

Goals of the Central Round Table (December 7, 1989)

Abstract

The Central Round Table [*Zentrale Runde Tisch*] was founded in East Berlin on December 7, 1989. It was a forum in which members of crumbling Communist organizations (e.g., the Socialist Unity Party, block parties, trade unions, and the women's league, etc.) came together with representatives of the popular citizens' movements (e.g., Democracy Now, Democratic Awakening, the Greens, the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights, the New Forum, the Social Democratic Party of the GDR, and the United Left) to discuss and advance reforms in the GDR.

Source

The participants in the Round Table are meeting out of their profound concern for our deeply crisis-ridden country, for its independence, and its long-term development.

They demand the disclosure of the ecological, economic, and financial situation of our country.

Although the Round Table can exercise no parliamentary or governmental function, it wishes to turn to the public with proposals for overcoming the crisis.

It demands that it be informed of, and included in, important legal, economic, and financial policy decisions in a timely fashion by the *Volkskammer* and the government.

It sees itself as a contributor to public monitoring in our country. It plans to continue its activities until free, democratic, and secret elections are held. [...]

The following agreements have been reached:

Drafting a New Constitution

1. The participants in the Round Table agree to start developing a draft of a new constitution immediately.
2. To this end they will appoint a working group with proportional representation that will get started immediately and will include additional citizens as needed.
3. The participants in the Round Table agree that approval of this new constitution will take place in a referendum in 1990 following the *Volkskammer* elections.
4. The constitutional amendments required for holding new elections are to be developed without delay.
5. The participants in the Round Table take note of the offer to participate in a corresponding committee of the *Volkskammer* and will reach a decision about their participation independently.

Election Date

The Round Table recommends holding the election to the *Volkskammer* on May 6, 1990.

Formation of working groups

The Round Table has decided to form working groups, to which it will appoint two conveners each.

1. Electoral law
2. Law on parties and associations
3. New constitution (see resolution above)
4. Economy

On the Rule of Law

In their efforts on behalf of the rule of law and the safeguarding of the interests of our people, the participants in the Round Table call for immediate government measures on the following questions:

1. Any person who has engaged in abuse of office or corruption will be held responsible on the basis of the prevailing penal code. In implementing preliminary proceedings or criminal proceedings, the provisions of the code of criminal procedure will be applied. This necessarily means issuing arrest warrants, but not ordering illegal house arrests.

1.1. The office of the chief public prosecutor of the GDR must immediately guarantee that all tips, information, and communications are pursued on the basis of § 95 of the code of criminal procedure and that, when grounds for suspicion of a criminal offense are submitted, the office will immediately consider the best way to secure objects and evidence.

1.2. The government is called on to form a special department of investigation for the clarification of instances of abuse of office and corruption. This department of investigation will be placed directly under the Prime Minister for the duration of its activity. The functions of this department of investigation will be made publicly known.

1.3. The public prosecutor's office is called on to cooperate effectively with the independent investigating commission created on December 4, 1989.

1.4. The government of the GDR is called on to announce publicly an immediate plan for measures to place all departments of the Office for National Security, at all levels, under the control of the security forces of the Ministry of the Interior, so that there is no destruction of documents or evidentiary material, and so that abuse can be ruled out.

2. The government of the GDR is called on to dissolve the Office for National Security under civilian control, and to guarantee the professional integration of the staff being let go. The government shall inform the public about the provision of services in the area of security should they prove necessary.

3. The government of the GDR is called on to define a legal framework to support the activity of independent citizens' committees.

Source: Zeno and Sabine Zimmerling, eds., *Neue Chronik DDR: Berichte, Fotos, Dokumente*, 3 (24. November – 22. December 1989). Berlin: Verlag Tribüne, 1990–91, p. 57 ff.

Translation: Jeremiah Riemer

Recommended Citation: Goals of the Central Round Table (December 7, 1989), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/a-new-germany-1990-2023/ghdi:document-441>> [May 05, 2024].