



Research Seminar  
Prof. Philipp Ther  
Thursdays, 17.15-19.15, Sala Europa

## The Revolutions of 1989 in Comparative Perspective

The revolutions in 1989 have profoundly changed Europe and the world. The seminar takes up the opportunity of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1989 to view the revolutions in a comparative perspective.

The seminar at first introduces briefly into previous revolutionary periods of history. The diachronic dimension of comparison will help to define the term revolution and to look at the specific contribution of 1989 to that discussion, such as the term “self-limiting revolution”. The second and main part of the seminar is dedicated to a comparison of the events of 1989 in various countries. It will also include cases of failed revolutions such as Romania and China.

Another goal of the seminar is the juxtaposition of various explanations of the causes of 1989 (bottom up, top down, center vs. periphery, nationalist mobilization, loss of ideological legitimization, welfare crisis etc.) which stress different agents and factors. By discussing these conflicting explanations the seminar attempts to develop a deeper understanding of comparative reasoning.

The seminar is accompanied by a film series open for the wider public at the EUI. The film series will cover the events of 1989 in countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Romania and China, and simultaneously give an opportunity to discuss the very politicized memory of 1989.

### Session 1 (Thursday, October 15, 5 pm)

#### The tradition of the “Democratic Revolution”

Required reading:

- Charles Tilly: *European Revolutions, 1492-1992*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993; 1-51, 233-248.

Optional reading:

- R. R. Palmer: *The Age of the Democratic Revolution. The Challenge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959; 3-24.
- Norman Davies: *Europe: A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; 675-757.

### Session 2 (Thursday, October 22, 5 pm)

#### Comparative approaches to the study of revolutions

Required reading:

- Theda Skocpol: *Social Revolutions in the Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; 133-166.

Optional reading:



- Gwynne Lewis: "The French Revolution 1789-99". – In: David Parker (ed.): *Revolutions and the Revolutionary Tradition in the West 1560-1991*. London: Routledge, 2000; 88-108.
- Maureen Perrie: "The Russian Revolution". – In: David Parker (ed.): *Revolutions and the Revolutionary Tradition*; 151-168.

### **Session 3 (Wednesday, November 4, 5 pm)**

#### The specificity of the 1989 Revolutions

##### Required reading:

- Zygmunt Bauman: "A Revolution in the Theory of Revolution?". – In: *International Political Science Review* 15 (1994); 15-24.
- Robert V. Daniels: "The anti-Communist Revolutions in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, 1989 to 1991". – In: David Parker (ed.): *Revolutions and the Revolutionary Tradition*; 202-224.

##### Optional reading:

- Timur Kuran: "Now Out of Never. The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolutions of 1989". – In: *World Politics* 44 (1991); 7-48.

### **Session 4 (Thursday, November 5, 5 pm)**

#### Poland and her "Self-Limiting Revolution" 1980-1989

##### Required reading:

- Timothy Garton Ash: *The Polish Revolution*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002 (1983); 287-317, 356-381.
- Arista Maria Cirtautas: *The Polish Solidarity Movement. Revolution, Democracy and Natural Rights*. London: Routledge, 1997; 165-205.

##### Optional reading:

- Jadwiga Staniszkis: *The Dynamics of Breakthrough in Eastern Europe. The Polish Experience*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; vii-xiii, 176-214.

##### Film (7 pm):

- "Solidarność, początek rewolucji" (Solidarity, the beginning of the revolution), Poland 2005.

### **Session 5 (Thursday, November 12, 5 pm)**

#### The Fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the GDR

##### Required reading:

- Mark R. Thompson: *Democratic Revolutions. Asia and Eastern Europe*. London: Routledge, 2004; 51-64.
- Charles S. Maier: *Dissolution. The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997; 108-167.

##### Optional reading:



- Edith Anderson: "Town mice and country mice: The East German Revolution". – In: William M. Brinton and Adam Rinzler (eds.): *Without Force or Lies. Voices from the Revolution of Central Europe in 1989-90*. San Francisco: Mercury House, 1990; 170-192.

Public lecture (7 pm):

- Prof. Martin Sabrow (Centre for Contemporary History, Potsdam), 1989 in the GDR and the Issue of Violence

**Session 6 (Thursday, November 19, 5 pm)**

Czechoslovakia and the "Velvet Revolution"

Required reading:

- Timothy Garton Ash: *We the People. The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin & Prague*. Cambridge: Granta Books, 1990; 78-130.

Optional reading:

- Mark R. Thompson: *Democratic Revolutions. Asia and Eastern Europe*. London: Routledge, 2004; 65-83.

Film (7 pm):

- "Občan Havel" (Citizen Havel), Czech Republic 2008

**Session 7 (Thursday, November 26, 5 pm)**

The "Singing Revolution" in the Baltic States

Required reading:

- Roman Szporluk: *Russia, Ukraine and the Breakup of the Soviet Union*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2000; 395-429.
- Graham Smith: "The Resurgence of Nationalism". – In: Idem (ed.): *The Baltic States. The National Self-Determination of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994; 121-143.

Optional reading:

- John Jekabson: "Economic independence is not enough for Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia". – In: William M. Brinton and Adam Rinzler (eds.): *Without Force or Lies. Voices from the Revolution of Central Europe in 1989-90*. San Francisco: Mercury House, 1990; 350-366.

Film (7 pm):

- "Laulev revolutsioon – The Singing Revolution", USA / Estonia 2006.

**Session 8 (Wednesday, December 2, 5 pm)**

Unfinished Revolution? The case of Romania

Required reading:

- Tom Gallagher: *Theft of a Nation. Romania since Communism*. London: Hurst & Company, 2005; 70-109.
- Peter Siani-Davies: *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005; 1-8, 267-286.



Optional reading:

- Katherine Verdery and Gail Kligman: "Romania after Ceaușescu: post-Communist Communism?". – In: Ivo Banac (ed.): *Eastern Europe in Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992; 117-147.

Film (7 pm):

- "A fost sau n-a fost?" (12:08 East of Bucharest), Romania 2006.

### **Session 9 (Wednesday, December 9, 5 pm)**

#### Failed Revolution? The case of China

Required reading:

- Douglas J. Guthrie: "Political Theater and Student Organizations in the 1989 Chinese Movement: A Multivariable Analysis of Tiananmen". – In: *Sociological Forum* 10 (1995); 419-454.

Optional reading:

- Craig Calhoun: *Neither Gods nor Emperors. Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994; 155-212.

Film (7 pm):

- "The Gate of Heavenly Peace", USA 1995.

### **Session 10 (Thursday, December 10, 5 pm)**

#### The revolutions of 1989 and beyond – the revolutionized societies in comparison

Required reading:

- Wolfgang Merkel: "Plausible Theory, Unexpected Results: The Rapid Democratic Consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe". – In: *IPG* (2008); 11-29.
- László Bruszt and David Stark: "Remaking the Political Field in Hungary: From the Politics of Confrontation to the Politics of Competition". – In: Ivo Banac (ed.): *Eastern Europe in Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992; 13-55.

Optional reading:

- Rasma Karklins and Roger Petersen: "Calculus of Protesters and Regimes: Eastern Europe 1989". – In: *The Journal of Politics* 55 (1993); 588-614.