

# Peterborough Arts Cinema

Films that make you think

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June at 7:30pm

## United States of Love

(Zjednoczone stany milosci, 2016)  
Poland | 1h 46min, cert 18

**Director;** Tomasz Wasilewski,

**Stars;** Julia Kijowska, Magdelena Cielecka & Dorota Kolak

Poland, 1990. The first euphoric year of freedom, but also of uncertainty for the future. Four apparently happy women of different ages decide it's time to change their lives, fight for their happiness and fulfill their desires. Agata is a young mother, trapped in an unhappy marriage, who seeks refuge in another, impossible relationship. Renata is an older teacher fascinated with her neighbor Marzena - a lonely former local beauty queen, whose husband works in Germany. Marzena's sister Iza is a headmistress in love with the father of one of her students.



## Reform in Poland and Hungary

By 1989, the Soviet Union had repealed the Brezhnev Doctrine in favor of non-intervention in the internal affairs of its [Warsaw Pact](#) allies, termed the Sinatra Doctrine in a joking reference to the song "My Way." Poland, followed by Hungary, became the first Warsaw Pact state country to break free of Soviet domination.

Labour turmoil in Poland during 1980 had led to the formation of the independent trade union, [Solidarity](#), led by [Lech Wałęsa](#), which over time became a political force. On December 13, 1981, Communist leader Wojciech Jaruzelski instituted a crack-down on Solidarity, declaring martial law in Poland, suspending the union, and temporarily imprisoning most of its leaders. Throughout the mid-1980s, Solidarity persisted solely as an underground organization, supported by the [Catholic Church](#). However, by the late 1980s, Solidarity became sufficiently strong enough to frustrate Jaruzelski's attempts at reform, and nationwide strikes in 1988 forced the government to open a dialogue with Solidarity. On March 9, 1989, both sides agreed to a bicameral legislature called the National Assembly. The already existing *Sejm* would become the lower house. The Senate would be elected by the people. Traditionally a ceremonial office, the presidency was given more powers.

In April 1989, Solidarity was again legalized and allowed to participate in parliamentary elections on June 4, 1989 (coincidentally, the day following the midnight crackdown on Chinese protesters in Tiananmen Square). A political earthquake followed. The victory of Solidarity surpassed all predictions. Solidarity candidates captured all the seats they were allowed to compete for in the Sejm, while in the Senate they captured 99 out of the 100 available seats (with the one remaining seat taken by an independent candidate). At the same time, many prominent Communist candidates failed to gain even the minimum number of votes required to capture the seats that were reserved for them. A new non-Communist government, the first of its kind in Eastern Europe, was sworn into office in September 1989.

After a reformed border was opened from Hungary, a growing number of East Germans began emigrating to [West Germany](#) via Hungary's border with [Austria](#). By the end of September 1989, more than 30,000 East Germans had escaped to the West before the GDR denied travel to Hungary, leaving the CSSR

([Czechoslovakia](#)) as the only neighboring state where East Germans could travel. Thousands of East Germans tried to reach the West by occupying the West German diplomatic facilities in other Eastern European capitals, notably the Prague Embassy where thousands camped in the muddy garden from August to November. The border to the CSSR was closed by the GDR in early October, too, by which time the GDR had isolated itself from all neighbors. Robbed the last chance for escape, remaining East Germans generated demands within East Germany for political change, and mass demonstrations with eventually hundreds of thousands of people in several cities—particularly in Leipzig—continued to grow in October.

On December 3, 1989, the leaders of the two world superpowers declared an end to the [Cold War](#) at a summit in [Malta](#). In July 1990, the final obstacle to [German reunification](#) was removed when West German Chancellor [Helmut Kohl](#) convinced Gorbachev to drop Soviet objections to a reunited Germany within [NATO](#) in return for substantial German economic aid to the Soviet Union. On July 1, 1991, the Warsaw Pact was officially dissolved at a meeting in Prague. At a summit later that same month, Gorbachev and [U.S.](#) President George H.W. Bush declared a US–Soviet strategic partnership, decisively marking the end of the Cold War. President Bush declared that US–Soviet cooperation during the 1990–1991 [Gulf War](#) had laid the groundwork for a partnership in resolving bilateral and world problems.

