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'A Change in Nine Weeks' – Areas for Action and Participants in the Peaceful Revolution of 1989

With the opening of the Hungarian border in September 1989, an unprecedented magnification of the revolution began in the German Democratic Republic, which neither the authorities nor the small opposition groups could at first properly assess. The GDR wasn't the only one to move from party dictatorship to an open and changing society within two months. In fact, the fall of the Berlin Wall (9 November 1989), together with the upheavals of democracy in Poland, Hungary and the Baltic States, symbolize a political turnaround for Europe. Thus, this lecture will look at how the peaceful revolution can flourish with civil rights groups (New Forum, etc.) and the involvement of "ordinary people" who demonstrated with increasing courage on the streets of Dresden, Plauen, Berlin and above all on the streets of Leipzig (9 October 1989). The tactical leadership of The Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), who claim to be able to take the lead with their pawn Eric Honecker, remains important to the process. Finally, not only the federal government of Bonn had been intervening in this important activity since November, but it also has been increasingly recognized by the people of the GDR as their representative.

About the speaker:

Dr. Frank Hoffmann studied history, German studies, education science and philosophy in Bochum. He obtained his first State Examination for the teaching profession. He is lecturer for adult education and also research associate and since 2012 he is the managing director of the Institute for German Cultural Studies of Ruhr University Bochum. Dr. Frank Hoffmann was coordinator for the post graduate doctoral program Promotionskolleg Ost-West (2001-2008) in Bochum and of the RUB Europadialog (2015-2019). He participated in numerous international projects of scientific cooperation. Research focuses: contemporary history, cultural history, German regional and cultural studies, especially the GDR and united Germany.

Recent Publications:

- Zur Kultur der DDR. Persönliche Erinnerungen und wissenschaftliche Perspektiven (2016, Hg.);
- Kulturgeschichte der DDR. Ein Überblick (2014).