

# **DIVERSITY ON COMMON GROUND**

Ten Perspectives  
on Contemporary  
Feminism



# Imprint

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## Content



*(Women's awakening: What we wanted – what we became)*, from 2011. There were several reasons why these groups formed. Firstly, the rigid social structure left little room for emancipation outside of expected role behaviour and heteronormativity. In addition, the womxn of the GDR also recognized that economic independence did not lead to a fair distribution of domestic and care work. Even though the official aim of state-controlled education and politics was to bring about changes in these fields, the necessary care work remained a private problem of the womxn wherever social arrangements—public child care, etc.—could not help. And in the GDR, too, the career of womxn usually ended at the glass ceiling just above the middle management level. In her comprehensive documentation of autonomous womxn's groups, Kenawi distinguishes three main currents of the GDR womxn's movement: «A) The groups 'Women for Peace' as women's groups within the civil rights movement, as well as the non-church women's groups inside and outside the church, B) the church women's groups, C) the lesbian groups inside and outside the Working Groups Homosexuality».

The experiences of these groups, their debates and insights, have found little entry into Western-influenced German feminism. This is a pity; relevant insights, from which feminist debates could still profit today, are being neglected. Despite all the justified criticism of gender relations in the GDR, important feminist demands were met, above all the high level of employment integration and the extensive social infrastructure with regard to care work. But since new contradictions resulting from these became apparent, while other questions remained open, today's debates could build on and benefit from the experiences of older and younger East German women. *From their struggles, and also from their success with*

Radhika Menon

## FEMINISM FREES THE MIND FROM FEARS