

Life Behind The Wall

Part 4: Party without People

A film of Roland May and Karsten Laske

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A UNIFIED STATE (approximately 1980 to 1989)

The 1980s in the GDR were on the one hand a time of rigidity and stagnation. On the other hand these were years of a timid awakening. What was it that held the DDR together internally although it was bankrupt? The Socialist Unity Party was able to make use of a power structure that reached into every corner of society. Whether it was schools, factories or residential areas, party structures formed the skeletal structure that the entire state was based on. Propaganda portrays the image of a unified state. But this image was deceptive, and the symbols of one-party rule had lost all meaning.

The rigidity and stagnation at the start of the 1980s caused people either to look for new meaning or to give up any hopes for change. They were either a part of the power structure or an unwilling object of it. They either sought their path within the party or had long since turned their backs on the system.