

UPF Berlin, Germany's Peace Road event bicycled the route of the Berlin Wall

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Berlin, Germany -- Twenty peace activists bicycled along the route of the former Berlin Wall as part of the 2018 Peace Road event.

Early on the sunny morning of September 1, they gathered at the World Clock in Alexanderplatz in the center of Berlin. At 10:15, after a prayer offered by Pastor Joshua from Nigeria, they set off.

Their first stop was at the Axel Springer House, where UPF supporter Achim Pock explained how journalist and publisher Axel Cäsar Springer invested himself for the reunification of Germany. They continued to Checkpoint Charlie, followed by the North Korean Embassy, and then on to the bunker where Hitler and his family took their lives. The route brought them also past the Holocaust Memorial.

At about noon, they reached the Brandenburg Gate, where more supporters awaited them and the official photograph with 30 participants was taken. From there they continued by bicycle to the spot where the first victim of the Berlin Wall met his death.

The tour ended at the Chapel of Reconciliation on the site of the former border strip between East Berlin and West Berlin. Here the bicyclists met again with their accompanying pedestrians.

Mathias Monzebe closed with the comment: "Today we have traveled in the former East and West Berlins. Twenty-eight years ago there was still a wall here, separating people. The Berlin Wall served as a model for many other nations which are still divided to this day. Through the Peace Road movement, we wish to give a signal for world peace and to demonstrate that it is quite possible to live together as one family of humankind."

Ulrich Ganz, the UPF coordinator for Northern Europe, also summarized his impressions: "Our group photograph, with Peace Road T-shirts and the banner, together with Ambassadors for Peace, UPF peace

activists, and guests, demonstrated a profile at the Brandenburg Gate and set a signal for world peace as a part of international Peace Road activities. Our tour along the route of the former Berlin Wall connected us to the city's recent history. Our group was made up of people of different skin colors and national backgrounds, and this generated a feeling of gratitude that we could come together today as world citizens in this city."

On the following day, September 2, all the participants as well as additional Ambassadors for Peace were invited to a prayer breakfast in a neighborhood church.



A special Peace Road participant from Leipzig was introduced: Christoph Wonneberger, a retired minister of the Lutheran Church, co-founder of the peace prayers in Dresden and St. Nicholas Church in Leipzig, which made a decisive contribution to the fall of the East German communist regime. Shortly before the Berlin Wall fell, he had his third stroke, which brought an end to his long years of work for peace in the former German Democratic Republic.

After 10 years of restricted activity due to ill health, Pastor Wonneberger discovered "Bike for Peace," a bicycle tour for peace that took him and some others on a seven-week trip from Paris to Moscow. This was followed by further excursions. When he heard about our Peace Road in Berlin, he immediately announced his participation. In the photographs he can be seen in full long-distance bicycle tour gear -- and he is 74 years old!

After breakfast, we saw an exciting PowerPoint report about the life and work of Pastor Wonneberger. Only in the past few years has his contribution to German reunification been recognized with awards and tributes. Two biographies have been published.

The unifying spirit of the Peace Road was distinctly tangible over the whole weekend.

(Translated from German by Catriona Valenta.)