

# Timeline of GDR Environmentalism

Although the East German government introduced somewhat ambiguous environmental laws as of its founding in 1949, its ideals could not be fulfilled in tandem with the country's economic growth plans and budget restrictions. In response to the international UN Conference on the Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy, in 1955 the GDR joined with other countries in adopting the conference's mission. As of 1968, it reasserted its ambivalent commitment to conservation in its revised constitution and added various protective measures. By 1982, however, environmental problems had increased to such an extent that the government felt it necessary to pass a law classifying all kinds of environmental data, including on air and water pollution in areas central to the chemical industry and uranium mining, and around power plants that burned brown coal.

As rivers and forests suffered from the ecological strain, citizens became concerned about their health and living conditions. At the end of the 1970s, the first grassroots environmental groups were founded and started meeting, most often in spaces provided by the Protestant Church. (In the GDR, churches were the only organizations independent of state structures that could offer protected spaces for oppositional groups to meet.) The growing ecological movement became critical in drawing public attention to increasingly disastrous environmental problems. Activists organized local and national information sessions, seminars, demonstrations and protest marches, which were closely monitored by the Stasi, the GDR's secret police.

The Chernobyl nuclear disaster of 1986 and the founding of the *Umweltbibliothek* (UB, Environmental Library) in Berlin were turning points in the GDR's increasingly political environmental movement, which became a crucial player during East Germany's peaceful revolution of 1989. Many environmental activists were key in protecting citizens' environmental interests during the *Wende* period, before and after the fall of the Wall and German unification in 1990.

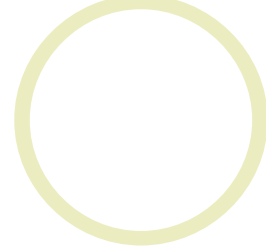
The following timeline is a list of selected events in East German environmental history, reflecting both developments and decisions on the part of the East German state, and the growth of ecological awareness and the environmental movement among GDR citizens.

- 1949** The constitution of the newly founded German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany) guarantees the redistribution of natural resources for public ownership, which seeks to ensure that the land would be exploited equitably.
- 7/1/52** The East German government sets up the Agency for Water Management, centralizing the management of water resources, water rights and water companies. This agency deals with national, but also international issues.
- 8/4/54** *Gesetz zur Erhaltung und Pflege der heimatischen Nature – Naturschutzgesetz* (Nature Protection Act, or Act for the Preservation and Care of Nature in the Homeland) replaces the environmental regulations established under the Nazis in 1935.

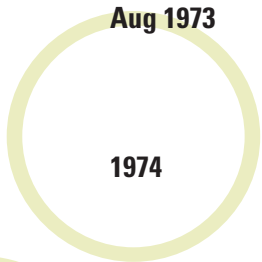
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- 1954** Wismut AG, a top-secret uranium mining company in southern East Germany that has been under Soviet control, becomes the Soviet-GDR shareholding company SDAG Wismut. Established in the Soviet Occupation Zone in April 1946, the Wismut AG mining district became a closed military zone as of early 1947; even the East German government—after its founding in 1949—was banned from activities there. This changes with the founding of SDAG Wismut, in which the USSR and GDR are equal shareholders. By 1990, 230,400 tons of uranium are mined, making the GDR the fourth largest producer worldwide.
- The Wismut mining company is also the setting of Konrad Wolf's DEFA feature film *Sonnensucher* (*Sun Seekers*, 1958). The film was banned and not premiere until 1971.
- Aug 1955** UN International Conference on the Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Fall 1955** Nuclear technology for civilian purposes, intended to forefront the superiority of socialism and contribute to the prosperity of the population, becomes a part of GDR state doctrine and national identity. Immediately after the UN conference, a media campaign launches to reassure people as to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
- The GDR asks the USSR for help building its first nuclear power plant in Rheinsberg, near Potsdam. The Politburo and the Council of Ministers create an *Amt für Kernforschung und Kerntechnik* (AKK, Office for Nuclear Research and Technology), comparable to the *Bundesministerium für Atomfragen* (Federal Ministry of Nuclear Issues) formed a few months earlier in West Germany.
- 1956-57** The *Zentrum für Kernforschung* (ZfK, Central Institute of Nuclear Research) is founded in Dresden-Rossendorf. With construction entirely realized by Soviet enterprises, the Rossendorf research reactor goes online in 1957.
- Late 1950s-60s** An official GDR advertising slogan in this period is "*Blühende Zukunft – Kernenergie*" (Bright Future—Nuclear Energy).
- 1962** The GDR's *Staatliche Zentrale für Strahlenschutz* (National Center for Radiation Protection) is founded; it will be renamed in 1973.
- 1966** The Rheinsberg Nuclear Power Plant, the GDR's first, is put into operation. The Soviet VVER-210 reactor and plant are built as a Soviet-GDR collaboration and radioactive waste is reprocessed then shipped for storage in the USSR.
- 1968** Revision of the East German constitution. Article 15 states that the "natural wealth" found in the land "must be protected and used efficiently." It argues that nature conservation is "in the interests of the well-being of the citizens" and is the responsibility of both the state and the people. Protections extend to land, water and air, as well as to flora and fauna.

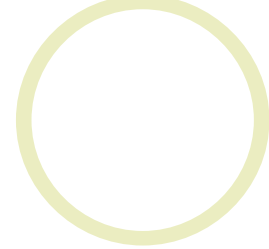
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- 1969** Construction begins on the Lubmin Nuclear Power Plant, near Greifswald, on the Baltic Sea.
- 1970** The *Gesetz über die planmäßige Gestaltung der sozialistischen Landeskultur* (Act for the Planned Management of Socialist Land Improvement) goes into effect. Although the law includes strict controls on the environmental contamination of land, water and air, companies continue to over-exploit the environment. One of the most visible cases is open-cast mining for brown coal, which is used in non-nuclear power plants and contributes to land and air pollution.
- Despite some doubts about the site's geological stability, a final repository for radioactive waste—which until now has been shipped to the USSR—is created in a former rock salt mine in Morsleben, Saxony-Anhalt.
- 1/1/72** In response to growing environmental concerns, the government sets up the *Ministerium für Umweltschutz und Wasserwirtschaft* (MUW, Ministry for Environmental Protection and Water Management), which is responsible for national planning and management. Its contradictory twofold mission is to oversee, on one hand, increasingly stringent regulations for environmental protection and land improvement and, on the other hand, the effective economic use of natural resources. Experts describe the law as exemplary and ambitious, but budget restrictions and a vested interest in industrial growth undercut compliance with environmental regulations.
- 1973** An accident at the Rheinsberg Nuclear Power Plant is prevented. All information is classified.
- The GDR gains international recognition and joins the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency.
- Aug 1973** The *Staatliche Amt für Atomsicherheit und Strahlenschutz* (SAAS, State Office for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection), formerly the State Center for Radiation Protection, is renamed.
- 1974** The first two reactors of the Lubmin Nuclear Power Plant go online.
- Over a period of years, plans to build a third nuclear power station near Stendal and a fourth one near Leipzig never come to fruition.
- 1975** Hairline fractures are discovered in the cooling system of the Rheinsberg Nuclear Power Plant and it is shut off. The water of nearby Stechlinsee Lake, which gets warmed by the cooling of the plant, gradually cools from 65°F (18°C) to 45°F (7°C).
- 12/7/75** To show his apprentice how to bridge electrical circuits, an electrician at the Lubmin Nuclear Power Plant decides to short-circuit the primary winding on one of the Unit 1 pumps.



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This results in a fire in the main trough that destroys the supply of current and the control lines for five of the unit's six main cooling pumps. The fire is quickly brought under control and the pumps are repaired in temporary fashion.

After this near-disaster, fire protection is substantially strengthened and separate electrical lines for each pump are introduced. The incident is first made public in 1989. A few hours after the incident, Soviet authorities inform the IAEA, which classifies the accident as an INES 4, later revised to INES 3.

3/6/78

High-ranking representatives of the Protestant Church meet with Erich Honecker after negotiations on the relationship between church and state. The Church declares that it shares humanistic goals with socialism, calls itself "the Church in Socialism" and acknowledges the SED's authority. Tantamount to a sort of détente with the government, local churches can now offer safe gathering places for social critics and dissidents working on environmental and other causes.

Late 1970s

Grassroots peace and environmental groups form in East Germany, despite Stasi surveillance and arrests. The groups protest against militarization, the arms race and nuclear threat, environmental problems and the decay of cities.

1979

One of the first environmental groups in the GDR begins work in Schwerin, holding its meetings in a local church. One of their campaigns, organized by three 17-year-olds, is to plant 5,000 trees and bushes in their hometown. They organize eco-actions, eco-weekends and lectures, as well as an annual *Ökoseminar* (Eco Seminar) from 1981 to 1989. (Schwerin activists repeat this project in 1987, but on a much smaller scale.)

West German journalist Peter Wensierski starts reporting on the GDR for the *Evangelischer Pressedienst* (Protestant News Agency). He covers a wide range of topics, including environmental problems, youth subcultures and the oppositional movements meeting in East German protestant churches.

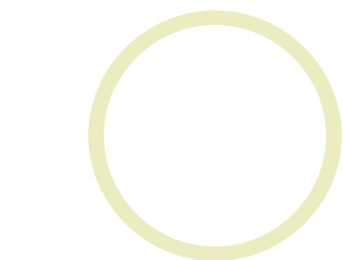
1980

Founding of the *Gesellschaft für Natur und Umwelt* (Society for Nature and Environment) within the *Kulturbund* (Cultural Association of the GDR), a national federation of local clubs and part of the GDR's National Front. The society's mission is to control the growing environmental movement, keep it apolitical and funnel it into state-sanctioned channels.

1/1/81

The S. Fischer publishing house in West Germany releases the novel *Flugasche* (*Flight of Ashes*), by the East German author Monika Maron. It follows a journalist writing about the noxious effects of the brown coal power plant in Bitterfeld. It is based on Maron's experience writing an article about local environmental problems for the weekly *Wochepost* in the early 1970s—which was only published in a shortened and heavily edited version.

Although the novel is not published in the GDR, the author is given 100 free copies to circulate in East Germany.



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- 2/11-15/81** First annual Eco Seminar in Schwerin, on the topic of “*Landwirtschaft – unsere Umwelt*” (“Agriculture – Our Environment”).
- 1981** Founding of the *Arbeitsgruppe Umweltschutz* by the *Jugendpfarramt* in Leipzig (Environmental Protection Working Group within Leipzig’s Youth Ministry), with at times up to 70 members. They set up a Umweltbibliothek (UB, Environmental Library) and publish the samizdat periodical *Streiflichter* [Streak of Light] with articles on social, political and environmental topics. They develop a tree inventory and ecological reports, as well as organizing discussion events and larger public actions around the UN’s World Environment Day.
- 1982** Founding of the *Christliche Umweltseminar* (CUR, Christian Environmental Seminar) in Rötha, near Leipzig. The members address GDR environmental issues, especially problems caused by the nearby Espenhain coal-fired power plant.
- 11/16/82** The GDR government approves the *Gesetz zur Geimhaltung von Umweltdaten* (Act Classifying Environmental Data).
- June 1983** The CUR hosts the first *Umweltgottesdienst* (Environmental Church Service) in Mölbis, near Espenhain in June 1983.
- 1983** The environmentalist groups in Schwerin and Wismar (also working to set up a UB) protest plans for a new highway between the two cities, which would run along Lake Schwerin and cross protected landscapes.
- 1984** Young biologist Annette Beleites founds a new environmental group in Schwerin that participates in local and national protest actions.
- 5/19/84** Environmental activists march from Bittersfeld to Wolfen, protesting the environmental contamination caused by chemical plants in the area. The church takes out the permit for the march.
- Feb 1985** Radioactive cooling water from the Rheinsberg Nuclear Power Plant is released into two adjoining lakes.
- 09/01/85** The MUW and District Councils around the country incorporate *Staatliche Umweltinspektoren* (state environmental inspectors) into their work. They are responsible for overseeing environmental conditions and legal compliance with national laws and international responsibilities.
- 1985** The East German government issues a ban against West German journalist Peter Wensierski, who is no longer allowed into the country.
- 1986** As of 1986, Wensierski appears on the West German public television show *Kontraste*

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[Contrasts]. Over time this weekly TV program, which most East Germans can also receive, will help publicize the findings of East German environmental groups.

**4/26/86**

A major accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in northern Ukraine causes a European-wide nuclear disaster. For nine days, considerable amounts of airborne radioactive contaminants precipitate onto parts of the Soviet Union and western Europe. Western media report on the dangerous repercussions of the accident, but East German media delay and then downplay the situation, taking their cue from Soviet officials and media.

The anti-nuclear movement grows in response to the disaster. Peace and environmental groups organize events to draw attention to the GDR's nuclear power plants in Rheinsberg and Lubmin. (A third plant is still being planned for Stendal.) One of the anti-nuclear activist slogans is "*Tschernobyl wirkt überall*" (Chernobyl Affects Everything Everywhere). The Stasi discusses ways to neutralize these activists.

**5/3/86**

The SAAS shares with GDR ministries an extensive study of elevated radioactive concentrations in East Germany, but the information is classified and not made public.

**6/5/86**

On World Environment Day, peace and environmental groups deliver a protest letter to the GDR's Council of Ministers and ADN news bureau. Signed by 141 activists, the letter decries the official response to the Chernobyl disaster and the condition of GDR nuclear power plants.

**9/2/86**

A UB is founded at East Berlin's *Zionskirche* (Zion Church) and becomes the most important UB in the country. Its mission is to collect materials and document environmental issues in the GDR, including ecocide, deforestation and toxic waste. UB members set up a network between existing East German environmental groups. They organize readings, exhibitions and discussions and host Ecology Seminars on a regular basis.

They also create the monthly samizdat *UmweltBlätter* [Environmental Pages] that at first is simply called *Die Umwelt-Bibliothek* [The Environmental Library]. Its circulation—originally about 150 copies—will grow to 4,000. Beside environmental issues, it addresses political problems in the GDR, including racism, neo-Nazism, freedom of travel and the division of Germany.

The Berlin UB is under strict Stasi surveillance, especially because of its close contact with West German media outlets and organizations, including the Green Party, Greenpeace and the Robin Wood environmental advocacy organization.

**11/18-30/86**

The Berlin UB's third Ecology Seminar on "*Atomkraft oder alternative Energien?*" (Nuclear Energy or Alternative Energies?)

**1/1/87**

West German journalist Peter Wensierski, who has been in close contact with the Berlin UB



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and has reported on ecological problems in the GDR since 1979, releases his book *Von oben nach unten wächst gar nichts: Umweltzerstörung und Protest in der DDR* [Nothing Grows Upside Down: Ecocide and Protests in the GDR] with S. Fischer publishing house.

### Late 1980s

By the late-1980s, around 60-70 East German environmental groups are engaged in local and national projects. They are mainly located in larger cities, such as Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig and Schwerin, and work under the auspices of the protestant church.

The East German DEFA Studios produce a number of documentaries, animation and feature films touching on environmental topics. While some films follow the official party line, others question the environmental situation and contribute to the environmental movement in the GDR.

In particular, Klaus Georgi's films, produced at the DEFA Studio for Animation Films, stand out for their sharp and satirical discussion of taboo topics: forest damage in *Sonntag* (*Sunday*, 1989-90) and air pollution in *Der Kreis* (*The Full Circle*, 1989) and *Konsequenz* (*Consequence*, 1986).

Other productions deal critically with problems caused by brown coal mining, including the resettling of villages in mining areas: *Abschiedsdisco* (*Farewell Disco*, 1989, dir. Rolf Losansky, feature film) and *Erinnerung an eine Landschaft – für Manuela* (*Memory of a Landscape – for Manuela*, 1983, dir. Kurt Tetzlaff, documentary).

One of the most notable projects is a trilogy by documentary filmmaker Peter Rocha on environmental destruction in the Lusatia area caused by brown coal mining. Rocha visited the region from 1987 to 1990, documenting the degradation of nature in *Die Schmerzen der Lausitz* (*The Pain of Lusatia*, 1990), *Leben am Fluss* (*Life on the Stream*, 1989) and *Hochwaldmärchen* (*High Forest Fairy Tale*, 1987).

### 1987

As of 1987, Minister Karl-Heinz Dallmann holds regular Environmental Church Services in Mölbis, near Leipzig. They are attended by up to 1,000 people concerned with ecological issues caused by the coal-fired power plant in nearby Espenhain. Dallmann and the CUR become known for the nation-wide campaign "*Eine Mark für Espenhain*" (*One Mark for Espenhain*), a drive to help finance the rehabilitation of the power plant.

The GDR's Aufbau Verlag publishes Christa Wolf's novella *Störfall: Nachrichten eines Tages* (published in the U.S. in 1989 as *Accident: A Day's News*). The story is set during the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The book becomes a bestseller in the GDR, especially among environmental and anti-nuclear activists.

Wensierksi starts incorporating secretly filmed footage provided by members of UB Berlin and the Ark (see Jan 1988, below) into his *Kontraste* television reports.<sup>1</sup> These continue through 1989.

<sup>1</sup> Some Kontraste reports are available on YouTube (Accessed May 2021), including: *Umweltverschmutzung* (*Environmental Pollution*, 3/3/87); *Waldschäden im Erzgebirge* (*Forest Damage in the Erzgebirge Mountains*, 5/12/87); *Uranbergbau in der DDR* (*Uranium Mining in the GDR*, 10/27/87); *Bitteres aus Bitterfeld* (*Bad News from Bitterfeld*, 9/29/88—includes material filmed by Ark); *Geheimhaltung von Umweltdaten in the DDR* (*Secrecy around Environmental Data in the GDR*, 7/4/89).

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- May 1987** Founding of the *Initiativgruppe Leben* (Life Initiative Group), a radical wing of the Working Group for Environmental Protection in Leipzig, that argues that environmental change can only take place in tandem with political reforms. The group organizes touring exhibitions, Action Days and the Pleiße-Marsch (Pleiße March) in 1988.
- 5/19/87** A Greenpeace representative gives a talk at the Berlin UB in an event on "Pollution in the Baltic and North Seas." Beforehand, the UB distributes thousands of Greenpeace flyers, provided by a representative of the Green Party faction in the West German Bundestag. Greenpeace members lecture at the UB throughout the year.
- 6/13/87** In response to catastrophic conditions in Upper Lusatia, the *Arbeitskreis Evangelium und Menschenrechte* (the Evangelium and Human Rights Group), of Kittlitz Parish in Saxony, issues an open letter to the Council of Ministers and UB Berlin, demanding the declassification of environmental data and compliance issues.
- 11/24-25/87** During the night of November 24-25, the Stasi raids the Berlin UB on the orders of Minister for State Security Erich Mielke, hoping to find subversive materials. Their goal is to catch UB members and friends from the *Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte* (IFM, Initiative for Peace and Human Rights) in the act of printing *Grenzfall* [Borderline Case], one of the GDR's most critical underground publications.
- The Stasi is following a tip provided by an informant within the IFM, which puts out the publication. Suspecting there is an IFM informant, that night UB members decide to instead print their own samizdat, *Environmental Pages*, which has been approved as a church publication. (GDR churches had special publication permits; all other printing projects had to officially be preapproved.)
- The Stasi arrests all seven UB members present. The raid stirs national and international indignation and makes the UB well-known overnight.
- 9/8/87** The West German *Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und nukleare Sicherheit* (Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety) and the East German MUW sign an *Abkommen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der DDR über die weitere Gestaltung der Beziehungen auf dem Gebiet des Umweltschutzes* (Agreement between the GDR and FRG on Continued Relations as Regards Environment Protection), which includes an action plan through 1989.
- January 1988** Carlo Jordan, co-founder of the Berlin UB, founds the *Grün-ökologische Netzwerk Arche* (Ark Green Ecological Network). Their mission is to coordinate the efforts of all environmental groups and UBs in the country. It is structured in regional groups that meet on a regular basis and independent working groups that deal with specific issues, such as waste being imported from West Germany or air pollution in Bitterfeld. They publish *Arche Info* and five issues of *Arche Nova* [Ark Info and Ark Nova].



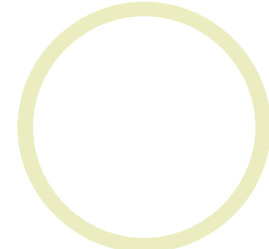
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- 5/16/88** The GDR Council of Ministers sends a three-page document addressing “*Abwehrmassnahmen gegen ‘feindliche Angriffe’ im Umweltbereich*” (Defense Measures against “Hostile Attacks” in Relation to the Environment) to Section XIX of the Ministry for State Security. It makes it clear that the government is fully aware of environmental problems and the growing ecological movement. Its recommendations include: defensive measures against environmental protests; continued prohibition of access to classified data; and the surveillance of Greenpeace.
- 6/5/88** At the Leipzig Riverside Forest on World Environment Day, the Pleiße March protests the pollution of the Pleiße River, using the slogan “*Umkehr zum Leben*” (Return to Life). It is organized by the city’s Life Initiative Group and the Youth Ministry’s Environmental Protection Working Group. Over 140 activists participate. Organizers distribute flyers with the headers: “*Wann wird die Pleiße endlich sauber?*” (When Will the Pleiße River Be Clean?) and “*Umweltschutz in der DDR – ein Gesetz?*” (Environmental Protection in the GDR – A Law?).
- June 1988** Ark in East Berlin and its West Berlin friends and partners produce a 30-minute film entitled *Bitteres aus Bitterfeld* (*Bad News from Bitterfeld*). It is shown among East German environmentalist groups in Berlin and Dresden.
- July 1988** The first issue of the new environmental periodical *Arche Nova* focuses on Bitterfeld and includes extensive excerpts from Monica Maron’s 1981 novel *Flugasche*. The ensuing four issues of *Arche Nova* (published until January 1990) focus on forests dying, crumbling old towns, energy and factory farming.
- 9/27/88** On West Germany’s ARD television station, *Kontraste* broadcasts a 10-minute report entitled *Bad News from Bitterfeld* and excerpted from the 30-minute version. This program is a very important event for the East German environmental movement and attracts a lot of attention, including from the Stasi and East German officials.
- 1989** As the main centers of oppositional eco activism in the GDR, the Berlin UB and Ark will play an important role in the upcoming peaceful revolution of 1989.
- 4/27/89** Erich Honecker and Ernst Albrecht, the Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, meet in East Berlin to discuss setting up *Umweltfonds* (environmental funds) for the protection of the Elbe River and the Drömling flats.
- 6/4/89** The *Arbeitskreis Weltumweltag Leipzig* (Leipzig Committee for World Environment Day) sends a letter to the GDR’s Council of Ministers sharing its concerns about water pollution in the Pleiße River and air pollution around Halle and Leipzig.
- The second Pleiße March draws 500 protesters. Erich Mielke, the Minister for State Security, tries but fails to stop the march; some participants are arrested.
- 11/9/89** The Berlin Wall opens.

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- 11/13/89** Secrecy about environmental data is curtailed. In the new political circumstances, SAAS can be more forthcoming about nuclear information and publishes data on radioactivity and nuclear power plant safety and security.
- 11/18/89** Environmental activists meet at the Bekenntniskirche (Confessional Church) in the Alt-Treptow borough of Berlin to discuss the founding of a *Grüne Liga* (Green League). During this meeting, flyers calling for an East German Green Party are distributed.
- 11/24/89** Constitutive meeting of the East German Green Party.
- L** Three out of six cooling water pumps at the Lubmin Nuclear Power Plant are switched off for a test. A fourth pump breaks down and control of the reactor is lost. Ten fuel elements are damaged, and the reactor is close to melting down. The accident is attributed to sticky relay contacts.
- 12/9/89** Environmental activists from East and West Germany draft a resolution demanding that the strip along the East-West German border be used as a *Grüne Band* (green strip) nature conservation project.
- Dec '89 - Mar '90** The *Zentraler Runde Tisch* (ZRT, Central Round Table) of the GDR's citizens movement discusses its environmental platform, creating a *Arbeitsgruppe Ökologischer Umbau* (Working Group for Ecological Reconstruction).
- The ZRT discusses environmental guidelines for economic development, safe drinking water, environmentally friendly agriculture and air pollution. They approve closing facilities harmful to the environment, decreasing energy consumption by 30%, use of eco-friendly energy, removing state subsidies for electricity and gas and a progressive decrease of dependence on brown coal. They also approve the designation of five large national parks, based on the ideas of environmental activist Michael Succow.
- A survey of GDR nuclear power plants initiated by the ZRT yields critical results, and they discuss founding an environmental agency and institute to deal with the environmental impact of mining uranium and other ores.
- 1989-90** Declassification of environmental data shows the high elevations of pollution in East Germany's air, water and soil.
- 2/3/90** 150 East German environmental groups merge into the Green League, which has been established as a nonpartisan, decentralized network.
- 2/9/90** Founding of the Green Party in East Germany. It will merge with the West German Green Party in December 1990, after German unification.
- 2/13/90** GDR Prime Minister Hans Modrow meets for consultations at the West German Chancellery in Bonn. The West German government offers to finance an economic and environmental emergency program.

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- May 1990** West Germany releases its *Umweltreport* (Environmental Report), which includes facts about the GDR's environmental problems. They describe the situation as disastrous.
- 6/1/90** The Rheinsberg Nuclear Power Plant is taken offline because of safety concerns. Early in 1991, the new government of the unified Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) will decide to decommission the plant in Lubmin.
- 8/27/90** The coal-fired power plant in Espenhain is closed for good.
- 8/31/90** The *Vereinigungsvertrag* (German Unification Treaty) is signed.
- Summer 1990** In preparation for German unification, East German laws are adjusted with respect to West German laws. Important parts of West German environmental law come into effect in the GDR. Shared projects begin, including setting up a smog warning system and water pollution controls along the Elbe, Spree and Havel Rivers. The Unification Treaty also sets the goal of attaining the same level of environmental conditions in both parts of Germany by the year 2000.
- 9/12/90** The GDR Council of Ministers approves an extensive national park program with the *Gesetz der Einrichtung der Naturschutzgebiete* (Act for the Creation of Conservation Areas).
- 10/3/90** Unification of East and West Germany into the Federal Republic of Germany. Dissolution of the GDR.

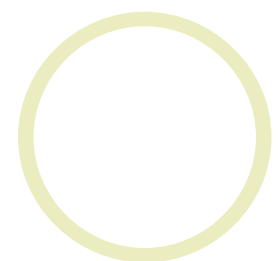
## RESOURCES

### Websites

The following websites contain original GDR party and mass organization documents and/or overview articles on East German environmental issues. (All sites were accessed in May 2021.)

### In German

- <https://www.stasi-mediathek.de>
- <https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/archiv-der-ddr-opposition/startseite/>
- <https://www.archiv-buergerbewegung.de>
- <https://www.bpb.de>
- <https://www.DDR89.de>
- <https://www.jugendopposition.de>
- <https://www.revolution89.de>
- <https://www.argus.bstu.bundesarchiv.de>
- <https://www.bundesregierung.de>
- <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/besuch-aus-niedersachsen-389918>
- [https://de.nucleopedia.org/wiki/Kernkraftwerk\\_Rheinsberg](https://de.nucleopedia.org/wiki/Kernkraftwerk_Rheinsberg)
- [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bitteres\\_aus\\_Bitterfeld](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bitteres_aus_Bitterfeld)
- <https://www.schwerin.de/geschichtspfad-freiheit/umweltbewegung/index.html>



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## Timeline of GDR Environmentalism

### In English

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greifswald\\_Nuclear\\_Power\\_Plant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greifswald_Nuclear_Power_Plant)

<http://www.nuclear-heritage.net/index.php/Morsleben>

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