

~~Top Secret~~
[redacted]**EAST GERMANY-WEST GERMANY: Hints of Moderation**

The East German regime apparently will allow more publicity for the Lutheran Church and the nonofficial peace movement in the hope of encouraging the West German peace movement. [redacted]

Officials recently claimed to the US Embassy that the regime is now more tolerant of such peace activities. They cited the publication in the party newspaper of a letter from a Lutheran parish expressing horror at missile deployments by both the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Party chief Honecker reportedly told visiting West German Greens he would agree to a live telecast of a discussion of peace issues by representatives of the East and West German Lutheran churches.

[redacted]

The US Embassy in East Berlin notes that this month the regime also has detained 100 peace activists and prevented church newspapers from printing a call for the dismantling of SS-20s. [redacted]

Comment: The policy shift may be an effort to encourage last-minute resistance to INF deployment in West Germany and may also be part of the Soviet effort to keep the West German peace movement alive after deployments begin next month. The recent arrests and censorship indicate that the regime still hopes to hold to some line on peace activism. [redacted]

The shift to the somewhat more moderate stance would incur some costs. The telecast would be a break from longstanding policy of preventing common action by the churches in the two Germanys and would risk a repetition by both churches of their denunciation of Warsaw Pact missile deployments. Overall, the effort to legitimize East German peace credentials is likely to have little impact on the West German peace movement. [redacted]

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