

Foreword

My first thoughts go to all those that in some ways have been involved in this work, in order to assist me towards completing the research. I have gone through many stages of development, having engaged several persons individually and through their belonging institutions. This has not only been fruitful for me as a person, having had the pleasure to get to know many different and interesting people. These persons and institutions have contributed with knowledge and expertise on the field. As such, it would be anything but unfair if I would not dedicate them a rightful and well-earned spot by the following sentences.

I would first of all like to thank my supervisor Prof. Peter Nitschke at the University of Vechta, who in different ways showed to be a committed supervisor. He was always willing to contribute to my requests and interests, regardless of together having participated on seminars and lectures or having had contact through phone or e-mail. Largely, such efforts particularly led to solving matters flexible and uncomplicated, making the overall situation considerable sufficient.

Since having been situated in Rostock most of the time, my need to access library material of different kind was dependable upon the offers that existed in Rostock. As such, not only was the opportunity of being in Rostock more than satisfying in comparison to the aforementioned. It was also well arranged by Prof. Werner Müller and librarian Sigrid Schmidt at the University of Rostock, whose persons extensively contributed to making the work considerably convenient to fulfil. Thus, since Werner Müller, apart from being an historian at the University of Rostock, amongst others also is the director of the university connected Documentary Centre for the Victims of the German Dictatorships. Sigrid Schmidt relates to this due to being the director of its belonging library, a library that has its focus on the history of the GDR.

Concerning the archival information mainly having come from the German state authority that is responsible for handling the work of the East German state security, many persons were involved. Therefore, my thanks go to all these persons and their respective institutions, with particular gratitude to the ones situated in Rostock and Berlin. Furthermore, many thanks is reserved my interviewees, all of them having lived in and experienced the GDR. Special thanks go to those

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having worked for the East German security service. Several obstacles had to be passed on the way, finally to be able to meet them as well as undertaking the conversations. I am grateful they were willing to spend time with me, after all exertions. For some, this factually implied climbing over the highest mountain in order to surmount own personal difficulties, which many of these co-workers of the East German state security as of today still carry as a consequence of their working life in the GDR.

To the reading of the manuscript, I would particularly like to share my thanks with Jon Martin Lie and Roar Iost, with whom friendships go all the way back to upper secondary school as class mates. After all these years, I believe they should have gotten a grip on how I intend to solve tasks. Especially since we, unflinchingly as fellow students during our period at the University of Oslo, Norway, while studying for the Cand. Mag. and Cand. Polit. as well as during my time at the University of Reading, England, undertaking MA studies, amongst others discussed immortal themes within the world of academia. In any case, as the Germans say: "*Man lernt nie aus*". Valuable comments, considerations and correctional reading were therefore given as constructive as ever before. I owe further the computer scientist Thomas Geithner gratitude in regards to the issue of informatics, as of his distinctive skills and quality within his particular field and science having debouched to endowing this work with a distinguished technological solution.

Finally, yet importantly, on the contrary, unique thanks go to my girlfriend, Yvonne - for only she knows the reasons. Towards matters of the professional and daily life, also having directly or indirectly been involved in many of the thesis' concerns, with inner equanimity, she always has a key for opening these doors one needs and wants to pass.