SED review of its members results in 3944 expulsions from the party
- 1980
- July–August 1980 Strikes in Poland over price rises escalate into demands for free trade unions
- 11 November 1980–9 September 1983 Madrid follow-up conference to Helsinki
- 1981
- 9 May 1981 Appeal from the Social Service for Peace group, containing criticism of

- the 'militarisation' of East German society
- 12 September 1981 Klaus Gysi rejects Social Service for Peace and suggests that anyone who is not satisfied with the Construction Unit option is bent on confrontation
- 13-14 December 1981 Peace Meeting of writers and scientists in East Berlin. Criticism from writers of the authorities' actions against activists in the unofficial peace movement.
- Martial Law declared in Poland
- 1982**
- 9 February 1982 The East German minister, Reiner Eppelmann, is taken into custody after publishing the Berlin Appeal
- 13 February 1982 Peace Forum in the Kreuzkirche attended by over 5000 East Germans
- March 1982 New military service law makes it possible for women to be called up in case of need
Official ban on the Swords into Ploughshares badge
- 9 April 1982 Robert Havemann dies
- 19-20 June 1982 Politburo member Kurt Hager talks of possibility of an alliance between Marxists, Christians and pacifists in the GDR
- 24-28 September 1982 Synod of the Evangelical Church in Halle takes peace as its theme. The symbol Swords into Ploughshares is dropped 'for the sake of peace'
- 1983**
- January 1983 East German Catholic bishops publicly criticise the introduction of pre-military training in schools

- 11-16 April 1983 International Karl Marx Conference in East Berlin. Western European and Japanese communist parties argue that the Soviet Union is not necessarily a model for all countries and that no ideology should become a state philosophy. Proceedings published in *Neues Deutschland*
- 22-23 April 1983 Second peace meeting of writers (in West Berlin)
- May 1983 Petra Kelly, Gert Bastian and other West German Greens demonstrate for pacifism on the Alexanderplatz and are taken away by police
- 23 July 1983 Around 200 East Germans hold a silent demonstration in Jena as part of their campaign to leave the GDR
- 1 September 1983 Some 70 people attempt to form a human chain between the American and Soviet embassies in East Berlin to 'remind both nuclear powers of their responsibility for world peace'. Security police break up the demonstration
- In summer 1983, 57 East German doctors form the Initiative against Nuclear War and argue that medical aid is useless in a nuclear war
- 17 September 1983 500 women attend a meeting in the Lichtenberg Auferstehungskirche and discuss the link between armaments and the male mentality
- December 1983 Cruise and Pershing missiles stationed in the Federal Republic. Willi Stoph states in the *Volkskammer* that the GDR government's main aim is to prevent a nuclear holocaust. This involves speeding up preparations for stationing long-range Soviet nuclear missiles in the GDR

12 December 1983 Ulrike Poppe and Bärbel Bohley are arrested after involvement in peace initiatives and setting up a non-state nursery. Released on 24 January 1984

1984

20 January 1984 Six people from East Berlin enter the US embassy there in connection with their attempt to leave the GDR. They are eventually allowed to go to the West. Others who try the same tactic soon afterwards are ejected from the embassy

24 January 1984 Twelve East Germans enter the West German Permanent Mission in East Berlin and are allowed to leave for West Germany

March 1984 Evangelical Church Synod at Görlitz calls upon the government to create the conditions in East Germany which will encourage its citizens to stay

6 April 1984 35 East Germans leave the West German embassy in Prague after five weeks and return to the GDR when they receive an assurance that they will be permitted to move to the Federal Republic

15 May 1984 *Neues Deutschland* reports that in response to the stationing of American missiles in Western European countries long-range missiles have now been stationed in the GDR

27 June 1984 The West German Permanent Mission in East Berlin is closed after 55 East Germans enter in their attempts to move to the West. They leave the Mission three days later

17-21 July 1984 END Conference in Perugia attended by East German peace activists. They criticise political repression in the

GDR, excessive church influence on the unofficial peace movement, and point out that the number of peace activists in the GDR has fallen dramatically as a result of people being allowed to leave the country for the West

October 1984 Up to 130 East Germans enter the West German embassy in Prague

9 November 1984 The West German authorities announce that 36 123 East Germans moved to the Federal Republic in the first nine months of 1984

1985

15 January 1985 The last six East German citizens leave the West German embassy in Prague and return to the GDR after receiving an assurance that they would not be prosecuted and that their applications to leave the GDR would receive attention. At one point the number of East Germans in the embassy had reached around 350