

EAST GERMANY'S CANDLELIGHT REVOLUTION

LEIPZIG, OCTOBER 9, 1989



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“The East German revolution has been one of the great spiritual and political events of our times” (Pierard 1990, 508).



“We were ready for anything, only not for candles and prayers. They rendered us powerless” (quoted by Tyndale 2010, 1).





Wilson Quarterly/<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20700623>



“In the tumultuous 20 years since the end of communism in Germany and Eastern Europe, the focus on the images of that single night has made it hard to recognise just how much work is necessary for a democracy movement to succeed” (Curry 2009, 16).





*St Nicholas
Church, Leipzig*

Alamy/https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/976/cpsprodpb/11C22/production/_109183727_leipzigikalamy9oct19.jpg.webp



“Religion contributed to the development of civil society by providing an institutional space in otherwise totalitarian societies within which it was possible to organise various forms of opposition to the communist state” (Herbert 1999, 281).





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*“Prayers for Peace”
crowds meeting at the
Nikolaikirche in October,
1989.*

*Wilson Quarterly/
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20700623>*



“Erich Honnecker, for his part, seemed oblivious to the need for reform and ordered a ‘Chinese solution’ for the demonstrations that were being held in Leipzig” (Smithey and Kurtz 1999, 99–100).





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Reuters/http://news.bbcimg.co.uk/media/images/70992000/jpg/_70992767_leipzig_ring_road_reuters.jpg



“Revolutions are not the artificial products of political propagandists, but the slow growth of centuries of oppression, resulting in the weakening of the central authority—culminating in some great national upheaval” (quoted by Maddison and Scalmer 2006, 140).

“Passive resistance was chosen for the same pragmatic reason that all tactics are selected. But it assumes the necessary moral and religious adornments” (Alinsky 1971, 44).



“The period 1982–89 remains atypical and aberrative in the contemporary history of the church’s political role and dynamics” (Monshipouri and Arnold 1996, 768).

“To summarise: the picture we built up of the Protestant Church in eastern Germany is one of a community which has suffered a good deal, which has seen itself used and abused by those who wanted a temporary vehicle for their ride to freedom” (Cantrell and Kemp 1993, 287).



“Through its Prayers for Peace, its guidance, its theology and its teaching, it managed to imbue the whole protest movement with a deeply rooted ethic of non-violence that was made the condition for every action taken” (Tyndale 2010, 110).





*Memorial at
St Nicholas
Church*

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