

Noah and Cassandra: The political mentality of the peace movement in the Federal Republic of Germany in the controversy over the NATO double track decision.

The aim of the dissertation project is to give a detailed insight into the political mentality and ideology of the German peace movement of the early 1980s. The main questions concern the dimensions of the various threats as perceived by the peace activists, most prominently – but not exclusively – that of nuclear war, and the perspectives of rescue from these dangers that the peace movement developed. Methodologically, the thesis stresses the enormous importance of narratives, which – among other aspects – contain the historical experiences of societies and exert strong formative and motivational influences in the shaping of worldviews, ideologies and political mentalities.

As expectations of the future are of central importance for these motivational powers to unfold, the project focuses on tales of prophecy and prophetic figures, especially Noah, as depicted in a short story by the German philosopher Günther Anders, and the iconic figure of Cassandra, as portrayed in the like-named novel of the eastern German writer Christa Wolf.

Also examined are theories of modern industrial, competitive, and thus antagonistic societies, the system of international relations, and the arms race. Furthermore, the thesis aims to show that the controversy about the missile deployment was based on a much more fundamental argument about competing concepts of rationality and realism, in which the peace movement sharply condemned the so-perceived ‘madness’ of the cold war.