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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Abby DeMaris Thompson entitled "Dissident Peace Movements Inside the German Democratic Republic: The Search for Reform, Freedom, and Toleration 1979-1986." I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

Vejas Liulevicius, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

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Dissident Peace Movements Inside the German Democratic Republic:

The Search for Reform, Freedom, and Toleration

1979-1986

A Thesis

Presented for the

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Abby DeMaris Thompson

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and to the memory of my grandparents for teaching me to always follow my conscience in addition to their continual support and encouragement. It is also dedicated to all those who courageously fight for their beliefs and their freedom.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explored the role of the independent peace movements in the German Democratic Republic in the early 1980s. It specifically examined three leaders of these movements: Rainer Eppelmann, Frank Eigenfeld, and Vera Wollenberger. Their work helped create the much larger dissident actions of 1989 by increasing the level of "free space" provided in various Lutheran parishes in East Germany. This expansion occurred in spite of the formation of the GDR Peace Council, which the state used in an attempt to quell opposition by politicizing peace. Their efforts were examined by looking at English translations of GDR Peace Council works, which often exaggerated their goals, actions, and the level of participation. The thesis also discussed the role of *Ostpolitik* and the early 1980s arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States. The latter was the initial inspiration for the independent peace movements, even as it demonstrated that the German Democratic Republic often did not strive for peace, especially when its allies were a factor in state diplomacy.

The role of the early 1980s independent peace movements has been largely absent from the historiography of the German Democratic Republic. The activities of 1989 have overshadowed the important precursors, such as the independent peace movements. Many of the leaders of these movements later became influential figures in the actions of 1989. The independent peace movements taught them important skills that they transferred from leading small groups in 1979-1983 to larger groups in 1989. The independent peace movements provided East German citizens with a public forum where they discussed their concerns and wishes. Their main goals were peace and the internal reform of the German Democratic Republic.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 1989, the German Democratic Republic collapsed after widespread demonstrations. Prior to these protests, small movements had grown in the early 1980s that laid the groundwork for the large-scale demonstrations of 1989. Throughout the 1980s in East Germany, three primary issues or causes, peace, human rights, and the environment, had rallied people together in spite of the constant threat of Stasi harassment, imprisonment, and possible torture. The earliest of these crusades were the anti-nuclear peace movements of the early 1980s. These set the precedent for "free space" within many Lutheran churches and established that a certain level of dissidence could exist, especially when the protestors took adequate precautions, such as alerting the Western media to their planned activities, though doing so might undermine their ultimate goals because the movements would be going outside the GDR, and the media could also put their own spin on events.

It is necessary to emphasize one crucial detail: the independent peace movements were plural entities. The majority did not have contact with each other and due to the level of state control, only limited networking could be established among them. In addition to this factor, many of the movements started because they desired reform within the system. For this reason, most did not attempt to contact other groups because they thought more in terms of local changes. Two new goals, protection from physical harm and the desire to leave East Germany permanently, along with one large governmental concession allowing more citizens to emigrate,

especially in 1984, ultimately led to the demise of the early 1980s peace movements, but they nevertheless ended up having significant effects on East German citizens and society.

The first changing objective was the importance of evading torture and imprisonment. From about 1978 until 1982, most of the protestors either did not entirely understand or did not care about the large possibility for personal harm. As arrests and harassment increased, some movements decided to use the publicity afforded by the Western media to protect themselves from the government. While this tactic was quite successful, it also meant that the original goal of most movements, reform from within the country, was lost because external media involvement often distorted the desires of the protestors. The second change was the desire of many to emigrate to West Germany. These people often became involved in the peace movements because they believed that participation in subversive activities could speed along the process. The potential emigrants were proven correct in their assumptions when the government changed its emigration allowance in 1984.[1] The levels were lowered in 1985 and returned to normal in 1987. The damage this migration did to the peace movements is a subject of controversy among historians and the former dissidents themselves. In some areas, the higher numbers of emigrants clearly damaged the movements, while in other areas there was little effect. Their

[1] Numbers of emigrants from the German Democratic Republic in 1983: 11,343; 1984: 40,974; 1985: 24,912; 1986: 26,178; 1987: 18,958. Source: Dirk Philipsen, *We Were the People: Voices From East Germany's Revolutionary Autumn of 1989* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993), 48.

strength in numbers no longer existed, and the government used this opportunity to create an official governmental peace movement, which began in 1983.

This official German Democratic Peace Movement really took off in 1983 as the government siphoned off members of the independent peace movements. The government's peace movement used many of the same tactics as the independent movements, such as peace marches, rallies, and concerts, but governmental control was guaranteed by Stasi infiltration and mobilization of party faithful to participate. By taking over the cause of peace and calling for the end of nuclear weapons, the government managed to circumvent the independent peace movements. Anti-nuclearization and peace became linked as issues advocated by the East German state, much like workers' rights. For this reason, the causes could no longer be used to demonstrate discontent with the East German government's policies and actions.

In spite of their importance, East Germany's peace movements in the early 1980s are largely missing in German historiography. The topic may warrant a few lines or perhaps a paragraph in works discussing German history, German peace movements, and actions leading to the collapse of the German Democratic Republic. Typically, the peace movements in the Federal Republic of Germany, social movements in the late 1960s throughout the Western world, and the late 1980s protests in East Germany, have contributed to overshadowing these important events.

In spite of this current obscurity, East German peace movements were clearly important in the history of social movements in the country. If pockets of protest for peace were to be built and maintained, there had to be a meeting place. Many

Lutheran churches in East Germany provided this "free space."[2] This was because the Lutheran church's relationship with the East German government had been transformed several years previously, on March 6, 1978.[3] On this date, leaders of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR, or the Kirchenbund, which contained exclusively Lutheran preachers, met with Erich Honecker, leader of the German Democratic Republic, to discuss the future of the Lutheran church within East Germany. Prior to this meeting, the Lutheran church had encountered a variety of moods from the state: toleration, sporadic anti-religion campaigns in the late 1940s, and strong dislike by the government under Ulbricht from 1958 until 1971. When Honecker came to power in 1971, church-state relations worsened until 1973 when the state granted limited concessions to Lutheran churches after "its acceptance as a full voting member of the United Nations" possibly due to the role of the Lutheran churches "in gaining international recognition for the GDR."[4] Because of increased state support, the Lutheran church began to portray itself as a "church within socialism."[5] This gradual return to toleration slowly led to rapprochement with Honecker at the March 1978 summit. Robert Goeckel argues in *The Lutheran Church and the East German State* that one of the main areas of concession was more freedom

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[2] John P. Burgess, *The East German Church and the End of Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 40-41.
[3] Robert F. Goeckel, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State: Political Conflict and Change under Ulbricht and Honecker* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 2.
[4] Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR: 1949-1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 107.
[5] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 3.

of assembly and an emphasis on better treatment for East German citizens "regardless of worldview and religious confession."[6]

The 1978 accord provided Lutheran churches with increased freedom, but this was not entirely without a cost to the churches. While the state did not control the churches externally, the East German government did send Ministry of State Security, or Stasi, agents to attend and check on certain church meetings.[7] In addition to this internal review, the state (via the Stasi) used some Lutheran preachers as unofficial informers.[8] Even with this new level of rapprochement, outward dissent and protest were nevertheless not allowed. Informal and formal meetings were assumed by participants to always be under surveillance by the Stasi. In spite of such measures, however, some Lutheran churches became umbrellas for numerous grassroots organizations.[9] There are several reasons for this. One was that the Lutheran church had traditionally spoken out on issues that it viewed as important, especially with a biblical foundation, such as peace, nature, or the environment.[10] Another reason was individual pastors or church members, who had a strong desire to discuss certain issues, such as peace and the environment. These individuals drove the process of creating small groups that met in Lutheran churches to speak about such topics. The most likely reason was the debate among the Lutheran church hierarchy over what it

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[6] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 245; 1-3, 241-246.
[7] Barbara Miller, *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany: Stasi informers and their impact on society* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 84-85; see also, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 109-115.
[8] *Narratives of Guilt and Compliance in Unified Germany*, 75-84; see also, Karen Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform: The Great Challenge*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 147-148.
[9] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 253.
[10] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 251-252.

meant to be a "church within socialism."[11] Many pastors believed that Lutheran churches had a duty to promote Christian ideals or causes, such as peace, even in a country with a dictatorial regime in power. The early grassroots movements focused on the environment in the 1970s and anti-nuclear disarmament and peace during the early 1980s.[12]

The level of participation by church officials in these movements is still debated. Some, such as Robert Goeckel, believe that the Lutheran church became a tool for networking and information gathering among these grassroots groups.[13] Others, like Frank Eigenfeld, a member of the Halle peace movement, argue that church leaders did not aid the movements, except by providing meeting spaces.[14] The reality of the situation appears to be somewhere in between the assertions of these two camps of interpretation. Certain parishes, specifically those in Berlin, appear to have networked within the city and at times also in other areas. In the same period, other parishes, such as those in Halle, did not know about other peace movements until as late as 1980 and did not begin networking until 1983.[15] Church leaders' acceptance of these groups varied from parish to parish. There was no one cohesive independent peace movement, but instead numerous organizations throughout East Germany. Pastors led some movements, while others merely used church facilities as a meeting spot because of governmental tolerance. In every case, the level of surveillance was

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[11] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 251.
[12] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 253.
[13] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 253.
[14] *We Were the People*, 55.
[15] *We Were the People*, 43, 46.

unknown until members were arrested or tortured. In some cases, while Stasi informers were present, the agency decided the activities did not warrant intervention.

Opinions also vary about the number of church informers who reported to the Stasi. Goeckel is very vague in his assessment of the situation. He states that "the church functioned to channel rising grassroots dissent on this [the independent peace movement] issue, thereby proving useful to a conservative regime interested in political stability without sacrificing ideological purity or loyalty to the USSR."[16] Goeckel does not explain how the Church provided information about opposition groups except for stating that subcommittees of the Kirchenbund worked with the state to deal with such issues.[17] He does not argue that church officials acted as unofficial informants for the Stasi. Goeckel also goes against most in arguing that the independent peace movement was a singular entity. Even with such apparent oversights, Goeckel provides a detailed account of the political situation that existed between the Kirchenbund and the East German government.

Even aside from the Lutheran church's participation, certain other persuasive reasons existed for the creation of independent peace groups that turned into social movements in a dictatorial state. This leads to the question of what causes a social movement. Theories on the causes of social movements are extremely varied. As Alice Holmes Cooper discusses in *Paradoxes of Peace*, there are three primary arguments that must be examined when thinking about peace movements. The first, which is largely connected to Ronald Inglehart's scholarship, is the "value change

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[16] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 255.
[17] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 256.

school."[18] This school "holds that value shifts take place across generations independently of their conscious experience."[19] In Inglehart's model, there are two primary categories, "materialist" and "postmaterialist." A materialist values tangible forms of security while a postmaterialist prizes "social, aesthetic, and intellectual gratification."[20] Using West Germany as an example for Inglehart's theory, one would suppose that a materialist would have lived through the scarcity of the end of World War II and the immediate postwar period, whereas a postmaterialist would have been born or grown up during the economic boom of the 1950s. Inglehart's theory largely fits the account of West Germany's protest movements in 1968 and later, as well as other forms of activism in western countries. Youths who were raised during uncommon economic prosperity did not have to worry about the existence or availability of basic material goods. For this reason, they focused on non-material ideas and causes. This argument stated that these postmaterialists had the time and energy to worry about higher ideals, and this led to increases in social activism.

A second school was largely created from the theories of the German social philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who viewed "social movements as symptomatic of a crisis of modernity."[21] Habermas argued that social movements arise in reaction to

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[18] Alice Holmes Cooper, *Paradoxes of Peace: German Peace Movements since 1945* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 6.
The work of Alice Holmes Cooper provided the information about the three primary social theories that were extremely helpful in analyzing the independent peace movements of the German Democratic Republic. While Holmes Cooper's work focuses strictly on the peace movements in the Federal Republic of Germany from the 1950s until the 1980s, her explanation of social theories was an invaluable tool in the analysis of the peace movements in the German Democratic Republic.

[19] *Paradoxes of Peace*, 6.

[20] *Paradoxes of Peace*, 6.

[21] *Paradoxes of Peace*, 8.

new effects on peoples' lives emanating from advanced capitalism.[22] Specifically, such movements arise when a new technological threat to society emerged.[23] This school contended that such a crisis existed in the 1970s, pointing to nuclear weapons and pollution as threatening "the physical foundations of life, while destruction of traditional social settings undermined sources of meaning."[24] According to this school, the inability of the current political system to deal with such issues led people to discern a crisis. Those who recognized this state of affairs created or joined social movements in response.[25] Thus, Habermas' followers did not confine social activism to a particular generation but instead to a group that saw a crisis and shifted their values and actions in reaction to it.

While the schools of Inglehart and Habermas sought a macro-level explanation of social movements in the 1960s and later, others used micro-level or individual analysis to explain participation. Such examinations classified causes "ranging from cost-benefit analyses and the draw of group solidarity to feelings of personal efficacy and belief in group success."[26] This third form of inquiry used individual responses to reconstruct groups by combining people who acted for similar reasons. Instead of one generation or "crisis-reacting" group, the individual analyses emphasized numerous theoretical groups whose only connection could be as limited as their belief that a particular movement could succeed in its goals, so they decided to participate in it.

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[22] *Paradoxes of Peace*, 8.
[23] *Paradoxes of Peace*, 9.
[24] *Paradoxes of Peace*, 9.
[25] *Paradoxes of Peace*, 9.
[26] *Paradoxes of Peace*, 281.

Numerous reasons existed for the creation and participation in social movements. The next chapter will examine a few of the primary reasons of those who joined such movements through case studies.

These case studies, which make up Chapter 2, examine three important individuals, Rainer Eppelmann, Frank Eigenfeld, and Vera Wollenberger, in the various independent peace movements. Each of these people participated in and helped lead certain peace movements of the early 1980s. They all also encouraged, organized, and influenced the movements for reform that later occurred in 1988 and 1989 in the German Democratic Republic. Their reasons for participating varied, though they each believed that the socialist system could be and needed to be changed. While the sources concerning their activism differed for the three, much of the information on Eppelmann and Eigenfeld came from interviews recorded by historian Dirk Philipsen. Numerous other secondary and primary sources were consulted to ensure that the accounts of the events discussed in the interviews were historically accurate. For Eppelmann, a letter he wrote to Erich Honecker, the leader of East Germany from 1971 until 1973, also provides specific evidence about his reasons for helping create an independent peace movement as well as the goals he hoped to accomplish through this group. Vera Wollenberger's autobiography, which illuminated her participation in opposition movements and the eventual discovery that her husband had been a Stasi informer, provided most of the information for the third case study. Again, other primary and secondary sources were examined to corroborate this material.

In addition to examining and analyzing case studies of the independent peace movements, the East German government's peace movement will also be explored in Chapter 3. The German Democratic Republic created the GDR Peace Council when the country was formed in 1949. This Council was only active until 1952. While the state's rhetoric at times included the goal of peace, no specific government-sponsored organization attempted to actively pursue the completion of such a large task. The emergence of independent peace movements in the late 1970s and early 1980s created problems for the East German government. While East German leaders (at times) claimed to want peace, their foreign policy did not always reflect such a goal. This was particularly evident during the intermediate nuclear force (INF) controversy, which debated the number of intermediate nuclear weapons the United States could have in Western Europe and the number that the Soviet Union could have within the Eastern Bloc, which lasted from 1979 until 1983. The independent peace movements focused on such contradictions in the state's rhetoric. In doing so, these groups created active dissent that could not easily be quelled because the government supposedly supported all activities that led toward a greater level of peace in the world.

For this reason, the German Democratic Republic revived the GDR Peace Council in 1983. From 1983 until 1986, the Council organized and sponsored numerous activities to get East German citizens involved in the peace campaign. At times, the GDR Peace Council used tactics, such as marches and rallies, which the independent peace movements had originally utilized. The state wanted to replace the inherent dissent within the independent peace movements by taking over the issue of

peace as a cause that was strongly advocated by the East German government. While numerous German sources verify the tactics taken by the state to accomplish this, there are also several English sources that demonstrate that the German Democratic Republic wanted to show those in the Western, capitalist world that it was fighting for peace. These sources advertise the activities of the East German state's peace movement while also pointing out the virtuous activities of the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union in the struggle for peace.

These two very different types of peace movements demonstrate the creation and quelling of dissent within the German Democratic Republic. Prior to the early 1980s (with the exception of the 1953 Uprising), the East German state had not been actively opposed by such numbers of its own citizens. Their response could not be overly harsh because these independent peace groups were usually contained and often protected by the Lutheran Church, which had been a largely (but not always respected) guaranteed "free space" in East Germany since the mid-1970s. For this reason and the political issues, specifically the Soviet Union placing more intermediate range nuclear weapons in East Germany in 1981 and 1982, involved in the INF debate, the state could not repress the independent peace movements, as they would have done at any previous time. Instead the German Democratic Republic had to wait until the INF controversy had concluded before it could take up the cause of peace as its own, as discussed below in Chapter 4.

The peace movements from 1979 until 1986 have rarely been discussed in the historiography that seeks to explain why the German Democratic Republic collapsed in 1989. Since the Berlin Wall fell, the episodes of 1988 and 1989 have been

thoroughly detailed. While 1989 was a watershed event, there were many prior actions that led to the success of 1989. The independent peace movements from 1979 until 1983 created a grassroots level of dissent for the first time in the state's history. These movements also taught organizational and leadership skills to many individuals who would use them again in 1989. The activities of the independent peace movements provided many of the tools, as well as the realization that opposition was possible, that made 1989 such a watershed event for the late twentieth century.

Chapter 2

Case Studies of Independent Peace Movements

In *We Were the People: Voices From East Germany's Revolutionary Autumn of 1989*, Dirk Philipsen argues against the idea that "the events of 1989 were somehow a product of a 'spontaneous' rising."[27] While 1989 has received the majority of historians' attention in the last decade, the events leading to the German Democratic Republic's collapse did not happen overnight. The idea of a spontaneous revolution is an interesting theory, but it is incorrect. The following chapter discusses key leaders and groups that represent certain categories within the independent peace movements of the early 1980s prior to the turning point of 1989. These categories include: a pastor's efforts in Berlin (with almost complete access to Western media broadcasts as well as contact with Western journalists), a small city group in Halle with Western media access that grew to an unanticipated degree, and a women's peace movement in Berlin. The case of the women's peace movement is important because it was the first women's movement in the German Democratic Republic. These women learned that they did not merely have to listen at group meetings but they could express their opinions and even become leaders. All three of these case studies are in regions that had access to the Western media, yet in each case, the motivations of the individuals involved were not solely responses to peace movements in West Germany. Instead, their aims were to increase peace, provide more open forums where citizens could express their fears, concerns, and opinions, and to reform the state from the inside out.

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[27] *We Were the People*, 16.

This information goes against the idea that the East German peace movements were only copycat events and not the true sentiments of East German citizens.

In numerous interviews with leaders of the 1989 dissident movements, Philipsen uncovered an important correlation: the majority of these influential individuals had participated in, if not in fact led, previous protest groups. One of the best known of these interviewees is Rainer Eppelmann, a Lutheran pastor in East Berlin during the early 1980s.

Eppelmann represents the epitome of a particular type of East German activist. He was fairly safe from serious harm because of his position in the church in addition to his intelligent use of Western media to ensure that he would not just "disappear." Eppelmann also preached in East Berlin where knowledge of Western activities, such as peace movements, was prevalent because Western German television transmitted into East Berlin and much of the GDR. While not a typical Lutheran preacher in any other time period (given Lutheran traditional deference to political authority at earlier times in German history), Eppelmann does fit the profile of many East German preachers who joined the profession because of their radical political tendencies. The Lutheran church was not entirely protected from the government's authority or the Stasi, but a career as a pastor permitted one to avoid severe penalties for not following the Socialist Unity Party's policies.

Eppelmann's life did not begin as that of a typical East German. He attended a school in West Berlin until the 1961 erection of the Berlin Wall.[28] Prior to the

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[28] *Wer war wer — DDR: Ein biographisches Lexikon* (Berlin: Christoph Links, 1992), 103.

building of the Wall, Eppelmann had not been a pacifist. In fact, he had intended to become a fighter pilot in the West German army. Because he had attended West German schools, the government refused to let him take the Abitur, the exam necessary to attend university.[29] Subsequently, Eppelmann worked as a roofer's apprentice. Then he was drafted into an East German construction brigade for a very brief stint because he refused to take the military oath that included, "'with a weapon in my hand.'"[30] After eight months in jail for this offense, he served his eighteen months required service and then returned to a construction apprenticeship. After completion of this apprenticeship, Eppelmann entered a construction-engineering program. After only a brief period there, he became a bricklayer because he found the East German university too close-minded after his liberal, West German education. As for numerous others in his generation, the 1968 Prague Spring was the turning point for Eppelmann. He and his sister legibly signed and provided a complete address in a solidarity declaration book at the Czechoslovakian Embassy.[31] Shortly thereafter, in 1969, Eppelmann began classes at an East Berlin seminary.[32] While he had been confirmed previously in his life and attended services, he had not been overly religious.[33] His decision to become a pastor hinged more on political convictions than religious beliefs "'because the church was the only place in which one could breathe in this country.'"[34] He served as the pastor of the Samariter Parish

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[29] *We Were the People*, 58. Interview by Philipsen with Rainer Eppelmann.
[30] *We Were the People*, 60.
[31] *We Were the People*, 61.
[32] *Wer war wer — DDR: Ein biographisches Lexikon*, 103.
[33] *We Were the People*, 62.
[34] *We Were the People*, 56.

in East Berlin as well as the district youth pastor for East Berlin's Friedrichshain borough.[35] It is in these capacities that his dissident tendencies grew. His most novel actions were the creation of "Blues Masses" in the late 1970s, writing letters to leaders of the German Democratic Republic, and co-authoring a call for a "peace without arms" in 1982 with Robert Havemann.

Eppelmann turned into an acknowledged revolutionary within the church almost immediately. He departed from the traditional use of a biblical theme as the focus of youth masses. Instead, Eppelmann decided to ask youths in attendance about concerns in their lives. As he remembered, "The topics that came up had to do with hopelessness, feeling incarcerated, fear, fear of the police, fear of the Stasi, fear of superiors—all these were topics that we tried to pick up on, even during public events."[36] This form of "outside the box thinking" epitomized Eppelmann's actions as a pastor. He was one of the first to provide a public forum for expressing political opinions. This was extremely uncommon because "citizens of the GDR only expressed what they really thought among circles of close friends, the family, or at the neighborhood bar after they got drunk—but never publicly."[37] Eppelmann continually pushed the envelope.

After being asked by a young man to allow blues concerts in the church around 1980, Eppelmann suggested a few improvements to this idea and in doing so created the "Blues Masses."[38] Blues were popular throughout East Germany as well as West

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[35] *Wer war wer — DDR: Ein biographisches Lexikon*, 103.
[36] *We Were the People*, 63.
[37] *We Were the People*, 63.
[38] *We Were the People*, 63-64.

Germany because of the infiltration of American music after World War II. The view of blues music that was held by the GDR state was that this type of American music was something that only those opposed to the government or degenerates would listen to. Eppelmann described the "Blues Masses" as starting

> with biblical texts about love, then [the young man] played a few blues songs, then we read a few texts, and so on, and 200 people showed up, for heaven's sake. For a normal church service in downtown Berlin you would never have gotten together 200 people. The next time we chose our own theme, wrote our own texts while still using some biblical texts, and then 400 people showed up. This kept on growing—growing so much, in fact that people began to come from all over the country, with backpacks on their shoulders, lining up in front of the church because they were worried they wouldn't be able to get in. During peak times—that must have been in the early '80s—10,000 people showed up. We had to repeat some services three to five times.[39]

This description explains a lot about the independent peace movements in the German Democratic Republic in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Some aspects justify detailed explanation. These movements were often held in churches where the government tolerated a level of "free space" as a safety valve. The utilization of church rooms as meeting places did not mean that those attending were necessarily Christian believers. This is worth emphasizing. Likewise, Eppelmann's case also demonstrates that not all East German Lutheran pastors chose the profession solely because of their religious convictions. Many actions at this time were driven by political necessity or on an even more simplistic level, the need for a free civic space, a place where opinions against governmental policies could be voiced. The government's tolerance of the Lutheran church, especially after the 1978 agreement, meant that Lutheran churches became forums where dissent could be voiced. It will become clear in later examples

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[39] *We Were the People*, 64.

that the church did not tolerate every group and certain churches were more strictly controlled by the Lutheran church leadership than Eppelmann's. Also, the levels of Stasi surveillance and infiltration, not only into groups but also within the church hierarchy, varied from city to city. Eppelmann's "Blues Masses" should be viewed as atypical, though the level of support he received from the church hierarchy was not. This institutional fact should be kept in mind: behind each parish that allowed independent peace groups to meet, there were church leaders who allowed the incidents and often protected the participants. In rare cases, church officials were unofficial informers for the Stasi, but the majority in the hierarchy were well-intentioned.

However, the Stasi did have an impact on Eppelmann's life. The "Blues Masses" were highly controversial and for that reason Eppelmann and the participants were watched and at times punished. As the "Blues Masses" became larger events, the Stasi, local police, and the East Berlin mayor all confronted Eppelmann, ordering that he stop holding these services.[40] In spite of these problems, the church hierarchy stood behind him though they also told him, "Eppelmann, you're putting the fate of the entire church at risk with your activities."[41] He told Philipsen that these events were difficult for him, but Eppelmann believed that he nevertheless had to sponsor these services. Throughout his story, Eppelmann emphasized the overriding importance of a free civic sphere. His actions reinforced this idea. He believed that too many citizens were suffering not from a lack of voice (though it was definitely a

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[40] *We Were the People*, 64-65.
[41] *We Were the People*, 65.

problem), but more importantly citizens did not know if they were the only ones who were feeling so much fear and were detached from each other as a consequence. Eppelmann appears to have truly wanted to help these people. In order to do so, he felt that he had to lead them. Eppelmann did this not only by backing the "Blues Masses" but also through letters (some of which were given in advance to the Western media) to top government officials asking for change in the German Democratic Republic.

An example of such a letter is one that Rainer Eppelmann wrote to Erich Honecker on September 24, 1981. In this letter, Eppelmann requested political changes, especially in relation to issues of peace. He began the letter by stating "It is five minutes before noon."[42] Eppelmann stated that the threat of a nuclear war was as high as ever in 1981. He told Honecker that many resources, including human labor and East German money, had been irresponsibly used. Eppelmann argued that increases in nuclear weapons only led to higher levels of "fear, mistrust, hate, aggression, and resignation" between countries.[43] He told Honecker that peace was the only solution because it builds trust and confidence between people and nations, which is impossible to do when the threat of nuclear destruction looms so close. Eppelmann believed that peace was the only solution to confronting the possibility of nuclear destruction. He continued to explain to Honecker why he should make increasing efforts toward peace with Western countries.[44]

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[42] Wolfgang Büscher, Peter Wensierski, and Klaus Wolschner, eds., *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978-1982* (Hattingen: Scandica, 1982), 178.
[43] *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978-1982*, 178-179.
[44] *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978-1982*, 178-179.

Eppelmann believed that the military was beyond the realm of control by East German citizens, even though the civilians would be destroyed if nuclear war occurred. Civilian interests were not being taken into account, and citizens wanted them to be, especially those who were Christians and pacifists because they were the primary leaders of the independent peace movements. Eppelmann wanted Honecker to support specific measures that could achieve peace for the numerous East German citizens who desired it. Instead of ordering Western European countries to disarm and giving NATO rules for disarmament, Eppelmann believed Honecker must first build trust between East Germany and Western Europe. He even provided Honecker with specific proposals for procedures that would lead to increased trust.[45]

The letter contained sixteen ideas that Eppelmann believed must be followed to create peace in Europe. First, he wanted to ban the production, sale, and importation of all war toys. Second, Eppelmann believed that soldiers must not be glorified in schoolbooks or in homework materials. Third, he wanted "organized visits of the kindergarten groups and school classes" to the barracks to end.[46] Fourth, Eppelmann believed that student and worker military training as well as studying the history of the army must be ended. Fifth, he deemed it necessary to teach students methods of peaceful conflict resolution in their families and in their work, and he also asserted that students needed to learn environmental conservation techniques in addition to taking an introduction to psychology class. Eppelmann wanted "financial and occupational preferential treatment" ended for youths who decided to make military

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[45] *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978-1982*, 179.
[46] *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978-1982*, 179.

service their career.[47] He also wanted Honecker to stop discrimination against youths who decided not to make the military their career. Eppelmann also believed that alternatives to military service, such as a form of community service, should be created and given an equal opportunity. Because of his background in the construction division of the army, Eppelmann also asked that "the occupational discrimination for conscripts allowed to do non-military (esp. building) work" end.[48] The other large changes that Eppelmann believed necessary were ending discrimination of students devoted to pacifism, East Germany publicly declaring that the country is leading the way "for a nuclear-free zone in Central Europe," requesting that all European countries follow this example, and a public declaration that the German Democratic Republic would gradually disarm.[49] Eppelmann stated that these measures were necessary because otherwise, he declared, only "five minutes" remained before nuclear war would break out and all of Europe would be destroyed. Eppelmann concluded that for this reason, East Germany must risk something in order to create peace. He even signed the startling letter "yours faithfully, Rainer Eppelmann."[50]

As this letter demonstrates, Eppelmann did not want to destroy the German Democratic Republic completely; he wanted to reform it. As he explained, "What we were trying to do was to turn East Germany into something else, into a society that would seem attractive to us, that would seem humane to us, a society in which it

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[47] *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978-1982*, 180.
[48] *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978-1982*, 180.
[49] *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978-1982*, 180.
[50] *Friedensbewegung in der DDR: Texte 1978-1982*, 180.

would be fun to live, in which one would be able to fulfill oneself."[51] In this way, Eppelmann fits into Inglehart's "value change school" as a "postmaterialist." He did not have to worry about the material goods necessary for daily life. For this reason, he had more time to focus on the ideas of change that East German citizens had and movements that would attempt to get them to that point. In addition to being a "postmaterialist," Eppelmann was also someone affected by the "crises of modernity." The causes of his dislike for the current society derived from what it had become as opposed to what it once was or could be. Eppelmann's life did not completely change when he decided to support the Prague Spring participants in 1968, but his ideals did begin to come to the forefront of his mind and they demanded action. He could have continued to make a good living as a bricklayer, but he would not have been able to speak his mind. For Eppelmann, the increasing forced militarization in schools and workplaces was something he saw as unnecessary and harmful. While he was not initially a pacifist, Eppelmann did view increased state control in all areas of life as overbearing. There was no public sphere, not even a true private sphere. Even if the German Democratic Republic did not maintain constant surveillance of every single person through the Stasi, each person suspected and feared that he or she was being watched in such a way. This fear was, not only for Eppelmann but also more importantly for those in his congregation, another of his perceived crises of modernity. The final crisis was the increased level of Soviet nuclear weapons in East Germany. Because Eppelmann was a leader, he did not really fit into the micro-level analysis for

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[51] *We Were the People*, 237.

group participation. He encouraged others to join because of his belief in the various causes. Each individual who attended the "Blues Masses" and other activities had to decide what his or her reasons were, but Eppelmann initiated and perpetuated the various causes, demanding confrontation, but not controlling action.

Other independent peace movements existed, though most did not know of the large gatherings in East Berlin in detail. One such movement formed in Halle in 1978 after a local pastor formed an "open group" calling itself "Open Work." Frank Eigenfeld, a biologist by trade as well as a founding member of the largest oppositional group in the late 1980s, New Forum, and his wife joined. At "Open Work," members discussed various problems in their lives and tried to find possible solutions. One area that they continued to return to was the issue of increasing nuclear weapons deployed in East Germany. Eigenfeld and his wife were among the few older members of "Open Work." The majority of the members were younger, though all appear to have worked together to develop plans of action across generational lines.[52]

"Open Work" wanted to draw attention to the problems of larger numbers of nuclear weapons in the German Democratic Republic. To accomplish this, the group decided to conduct small demonstrations. These were largely successful because no one in the government expected such actions. Eigenfeld's description of their first demonstration seems almost surreal. During an official East German "peace meeting" in 1981, the group marched alongside the "blueshirts," the party-operated Free

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[52] *We Were the People*, 39. This is the source for all but the first sentence of this paragraph. Interview by Philipsen with Frank Eigenfeld.

German Youth (FDJ). Members of "Open Work" continued to march in the "Make Peace Against NATO Weapons" state meeting even though they also opposed Soviet nuclear missiles that were to be stationed throughout East Germany. "Open Work" made it all the way to the grandstand, which contained the district party leaders. At that point, the independent group of about eighty people began singing songs to gain attention from the leaders and the crowd. They briefly achieved this before being drowned out by the "blueshirts" yelling "'long live the party.'"[53] This first event was successful in gaining attention, even if only briefly, for their cause. Various "forms of repression, summonses, and such" limited future success. Eigenfeld pointed out that the first event was the only one free of oppressive measures. At the 1981 "Make Peace Against NATO Weapons" march, the government merely photographed them.[54]

In spite of the government's efforts to contain the Halle group, they soon conducted other demonstrations and activities. This shows that their actions were not for limited goals. They desired more than brief governmental attention. The group desired real change and social impact. Many have suggested that the dissident movements of the 1980s desired the downfall of the government. Even in these seemingly extreme cases of opposition, the leaders of these groups did not think in terms of the destruction of the German Democratic Republic (this perhaps began to occur closer to 1989). Eigenfeld demonstrated this point when he said that in the early 1980s, his "hopes did not encompass the idea that the existing state had to be

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[53] *We Were the People*, 40.
[54] *We Were the People*, 39-40.

toppled."[55] This idea runs throughout almost every story of East German dissenters. More than anything, these individuals desired real change in the existing environment. They were tired of the government's hypocrisy and repression.

While they desired peace, the independent peace movements were also effective tools for political dissent. The government had a peace agenda as previously noted, "Make Peace Against NATO Weapons" (Frieden Schaffen und gegen NATO-Waffen). For this reason, the issue of peace was one of the few realms where a small level of freedom existed for East German citizens. Clearly this was still quite limited as the crackdown on the "Open Work" group revealed. The cause of peace was also an area that the Lutheran church supported strongly. This allowed those who desired change to use churches as meeting places. Only when groups severely deviated from the issue of peace, narrowly construed, did some church leaders intervene and refuse to allow meeting space. And this was often only because of increased governmental controls against various churches. Prior to such suppression, groups in Halle and other cities worked to change not only policies and actions with respect to nuclear weapons but also to change the East German system to allow more freedom for its citizens. According to Eigenfeld, "Open Work" was not an overly theoretical organization. Members felt that "the party pretty much determined people's lives, that nobody had the opportunity to participate freely in this society, that 'they' always decided everything."[56] The group wanted to change the German Democratic Republic from a

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[55] *We Were the People*, 40.
[56] *We Were the People*, 45.

repressively controlled government to one that tolerated expression of opinions against certain policies.

They tried to do this through several methods, specifically targeting the causes of peace and the environment, topics that had received a fair amount of support from the Lutheran church in the mid-1970s (in the two Germanies). An example of the level of suppression that Eigenfeld and the others had to endure is exemplified by one particular environmental demonstration incident (though similar ones occurred with peace protests). As Eigenfeld explained to Philipsen, "each and every time, [these] resulted in our short-term arrest, such as an environmental demonstration in which we wanted to bike to Buna (an extremely polluted industrial center near Halle), with banners, signs, and petitions, and so on."[57]

In addition to these arrests in 1982 and 1983, Eigenfeld and three others attempted to draft a "petition about the current situation in the GDR," but he and another member were briefly arrested though not tried for any crime.[58] Their defense attorney was Wolfgang Schnur, who often defended dissidents though he was also—unknown to his clients—an important Stasi informer. Schnur typically advised his clients and their families not to go to the Western media. He initially convinced Eigenfeld of this when Eigenfeld's wife was arrested on August 31, 1983, for helping plan a failed peace demonstration. Two weeks later, Erich Honecker released

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[57] *We Were the People*, 45. This is only the source for the last sentence of this paragraph.
[58] *We Were the People*, 45.

Sebastian Pflugbeil, an East Berlin dissident, after the mayor of West Berlin argued publicly for his release.[59] Clearly, publicity was effective at times.

This event was a turning point for Eigenfeld. Previously, he had believed that involving the Western media would be pointless, but this event proved that publicity was key in protection from long-term imprisonment. Prior to 1983, "Open Work" did not network with other peace movements. "Open Work" had heard about Eppelmann and members attended his church in Berlin around 1980. They also tried to establish initial contacts with him though they were not really successful in doing so in a significant way until 1982. The members of "Open Work" likely traveled to attend a "Blues Mass" as so many others throughout East Germany had done. Eigenfeld used his wife's role in creating a local "Women for Peace" group in Halle to enlist the support of the much larger, founding Berlin group of "Women for Peace." Eigenfeld explained that by 1983 "everyone had vague notions about other groups, but until then we had not attempted to establish any contacts."[60] The emergency situation and understanding of the importance of publicity led him to drive to Berlin to find help by searching for Western contacts. Eigenfeld's use of the Western media resulted in intervention by the West German Green party who petitioned Honecker for his wife's release, which occurred the following day.[61]

From this point on Eigenfeld decided, in a fundamental shift, that the Halle group "should try [to] use the Western media as a source of security."[62] Eigenfeld

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[59] *We Were the People*, 45-46.
[60] *We Were the People*, 46.
[61] *We Were the People*, 43-4, 46, 51.
[62] *We Were the People*, 52.

finally understood that if activists "continued to work in isolation and engage in actions without letting the Western media know about it, no one would find out about them."[63] Previously, Eigenfeld and others in the Halle peace movement believed that they should not turn to the Western media because the issues were internal East German matters. This demonstrates that the Halle movement continued to believe in reform from within. They sent petitions to state and party officials and not to the Western media because they "nurtured the naïve hope that some day [they] would receive a position response through official avenues."[64] It took the arrest of Eigenfeld's wife to force him to realize how ineffective their actions had previously been. The Halle peace group had held numerous marches and events in the center of the city, but very few people knew about them and those who did refused to spread the word. Eigenfeld believes this was because of the Stasi's control and people's fear of being labeled as dissidents. In this way, the Stasi maintained boundaries for topics of discussion in East German society. However, information gained through the Western media was outside of this realm of Stasi control. Since the government tacitly tolerated East German citizens watching Western television programs, knowledge gained through such channels could be discussed with others. This realization in addition to the need for security against almost certain arrests and indefinite imprisonment led the Halle peace movement to add the use of Western media to their

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[63] *We Were the People*, 52.
[64] *We Were the People*, 50.

operations. They achieved this by twice monthly trips to Berlin to update the media about their activities.[65]

For Eigenfeld, the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 was his crisis. He explained, "All of a sudden it became strikingly clear to me that there are certain people out there who have the power fundamentally to curtail your wishes and your plans. This was something I wasn't used to from home, and something I was never able to accept."[66] He viewed constraints as unjust, though he says he and others he knew felt powerless, especially after the failure of the Prague Spring. Eigenfeld's turning point came after the 1977-1978 nuclear armaments buildups in East and West Germany. During this period, he decided that he could no longer watch what happened but that he should take action and stop being a victim.[67]

This transformation demonstrates that Eigenfeld had time to think and worry about non-material values, which means that he was a "postmaterialist" in terms of Inglehart's theories. Eigenfeld fits Habermas' model almost perfectly because he believed that the environment's destruction and increases in nuclear weapons were killing the German Democratic Republic. Habermas' model states that those who believe social movements are created because of a crisis of modernity often use the example of nuclear weapons and pollution as threatening "the physical foundations of life, while destruction of traditional social settings undermined sources of meaning."[68] This is exactly what Eigenfeld believed. The only area that does not completely

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[65] *We Were the People*, 50, 52.
[66] *We Were the People*, 37.
[67] *We Were the People*, 38.
[68] *Paradoxes of Peace*, 9.

accord with Habermas' model is the idea of advanced capitalism. While East Germany was explicitly created with an anti-capitalist system, there was still a crisis of modernity for Eigenfeld. The state continually infringed on his life and undermined what he valued, specifically the environment and peace. For these reasons, Eigenfeld decided that he must participate in social movements against the state. On the micro-level, Eigenfeld not only believed in the ideas of the independent peace movement in Halle but he also felt that it was necessary for East Germans to be able to voice their opinions even when they opposed governmental actions. Eigenfeld's participation ultimately hinged on his desire to end the German Democratic Republic's repression of its own citizens.

The experience of Vera Wollenberger has certain important similarities to that of Eppelmann and Eigenfeld as well as many striking differences. Just as in the cases of the two men, Wollenberger's participation in the independent peace movement began in a church. Like them she eventually came to believe that open, genuine discussions needed to occur in which all citizens could freely voice their opinions. Wollenberger also believed that the German Democratic Republic should continue to exist but that it had to adapt in order to do so. While her views were comparable to those of Eppelmann and Eigenfeld in these areas, her case differed considerably in terms of her personal life. Unknown to her prior to East Germany's collapse, her husband, Knud ("Donald" to the state), was a Stasi informer. Additionally, her case is significant because Wollenberger provides a female perspective as well as that of a mother in a peace group.

Wollenberger's participation in the independent peace movement was a gradual process (unlike her husband's unhesitating decision to be a Stasi informer).[69] She studied historical materialism at the Academy of Science under Professor Wolfgang Eichhorn.[70] Around 1975 she formed a small house circle that met to discuss science fiction authors Karl-Heinz and Angela Steinmüller.[71] This group eventually progressed to examine other issues, and began to work through the history of modern European philosophy.[72] While Wollenberger did not view their weekly meetings as practical, she argues that the intellectual exchange the group fostered was very important to her.[73] This appears to be one of the activities that led Wollenberger to believe that discussion was necessary in any country. Her house group's meetings were not direct dissent but they were also not typical.

Beyond this group, Wollenberger, like many others her age, had prior knowledge of important dissident events in the Eastern Bloc. She had been present when classmates at her school discussed the Prague Spring of 1968.[74] Wollenberger also knew about a group of students that experienced disciplinary action and party punishment when its activities in 1971 were deemed by the government to be anti-Soviet and attempting to undermine the strength of the military.[75] She knew the consequences for such actions, yet she still had great illusions and hopes that change

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[69] Vera Wollenberger, *Virus der Heuchler: Innenansicht aus Stasi-Akten* (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1992), 10.
[70] *Virus der Heuchler*, 14.
[71] *Virus der Heuchler*, 13.
[72] *Virus der Heuchler*, 13.
[73] *Virus der Heuchler*, 13.
[74] *Virus der Heuchler*, 16.
[75] *Virus der Heuchler*, 16.

could occur.[76] These hopes gradually faded the longer she worked at the Academy of Science.[77]

Wollenberger's participation in the independent peace movement seems almost accidental, though her husband's secret work likely unintentionally led to this activity. It all began when she and her husband attended an event at the old parish in Berlin-Pankow on October 24, 1981.[78] The new youth pastor, Ruth Misselwitz, began a discussion of the theme "Against Death—Security for Peace."[79] At the end of the service, a leaflet came around that explained the creation of a peace circle that those attending could attend.[80] Wollenberger writes that she and Knud entered their names, and they later received an invitation from Ruth Misselwitz with details for the first meeting.[81] A month later, fifty people gathered in the parish hall on Hadlichstrasse in the Pankow district.[82] Wollenberger became very anxious when she had to introduce herself to the group though she remembers that Knud was oddly calm.[83] It was at this first meeting where she began to work in an independent peace movement.

After her first month of participation in the group, the peace circle rapidly became the center of their lives for the next year. For the first time, Wollenberger was able to overcome her shyness and voice her own opinions to the Pankow peace circle. In this environment, she was able to freely express her ideas in front of a relatively

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[76] *Virus der Heuchler*, 16.
[77] *Virus der Heuchler*, 16.
[78] *Virus der Heuchler*, 17.
[79] *Virus der Heuchler*, 17.
[80] *Virus der Heuchler*, 17.
[81] *Virus der Heuchler*, 17.
[82] *Virus der Heuchler*, 17.
[83] *Virus der Heuchler*, 17.

large group, an experience she had never previously had. Wollenberger describes it as a new intellectual freedom because she could express her views instead of hiding them as she had done growing up and as an adult. These were not necessarily new thoughts, but now her ideas developed and evolved for the first time because of the input of the group.[84]

After Wollenberger began to participate in the group, she also assumed a role as one of the teachers. She and her students often had politically critical discussions in which she taught them to be mindful of the numerous pro-Marxist mottos that existed. Only later did Wollenberger participate in critical discussion classes in her work at the Academy of Science. Wollenberger describes her experience in the Pankow peace circle as separate from her career. In the circle, she could discuss her opinions while in her work, she was forced to ignore them. Eventually the Pankow peace circle grew to include more members of the public, which also increased the risk that sooner or later repressive measures from the state would descend on them all. Wollenberger effectively describes the possible actions against an individual determined to be a dissident. The initial measures would be discrimination in the workplace. This could then escalate into loss of job, and even more severe were travel restrictions, detention, and possibly (as a last resort) forced deportation out of the German Democratic Republic.[85]

The creation of the Pankow peace circle thus came with many risks, though the greatest of these was not ever knowing if a member was a Stasi informer who could

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[84] *Virus der Heuchler*, 17-18.
[85] *Virus der Heuchler*, 18.

turn the whole group into criminals by reporting to East German authorities.[86] While church rooms were supposed to have a legally safe status, the meetings the Pankow peace circle held in the parish were not purely Christian meetings.[87] In spite of this risk, Wollenberger decided to participate in the circle. She even commented that after the first meeting without any incidents, the fear of being reported disappears.[88] While in retrospect this may appear incredibly naïve, it would be almost impossible to live any kind of life while constantly fearing that the Stasi was going to arrest you. Instead of focusing on such concerns, Wollenberger and the peace circle grew so much that she even created a private philosophy circle that studied the environment and later one that focused exclusively on ecology.[89] One perceives here the dynamics of growing personal and group activity.

For almost all of 1982, the Pankow peace circle worked without being disturbed. During this time, the "Core Members" developed into fast friends. As Wollenberger describes the members, most were in their thirties with small children. For this reason, children played an important role in their group. While they worked and discussed, their children stayed busy. At one point, the children even took part in role-playing peaceful actions. In Wollenberger's mind, the amount of participation that their children were allowed made it possible for the adults to discuss and theorize as well as play, sing, and dance. In this way, the experience was very different from

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[86] *Virus der Heuchler*, 19.
[87] *Virus der Heuchler*, 19.
[88] *Virus der Heuchler*, 19.
[89] *Virus der Heuchler*, 19-20.

the "fossilized system" of East Germany. The peace circle provided a new way of living, an alternative model.[90]

Because of these reasons, Wollenberger fits into Inglehart's model as a postmaterialist because she was able to look beyond the issue of security. She realized the danger that could come with Stasi intervention because of her participation in the Pankow peace circle, yet she chose to ignore this. In fact, Wollenberger fits the postmodernist category almost exactly because her desire for intellectual discourse was so gratifying that it outweighed the associated threat of harassment or detention by the state.

Wollenberger also fits the theories of Habermas, though only gradually. Through her participation in the peace circles, she realized what the German Democratic Republic was missing. While in Habermas' model, those joining social movements do so with the knowledge and intent of reacting against the failures of the current system to adapt, it took participation with others before Wollenberger realized how problem-ridden the state had become. After this realization, she worked to solve this crisis, which she believed could be accomplished through public discussion that would lead to changes not only in the government but also in society at large.

On the micro-level, Wollenberger enjoyed participating in the Pankow peace circle because of the group's unity and camaraderie. Her desire for group success as well as intellectual fulfillment trumped her fears about reactive measures taken by the

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[90] *Virus der Heuchler*, 20.

state. For Wollenberger the cost-benefit analysis always came down on the side of participation in spite of the risks.

This was also true for Eppelmann and Eigenfeld. All three believed in reforming the German Democratic Republic, and they felt that this could be done through the work of the independent peace movements. Most importantly, they valued the ideal that citizens should have a voice in the state, especially if the government acted in unjust ways. The independent peace movements provided them as well as many other citizens with such a voice.

Chapter 3

Superseding the Independent Peace Movements: the Case of the German Democratic Republic Peace Council

According to literature written and published by the German Democratic Peace Council, East Germany was always committed to the cause of peace because of the lessons learned from World War I and World War II.[91] These statements clearly fit the mission of the GDR Peace Council in the late 1980s but do not seem completely accurate because the actions of the East German government did not always adhere to increasing peace. This is particularly evident in the euromissile debate that occurred from 1979-1983.

Literature written by the GDR Peace Council demonstrates the contradictions that exist between the rhetoric and the reality of the state's actions. The English translation of the GDR Peace Council's work, *The peace movement in the GDR*, and its distribution to libraries in the United States prior to the collapse of East Germany also indicates a specifically, carefully targeted audience.[92] Throughout the Council's pronouncements, claims are made that all areas of society are welcome and participate in the GDR Peace Council's activities.[93] One of the most blatant of these assertions comes on the first page after the introductory comments. It states, "By nature, the peace movement of the GDR is a democratic mass movement which comprises all classes and strata of society, people of all ages, different philosophies and religious

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[91] Intertext Berlin, translated, *The peace movement in the GDR* (Berlin: Zeit im Bild, 1986), 5.
[92] Imprint of University of Wisconsin Library with the date clearly marked as October 17, 1985 in *World Peace Day 1985 in the GDR: No Militarisation of Space! Stop the Arms Race!* (Dresden: Grafischer Grossbetrieb Völkerfreundschaft, 1985), 1.
[93] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 5.

beliefs."[94] If the movement was truly democratic, then why were all of the independent peace movements discussed in the previous chapter excluded and persecuted? It also is highly irregular for a text to mention its broad-based support yet provide no individual examples of this throughout the entire work. Each quoted endorsement comes from a leading member of the Politburo, (primarily Erich Honecker, leader of East Germany and a senior member of the GDR Peace Council) or writers who strongly supported the German Democratic Republic. Where were those members with "different philosophies and religious beliefs?"[95] They could possibly be among the faceless crowds pictured at the government sponsored peace concerts and peace rallies. But this is unlikely since most who participated were involved in the official Free German Youth or were party members who were expected to participate (as discussed in the Halle example).

Why publish such a work in English unless the East German government was in fact trying to foster a new agenda and possibly cover up abuses against truly independent peace movement leaders in the early 1980s? *The peace movement in the GDR* has a very propagandistic feel. The historical tradition and activities of the GDR Peace Council are spelled out in terms that a middle school student could understand. The work states that five months before the creation of the German Democratic Republic, "the 'German Committee of Fighters for Peace' was founded in Berlin to later become the Peace Council of the GDR."[96] If this is the case, then where was this

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[94] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 5.
[95] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 5.
[96] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 6.

Peace Council during the late 1970s, the early 1980s, and before, when Soviet nuclear weapons were stationed in East Germany? The GDR Peace Council likely existed only nominally since there is no continuous evidence of its work prior to the early 1980s. The Council was apparently active from 1949-1952 since the majority of pictures and excerpts come from this period, but the rest with two minor exceptions come from 1983 and later. The authors of the work even appear to have noticed the gap because they included one sentence to try to demonstrate that the Council continuously fought for peace. Supposedly, "Large campaigns were launched by the GDR peace movement in the 1960s and 1970s calling for an end to the US intervention in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea and advocating a European security system which was provided with an important contractual basis through the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975."[97] This statement comes on the last three pages of the work. Even the chronology provided at the back was extremely sparse from 1951 until 1981.[98] If the Peace Council was so active, where is the evidence? There are no pictures or documents for almost thirty years, yet there were plenty of photos and excerpts from 1949-1952 and the early 1980s. The claims regarding the GDR Peace Council as a continuous and active presence are very questionable at best. It appears much more probable that the Peace Council was not needed by the government until independent peace movements threatened the tight control of the German Democratic Republic over its citizens. Increased Western media attention apparently made it necessary for the government not only to revitalize and revamp its dormant Peace

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[97] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 41-42.
[98] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 44-48.

Council but also to write and translate propaganda for the West that demonstrated a high level of commitment to peace throughout its history.

The evolution of the GDR peace movement's tactics, however, did not take place overnight. Originally, many tactics from the independent peace movements were used or indeed coopted. Such measures included writing letters to the Erich Honecker (as Rainer Eppelmann and many others had done over the last few years). However, one major difference in the letters from the GDR peace movement was that they were often written by high-ranking political figures, who were in practice Honecker's hierarchical inferiors. One example is the letter to Honecker, which the GDR Peace Council composed at one of its meetings.[99] Writing to Honecker gave the appearance of requesting change while actually only informing him of the measures being taken by the Peace Council. Such actions appear to merely be propagandistic tools since the information had probably already been discussed and approved by Honecker prior to the GDR Peace Council meeting. In spite of this fact, the independent peace movements had established the tactic of writing letters to top officials appealing for transformations in the current system. By following such methods, the German Democratic Republic could gradually absorb the cause of peace and slowly muffle the independent peace movements by taking over some of their characteristic methods.

While writing public letters to leading East German officials was one step in the process of superseding the independent peace movements, several other devices

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[99] *Entering the third millennium without nuclear weapons* (Dresden: Grafischer Grossbetrieb Völkerfreundschaft, 1986), 4-6.

were also used. A few of these included signatures on resolutions requesting disarmament, small meetings, and large rallies.[100] Gaining the support of certain members of the East German Lutheran churches was another important tool. This was still a difficult and not entirely successful task for the state. The primary obstacle in this endeavor was the level of independence that each parish pastor had. While the pastor should follow certain guidelines, each parish differed in the level of participation in the independent peace movements. As discussed in the earlier case study of Rainer Eppelmann, each parish pastor had to either have the support of the hierarchy or take the risk of losing his parish if he overstepped the hierarchy's wishes. For these and other personal reasons, many parish pastors chose not to participate in the independent peace movements. Yet those pastors who were involved managed to tolerate, and at times even foster, enough dissent that the state viewed them as a threat. This led to additional force exerted not only against the dissident pastors and peace supporters but also pressure on the higher levels of the hierarchy. It became very important to the East German government to control as much of the Lutheran church's top hierarchy as possible because the state believed that this would calm dissent.

By 1982, individual arrests had largely failed because of Western media attention.[101] It had become too costly for well-known dissidents to be arrested by an East German government that needed to maintain the levels of international support it had. Clearly, even the Stasi was aware of this concern and took it into account. In one

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[100] *Entering the third millennium without nuclear weapons*, 43; *World Peace Day 1985 in the GDR* , 28, 45; Friedensrat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever* (Berlin: The Council, 1984), 43.

[101] John Sanford, *The Sword and the Ploughshare: Autonomous Peace Initiatives in East Germany* (London: Merlin Press, 1983), 64.

example in 1982, the Stasi arrested Eppelmann and about seventy of his supporters, all of whom had signed the Berlin Appeal, which examined numerous concerns of the independent peace movements in East Germany.[102] In less than a day, all had been released.[103] This cooperation between the state and the Stasi seems to verify the idea that the two organizations worked closely together even if many East German citizens continued to believe that the Stasi followed a largely separate agenda. Given the amount of state pressure upon them, many members of the Lutheran hierarchy acquiesced to the government's demands though they often did so with an initial statement of criticism prior to their support of government proposals.[104]

The German Democratic Republic's Politburo used its new Lutheran supporters to argue that the government had always and would continue to assist the cause of peace through the one and only official peace movement in East Germany. An example of this is the GDR Peace Council's own description of the cooperative work it undertook with pastors in the Federation of Evangelical Pastors of the GDR, founded in 1958 to "mobilize pro-regime, 'progressive' pastors and pressure the church leadership."[105] The members of the Peace Council and the pastors had "regular exchanges of views and ideas in a climate of trust on increased efforts in the campaign for peace, détente and disarmament."[106] According to the Peace Council, specific cooperative activities included "the opening of the exhibition entitled 'Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Warning and Obligation' on World Peace Day 1983 in Magdeburg" as well

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[102] *The Sword and the Ploughshare*, 63-64.
[103] *The Sword and the Ploughshare*, 64.
[104] *The Sword and the Ploughshare*, 65.
[105] *The Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 37.
[106] *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, 21.

as "the candid discussion held in November 1983 in the parish of Berlin-Oberspree."[107] The Hiroshima and Nagasaki exhibition was described by the East German Peace Council, not by individual pastors. If there was so much collaboration between the state and the pastors (as the text *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever* claims) then why are more combined activities not listed? In the English publications of the GDR examined for this paper, only three specific events are discussed with reference to a combined effort by the state and a Protestant church. East German publications stated that, "Theologians and members of all religious communities which are active in the GDR contribute to the work of the [GDR Peace] Council guided by their humanist and Christian beliefs."[108] Oddly, in the numerous listings of remarks made by East German citizens in GDR Peace Council publications, only a few Protestant pastors were quoted. One example was a pastor from Oderberg who said, "Every true Christian must raise his voice against President Reagan's attack missiles in Western Europe!"[109] Another example came from a self-professed member of the largely artificial Christian Democrat Party in East Germany and a Protestant Synod member who said, "Christians and non-Christians bear an equal measure of responsibility" in relation to bringing about peace.[110] Both statements were clearly political and very supportive of the German Democratic Republic's state. They attempted to persuade the reader that these two Christians were representative of all East German Christians in terms of their support of the state. The numerous

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[107] *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, 21-22.
[108] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 10, 12.
[109] *World Peace Day 1983 in the GDR: The Threat of War Can Be Banned! Peace Must Triumph!* (Dresden: Grafischer Grossbetrieb Völkerfreundschaft, 1983), 34.
[110] *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, 36-37.

independent peace movements that were aided by pastors as well as the need to threaten many in the Lutheran church hierarchy into submission did not accord with the perceived love of the German Democratic Republic's government. The participation of Protestant leaders in the official East German peace movement appears to have been sporadic at best.

In spite of this, the rhetoric in the works by the GDR Peace Council continually tried to argue that Christians really were very active in the sole East German peace movement. In a section entitled "In concert with Christian citizens" the case for Christian and state cooperation is made. The Christians and the Lutheran churches of East Germany were also said to be increasingly active in the

> cause of peace and disarmament. The Federation of Protestant Churches has vowed to live up to its responsibility for peace with the means and possibilities at its command. It has declared its willingness to contribute to the efforts of our state towards a more just and peaceful world. Conscious of their shared responsibility, many Christians, pastors and theologians have taken part in numerous activities undertaken by the all-embracing peace movement of our country.[111]

The dismissal of the independent peace movements is clear with the statement of "the all-embracing peace movement." The state refused to acknowledge dissent of any kind even though many of those involved in the independent movements often began by merely wanting an area where ideas of all types (political, economic, cultural, and so forth) could be discussed. Instead of trying to respond to its citizens' desires, the East German government wanted to hide all mention of this issue by reclaiming the cause of peace and trying to make it exclusively the state's cause. The Peace

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[111] *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, 21-22.

Council's writings supported the state's plan by asserting that "The peace movement of our country and the policies of our state draw on people from all classes and strata."[112]

In order to ensure that all levels of society were active in the peace movement, the state sponsored numerous activities in the name of peace. Examples included members of the Free German Youth (FDJ) pledging their commitment to peace at the National Youth Festival held in 1983.[113] Other activities for youths, aptly named "the FDJ Mobilization for Peace campaign," were also very influential during the 1984 celebration of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the creation of the German Democratic Republic.[114] The FDJ demonstrated how they actively worked for peace through their labors as industrial workers, students, scientists, and artists.[115] The idea of working for peace through typical occupations is often presented in the English publications of the GDR Peace Council. Underlying this notion is the belief that the government supports peace, so if an East German citizen wants to work for peace, he or she can increase their level of production at work. Because his or her products strengthen the state economically, each individual worker can contribute to peace. Theoretically this idea is possible, and the East German state could have really believed its own rhetoric. More probable, however, is the acknowledgment that the issue of peace could be harnessed not merely to quell internal dissent or to gain favorable international attention but also to help save the weak economy of the German Democratic Republic.

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[112] *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, 21-22.
[113] *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, photo caption between 32-33.
[114] *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, 43.
[115] *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, 13.

Eastern Bloc countries were always looking for tools to increase worker production. The inherent problem in an economy where everyone who wants work has it, is that there are no incentives. Why exert one's energies if job security is a guarantee? Why work harder if there are no substantial pay increases? Since East Germany did not have abundant wealth, incentives often came in the forms of being able to shop at limited access stores as well as ideological attempts to increase worker production by appealing to a particular cause.

An example of this theory in action is the Open-Cast Mine worker, Martina Pfefferkorn, who along with fellow workers tried to follow the "'Good Work for a Good World'" motto.[116] Pfefferkorn explained this motto as necessary because "the socialist GDR is our country. We have grown up here, gone to school here, many of us already have families, we have received new flats and we experience daily the social achievements of real socialism."[117] This statement did not directly correspond to the cause of peace, especially in relation to the themes of ending the arms race on earth and possibly in space. Instead, Pfefferkorn appeared to be following the socialist party line by stating how good conditions were and that the German Democratic Republic was her home. Given the context of increased emigration permission in 1984 and continued requests to leave East Germany by many of its citizens, Pfefferkorn's statement appeared to target that problem more than the issue of peace.[118] She focused on what the German Democratic Republic had done for her and

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[116] *World Peace Day 1985 in the GDR*, 13.
[117] *World Peace Day 1985 in the GDR*, 13.
[118] See footnote 1 for specific numbers of emigrants from 1983-1986.

how it was where she chose to live (even though it is unknown if she would have chosen to stay if she actually had had the opportunity to freely choose). As discussed theoretically earlier, the East German Peace Council alleged that "workers are guided by the knowledge that the economic stability and productivity of the GDR lends international weight to its constructive peace policies."[119] Even with Pfefferkorn's statements, this notion continues to appear as a weak attempt for motivating workers to increase their productivity. While such motivations occurred as early as 1984, few questioned that using peace as an incentive could be a sign of economic crisis in the country.

In addition to changes in certain workers' behavior, the German Democratic Republic created various new events when the state chose to renew its professed interest in peace. GDR peace movement activities ran the gamut from "meetings, discussions, work team gatherings, demonstrations and rallies to public readings, poster exhibitions, solidarity bazaars and discussions with scientists and cultural workers, peace services, sporting events and rock concerts."[120] While the state did use certain ideas from the independent peace movements, the Berlin Peace Run was an event invented solely by the East German government: "The biggest running event so far was this year's Berlin Peace Run which took place on the eve of World Peace Day with 35,000 people taking part."[121] In one source the 1983 Berlin Peace Run was listed as the second time the event had been held, though the amount of German and

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[119] *World Peace Day 1985 in the GDR*, 12.
[120] *Entering the third millennium without nuclear weapons*, 15, 28.
[121] *World Peace Day 1983 in the GDR*, 19.

English literature on the German Democratic Republic's support of peace was not widespread until 1983.[122]

While the Berlin Peace Run was an original idea, the idea of rock concerts was likely borrowed from the independent peace movements, possibly coming from the successful Blues Masses held at Rainer Eppelmann's church. Each year (beginning in 1983) the FDJ sponsored the "Political Song Festival" in which participants focused on peace and friendship.[123] Also, the East German government funded "Rock for Peace" concerts where the "most popular rock singers and pop groups" performed and "donate[d] the proceeds to the peace and solidarity fund."[124] Other state-approved activities included "Artists, actors, singers, writers and poets organiz[ing] exhibitions, matinees, readings and performances to contribute, along with their artistic talents, to the peace struggle and to mobilize people for action."[125] The independent peace movements originally dominated similar activities, but by 1983 the German Democratic Republic began to make very strong attempts to supersede such activities. In many areas the state was largely successful for several reasons. First, the GDR Peace Council could actively advertise its meetings, rallies, and similar activities in ways the independent movements could not. Second, the state chose to mobilize all citizens under its control to compulsory participation in the East German peace movement. This meant that all party members, workers in government organizations,

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[122] *World Peace Day 1983 in the GDR*, p.20.
[123] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 33; *Entering the third millennium without nuclear weapons*, 30; *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, 43.
[124] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 33; *Entering the third millennium without nuclear weapons*, 30; *The struggle for peace, more vital than ever*, photo caption between 32-33.
[125] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 33.

and youths in the Free German Youth could be quickly coerced into involvement in the cause of peace. Clearly, their level of conviction was a separate issue.

The ability and willingness of the East German government to draw upon members of state-sponsored organizations clearly contributed to the rapid supplanting of the independent peace movements by the GDR Peace Council. The East German organizations that supported the GDR Peace Council's activities included "the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions as the biggest mass organization of the working people, the Free German Youth organization, the Women's Democratic League, the Sports and Gymnastics Union, the League of Culture of the GDR and numerous professional and other associations."[126] These organizations were the most important factor in the state's ability to quickly mobilize large masses for rallies, meetings, as well as finding citizens who would verbally defend the government's stance. According to East German sources, the Free German Youth contained "more than 2.3 million members."[127] Turning out even a tenth of those members would create a huge rally. The independent peace movements could not even remotely compete with such numbers because of their lack of a central organization in addition to their inability to spread the word about meetings and rallies because their actions were hindered by the Stasi. While the GDR Peace Council highlighted large turnouts for rallies, such as 300,000 at one rally, their statements were at times clearly exaggerated.[128] One example of this embellishment was their statement that "Almost

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[126] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 10.
[127] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 31.
[128] *World Peace Day 1985 in the GDR*, 45.

every citizen of the GDR participates, in one way or another, in the pluriform activities of the GDR's peace movement."[129] While the state did control a number of people, it did not have total power over them. If it had, the rally of 300,000 would have instead been a million or more people. This type of overstatement reinforces the idea that the English-translated GDR Peace Council's texts were tools that the government used to try to bolster its own image of East Germany.

In spite of such embellishments, the East German Peace Council at times seemed to realize that it did not control everyone. This understanding was made clear in a statement:

> The GDR Peace Council is not a rigid body with a strict organization. It offers ample opportunities to everybody who wishes to cooperate constructively with the Council in the cause of peace. Therefore, there are no 'membership quotas' fixed for certain population groups and there is not even any formal membership required for participation in the struggle against nuclear war and the arms race. In this way, the Peace Council and in general the peace movement provide vast opportunities and scope to all members of society, irrespective of their social, political and philosophical stance, to work for their one common goal.[130]

These apparent contradictions that exist only sixteen pages apart could have occurred for many reasons. Multiple authors may not have examined previous texts. Or one author or one group of authors could have written both statements. While one or two authors writing a text with clear contradictions may seem impossible, almost every East German citizen thought in terms of several layers of facts and opinions. An example of this is that only those people who actually participated in official peace movement activities would know for certain of their participation. Yet even those

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[129] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 31.
[130] *The peace movement in the GDR*, 13.

who did not attend the officially sponsored events would likely say, if questioned by his employer, members of the government, or identified Stasi agents, that he attended. Even if the state knew the non-attender was lying, they would probably still include him in the numbers of attendees because he said that he was there. These contradictions aside, the German Democratic Republic did actively decide to work toward its own understanding of "peace" with renewed interest from 1983 until 1986. This desire is succinctly stated in a work about the 1983 World Peace Day: "Peace is the supreme imperative for us, for the policies of our Party and government. Socialism decrees this by its very nature. It has already been said here that another war must never emanate from German soil. That has always been our pledge, ever since the GDR was founded, and we shall stand by it, now and for all time."[131] As the next chapter explains, East Germany's leaders may not have always practiced such peaceful ideas with their actions, but the emphasis on "now" appears to demonstrate the state's new effort in this area even if it took independent peace movements to spur the government into action.

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[131] *World Peace Day 1983 in the GDR*, 12.

Chapter 4

The Roller Coaster That was Détente: *Ostpolitik* and the Early 1980s Arms Race

The year 1983 was a turning point for the antinuclear peace movements in East Germany. There were several reasons for this. Throughout 1983 the German Democratic Republic's state worked to gain control over the independent peace movements throughout the country. The GDR Peace Council was largely successful in its efforts, though the timing of key decisions in the politics surrounding the nuclear question also played a role in the Council's accomplishments. By 1984 the antinuclear movement had become in effect a non-issue. This was because the euromissiles debate, which had specific implications for the two Germanies, ended between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in November 1983 when the United States deployed Pershing II missiles in West Germany. However, the GDR Peace Council continued to use the issue to ensure that independent peace movements did not reemerge. The GDR Peace Council also tried to find common ground and lessen tensions between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany because the GDR was allied with the Soviet Union but the Federal Republic was one of it main trading partners. East German leaders wanted a new type of détente because West Germany provided economic benefits that the German Democratic Republic desperately needed at this time. Additionally, the Soviet Union was East Germany's diplomatic and ideological ally. Relations between the two German states had reached a form of rapprochement under the previous West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt.

His foreign policy in 1972 toward the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union was known as *Ostpolitik.*

Brandt believed that greater cooperation could exist between the two Germanies if diplomatic coexistence became the established policy. This course of action "belatedly recognized Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe" and propelled West Germany into a higher status in international affairs.[132] Brandt believed that détente was possible, and he led the Federal Republic's efforts toward this goal.

In the early 1970s, Brandt created the primary arguments in favor of Ostpolitik. He believed that realism and communication should be the basis for all politics between the East and West. Brandt argued that "the realities of the postwar settlement should be accepted."[133] He also favored increased communication between Eastern and Western powers because he believed that this could lead to the saturation of Western ideas into the communist East, which would lead to gradual changes. Brandt also believed that the West's security interests must be acknowledged in relation to the East's interests if "the realities of power politics" were going to change. Brandt believed that recognizing the current state of affairs was the first step to transforming East-West relations. Part of acknowledging the status quo was to reassure the Soviet Union that it was the predominant force in Eastern Europe. Brandt thought that Moscow would be more willing to communicate with the West if Soviet leaders were not constantly fearful about being forced out of East Germany and then

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[132] Gottfried Niedhart, "Ostpolitik: The Role of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Process of Détente," in *1968: The World Transformed*, eds. Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 173.
[133] "Ostpolitik: The Role of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Process of Détente," 175.

out of Eastern Europe. Ostpolitik also led to the acknowledgement that "the division of Germany would last as long as the division of Europe."[134] Finally, Brandt believed that the Federal Republic should be treated as an adult within the Western community because it had been integrated into the West and it should now be able to "'look after its [own] interests with respect to the East in a more vigorous way.'"[135]

It is within this context of Ostpolitik that relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic progressed from the early 1970s until the late 1970s when the question of intermediate-range missiles came to the forefront in East-West relations. This issue arose in earnest in October 1979 when Brezhnev, at a meeting in East Berlin, "made a much-publicized offer to reduce the number of his country's intermediate-range missiles provided that the West abandoned all consideration of its own INF deployments."[136] The German Democratic Republic also supported this proposal. This is evident from a letter written by Erich Honecker, the leader of East Germany, on October 12, 1979, to Helmut Schmidt, the current Social Democrat Chancellor of West Germany. In the letter Honecker "emphasized that any NATO decision to station the INF forces on German soil would 'necessarily have negative consequences for relations between the GDR and the FRG.'"[137] Honecker's support may have been an act of conforming to expected behavior for a

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[134] "Ostpolitik: The Role of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Process of Détente," 175.
[135] *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik*, 4th series (Frankfurt am Main, 1978), 9:565-75, quoted in Gottfried Niedhart, "Ostpolitik: The Role of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Process of Détente," in *1968: The World Transformed*, eds. Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 175-176.
[136] A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 141.
[137] *Germany Divided*, 141-142.

country in the Soviet Bloc. But it is more likely that Honecker also worried about having additional Soviet nuclear missiles deployed in East Germany because more missiles would make the GDR an even greater target if the West decided upon a nuclear attack. The Soviet Union's leadership told Honecker that if NATO chose to deploy missiles, the exact number deployed in West Germany would be stationed by the Soviet Union in East Germany.[138] Leaders in the German Democratic Republic "chose to underscore their regret at the extent to which the 'so hopeful' developments between the German[ies] had been threatened by international tensions."[139] This tame language was very different from the harsh words that Moscow had for the West German government's role in the intermediate nuclear missiles debate.[140] In spite of this, Schmidt tried to stave off the end of détente.[141] President Jimmy Carter of the United States knew that the issue of nuclear missiles in West Germany could be a divisive issue, not only between the two superpowers but also between the Federal Republic and the United States.[142] This awareness did not help to defuse the issue. By the early 1980s there was a clear rift between the United States and the Soviet Union over the number of missiles that could remain deployed in the two Germanies.

The issue of nuclear missiles in the Federal Republic and in the German Democratic Republic became even more important when President Ronald Reagan

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[138] *Germany Divided*, 142; *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform*, 145.
[139] *Germany Divided*, 142.
[140] *Germany Divided*, 142.
[141] Thomas Banchoff, *The German Problem Transformed: Institutions, Politics, and Foreign Policy, 1945-1995* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 95.
[142] William E. Griffith, *The Ostpolitik of the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1978), 233.

proposed the "zero option" on November 18, 1981.[143] The "zero option" stated that "If the Soviet Union would agree to dismantle its SS-20s, SS-4s, and SS-5s, NATO would cancel deployment of the Pershing II and cruise missiles."[144] The Soviet Union flatly rejected the plan arguing that it was "pure propaganda" based on "absolutely fantastic facts."[145] The primary problem was over the definition of what constituted an equal number of intermediate range missiles in Europe and the boundaries of Europe. The Soviet Union believed that British and French weapons should be included in the total number allowed in Europe for the West.[146] The United States disagreed with this definition because nuclear missiles inside the Soviet Union itself were excluded since leaders in Moscow said they were not technically in Europe. In 1978, the Soviet Union had deployed fifty SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe. By the end of 1981, two hundred fifty SS-20s were present in countries belonging to the Soviet Bloc.[147] The West had not sent any new missiles during this time period.[148] Given these new additions in the East, the two superpowers did not have equal numbers of missiles in Europe. After the Soviet Union had fortified its East European arsenal, Brezhnev decided on March 16, 1982, to declare a moratorium on stationing new intermediate missiles in Europe.[149] In response to Brezhnev's action, "In Washington, President Reagan said that the moratorium proposal did not go far

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[143] Jeffrey Herf, *War by Other Means: Soviet Power, West German Resistance, and the Battle of the Euromissiles* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 140.
[144] *War by Other Means*, 140.
[145] *War by Other Means*, 141.
[146] *War by Other Means*, 157.
[147] *War by Other Means*, 141, 151.
[148] *War by Other Means*, 141.
[149] *War by Other Means*, 151, 152.

enough and that it would leave a large Soviet arsenal intact."[150] Prior to these negotiations, many other options had been explored and dismissed, primarily by the Soviets.

One well-publicized example was the so-called "walk in the woods agreement," which occurred in the summer of 1982.[151] This particular arrangement occurred between the United States Ambassador Paul Nitze and the Soviet Union's negotiator, Juri Kvitsinsky.[152] The two men decided to present to their respective governments a package which stated that "the United States and the USSR would each have 225 long-range intermediate nuclear force (LRINF) missile launchers and aircraft in Europe; each would be limited to a ceiling of 75 LRINF missile launchers in Europe."[153] Further conditions were that the United States could only deploy cruise missiles while the Soviet Union could simply send ballistic missiles.[154] There were additional limitations on the numbers of missile launchers that the Soviet Union could have in its eastern regions as well as limits on numbers of American and Soviet aircraft that could be present at a given time.[155] The Soviet Union rejected the agreement. Instead Moscow demanded "no U.S. deployments, no constraints on Soviet deployments in the Eastern USSR, radical reductions in dual-capability aircraft, and full adherence to the principle of equality and parity."[156] These were demands that the United States could not agree to follow.

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[150] *War by Other Means*, 152.
[151] *War by Other Means*, 157.
[152] *War by Other Means*, 156.
[153] *War by Other Means*, 156.
[154] *War by Other Means*, 156-157.
[155] *War by Other Means*, 157.
[156] *War by Other Means*, 157.

The unacceptable proposals continued back and forth from both sides, as each said that the other was trying to gain superiority over the world.[157] Meanwhile, a political change occurred in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1983 election. According to Jeffrey Herf, "The election of March 6 was a turning point in postwar history and a continuation of the reversal in the regional balance of forces in Europe that Helmut Schmidt had set in motion in October 1977."[158] Helmut Kohl, leader of the Christian Democrat Union, or CDU, became the new Chancellor of the Federal Republic. Kohl had campaigned in support of the United States deployments and a stronger alliance between the United States and West Germany.[159] By contrast, the Social Democrats were clear in their desire to stop the planned missile deployment.[160] West German voters had decided in favor of the leader and the party who urged for the acceptance of the missiles.

While new leadership took over in the Federal Republic of Germany, the Soviet Union took advantage of the situation and "By March 1983, the Soviets had deployed 351 SS-20s, with 1053 warheads, and no new American missiles had arrived."[161] Another series of proposals ensued, were rejected by either side, and the Soviet Union continued to insist that equal numbers of missiles must include those of Great Britain and France.[162] At the same time that the negotiations continued, the

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[157] *War by Other Means*, 167, 181.
[158] *War by Other Means*, 174.
[159] *The German Problem Transformed*, 97; Edwina Moreton, "The German question in the 1980s," in *Germany between East and West*, ed. Edwina Moreton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.
[160] *War by Other Means*, 174.
[161] *War by Other Means*, 181.
[162] *War by Other Means*, 175.

Social Democrats debated how they would vote on the euromissile question at a meeting in Cologne. While former Chancellor Schmidt wanted to blame the Soviet Union for the East-West conflict, the overwhelming majority of the other delegates decided to vote against the deployment of new American missiles in the Federal Republic.[163] The final vote was held in the Bundestag on November 22, 1983.[164] In this vote, "All 286 members of the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition voted in favor of the resolution, while 226 Social Democrats and Green members voted against it."[165] Arrivals of the Pershing IIs began the next weekend.[166]

Once this occurred amidst the crisis, the German Democratic Republic started actively seeking to preserve its ties, especially for economic reasons, to the Federal Republic of Germany.[167] East Germany tried to "downplay the significance of the deployment" while the Soviet Union tried to penalize West Germany.[168] At other times the German Democratic Republic and the Soviet Union had not been on the same page even during the euromissiles controversy. While both countries believed that the level of security needed to increase along the East European border, their reasons for this varied.[169] The Soviets desired greater security in this area because it "worried in particular about both Chinese militarism and the potential that the FRG would gain nuclear capabilities of its own."[170] East German leaders wanted a more

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[163] *War by Other Means*, 197-198, 204.
[164] *War by Other Means*, 214.
[165] *War by Other Means*, 214.
[166] *War by Other Means*, 214.
[167] Fred S. Oldenburg, "East German foreign and security interests," in *Germany between East and West*, ed. Edwina Moreton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 116.
[168] "East German foreign and security interests," 116.
[169] M. E. Sarotte, *East Germany, Détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 169.
[170] *East Germany, Détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973*, 169.

secure and static region because they were concerned about "protection against the flow of human beings—either a flow of West Germans *into* the GDR, thanks to improved transit and visitation rights; or a flow of East German *out* of the GDR, via cooperation with all those new capitalist visitors."[171] While both had the same goal, their justifications were quite different. This example demonstrates the existence of a divergence of ideas over how the German Democratic Republic should be run between the leaders of the Soviet Union and those of East Germany. These divisions increased for a brief period in 1983 and 1984 before the Soviet Union ended such blatantly independent foreign policy gestures by the GDR toward the Federal Republic.

While these actions were wildly outside the norm for a country within the Soviet Bloc, the German Democratic Republic likely felt an attempt to salvage ties to West Germany was vitally necessary and justified given the GDR's declining economy. Surprisingly, "Economic links between both German states flourished during the early 1980s, most dramatically with Bonn's two DM 1 billion credits to East Berlin in 1983-1984."[172] Political and diplomatic issues, such as a combined Germany or a renewal of German national unity, were pragmatically dismissed by West Germany and East Germany.[173] Instead, the two countries focused on "their joint commitment to the preservation of peace and cooperation in Europe."[174] While the Soviet Union initially tolerated this type of behavior by the German Democratic Republic, its patience finally ended when Honecker planned to visit the Federal

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[171] *East Germany, Détente, and Ostpolitik, 1969-1973*, 169.
[172] *The German Problem Transformed*, 189.
[173] *The German Problem Transformed*, 189.
[174] *The German Problem Transformed*, 189.

Republic in September 1984.[175] Honecker's trip was "postponed" with no further explanation.[176] The visit's goal was to have been "to signal mutual German determination to construct an island of détente in Central Europe, a 'coalition of reason' in an implied sea of irrationality."[177] Instead, in October 1984, Gromyko, then the foreign minister of the Soviet Union, rebuked the East German leadership's separate policies. In the keynote address for the October Revolution's anniversary, Gromyko "warned 'revanchists' (the West Germans) and 'semi-revanchists' (the East Germans) 'of all stripes, wherever they are' (in either Bonn or East Berlin) that 'the German Reich (not just Hitler's Third Reich, but any hope for a unified German state) burned to the ground in the fire of the Second World War. There is no return to it, nor will there be.'"[178] Such language left nothing to the imagination. The Soviet Union had clearly had enough of even mildly independent East German foreign policies. The euromissiles controversy brought to the surface some budding issues of conflict between the leaders in East Berlin and Moscow, but by the end of 1984, these had died.[179]

Before the October 1984 speech by Gromyko, the German Democratic Republic had tried to accommodate its Soviet allies while also trying to maintain economic support from the Federal Republic. East Germany's support for the Soviet Union took various forms. One example is that in 1983 and after, the German

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[175] *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform*, 145-146.
[176] *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform*, 146; *The German Problem Transformed*, 100.
[177] *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform*, 145-146.
[178] *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform*, 146. Material in parentheses was added by Karen Dawisha, the author of *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform*.
[179] *Germany Divided*, 159.

Democratic Republic's government began to praise peace and the actions taken by the Soviet Union to create peace. While these statements might technically have been true if they were published in December 1983, they would not have been valid prior to that time. The GDR Peace Council literature discussed in the previous chapter continually blamed Western powers for the lack of peace. Yet from 1979 until November 1983, the West tried to reach peaceful solutions. Only after all these attempts had failed, the United States deployed Pershing II missiles with authorization from the Federal Republic of Germany.

As this chapter has discussed, this event provided a short-lived turning point for the German Democratic Republic. For much of 1984, East German leaders followed their own foreign policy, diverging from the Soviet line in some areas. After Gromyko's speech stopped this type of action immediately, it took the appointment of a new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, in 1985 before the two countries began to closely plan their foreign trade again.[180] Shortly after Gorbachev took the top office, he decided to reopen the intermediate nuclear force (INF) negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union.[181] In spite of the East German leadership's 1984 rebuke by the Soviet Union, "policymakers in the GDR and the FRG were *already* prepared to enter into a qualitatively new stage in their relations" before the new INF meetings began.[182] To maintain the economic benefits of the relationship, leaders of the German Democratic Republic understood that certain accommodations had to be

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[180] "East German foreign and security interests," 116-117.
[181] *Germany Divided*, 165.
[182] *Germany Divided*, 165.

made to ensure Bonn's goodwill.[183] At the same time, East German leadership worked to remain within the lines of acceptable foreign policy that were drawn so firmly by the Soviet Union. Concurrently, changes within East Germany, and the ongoing development of the actors of the independent peace movements, would now become a factor.

[183] *Germany Divided*, 165.

Chapter 5

The Pockets of Resistance Become One Mass Movement

The appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev as the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985 ushered in a new era of changes, the significance of which can still be seen today, though other transformations were taking place even before then: "The Charter 77 movement in Czechoslovakia, the Polish Solidarnošc (Solidarity) union, and the German peace movement[s] fought not just for the recovery of civil rights but also for the construction of a new form of civic self-organization."[184] Prior to these events, the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 led many East Germans to feel trapped while the Prague Spring of 1968 provided a brief flicker of hope that the system could change before Soviet tanks rolled in to snuff it out. This long series of events on the international stage, in addition to a stagnating economy, loss of faith in the state's ability to effectively govern, and gradual erosion of control by the Soviet Union led to the collapse of the German Democratic Republic in 1989.

However, one thing is clear: the events of 1989 would have been impossible if the framework for dissent in the German Democratic Republic had not been previously established. The leaders of the independent peace movements were the groundbreakers who accomplished this great feat. Leaders such as Eppelmann, Eigenfeld, and Wollenberger wrote letters, organized marches, led small meetings and larger rallies, and learned how to utilize the Western media to further their causes. In

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[184] Konrad H. Jarausch, "1968 and 1989: Caesuras, Comparisons, and Connections," in *1968: The World Transformed*, eds. Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 469.

doing so, they learned how to mobilize people, build coalitions, all the basics of leadership, and the political strategies for targeting the concerns and ideas of their fellow citizens. They also discovered that it was possible to oppose the state and survive, though arrests and torture were likely to be the penalty for such behavior. In spite of this, they refused to let such obstacles stand in their way.

Eppelmann and Eigenfeld, already discussed in detail above, were chosen for case studies because each had different motivations for participation in the independent peace movements. Also, each became a leader or co-founder of groups that made 1989 a historical turning point. Eppelmann was a founding member of Democratic Awakening, which was "the only large opposition group that made initial references to a 'reform of socialism.'"[185] For his part, Eigenfeld helped to create New Forum, formed by people from various cities who wrote and disseminated copies of the New Forum appeal, which stated that they "wanted to address all those who wanted to *stay*, all those who wanted to fight for a transformation of the *existing* society," rather than simply emigrating to West Germany.[186] This call for reform was typical among leaders of the independent peace movements of the early 1980s. While some of the members wanted to leave East Germany, these leaders chose to stay to fight for reform.

By contrast, the case of Vera Wollenberger, "one of the founders of the antiestablishment 'church from below,'" is significantly different.[187] She and many

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[185] *We Were the People*, 55, 236.
[186] *We Were the People*, 35, 227.
[187] *Germany Divided*, 185.

other well-known critics were expelled from the German Democratic Republic at the beginning of 1988.[188] Such measures were taken by the state in order to "quell discontent among its artistic community and churches."[189] Prior to her expulsion to the Federal Republic of Germany, Wollenberger participated in the independent peace movements of the early 1980s as well as being involved in a nongovernmental women's group, which formed out of a larger independent peace movement group, demonstrating "growing opposition to the ruling power structures" in the early 1980s.[190] She continued to work in and lead similar organizations until 1988. The work of Wollenberger and other women like her increasingly provided East German women with their own voice regarding their fears and concerns as well as the hopes for change that they shared with the other members of the group.

Beyond each of these brief case studies of leadership figures, there are hundreds of others who also led the oppositional movements as well as the thousands who participated in these activities. Any of them could have been chosen as a case study and though their stories would be different, the overarching theme of civic participation to create change would be pervasive. Eppelmann, Eigenfeld, and Wollenberger were chosen because of their early and later leadership roles as well as the availability of resources that provided for a more in-depth analysis of their reasons for participation and the methods they used. While each of these leaders was

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[188] *Germany Divided*, 185.
[189] *Germany Divided*, 185.
[190] Eva Maleck-Lewy and Bernhard Maleck, "The Women's Movement in East and West Germany," in *1968: The World Transformed*, eds. Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 392.

important in the creation of opposition to the state, one event was a necessary precursor to the independent peace movements: the INF debate.

The role of the intermediate nuclear force controversy was an important and yet unlikely link in the chain of events leading to a mass movement from below in the German Democratic Republic. Without the INF debate of 1979 until 1983, the independent peace movements would not have had a single issue to rally behind. The desire for peace and an end to nuclear weapons in East Germany led a variety of different individuals to join an oppositional group and become involved. The agendas of these groups spread beyond the urgent cause of peace. They became places in which the attendees had a voice. Their remarks did not follow the party line, and for many this was the first time they had shared such ideas with anyone outside of their immediate family. The psychological effects of such acts were significant. While the independent peace movements existed in many forms, the most common was a small group where such personal contact and empowerment was maximized. Examples of the small groups were the women's groups that Vera Wollenberger participated in as well as the slightly larger though still relatively small group originally organized and led by Ruth Misselwitz which Wollenberger also attended. Another example was the small group, which first focused on peace and later on the environment, that Frank Eigenfeld organized, participated in, and led. Together the groups provided small pockets of dissent throughout East Germany.

After the INF controversy had been settled, the state took over the issue of peace and formed the GDR Peace Council in an effort to calm dissent. While the state was largely successful in making the cause of peace its own on a rhetorical level, other

concerns, such as human rights and the environment, took the place of peace for dissenting groups. Small groups formed around these causes, and opposition from below continued throughout the 1980s. Unfortunately this time period has been largely ignored in the historiography. Many historians have chosen to focus on the larger, denser opposition activities in 1988 and 1989. These events are also very important, but it is unlikely that they would have been so effective in such a short period of time if the tools learned and applied to later movements by the leaders of the independent peace movements, had only been taken up in 1988 and 1989.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The independent peace movements that appeared from 1979-1983 in the German Democratic Republic provided the necessary skills and mindset for the later successful opposition movements of 1989. In particular, the case studies of Eppelmann and Eigenfeld demonstrated that the movements taught them how to organize and mobilize people toward a specific cause. Meanwhile, the case study of Wollenberger showed that many East German citizens even in the early 1980s did not know how to lead small groups or how to voice their opinions in public, but Wollenberger also proved that these skills could be learned. All three case studies established that citizens did not always agree with the state's actions, but until the independent peace movements provided a foundation or possibility for doing so, many had no idea how they could effectively voice their dissent.

The creation of the independent peace movements, while furnishing a forum for discussion about political and social issues, also slowly created a greater level of "free space" within the Lutheran churches. This was not universally true, but many more churches opened their doors to opposition groups from 1979 on. There are numerous levels on which this was an important development. Lutheran churches often had to defend the independent peace movements against the government. By doing this, certain Lutheran churches, intentionally in some cases and unintentionally in others, became sites where dissent against the government was tolerated, at least in relative terms. The independent peace movements pushed this "free space" at times,

but they also made many churches aware that citizens had numerous ideas that could not be voiced anywhere else. This new consciousness because of the actions of the independent peace movements meant that when issues about the environment, human rights, and other problems were raised in the mid-to-late 1980s, more and more Lutheran churches contributed space for oppositionists. This became very important in 1988 and 1989 because without these locations, which were relatively protected from the Stasi, it is unlikely that the "revolution" of 1989 would have been cohesive enough to succeed. The independent peace movements forced Lutheran churches' hands, and some of the churches responded with meeting space, which set a new precedent.

While the independent peace movements were important in this way, they were not entirely protected from harassment and arrests, as previously discussed. The movements were also just that: plural entities and not one united effort. For this reason, the German Democratic Republic was able to supersede the independent groups and create the official, government-sanctioned East German peace movement. This movement did not have to worry about the Stasi because it was state sponsored and organized. The East German peace movement was successful because members of the socialist party and trade unions all participated in marches, rallies, and letter writing. The united movement spoke often about peace and linked it to the German Democratic Republic and its public relations initiatives, yet very little was really done to create peace. Instead, the East German peace movement was an effective tool for quickly quieting true dissent over a debatable topic.

The issue of peace was quite controversial in the early 1980s because of the INF debate, in which the United States and the Soviet Union argued over the number of intermediate nuclear weapons that could be deployed in the two Germanies. After a decision had been reached in 1983, the anti-nuclear argument, which was inherently linked to the independent peace movements, temporarily became a non-issue. Most of those involved in these movements moved to the issues of greater human rights and a cleaner environment. In spite of this, the official East German peace movement ensured that peace would not continue as a focal point for dissent. This was an important development for the government because while the state often said it believed in creating peace, it did very little to achieve this. In fact, the positioning of intermediate range nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union was contrary to the idea of peace and demonstrated a blatant contradiction in the GDR's policies, which strongly advocated world-wide peace.

While the official East German peace movement was successful in turning peace into a state-controlled cause, the government was less effective in actually ending dissent by its citizens, which demonstrated the increasing space for dissent which the independent peace movements had created. The independent peace movements demonstrated that opposition existed, that some Lutheran churches would provide meeting space for these dissenters, and that many believed change might actually come if the citizens were able to convince the government of other ideas. The independent groups also gave many a voice as well as leadership and organizational skills that they would not have acquired otherwise. Most of these participants were unwilling to give up their new voice, and those who found the courage to lead also

refused to let go of this new, important tool in their fight to change the system. The "bloodless revolution" would probably have taken place without the independent peace movements, but it is likely that the year would not have been 1989 but much later.

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