

## DOK Leipzig Retrospective focuses on resistance to communist regimes in the Eastern Bloc

Press Release  
22 August 2023

DEFA Matinee and Saxon State Archives Matinee tie in to this theme



DOK Leipzig 2023 | Undeclared (director: Marek Drżewski)

This year's DOK Leipzig **Retrospective** titled **"Film and Protest – Popular Uprisings in the Cold War"** will explore the past by turning a spotlight on the cinematic testimony to resistance against Soviet regimes – a testimony that existed outside of the propagandistic self-portrayal of those in power. This programme, curated by Katharina Franck (Cinémathèque Leipzig) and Andreas Kötzing (Hannah Arendt Institute Dresden), focuses on films that documented the uprisings in various Eastern Bloc countries as they were happening, while bypassing the censors and defying political persecution.

These uprisings range from the East German protests of 17 June 1953 to the uprising in Budapest in 1956, to the Prague Spring, to the bloody struggles for independence in the Baltic states after 1990. "The popular uprisings and quashed attempts at reform are a recurring theme throughout the Cold War period," Andreas Kötzing points out. "When viewed as a whole, these films demonstrate that the protest movements were an enduring phenomenon in the Eastern Bloc – and that there were a wide variety of ways for filmmakers to portray them in film."

The contents of the Retrospective range from subversive animated films to footage smuggled into Western countries to unusually candid films that could only be made as a result of a brief relaxation of censorship in Poland. "The courage of the filmmakers who took substantial risks, sometimes even risking their lives, with their covert footage or subversive productions resonates throughout the programme," comments Katharina Franck. The programme also looks at the Western perspective on these developments in the Eastern Bloc, as reflected in the media at the time.

By staging this Retrospective, DOK Leipzig is also reflecting on its own controversial history. The growing influence of ideological guidelines on its programming meant that until the late 1980s, critical approaches to Soviet regimes were largely absent from the festival. This year's programme includes some of the films that fell victim to (self-)censorship at the time,

66th International Leipzig  
Festival for Documentary and  
Animated Film

8 October to 15 October

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such as a Cuban newsreel by Santiago Álvarez (1968), in which Fidel Castro spoke critically of the Soviet invasion of Prague, and Bohdan Kosiński's film about the "Birth of Solidarity" (1981), which was shown at Western festivals when it came out but was not invited to Leipzig.

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The Retrospective at the 66th edition of DOK Leipzig will kick off with three short films from the period of upheaval from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. They will be shown free of charge at the main station on 9 October as part of the Leipzig Festival of Lights.

Two matinees tie in to the theme of the Retrospective. With the film "Woe to the Vanquished – The Workers' Uprising, 17 June 1953" (1990) by Andrea Ritterbusch in the **DEFA Matinee**, DOK Leipzig is screening an impressive cinematic recreation of the popular uprising in the GDR which uses original footage from Western archives and interviews with eyewitnesses filmed directly after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

The **Matinee Saxon State Archive** will contribute to this multifaceted topic by reflecting critically on so-called "German-Soviet friendship" and its chequered history, which involved both fraternisation and glorification.

This year, the FilmFestival Cottbus (7–12 November) is also taking up the theme of resistance to communist regimes in the Eastern Bloc. A section titled "What Remains of History" is offering screenings of feature and documentary films on uprisings and opposition in the socialist GDR, Poland and Hungary. The programme includes films by Andrzej Wajda, Márta Mészáros, Andrea Ritterbusch and Volker Schlöndorff.

The Retrospective was produced in cooperation with the Cinémathèque Leipzig and the Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Studies in Dresden.

DOK Leipzig would like to thank the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Eastern Germany, the DEFA Foundation and the Saxon State Archive for their funding and support of the film programmes.

The entire film selection of the programmes can be found in the following film lists.

Logos, this year's poster design, festival impressions, and portraits of the programme directors can be found here: [Press Download](#)  
If you need film stills for your coverage of DOK Leipzig 2023, please contact us.

The 66th edition of DOK Leipzig will take place on site from 8 to 15 October, 2023. Each day during the week of the festival, a different film will be available online throughout Germany for 24 hours in the DOK Stream. Accredited participants worldwide can also view the majority of the films in competition online. You can apply for press accreditation via [this form](#).

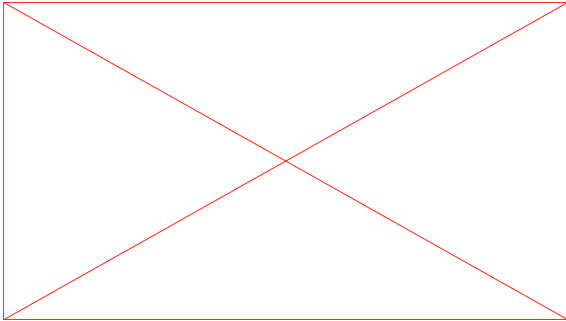
# Retrospektive: Film und Protest – Volksaufstände im Kalten Krieg

## Retrospective: Film and Protest – Popular Uprisings in the Cold War

**DOX Leipzig**

66. Internationales Leipziger  
Festival für Dokumentar- und  
Animationsfilm

8.10.– 15.10.2023

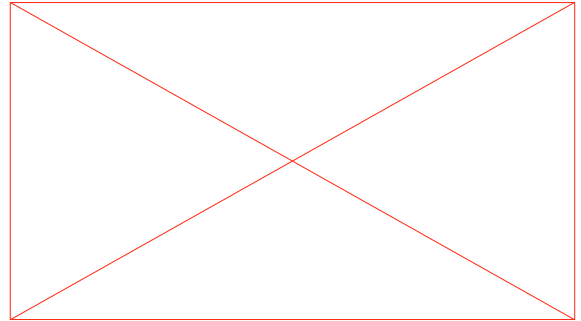


### Der 17. Juni im Saarland

**Documentary Film**

Sven Trittelvitz  
FRG 1964 | 9 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language German  
Subtitles None



### Aufstände im sowjetischen Machtbereich

**Documentary Film**

Ralph Giordano, Hans-Ulrich Barth  
FRG 1961 | 24 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language German  
Subtitles None



### The Baltic Way

**Documentary Film**

Arūnas Matelis, Audrius Stonys  
Lithuania 1990 | 10 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language Lithuanian  
Subtitles English



### Birth of Solidarity

**Documentary Film**

Bohdan Kosiński  
Poland 1981 | 29 min, -  
No Premiere

Language Polish  
Subtitles English

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### Black Days

**Documentary Film**

Ladislav Kudelka, Milan Černák, Ctibor Kováč, Štefan Kamenický  
Czechoslovakia 1968 | 30 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language Slovak  
Subtitles English



### The Cathedral

**Documentary Film**

Laila Pakalniņa  
Latvia 1990 | 19 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language Latvian  
Subtitles English

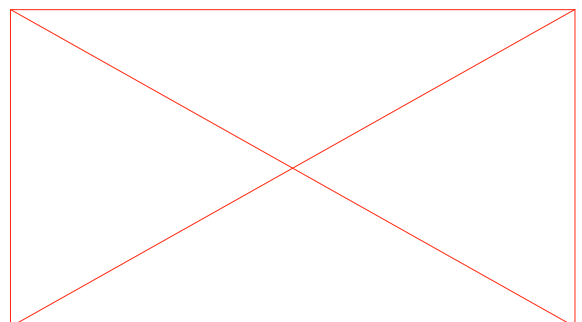


### Confusion

**Documentary Film**

Evald Schorm  
Czechoslovakia 1969 | 36 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language Czech  
Subtitles English



### Deadlock

**Animated Film**

Ferenc Rófusz  
Hungary 1982 | 4 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language without dialogue  
Subtitles None

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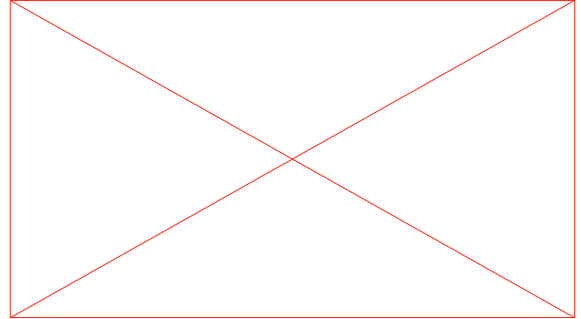
### Downhill

Animated Film

Marian Cholepek, Marian Cholepek  
Poland 1969 | 6 min, Colour  
No Premiere

–

Language without dialogue  
Subtitles None



### Ein Mittwoch im Juni – Vor 20 Jahren: Volksaufstand, Arbeiterrevolte oder Agentenputsch?

Documentary Film

Lutz Lehmann  
FRG 1973 | 60 min, Colour & B&W  
No Premiere

–

Language German  
Subtitles None



### Exit

Documentary Film

Małgorzata Bieńkowska-Buehlmann  
Poland 1990 | 29 min, Colour  
No Premiere

–

Language Polish, German  
Subtitles



### Mind the Steps!

Animated Film

István Orosz  
Hungary 1989 | 6 min, B&W  
No Premiere

–

Language without dialogue  
Subtitles None

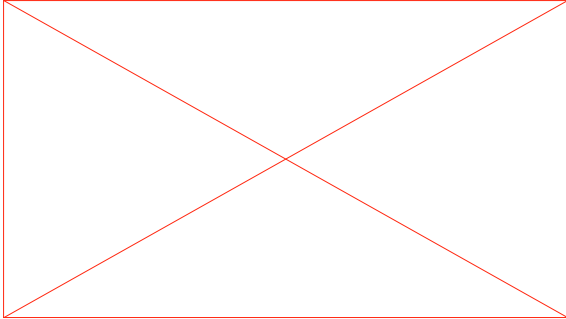
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### Noticiero ICAIC Latinoamericano, No. 422

**Documentary Film**

Santiago Álvarez  
Cuba 1968 | 14 min, B&W  
No Premiere

–

Language Spanish  
Subtitles English



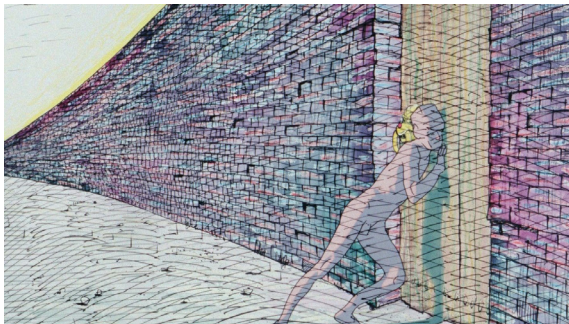
### The Orange Alternative

**Documentary Film**

Mirostaw Dembiński  
Poland 1988 | 24 min, Colour & B&W  
No Premiere

–

Language Polish  
Subtitles English



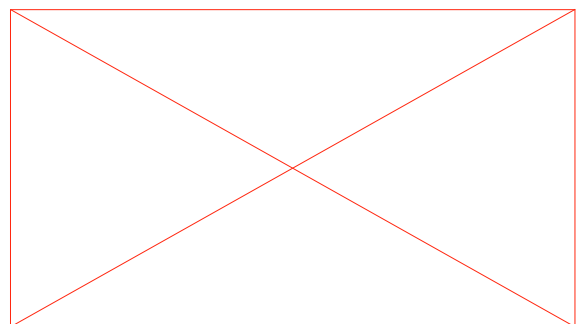
### Sitis

**Animated Film**

Rainer Schade  
GDR 1989 | 11 min, Colour  
No Premiere

–

Language German  
Subtitles None



### Sowjetische Truppen in Prag und Budapest (Panorama, 29.7.1968)

**Documentary Film**

FRG 1968 | 15 min, -  
No Premiere

–

Language German  
Subtitles None

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### Die Streichholzballade

Animated Film

Johannes Hempel  
GDR 1953 | 16 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language German  
Subtitles None

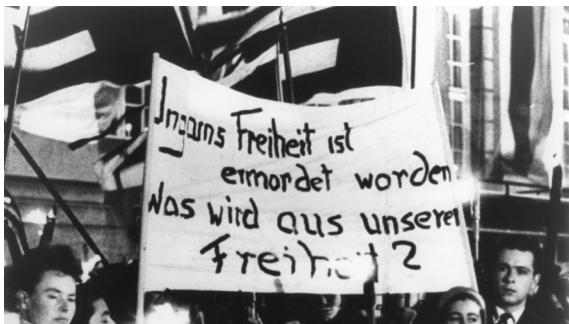


### Undeclared

Documentary Film

Marek Drązewski  
Poland 1984 | 75 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language Polish  
Subtitles English



### Ungarn in Flammen

Documentary Film

Ferdinand Khittl, Stefan Erdélyi  
FRG 1957 | 83 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language German  
Subtitles None



### The Wall

Documentary Film

Anatolijs Pjatkina  
Latvia 1991 | 10 min, Colour  
No Premiere

Language without dialogue  
Subtitles None

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### We Summon You

**Documentary Film**

Bohdan Kosiński  
Poland 1991 | 8 min, -  
No Premiere

Language Polish  
Subtitles



### Year of the Dragon

**Documentary Film**

Andres Sööt  
USSR 1988 | 59 min, B&W  
No Premiere

Language Estonian, Russian  
Subtitles English

# DEFA Matinee



## Wehe den Besiegten – Der 17. Juni 1953

Documentary Film

Andrea Ritterbusch  
GDR 1990 | 87 min, Colour & B&W  
No Premiere

Language German  
Subtitles

## [Kurt Biedenkopf besucht ein sowjetisches Panzerregiment]

Documentary Film

Klaus Wilhelm  
Germany 1991 | 8 min, Colour  
No Premiere

–

Language German  
Subtitles None

## Begegnungen

Documentary Film

Alfred Dorn  
GDR 1970 | 15 min, B&W  
No Premiere

–

Language German  
Subtitles None

## Doroga Zhizni – Straße des Lebens

Documentary Film

M. Markosov  
USSR 1965 | 9 min, B&W  
No Premiere

–

Language German  
Subtitles None

## Drei Jahrzehnte später

Documentary Film

Volker Kastius  
GDR 1977 | 15 min, Colour  
No Premiere

–

Language German  
Subtitles None

## Paskutinis

Fictional Film

Vladislovas Algimantas Blinstrubas  
USSR 1970 | 9 min, B&W  
No Premiere

–

Language German  
Subtitles

## Rückgabe der Kunstschatze an das Grüne Gewölbe

Documentary Film

anonym  
GDR 1958 | 5 min, B&W  
No Premiere

–

Language without dialogue  
Subtitles

## SSSR. 50 Let – 50 Jahre UdSSR [Fragment]

Documentary Film

anonym  
USSR 1972 | 10 min, Colour  
No Premiere

–

Language German  
Subtitles None

## Stranicy Moego Kinoalboma – Seiten meines Filmalbums

Documentary Film

V. Shendrik, V. Vajda, F. Krevnev  
USSR 1969 | 9 min, B&W  
No Premiere

–

Language German Voiceover  
Subtitles None

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