

The Discourse of Women's Experiences under Socialism:  
During the Cold War and Upon Reflection

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Introduction:

The relationship between time passing and the admission of guilt is a complicated one. For how long it took Germany to acknowledge and discuss the atrocities of the Nazi regime, people immediately wondered in 1989 when and how they would approach the discussion of communism and East Germany. The East German example is unique in that there were discernible benefits and successes for its people, and for the most part, it fostered solidarity, camaraderie, and apparent equality. Women were granted unprecedented benefits such as year-long paid maternity leave and state-funded childcare facilities and were said to have had equal opportunity and equal pay as men. These principles were the base line for all communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and during communist rule, the state allowed literature and propaganda that focused only on these positive principles.

While they still employed fear tactics and enforced strict assimilation to the Communist Party, many reflected fondly on the idyllic simplicity of the "old days" (although it's not always clear if this is an expression of nostalgia or actual fact). But those who did not reflect fondly or whose voices were stifled by their respective regimes told a different story. For women especially (who were reduced to stereotypes, e.g. "worker-mother" or "Superwoman"), it was not

as easy to characterize their time using idealized socialist phrasing. Understandably, it was only after the fall of communism that women came forward to share stories that went against the narrative of equality and togetherness and addressed an overwhelmingly negative experience. These stories, which illuminated the dark side of communism, emerged from former communist countries beginning in 1989. Titles like *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (1993), *The Wall in My Backyard* (1994), and *Stasiland: Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall* (2002) appeared and expressed an overarching postwar anti-communist sentiment. For roughly ten years after the Cold War, these autobiographical works remained at the forefront of post-communist literature.

Once a momentum like this sets in, primarily highlighting the detriments and horror stories of women's lives under communism, it takes something drastic to shift that understanding. Arguably, this shift occurred when Angela Merkel was elected as Chancellor of Germany in 2005. After a decade's worth of literature claiming that communism was no good for women, Merkel's election prompted a reassessment of East Germany's faults. After all, how could Merkel, having grown up in Brandenburg, East Germany, rise to the most powerful position in the German government if her upbringing was riddled with the cruelties and inequalities that the women a decade earlier spoke of? The answer is simply that communism was not *always* as bad as the postwar literature made it seem. Clearly, it could have immense benefits on its population, and with Merkel as proof, especially on women. Thus beginning in 2005, scholarship and media discourse began to acknowledge and reevaluate the communist system's benefits and opportunities for women. This not does discredit those women who spoke up in the decade following the fall of communism, but it asserts that there is not merely one way to assess the effects of communism. It is a complex topic that cannot be reduced to one narrative

or judgment, but rather expressed in three waves of opinions. First, the communist system enabled only its positive principles to be shared, then the fall of communism enabled women to speak up and reject those principles, and finally Angela Merkel's ascension enabled people to see through to the benefits of an East German upbringing. Stories, truths, and realizations are historically contingent, and each wave was formulated in light of, and often in reaction to its predecessor.

#### Wave Breakdown:

The first of the three waves, largely controlled by state propaganda, asserted that women were equal under their communist constitutions and that the socialist/communist system benefited women, ultimately putting them in a much better position than women in the west. While gender equality was indeed a constitutional policy in East Germany, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union, major flaws and contradictions placed a "double burden" on women instead of enabling the promised favorable standing opposite their western counterparts. Although this façade of gender equality was the reality of the situation, it was not challenged on a large scale until after the Cold War when women were released from the stranglehold of their respective communist regimes. This point marks the second wave in the discourse surrounding what effect communist policies had on the specific situation of women in Eastern Europe.

Beginning immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, people jumped to assess the collapsing communist regimes and speculate on how and why they had fallen so suddenly and, apparently, without resistance. Amidst this discussion arose talk of just how bad it was and just how equal men and women were under communism. Now that the mechanisms of state repression in these communist regimes no longer existed, women began to speak and write freely

of their experiences behind the Iron Curtain. Their contributions to post-1989 literature exposed the hypocrisy of their governments and shed light on the “double burden,” as well as – even more prominently – calling attention to the brutality and oppression of the East German Stasi and other inhumane state security apparatuses. The discussion of feminism, specifically the two types that had been cultivated in West Germany and East Germany also emerged at the forefront of this discourse and serves as a lens through which women’s experiences could be analyzed. Women’s agency in telling their own stories – the true stories – and finding meaning in this discussion progressed and continued throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s. The third “wave” follows with the reemergence of acknowledging the benefits of the communist system, arguably being triggered by Angela Merkel’s ascension into prominent political positions and ultimately her election as Chancellor of Germany in 2005.

## Chapter One

### Women's Experiences during the Cold War:

Since their creation, the communist entities of Eastern Europe (all initially under the umbrella of the Soviet Union) implemented state-enforced gender equality. Their constitutions stated clearly that women would have equal rights as men in every sector of society with policies ranging from equal pay to equal opportunity to equal voting rights. In Eastern Europe, the promise of “formal and institutional” gender equality was prompted by the Soviet Union’s 1936 constitution. In 1946, the Yugoslav constitution followed suit, securing women’s legal, familial, political, and economic equality.<sup>1</sup> Then in 1949, after Germany had been split in two as a means to facilitate postwar reparations, the Soviet-controlled East Germany created their own constitution asserting gender equality as a national policy. This was a very attractive concept, and has been famously tested to the same degree in nations such as the People’s Republic of China under Mao Zedong. But with gender equality comes the unfortunate consequence of gender erasure and the obvious threat of inconsistency and injustice. In the case of East Germany, gender equality on paper did not always translate into gender equality in practice, and the legal policies/changes did not necessarily usher in commensurate/corresponding cultural changes.

While there were undeniable benefits to state-enforced gender equality, the East German government also neglected their constitutional agreement to grant women equal liberties. The façade of gender equality plagued East German women and masked the harsh reality of life in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The GDR famously supplied women with social benefits like year-long paid maternity leave (*Baby-Jahr*) and state-provided childcare facilities

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<sup>1</sup> Patrizia Albanese, *Mothers of the Nation: Women, Families and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 1112.

(*Kinderkrippe* and *Kindergarten*), and encouraged their participation in the workforce.<sup>2</sup>

Traditional standards of femininity and motherhood were challenged by these efforts to include women in nontraditional female roles which set them apart from the west. At a structural level, these provisions pacified women who yearned for basic equalities. Nevertheless, women's abundant presence in the workforce – while still being able to maintain their role as nurturing mothers and devoted housewives – did not magically generate gender equality. Instead, it tended to impose upon women a “double burden” – twice the responsibilities, given that women were now responsible for earning an income as well as tending to home and family – and added to the complex relationship between women and the state.<sup>3</sup> East German women subsequently developed a complicated and contradictory relationship with the state that was supposed to be supporting them.

The classic model of the East German woman is the “Superwoman” or “worker-mother,” juggling domestic and career-related duties.<sup>4</sup> Considering their western counterparts' inability to successfully enter the workforce and sustain an image of versatility and economic independence, East Germans had seemingly little to complain about. As mothers, women were granted social benefits which indebted them to the state for their support; as workers, women were indebted to the government for the support of their careers. Used as a propaganda tool at their expense, the “worker-mother” trope put extreme pressure on women to live up to that standard. The state's dual emphasis on motherhood and employment may allude to equality, but women's responsibilities only doubled with the encouraged and enforced “worker-mother” persona.

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<sup>2</sup> Chris Corrin, *Superwomen and the Double Burden: Women's experience of change in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union* (Toronto: Canada, Second Story Press, 1992), 132.

<sup>3</sup> Chris Corrin, *Superwomen and the Double Burden: Women's experience of change in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union* (Toronto: Canada, Second Story Press, 1992), 132.

<sup>4</sup> Belinda Cooper, “The Truth about Superwoman: Women in East Germany,” *Michigan Feminist Studies* 12 (1974-1997): 59-66.

Gender equality was attempted on many fronts. The German terms for these efforts were *Frauenpolitik*, (policies regarding women) and *Muttipolitik* (policies regarding mothers). Single mothers were granted a *Baby-Jahr* (“baby year”), a paid year-long maternity leave, after which they would be welcomed back into their job. Married women were given 26 weeks of leave for their first child, assuming that the father would also partake in the child’s initial care. Once it was time for women to reenter the workforce, the state provided free childcare facilities: *Kinderkrippe* for children under three, and *Kindergarten* for children from three to five. Further compensation was granted in several other forms. The *Kindergeld*, for one, was a monthly stipend provided by the government to families with children. Married women, single women with children under sixteen, and women over the age of forty without children were also granted a “household day” once a month – a gesture that acknowledged the additional burden of domestic responsibilities for working women, but also reinforced the gender division of doing household labor. The “household day” was offered to fathers as well, but was seldom taken because of the gendered view of household duties. Additionally, 20 to 30 days annually of paid time-off (at 90 percent of salary) was allotted to all single mothers and married mothers with at least two children to use when their children fell sick.<sup>5</sup> This vast array of state-provided benefits was undeniably helpful, but must be viewed in the context of the “double burden.”

Outside of the family, equal opportunity was also promised in both the educational and professional realm. Women increasingly took advantage of these academic and occupational opportunities, making up almost 50 percent of the total university enrollments in 1980.<sup>6</sup> Women’s acceptance into schooling and training programs was crucial to their eventual economic stability because entrance into their desired trades and professions was state-

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<sup>5</sup> All state-provided benefits listed are taken from Allen-Thompson and Dodds, *The Wall in My Backyard* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 11-14.

<sup>6</sup> Allen-Thompson, Dinah Dodds, *The Wall in My Backyard* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 9.

regulated.<sup>7</sup> In their assignment to training programs, which preceded their active involvement in the economy, women were “often steered away from higher paying occupations, which resulted in a gender classification of entire trades.”<sup>8</sup> In 1988, roughly 83 percent of women were actively employed in the labor market.<sup>9</sup> At first glance, the sheer number of women in various professions might suggest the achievement of gender equality, but close analysis exposes this as a façade, underneath which lied the undeniable hypocrisy of the East German government.

While women were indeed present in jobs across East Germany, occupational segregation signified the lingering distinctions of gendered work. Sectors of employment like retail and service were densely populated by women, making up 92 percent of restaurant and hotel service workers and 72 percent of wholesale and retail trades.<sup>10</sup> Outside of the realm of traditionally female employment, women were largely concentrated in industrial jobs because they required a lower level of qualifications and responsibilities. And although the GDR’s constitution insisted on equal pay, the average income for women was about one-quarter less than men in the same professions.<sup>11</sup> In the end, women also received lower pensions than men and subsequently experienced poverty in their old age despite their lifelong engagement in the workforce.<sup>12</sup>

The field that reflected the most inequality, however, was politics. Women’s political representation arguably ended at the local level, where they frequently acted as mayors and judges.<sup>13</sup> Beyond that aspect, women were scarcely present in higher authoritative positions.

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<sup>7</sup> Allen-Thompson, Dinah Dodds, *The Wall in My Backyard* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Allen-Thompson, Dinah Dodds, *The Wall in My Backyard* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 9.

<sup>9</sup> Chris Corrin, *Superwomen and the Double Burden: Women’s experience of change in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union* (Toronto: Canada, Second Story Press, 1992), 129.

<sup>10</sup> Chris Corrin, *Superwomen and the Double Burden: Women’s experience of change in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union* (Toronto: Canada, Second Story Press, 1992), 127.

<sup>11</sup> Chris Corrin, *Superwomen and the Double Burden: Women’s experience of change in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union* (Toronto: Canada, Second Story Press, 1992), 129.

<sup>12</sup> Allen-Thompson, Dinah Dodds, *The Wall in My Backyard* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 9.

<sup>13</sup> Chris Corrin, *Superwomen and the Double Burden: Women’s experience of change in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union* (Toronto: Canada, Second Story Press, 1992), 144.



While women made up 32 percent of the German Parliament (*Volkskammer*), their involvement in the Socialist Unity Party (SED) was virtually nonexistent. Although the SED did have a separate women's organization called the German Democratic Women's Federation or the Democratic Women's League of Germany (DFD), the organization's political power was restrained by the strict supervision of the SED.<sup>14</sup> It was only in the SED that they would have had a real role in decision making and thus in their own political representation. When the Wall fell in 1989, there was only one woman in the cabinet of 37 ministers; that woman was Margot Honecker, wife of the long-standing General Secretary.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Susanne Kranz, "Women's Role in the German Democratic Republic and the State's Policy Toward Women," 79.

<sup>15</sup> Margot Honecker held the position of Minister of Education from 1963 to November 1989. Susanne Kranz, "Women's Role in the German Democratic Republic and the State's Policy Toward Women," 78.

## Chapter Two

### Reunification and the Second Wave:

The second wave of discourse surrounding the effect that communist systems had on women's situations, in particular, quickly exposed the lies that the communist system perpetuated during the Cold War. The women who published autobiographical works in the 1990s through the early 2000s spoke freely and honestly of their experiences. The majority of these women experienced years of corruption, psychological and physical imprisonment, and the threat of government surveillance, and their accounts illuminate the atrocities and realities of living under a communist system that were so easily covered up by their authoritarian regimes. The women who chose to speak up and share their stories provide an invaluable look into the mysterious and isolated states that thwarted women's ambition and repressed their desires as often as they promoted them. Primary accounts from Slavenka Drakulić, Christa Wolf, Rita Kuczynski, Jana Hensel, and the East German women whom Anna Funder, Dinah Dodds and Pam Allen-Thompson interviewed are useful sources for evaluating the communist experience, but with a focused attention on women. Included in this discussion are the stories of ordinary women. These are the most important perspectives to consider while looking at this period in history, as Julia Behrend from Anna Funder's *Stasiland* explains:

“For anyone to understand a regime like the GDR, the stories of ordinary people must be told. Not just the activists or the famous writers... You have to look at how normal people manage with such things in their pasts” (Funder, 144).

Secondary materials that adopt interdisciplinary approaches have also analyzed how the façade of gender equality, the “double burden,” and the state's intimidation efforts were detrimental to women's well-being. Throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, numerous publications addressed the differences in the East German and West German state's policies towards women.

Topics ranged from women's reproductive rights to women's involvement in the workforce to women's access to political representation. Historians, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, political scientists, and feminist theorists have all contributed to this phase of the discourse, which focused on communism's purported negative effect on women. These sources provide evidence of the post-socialist mindset and context into which we can situate the primary sources of this second wave.

But before this second wave gained momentum, there was the discourse of German reunification. The months following the fall of the Berlin Wall and leading up to German reunification in May of 1990 were characterized by a much different attitude. There were conflicting views about how the two states would merge economically, politically, and socially, but there were also skeptics of the western system. Those who had achieved certain freedoms – such as mothers with social benefits and women with relative political representation – were wary of reunification because of what they would lose in the process of assimilation. Skeptics included East German feminists like Christine Schenck who doubted West Germany's treatment of independent women. Situated between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the second wave of discourse, then, is this smaller wave that I call “reunification discourse.” The tone of the second wave was very much a negative one, and it persisted throughout the 1990s until the early 2000s. But we must acknowledge the publications emerging in the immediate months of reunification that reflect the uncertainty and uneasiness towards the merging of East and West Germany. These two movements – the smaller reunification discourse wave and the larger second wave – overlapped in the early 1990s, but the second wave lasted for over a decade. Primary sources, earlier than secondary sources, take on the negative view of East Germany. These works typically come from women who experienced the brutalities of the Stasi and were

subjected to harmful conditions in the former GDR; whereas scholars removed from that atmosphere could reflect objectively and analytically on the former GDR. These two types of sources do not follow the exact same course in terms of when they exit the reunification discourse wave and enter the second wave. Almost exclusively, secondary sources contribute to the reunification discourse and later enter into the reflective second wave of the early 1990s.

#### Reunification Discourse and Second Wave Secondary Sources:

Beginning in May of 1989, the communist regimes of Eastern Europe came to a speedy yet unexpected collapse. That fall, borders would open and the Berlin Wall would cease to exist as the dividing line between East and West. With this collapse, it became clear that the political systems of the east would be replaced by the political systems of the west. But what was unknown at the time was whether or not these changes would last or become permanent. In the immediate months following the fall of the Wall, scholars and citizens alike tried to assess the situation and predict the fate of their two separate German states. For the two Germanys, reunification<sup>16</sup> was the solution, and it was decided that the former GDR would assimilate into West German society and adopt all western political and economic principles. Right after the fall of the Berlin Wall and amidst whispers of reunification, the attitude towards these developments had yet to solidify into an overarching theme. There were endless factors to consider in forming an opinion about reunification. Not all aspects of the merge would benefit former East Germans, and they were well aware of this fact in the late months of 1989 and early months of 1990. This realization was reflected in the “reunification discourse.”

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<sup>16</sup> The merging of the two Germanys is sometimes referred to “unification” rather than reunification”; it is a stylistic choice.

The end of the socialist state meant that East Germans would have to start over in a new system, losing many of the achievements made in the 40 years of the GDR. Women were the group most likely to experience this loss, as they would now be held to the western model of the “wife-mother” in place of the “worker-mother.” The discourse emerging from the early 1990s reflected the unsureness and uneasiness about the state of the former East Germany and the wariness surrounding the situation of women. While many assessments and predictions were made, these theories were grounded in the very specific context of the end of the long-lasting communist regimes of Eastern Europe, making their study a valuable resource in identifying early post-socialist attitudes.

Feminist theory and women’s mobilization made up a significant branch of the emerging discourse, as women were an important aspect of the reunification process. One of the earliest East German feminist organizations was Women for Peace, which emerged out of the Protestant church in 1982.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the next decade, the Protestant church continued to provide a space for women’s discussion and peaceful mobilization. In September of 1989, the *Neues Forum* (New Forum) was established as the first political movement outside of the Protestant church. The New Forum experienced massive membership and was densely populated by women, organizing the first demonstrations during the autumn of 1989. Women for Peace and the New Forum had complimentary intentions of democracy and representation, and many women were active members of both. On November 9, 1989, the border between East and West Berlin was opened, signaling the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. The interim government of Hans Modrow, beginning in November, facilitated the creation of the Round Table, an unofficial, multi-constituency advisory body to the interim government that existed from December 1989 to

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<sup>17</sup> Allen-Thompson, Dinah Dodds, *The Wall in My Backyard* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994),.

March 1990.<sup>18</sup> The Round Table was composed of representatives of political parties, societal groups, and the citizen's movements that formed the "core of political opposition," which provided another opportunity for women to mobilize.<sup>19</sup> Women's presence in the Round Table discussions signifies their continuous desire for representation, participation, and equality. In December of 1989, amidst the bustle of communism's downfall, the Autonomous Women's Association (UFV) was established.<sup>20</sup> Since its initiation, the UFV acted as an umbrella organization for various feminist movements in the final moments of East Germany. One of the first actions taken by the UFV was their "Petition to the Round Table," which pressured the interim government to establish a Women's State Secretary for Gender Equality.<sup>21</sup> With the impending western-centric economic reforms of reunification, women's economic and social independence was threatened. This issue was the main concern of East German feminists and dominated the discourse of the *Wende*.<sup>22</sup>

#### Historiography/Discourse:

A myriad of historians, sociologists, political scientists, and feminist theorists offered their remarks in journal publications and book contributions of this wave of reunification discourse. Of these scholars, a variety of backgrounds was represented as some were from the former East Germany and others from the West. In the fall of 1991, the American scholar of German studies Dorothy J. Rosenberg published two articles, "Learning to Say 'I' Instead of 'We': Recent Works on Women in the Former GDR," and "Shock Therapy: GDR Women in

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<sup>18</sup> Allen-Thompson, Dinah Dodds, *The Wall in My Backyard* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> Wolfgang Seibel, "Institutional Coping" in Konrad Jarausch's *United Germany*, 85.

<sup>20</sup> The Autonomous Women's Association is also referred to as the Independent Women's Association and the Independent Women's Union.

<sup>21</sup> Brigitte Young, *Triumph of the Fatherland: German Unification and the Marginalization of Women* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 104.

<sup>22</sup> Brigitte Young, *Triumph of the Fatherland: German Unification and the Marginalization of Women* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 104.

Transition from a Socialist Welfare State to a Social Market Economy.” In the former, Rosenberg addresses the general tone of post-communist women’s writing which reflected their adjustment to post-communist society and learning how they fit into that society (as an “I” and not a “we”). With reunification, as Rosenberg explains, there no longer existed a common agenda among all East German citizens; they were shuffled into the new agenda of the capitalist state that encouraged competition and class division.<sup>23</sup> She also identifies the current pitfalls of that discourse as of 1991, stating, “The books that describe, balance, and place in perspective the radical changes that have taken place in the lives of women in the former GDR have yet to appear. I hope that they are now in the process of being written and that when they are completed, they will find their way into print.”<sup>24</sup> Rosenberg’s criticisms in 1991 show how undeveloped this aspect of discourse was only a year after official German reunification.

In “Shock Therapy,” Rosenberg focuses on the losses and gains of women, explaining that women from the former GDR were finding themselves in the “peculiar position of having gained significant expansion of their civil rights at the expensive of vital economic ones.”<sup>25</sup> Noting the unemployment rates of women in the five former GDR territories, she calls attention to the harmful effects of the economic shift.<sup>26</sup> Rosenberg, like most, also understood that women’s former social benefits were stripped from them in 1990, and even quotes the relevant and influential UFV member Christine Schenck who argued that the effects of German

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<sup>23</sup> Dorothy J. Rosenberg, “Learning to Say ‘I’ Instead of ‘We’: Recent Works on Women in the Former GDR.” *Women in German Yearbook* Vol. 7 (1991): 169.

<sup>24</sup> Dorothy J. Rosenberg, “Learning to Say ‘I’ Instead of ‘We’: Recent Works on Women in the Former GDR.” *Women in German Yearbook* Vol. 7 (1991): 167.

<sup>25</sup> Dorothy J. Rosenberg, “Shock Therapy: GDR Women in Transition from a Socialist Welfare State to a Social Market Economy.” *Signs* 17, no. 1 (Autumn, 1991): 129.

<sup>26</sup> The real unemployment rate was in the former GDR was over 25 percent by the end of 1990 and was expected to reach 50 percent by the summer of 1991. By that time, “only slightly over half of the newly unemployed were women, however women constituted just one-quarter of those who had found new jobs as the labor force was redefined by the West German model. Single mothers are disproportionately represented among the unemployed, as are women over fifty and women with college degrees. As child-care centers raise their prices or close for lack of funding, more and more women are forced out of work or onto welfare,” 132.

reunification were “a massive attack on the rights of women.”<sup>27</sup> This “attack” meant that women who made career choices and personal decisions within the realm of East German social and economic universe were faced with a set of principles through reunification, thus giving them an overall disadvantage.<sup>28</sup> By the end of 1991, the unfortunate conditions confronting women of the former GDR still had yet to be addressed by the government and by the press. Rosenberg is one of few scholars who were able to publish their criticisms of the reunification process in the midst of it all. She represents those who were cautious about the merging of the two Germans, were wary of the developments affecting women, and inserted those views into their contributions to the contemporary discourse.

By 1993, the tone had shifted somewhat to include the rhetoric of the second wave. Three years had passed since reunification, making room for more reflective analyses. Around this time marks the point when reunification discourse had withered away and the dominant theme became second wave discourse. These publications still considered the potential pitfalls of reunification, but focused primarily on the negative effects of East Germany’s *Frauenpolitik*.<sup>29</sup> In her 1993 article “Three Generations of East German Women: Four Decades of the GDR and After,” West German historian Dorothee Wierling offers an appropriate assessment of this period. About whether or not women were the “losers” of reunification, she states, “Short-term losers may turn out long-term winners and vice versa...I know that what is experienced as a loss may later be remembered as a gain, and vice versa.”<sup>30</sup> This awareness of the uncertainties of

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<sup>27</sup> Dorothy J. Rosenberg, “Shock Therapy: GDR Women in Transition from a Socialist Welfare State to a Social Market Economy.” *Signs* 17, no. 1 (Autumn, 1991): 133.

<sup>28</sup> Dorothy J. Rosenberg, “Shock Therapy: GDR Women in Transition from a Socialist Welfare State to a Social Market Economy.” *Signs* 17, no. 1 (Autumn, 1991): 133

<sup>29</sup> I will have already introduced this concept.

<sup>30</sup> Dorothee Wierling, “Three Generations of East German Women: Four Decades of the GDR and After.” *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Winter, 1993): 29.



reunification, expressed by Wierling in 1993, is an important aspect of the early 1990s when the reunified state was still relatively young.

Sources that contribute to the second wave revealed the hypocrisy of the East German's supposed gender equality. Texts that I have employed to trace this theme, emerging in the early 1990s and ending in the early 2000s, are: "The Truth about Superwoman: Women in East Germany" (1990) by Belinda Cooper, *Superwomen and the Double Burden: Women's experience of change in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union* (1992) edited by Chris Corrin, *Democratic Reform and the Position of Women in Transitional Economies* (1993) edited by Valentine M. Moghdam, *Gender Politics and Post-Communist: Reflections from Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (1993) edited by Nanette Funk and Magda Mueller, "The Rise and Fall of 'Mommy Politics': Feminism and Unification in (East) Germany" (1993) and "Three Steps Back for Women: German Unification, Gender, and University 'Reform'" (1993) by Myra Marx Ferree, *Women in the Politics of Postcommunist Eastern Europe* (1994) edited by Marilyn Rueschmeyer, "Keeping a Foot in the Door: East German Women's Academic, Political, Cultural, and Social Projects" (1994) and "East German Women and the Wende" (1995) by Hannah Behrend, *After the Wall: Eastern Germany since 1989* (1998) edited by Patricia J. Smith, *Triumph of the Fatherland: German Unification and the Marginalization of Women* (1999) edited by Brigitte Young, *Reproducing Gender: Politics, Publics, and Everyday Life after Socialism* (2000) edited by Susal Gal and Gail Kligman, *East Germany: Continuity and Change* (2000) edited by Paul Cooke and Jonathan Grix, and *Reinventing Gender: Women in Eastern Germany since Unification* (2003) edited by Eva Kolinsky and Hildegard Maria Nickel. Recurring scholars in this discussion are: Irene Dolling, Myra Marx Ferree, Barbara Einhorn, Dorothy J. Rosenberg, Eva Kolinsky, Hannah Behrend,

Vanessa Beck, and Brigitte Young. These scholars and their resulting textual analyses largely focus on the negative experiences of women in the former East Germany, and follow their assimilation into the newly reunified German state. Their assertions about former East German women reflect the second wave rhetoric, which reveals the “double burden” placed upon East German women.

Primary Source Analysis: (in progress)