West Germany and the Rise of the Greens

Formed in West Germany during the second half of the 1970s, the German Green Party incorporates policies such as the removal of nuclear power plants and the reduction of pollution problems that overwhelm West Germany. This ideology has resulted in the creation of an environmentally conscious society; one that understands the role the environment plays in German society. No political party around the world has raised such prominent tenets during the last fifty years; the United States cringed more over the fear of Communism than on domestic issues, such as raising environmental consciousness. Though the German Green Party has implemented environmental policies for the good of Germany, many of the people within Germany’s political culture have questioned “environmental consciousness” and its meaning for them as citizens. Although the party is nearly thirty years old, these ideas continue to grow, as does its popularity within the Bundestag or the German Parliament.
Authoritarianism, Socialism and Green Politics

Within the context of West German politics, socialists feared the rising popularity of the Green Party, and its willingness to do anything, even if it meant showing an interest to rising environmental problems; the Young Socialists feared the rise of electoral power of the Greens, and if they lost seats in the Bundestag, the future of Social Democrats was at stake. Because the Young Socialists political interests differ from the Green Party, most political parties never considered environmental issues to be of importance to Germany. This leads one to question the ability of environmental consciousness within a communist society. The case of China prompted multiple questions as to how Mao’s legacy within the environment created more problems for China for several decades. As historians have seen, the nature of communist ideology and how it led the evolution to totalitarianism or authoritarianism has destroyed any sense of environmental consciousness. With totalitarian dictators, power is more important than addressing the people’s needs.

“Bitte Gib Mir Nur Ein Wort”—West Germany’s Growth in Green

Environmental politics had been a new focus examined in twentieth century Europe, particularly in areas such as West Germany. During the post-World War II period, ecological concerns became the center of thought. According to German political historian E. Gene Frankland, the people of West Germany sought “a radical break with proponents of permanent economic growth and competition that threatened the survival of the planet.”

The foundation of the West German Green Party was founded under an underlying environmental pollution problem: rivers. Prior to the postwar years, West Germans were aware of the role of water pollution. Even in the postwar period, West German societies endeavored to address the water supply problems that occurred in the Rhine-Main area, with proposals drafted by water engineers to create different water networks for the fish, so economic productivity would be made possible. During the 1950s, in the Federal Republic era, the political ideas were at a culturally conservative slant; the ideas of West German society were of no concern to the political body. To the conservatives, they “disliked the ‘domination’ of nature as much as they disliked communism or American rock and roll.

Conservative anxieties about the natural landscape fitted neatly into broader concerns: defense of the family...defense of the ‘Christian West’ against crass materialism and Soviet ‘totalitarianism.’” The political parties in 1950s Germany were more fearful of rising Soviet totalitarianism—by controlling East Germany; there were fears of an invasion of Western Germany and the creation of a world regime. The conservative members in Parliament refused another rise of totalitarianism and were willing to do anything, even if it meant seeking political reform. Though the government tried to look after interests of West German societies, they did not address domestic problems, such as environmental reforms. As protests increased during the 1950s and 1960s, environmental consciousness grew on the German people.

When the government witnessed atrocities with the Soviet Union and China—how dictators overlooked environmental problems, and only sought economic and imperial power—their rule characterized ignorance over human life. Authoritarianism in Communist societies should allow social representation. The West German Green Party allowed societies to benefit by creating this sort of participation, showing

1 In English, the term means, “Please give me just one word.”
that politics and society could co-exist. West Germans had not experienced participation in government, since the post-War period. With the West German Green Party accredited as “the mother of Green parties,” it caused inspiration for other Green movements in Europe, demonstrating it was “the most successful in the world”, inspiring other green movements in countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden.

The Green, Lean Machine: Petra Kelly

Petra Kelly—an influential woman behind environmental consciousness and one of the founders of the West German Green Party—explored how the future Europe could enter by following a “Green, environmental” world. Based on her personal experiences with the West German Green Party, she looked to other nations for following similar Green movements. The fundamental focus for the survival of European Green parties is through social-political cooperation. This idea becomes the key to strengthening environmental consciousness, spreading the awareness to all social classes.

Petra Kelly also explored deeper concepts with the idea of “eco-feminism,” and how important this term can be, especially in an environmentally conscious society, such as West Germany. Known formally as “ecological feminism,” the term is defined as “the position that there are important connection between how one treats women, people of color, and the underclass on one hand and how one treats the nonhuman natural environment on the other.” Kelly’s primary reason for joining the West German Green Party was to increase awareness that eco-feminism existed. Kelly viewed the treatment of women within a historical paradigm, arguing, “There are many structures of domination—nation over nation, class over class, race over race, humans over nature. But domination of women by men is a constant feature within every other aspect of oppression.” Men manipulated the environment the same way that they manipulate women; Kelly felt if men were active within the German landscape, they could respect women. Petra Kelly and the German Green Party have been instrumental in spreading awareness of the environment, eco-feminism, and ideas of a nonviolent world.
If there was one political party reflecting on the ideals of the environment in the last thirty years of world history, the German Green Party would be the ideal candidate. Formed in West Germany during the second half of the 1970s, the German Greens incorporated policies such as the removal over of nuclear power plants and the reduction of pollution problems overwhelming western Germany, resulting in the creation of an environmentally conscious society, one that would understand the role the environment plays in German society. No political party around the world has raised such prominent tenets during the last fifty years; the United States cringed more over the fear of Communism than on domestic issues, such as raising environmental consciousness.

The German connection to the landscape was integral to their environmental consciousness: German identity was based on myth and how myth had the ability to connect with culture to see the landscape. Though the German Green Party has implemented environmental policies for the good of Germany, many of the people within Germany’s political culture have questioned “environmental consciousness” and its meaning for them as citizens. Though the party is nearly thirty years old, these ideas continue to grow, as does its popularity within the German Parliament (Bundestag).

Within the context of West German politics, socialists feared the rising popularity of the Green Party, and its willingness to do anything, even if it meant showing an interest to rising
environmental problems; the Young Socialists feared the rise of electoral power of the Greens, and if they lose seats in the Bundestag, the future of Social Democrats were at stake. Because of the Young Socialists political interests differ from the Green Party, most political parties never considered environmental issues to be of importance to Germany.

One should question the ability of environmental consciousness within a communist society. The case of China prompted multiple questions as to how Mao’s legacy within the environment created further problems for China for several decades. As historians have seen, the nature of communist ideology and how it led the evolution to totalitarianism or authoritarianism has destroyed any sense of environmental consciousness. With totalitarian dictators, power is more important than addressing the people’s needs.

Simon Schama, an art historian and author of Landscape and Memory, touches on the subject of how much the political landscape meant to German culture. When a historical scholar witnesses the creation of the German Green Party, they should recognize that the passion for environmentalism and landscape had been a part of Germany centuries before. The people saw the German forests as a cultural imagination within Germany: “even as prolific forests of fir and larch rose in the heartland of the old German woods.”¹ As Schama saw it, man’s view of the wilderness was held within his own mind; nature was a state of mind, showing it was part of their cultural imagination. The perceptions of the forests and the wilderness were part of man’s imagination, and these interpretations created who the people of Germany are. In essence, a forest was known as “‘the heartland of [German] folk culture…so that a village without a forest is like a town without any historical buildings, theater or art galleries’…They were, in short, the home of the community.”² The German landscape left an impact on many, even when the

² Ibid., 114.
industrial revolution transformed German life. To the people of Germany—the preservation of forests and woodlands gave much hope to these individuals; the landscape was part of their reality.

Until the early part of the 1970s, Germans explored the severity of the environment—such as flooding—and continued questioning the roles that need to be fulfilled in preventing the loss of German landscape. The problem with this monograph is that Schama envisions the German obsession with landscape through art. He does not examine the causes for environmental deprivation, but rather focuses on the aesthetics and meaning of the landscape. Schama’s intention was to examine how environmental conservation was important to German societies. Environmental consciousness was illustrated through paintings, drawings, and other artistic mediums.

As German historian David Blackbourn put it in his work, *The Conquest of Nature: Water, Landscape, and the Making of Modern Germany*, “This was like water turning suddenly into ice or steam, one of those instant transitions that sometimes occur in the human as well as the natural world.”

During the post-World War II phase, Germany experienced a schism, with the Western portion controlled by American and European forces and the Eastern portion was put under Soviets. During the division, there was an increased worry concerning water pollution, and this concern showed little care to the conservatives in the Federal Republic, who dissented the “‘domination’ of nature as much as they disliked communism or American rock n’ roll.”

The concern for water pollution was viewed as another domestic issue, just like any other: conservative Germans feared the fight of advancing industrialization and increased consumer

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3 Ibid., 331.
capitalism to the West and the rising concerns of totalitarian in the East. Blackbourn’s intention was to illustrate the development of environmental consciousness in West Germany and how their need for political reform grew; the objectives for the German conservatives were to strengthen German identity. Blackbourn’s approach was to examine the needs of the West German government and West German society; though the government wanted to improve the political culture by listening to the needs of people, societies demanded domestic issues—such as environmental flooding—to be of more importance than improving West Germany’s international status.

In 1970, West Germany took a poll, questioning whether West Germans were environmentally conscious; only forty percent of the population was familiar with the term “environmental protection.” A year later when another poll was conducted, the number increased to ninety percent. The whole notion of “environmental consciousness” increased heavily during the 1960s. Politics shaped human action for the environment. There was a call for individuals within the German landscape: if they wanted to continue having the German landscape as part of their state of mind, then they had to fight. The German people had to fight for what it believed in. The party—influenced significantly by leftist ideologies—had objectives that were three-fold: “aesthetic (removing concrete culverts and the appearance of canalization), ecological (recreating niches to which species might return), and practical (restoring wetland zones as retention basins for floodwaters).” Paving the way for environmental advancements in West Germany led to concerns in East Germany, questioning the ideas of the socialist ideologies and the impact they had for the people of East Germany.

The problem with this monograph is that it discussed the impact of what led to the

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5 Ibid., 329.  
6 Ibid., 331.  
7 Ibid., 333.
German Green Party but does not sufficiently discuss the implementation of policies that were introduced when the Green Party formed. Though Blackbourn’s intent was to examine the socio-political background of Germany from the eighteenth century to the 1990s, he examined the human constructs within the environment, discussing environmental movements rather than policy implications of local and national governments. Discussion of political policies would have strengthened his argument about environmental consciousness. Instead, Blackbourn focused on the psychological mindset of the German people, showing no interest to the political history of the Green Party, and argued that cultural construction of human landscapes shaped German environmental history—not politics: “What we call landscapes are neither natural nor innocent; they are human constructs. How and why they were constructed belongs to the stuff of history.”

In discussing responses within other German political parties, Allison Brown examines how the SPD—known as the Social Democratic Party of Germany—had no strategy for integrating democracy within the environment. Brown argued the SPD would “feel committed to social progress and how it objectively pave[d] the way for reactionary politics.” The Young Socialists Party struggled to be the majority party for East Germany, but could not achieve the goal because of growing interest within the Green Party. There are two issues the Young Socialists face in terms of gaining popularity in West Germany: “environmental problems with a focus on nuclear power, and the threat posed to the political democracy by measures of state repression.” With rising sentiments of popularity concerning the Greens, the Federal Republicans show promise that the leftist-Greens will continue to dominate seats in the

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8 Ibid., 16.
10 Ibid., 1.
Bundestag. The Greens are not interested in negotiating with more seats; they were interested in trying “to win over as many as possible of the Young Socialists who are disappointed with government politics.”¹¹ Many of the German parties to the left want to spread socialist ideals, and are aided by the understanding that environmentalist consciousness is growing at a rapid rate. In this situation, various party officials tend to align their political ideologies with those of the Green Party.

The problem with Brown’s document is that it does not show both sides of reaction from the Bundestag: more reaction and analysis should take shape in order to understand the growing leftist sentiments of the party. Rather than provide fragments of evidence that shows the decline of the socialist party in only three pages, Brown fails to adequately focus on both sides of the equation. Politically, Brown wanted to examine how the rising sentiment of the Greens showed an increased awareness of political consciousness in West German societies-- she fails to examine the political perspectives of the Federal Republicans and the SPD, and what role they would play in increasing environmental awareness; parties like the Federal Republicans and the SPD lacked focus on the environment and did nothing to meet the needs of West German societies. The Green Party looked after the interests of West German societies, bringing about promises of environmental reform. Because of growing popularity, other political parties declined in popularity.

By examining China’s role of environmentalism under an authoritarian, communist society, historians examine the effects that Mao Tse Tung left at the conclusion of his reign. To Judith Shapiro, she wanted to examine how Communism can impact the environment, and focused on the reign of Mao Tse Tung, and the impact he left for China under authoritarian view.

¹¹ Ibid., 2.
In Shapiro’s view, the role of Chinese traditions “enabled Maoist social control;”\(^{12}\) Mao’s rule created various “environmental problems, [which] were profoundly influenced by China’s links to Soviet mentors with appetites for grandiose projects and state-led social engineering.”\(^{13}\) The terror that Mao precipitated from 1949 to 1976 in Chinese societies was fear—not joy—about protecting the landscape. As a result of Mao’s control, the environment suffered significantly. The result of his values “laid the groundwork for intensified exploitation and despolitation,”\(^{14}\) according to Shapiro.

Political repression by a Communist society led to damaging consequences. The objectives and laws imposed by Mao led to a destructive dismissal of the landscape. Though Simon Schama would argue that people build their own interpretation of the landscape within their mind, Mao worsened Chinese perception and interpretation of what the landscape meant to them. The psychological impacts of the mind—based on control—allowed the Chinese communist officials to mold a differing outlook over the feelings of the environment. In the end, environmental degradation of societies was the result within societies and their perception of the environment.

What Shapiro fails to address is whether or not environmental consciousness in an authoritarian, communist society was destroyed long before from European interaction. If European influence led to the cause of economic exploitation and the Boxer Rebellion, is it possible that Soviet Russia molded a Chinese change of mindset, dismissing and ruining originated perceptions of what the environment holds to the people?

The works of Schama, Blackbourn, Brown, and Shapiro, each provided multiple views on the impact of environmental consciousness and provided explanations for how it increased in

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13 Ibid., 195.
14 Ibid., 196.
West Germany and declined in areas such as Communist China where an authoritarian
dictatorship affected the psychological effects of a society. Environmental consciousness was
what raised awareness and political popularity of West Germany; in Mao’s China, the
diminishing notion of consciousness is what led to environmental ignorance, making China one
of the worst countries on environmental control. A discussion of the nature of politics and its
concerns for the environment should include an investigation showing whether or not a political
mind controls the social recognition of the environment, allowing for invitation or dismissal of
environmental issues. By looking at two separate regions in the world, environmentalism within
politics can embrace or dismiss the consciousness, depending on the view of politicians or
society. Germany will be examined within reason as to why environmental consciousness
showed promise in the twentieth century, and the goals that should be created within the twenty-
first century.

Overall, there can be important significance to environmentalism and social involvement
with politics. Authoritarian and totalitarian rulers neglected the environmental front, with the
hopes that nature will continue to take its course. Power became the motive for rulers that tried to
follow Communist ideology, and because they wanted to elevate their status within the world,
their care for society and the environment was only minimal. Mao overlooked the people’s
needs, practically forcing them to abuse the environment; his abuse of society is reflected on his
abuse of the people. Under democratic forms of government, environmental consciousness grew,
as did various principles, such as nonviolence and eco-feminism—an idea known as “ecological
feminism” to historians and sociologists, where man’s abuse in the environment reflected his
cruelty to women. As democratic societies grew concerned over environmental effects in the
post-World War II period, the call for communication between society and government became
apparent. Social cries from environmental equality led to early environmental reforms and increasing environmental consciousness. Though environmental consciousness became apparent in West Germany during the 1950s and 1960s, the main political party of West Germany—strong right-wing conservative officials—had more of a responsibility for rebuilding the country after World War II—and were unconcerned with environmental ideas and reforms. After 1980, environmental consciousness was strengthened as such that it introduced active environmental reform, brought about eco-feminism and nonviolence, and served as a model of inspiration for other European countries to model a Green Party. As it is seen, West Germany’s political role in environmentalism transformed societies from 1980 all the way to today

“Bitte Gib Mir Nur Ein Wort”15—West Germany’s Growth in Green

Environmental politics had been a new focus examined in twentieth century Europe, particularly in areas such as West Germany. During the post-World War II period, ecological concerns became the center of thought. Over time, small groups of environmentalist demonstrations in West Germany—such as protests—were formed so governmental response and reform that would benefit improvement. According to E. Gene Frankland—German political historian—the people of West Germany sought “a radical break with proponents of permanent economic growth and competition that threatened the survival of the planet.”16 Capitalist societies demanded the expansion of consumer-directed economic infrastructure, which drained economic and military resources.

After the conclusion of World War II, there was a need for rebuilding all European societies on strong capitalist values to ensure progression in European economies. In the case of

15 In English, the term means, “Please give me just one word.” The German alternative rock band, Wir Sind Helden released the song “Nur Ein Wort” and it became a well-known German single hit in 2005. The song’s overall message dealt with German political culture since the re-unification of Germany.
East Germany, was hindered by various environmental disasters, such as the flood of Leipzig, Bitterfield, Halle, Dresden, Chemnitz, and Cottbus. With having a political party that would show increased environmental consciousness, the urge for continual capitalist productivity would subside over time. This sort of “Green renewal” would allow West Germany to save the planet, as well as focus on psychological constructs—such as nonviolence and eco-feminism—which showed importance in the 1950s and 1960s. In this paper, I intend to examine the West German Green Party by looking at important policies and responses that allowed for increased awareness in environmental consciousness. Specifically, I wish to examine the role of one of the founding members of the Green Party in West Germany, Petra Kelly, and how she viewed the importance of environmental consciousness with ideas dealing with nonviolence and eco-feminism.

The foundation of the West German Green Party was founded under an underlying environmental pollution problem: rivers. Prior to the postwar years, West Germans was aware of the role of water pollution, for it “aroused controversy from the earliest postwar years, especially when major fish-kills were captured in dramatic photographs.” Even in the postwar period, West German societies endeavored to address the water-supply problems occurring in the Rhine-Main area, with proposals drafted by water engineers to create different water networks for the fish, so economic productivity would be made possible. During the 1950s, with the Federal Republic era, the political ideas were at a culturally conservative slant; basically, the ideas of West German society were of no concern to the political body. To the conservatives, they “disliked the ‘domination’ of nature as much as they disliked communism or American rock and roll.

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17 Ibid., 42.
18 Ibid., 42.
Conservative anxieties about the natural landscape fitted neatly into broader concerns: defense of the family…defense of the ‘Christian West’ against crass materialism and Soviet ‘totalitarianism.’”20 The political parties in 1950s Germany were more fearful of rising Soviet totalitarianism—by controlling East Germany, there could have been fears of easily invading West Germany and creating a rise of a world regime. The conservative members in Parliament refused another rise of totalitarianism and were willing to do anything, even if it meant seeking political reform. Though the government tried to look after interests of West German societies, they did not address domestic problems, such as environmental reforms. As protests increased during the 1950s and 1960s, environmental consciousness grew on the German people.

By January 13, 1980, after various protests and increased focus on the environment, the German Green Party was born in West Germany. Though various protests occurred with West German societies pre-1980, society never had a voice within the government until they received political representation in January 1980. It was the period where society’s voice was important to the political government. At this point in German history, questions rose as to what led to the creation of the West German Green Party. More importantly, were the Greens responsible for civilizing Germany? For that matter, “It was not the ‘68ers and their Green offshoots who civilized Germany, but Germany which civilized them.”21 West German societies allowed the consolidation of this political party to exist. After all, “they have never lacked self-confidence. The nerve of this small group of friendly, former Maoist-loving rebels to declare themselves the healers of the republic stupefied, even the most talented rhetoricians in the ruling conservative

20 Ibid., 328-329.
Prior to the 1970s, the Green movement had a main goal that needed to be achieved: the main notion of “renaturing.” In order for this to occur, they had to turn the clocks back and look at three advantages: “aesthetic (removing concrete culverts and the appearance of canalization), ecological (retreating niches to which lost species might return), and practical (restoring wetland zones as retention basins for floodwaters).”

Founding members such as Petra Kelly and Fritz Kuhn sought increased citizenship within West German societies to make environmental issues important in the political world. What the West German Green Party endeavored to achieve was “a semi-institutionalized, nonprofessionally led, ‘bottom-up’ organization. Furthermore, the Green Party has advocated participation throughout society, in contrast to the major parties’ more technocratic approach to problem solving.”

Instead of having negotiations by politicians, society intervened with environmental issues, allowing for politicians to focus on humanitarian values.

When the government witnessed atrocities with the Soviet Union and China—how dictators overlooked environmental problems, and only sought economic and imperial power—their rule characterized ignorance over human life. Authoritarianism in Communist societies should allow social representation; not necessarily Western-style representative democracy, “but a democracy with opportunities for direct participation—a democracy with plebiscitary possibilities.”

The West German Green Party allowed societies to benefit by creating this sort of participation, showing that politics and society could co-exist. West Germans had not

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22 Malzahn, “Happy 25th Birthday Greens. What’s the Plan Now?”
25 Ibid., 18.
experienced participation in government, since the post-War period. With the West German Green Party accredited as “the mother of Green parties,” it caused inspiration for other Green movements in Europe, demonstrating it was “the most successful in the world.”

By being the inspiration for other Green movements in Europe, parties were created in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden with the intention of allowing for a “Green world.” With the creation of the German Green Party, it showed for inspiration, demonstrating “a real possibility of constructing new relationships in Europe that do not depend on the threat of use of military force...The peaceful transition of Europe is unthinkable without the full observance of all human and civil rights.” European countries wish to model political parties similar to that of Germany, not just for the intention of spreading environmental consciousness, but to bring about non-violence; if environmental consciousness spreads, peace could be achieved. With ongoing military threats of the Middle East and Eastern Europe during the 1980s, the need for peace became an interest to European countries. Militant revolutions were not of key to West German politics—in order to avoid nuclear war, environmental parties could lead to world peace.

In the 1980s, the West German Green Parties had larger concerns with what would happen with the environment. Their primary concerns did not deal with irrigation projects or flooding, but rather with atomic weapons and nuclear power. When environmental consciousness increased in West German societies, their concern dealt with “U.S. nuclear warheads stationed on German soil and pointed at the Soviet Union.” Political tensions between the two nations escalated after World War II, and when Germany found nuclear missiles, the Party’s main

concern was to seek active environmental reform. The Party’s rationale was that “West Germans are in the midst of an ecological and economic crisis threatening the future of industrial societies. The symptoms of this crisis are environmental destruction and human exploitation; its roots are in profit-seeking competition and quantitative economic growth.”

By looking into this view, the United States and Soviet Union were trying to demonstrate their capitalist superpower—if one country threatened the other with nuclear warheads, it was to demonstrate the economic and military power that the country had. The United States was demonstrating that they could do whatever it takes to wipe out an authoritarian dictatorship, even if it meant destroying land. The party’s ideology centered on the notion of nonviolence; to one of the founding members of the German Green Party, she looked to former political leaders around the world to increase awareness of non-violence, which would benefit the people of West Germany. The hope of a “green” tomorrow can only be led through awareness of violence and what can be done to prevent it.

The Green, Lean Machine: Petra Kelly

Petra Kelly—an influential woman behind environmental consciousness and one of the founders of the West German Green Party—explored how the future Europe could enter by following a “Green, environmental” world. Based on her personal experiences with the West German Green Party, she looked to other nations for following similar Green movements. Regarding nonviolence, Kelly believed “that the Green way of thinking and living is here to stay, even if some of the Green parties will not survive into the nineties. I also believe that we as a Party are here to stay if we do not make compromises when it comes to life and death.

30 Ibid., 131.
questions.”31 The fundamental focus for the survival of European Green parties is through social-political cooperation. This idea becomes the key to strengthening environmental consciousness, spreading the awareness to all social classes. When European powers questioned the role of the power environmentalism has on a country, Kelly felt “it is important to realize that we do not talk about ‘power over’ or ‘power to dominate’ or ‘power to terrorize or oppress.’ When we speak of a new type of power, the power of nonviolence it is rather about abolishing power as we know it.”32 To the German green movement, the focus was to share the power with all forms of society—the upper and lower classes have the ability to pave the future. Kelly’s idea of nonviolence is defined as, “something common to all, to be used by all, and for all.”33 Power was always measured by how well man could advance in a society. Kelly believed the key to power was that it could be shared by all—no one should take that way from a society. In order for progression to exist, cooperation on domestic—and possibly international issues—has to be key for a successful political organization.

Petra Kelly also explored deeper concepts with the idea of “eco-feminism,” and how important this term can be, especially in an environmentally conscious society, such as West Germany. Known formally as “ecological feminism,” the term is defined as “the position that there are important connection between how one treats women, people of color, and the underclass on one hand and how one treats the nonhuman natural environment on the other.”34 Kelly’s primary reason for joining the West German Green Party was to increase awareness that eco-feminism existed. Kelly viewed the treatment of women within a historical paradigm, arguing, “There are many structures of domination—nation over nation, class over class, race

32 Ibid., 21.
33 Ibid., 21.
over race, humans over nature. But domination of women by men is a constant feature within every other aspect of oppression.”35 Men manipulated the environment the same way that they manipulate women; Kelly felt if men were active within the German landscape, they could respect women.

Capitalist societies have demonstrated the treatment of women. With the Industrial Revolution, women in European and American societies had one duty: raise the children. In any society—whether industrialized or agrarian—Kelly argued that the need for female recognition in manual labor is important: women do as much work as men, but do not reap the same benefits. As Kelly witnessed, “Women constitute the largest group of landless laborers in the world. Though they do much of the work in most agricultural regions, because land ownership is generally the domain of men, women have even less security than male tenants or employees.”36 She also argued that an “unjust division of labor between men and women” exists.37 Man’s continued abuse of the environment became reflective of women; to the men belonging in a hungry, capitalist society, the woman was regarded as a product. By abusing the product, consequential effects on the environment could lead to catastrophic events.

When Kelly discussed the fundamental inspiration of joining the Green movement, she looked to “non-violent men like Mahatma Gandhi; Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Cesar Chavez. We know far less about contributions to nonviolence by women like Dorothy Day, Rosa Parks, and the women in recent nonviolent revolutions in Eastern Europe.”38 Kelly looked to the nonviolence protestors for inspiration to join the movement, showing direct parallels between women and the environment. Some social historians have acknowledged the significance of

35 Ibid., 115.
36 Ibid., 116.
37 Ibid., 116.
38 Ibid., 117.
gender wars, and writers such as Joan W. Scott admit that “high politics have not been explicitly about those relationships...gender seems not to apply and so continues to be irrelevant to the thinking of historians concerned with issues of politics and power.”39 Men purport to have a dominant, hegemonic role in a society; if men dominate women—socially or politically—women will never have an active role. An examination of Kelly’s goals verified her purpose within the political party. Petra Kelly joined the environmental movement with two goals: (1) to show a connection between women and the environment, and how men continue to abuse both; (2) to make it possible for women to play an active role in the political world.

In order to achieve both goals, Kelly had to find a way to spread this consciousness to the people. In order for people to maintain that sense of consciousness, several conditions have to be met: firstly, “an ecological society is a truly free society that is based on ecological principles that can mediate humanity’s relationship with nature. That means searching for soft decentralized technologies and energies for the ways of true co-and self-determination.”40 In order to spread consciousness, people have to be aware of the current relationship that society’s have with the environment; if they are not aware of the issues at hand, then there is no purpose for being a part of that ecological movement. By looking at the 1950s, conservatives overlooked the environmental issues because they saw no purpose in assisting with environmental issues—these issues seemed small-scale and not important to Germany as a whole.

The other importance of increasing environmental consciousness is having a “truly free society.” Kelly elaborated on the definition, arguing “we do not want peace that oppresses us. We must learn, on our terms, what peace and freedom mean. The phrase ‘peace and freedom’ all too long has been part of Right-wing vocabulary and ideology, at times sadly neglected by the

Left, sometimes even within our ranks." Cultural conservatism used the phrase “peace and freedom” to prevent Nazi ideology from rising in Germany. They wanted to spread the ideas of national awareness, but refused to participate in issues that were domestic. Environmental problems increased environmental consciousness, showing that “peace and freedom” were important in West German societies. In order for environmental consciousness to be achieved, mission goals of “peace and freedom” become the backdrop for increasing interest, demonstrating environmental awareness. By urging for environmental reform, West German societies are closer in achieving “peace and freedom.”

By achieving both goals, Petra Kelly wanted her voice to be heard over West German societies, demonstrating that women can take action in government. In Kelly’s final interview, she worried over German unification and the roles it will have for women in the late twentieth century. Immigration played a fundamental factor, where those that were included were not just “refugees from political and economic uncertainty in Eastern Europe…but those fleeing the Third World because of social turmoil due to ‘weapons exports or because of the way we have tolerated and helped regimes who torture their own people.’” Waves of immigrations have occurred due to the ongoing spread of violence—dictators in areas such as Africa and Southeast Asia manipulated societies into forced manual labor. Because of the low economic pay and the treatment women are receiving in such environments, many move to a unified Germany, where economic opportunity exists.

Kelly’s other concern dealt with the treatment of women in Germany and the abortions that are taking place. Kelly felt abortion laws in East and West Germany were not feasible:

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41 Ibid., 23.
In eastern Germany, there was a right to have an abortion in the first three months, and it became like an assembly line, something that I didn’t think was right either. After unification, there was supposed to be a kind of transition period where both regions would have the right to keep their own laws. It turned out completely the opposite. This has divided women very much.  

Kelly’s concerns over abortion are important because as discussed earlier, she wanted to achieve political goals using non-violence. If a government works with a society to meet their needs, it should be achieved through non-violence. Kelly’s pessimism was to achieve a governmental movement that promotes non-violence; as she felt, men abused the environment the same way they abused women. With women getting abortions, they are abusing themselves and the children who could have had a chance for achieving a better life. Kelly represented one of many women to achieve the goal that a woman could benefit from an environment that was eco-friendly. If she is out getting an abortion, she is fighting against what the German Green Party believed in: an eco-friendly environment and non-violence.

Kelly was skeptical over the reunification of Germany, with thoughts that the political party could dismantle within the next decade. As Kelly saw it, reunification led to a wave of riots and abortion, something that she would have never wished to see. When she joined the movement in the 1970s, her goal was to remove any sense of nonviolence, making West Germany a primary example for other European countries to follow. After witnessing the reality of a post-reunified Germany, Kelly was depressed over the negative direction the political party would take. She committed suicide in 1994, causing great political tragedy to the people of

43 Williams, Ibid.
Because of the success within the German Green movement, other political parties throughout Western Europe desired to follow the path that West Germany created. As Petra Kelly advanced the role of the movement and the political party, the successes of the environmental movement were more than spreading consciousness: the true significance of these ideas focused on maintaining a “Green planet” and what could be done to allow Germany to prevent nuclear disasters from occurring. The limitation of political power and the acknowledgement of gender equality within a society were other important goals. Cultural conservatism was the building block for improving German societies during postwar period. After having a taste of authoritarianism with the Nazi regime, societies urged for social change, particularly with the environment. Though cultural conservatism recognized society’s cries for reform, they overlooked the issues, with hopes of improving Germany on an international scale.

The German Green Party was the key for spreading environmental awareness, as well as bring about issues such as eco-feminism and nonviolence. German societies grew increasingly concerned over the environment and how abuse of the environment could lead to probable global destruction. The Green Party was created to meet the needs of West German society upon improvement on social concerns. As the Green Party approaches thirty years of success within Germany, more will be focused on how environmental consciousness will play a significant role for the future of societies throughout the world. 45

44 Williams, Ibid.
45 I would like to thank Amber Noecker for giving me insight on writing about the German Green Party. I would also like to thank Ben Hendricks for his effortless encouragement and constant criticisms when composing the document.
Bibliography


A news article examining how one political party—the German Green party—proved to be the inspiration for European environmentalism, showing involvement in the political landscape. Since the party’s creation in 1980, it created political parties all over the world. Devya Arthur also examines why the United States has made no efforts to go “Green.”


A critique on the history of Germany, David Blackbourn examined Germany’s active role in environmentalism, all the way up to the present time. He devoted a considerable amount of time to the political framework, examining the environmental motives in West German society during the post-World War II era. As growing attitudes demanded a political party focused on environmentalism, increased sentiments from right-wing politicians wanted to see the decline in environmental consciousness. It was not until 1980 that the environment gained the political attention of West Germany.


Allison Brown examined how the popularity of cultural conservatism declined due to West Germany’s increasing awareness of environmental consciousness led to the creation of the German Green Party.

Frankland’s monograph deals with the development of the German Green Party from 1979-1980, with details providing what “environmental consciousness” meant to the German people. The work not only examines the Greens back to 1979, but shows how influential German society was with the environment and politics in post-1989 with the re-unification of Germany.


A political monograph examining the schism between West and East Germany after World War II, all the way up to the re-unification period in 1990. The monograph deals with the governmental systems and political parties that emerged over the thirty-five year period, the lessons learned from the various political parties, and the steps taken for re-unification. The monograph also examined the role of environmentalism not just in West Germany, but in East Germany as well, where environmental consciousness was discouraged under authoritarian dictatorships.


A primary source document focusing on Petra Kelly’s influences with the German Green Party in the 1970s, the book deals with three important aspects: environmentalism, feminism, and non violence. With her dream of Germany’s future, she admitted, “If there is to be a future, it will be green.” Kelly talks about her personal experience in keeping the environmentally conscious dream alive, with hopes that she would spark other issues, such as feminism and nonviolence, within her Green Party objectives.

A news article celebrating twenty-five years of the creation German Green Party; the article also examined what direction the German Greens will go to continue improving awareness in German societies.


Simon Schama examined disintegrated German kingdoms from the seventeenth century up to the present, and how the people were unified with maintaining the German landscape. Landscape, Schama argued, was the key factor for unification.


A controversial article written for the American Historical Review, Joan W. Scott was one of the first historians to provide a different view on “gender.” As I endeavored to tie her article in with Petra Kelly, I wanted to emphasize the importance gender has in a society; as Petra Kelly saw it, gender inequalities exist, with man’s abuse to a woman being deemed equivalent to his abuse in a capitalist society. As I incorporated a couple of Scott’s points into the case study, I felt it showed a prominent reason to Petra Kelly’s involvement within the environmentalist party.


An examination of authoritarian rule of Mao Zedong from 1949 to 1976, and how his rule

Another continuation of Petra Kelly’s movement within the Green Party, the ideas of environmental consciousness come through with the term of “eco-feminism,” an idea where ecology and feminism are linked. To elaborate further, eco-feminism describes an existing parallel between the oppression of men and subordination of women, where there is a degradation of nature. Within the monograph, Kelly goes deep into environmental conscious, showing that environmental degradation is comparable, and that males who create this divergence between females create that separation within the environment. Kelly’s work discusses the greater details of that in Germany, and what she did within the German Green Party to develop this social and political movement.


The last interview with Petra Kelly—one of the founding members of the German Green party, Williams questioned Kelly’s position on where the environmentalist party will go, especially after the re-unification of Germany. With her deep insights towards immigration, abortion, and the lack of direction in feminism, Kelly felt the party was in for the worst. Kelly died a year later; officials speculated the cause of death was suicide.
When I entered Shippensburg University in August 2005, I had an interest in being a chemistry major. Though the major offered great incentives—such as a scientific basis for solving a problem—it was not a pleasing career for me to fall into. In spring semester of 2007, a friend suggested I take Dr. George Snow—currently Professor Emeritus of Shippensburg University—for History of World Civilizations, Part II. I hesitated; for fear that it would be another survey world history course where I would have learned nothing. When I took Dr. Snow’s course, it opened excitement, curiosity, and questions concerning the social, political, religious, technological, and economic aspects of societies around the world. The following semester, I decided to take more history electives, fulfilling my historical curiosity about specific topics. After realizing that history was a passion more than chemistry, I switched majors. After entering the history major, I embarked a journey examining the history of various societies and how these societies worked. Whether it was examining Karl Marx’s critique on industrialization, or how the Soviet Union promoted education from the 1940s to the collapse in 1989, I experienced an eclectic blend of history, political science, and theater courses to aid my understanding of how a society’s past explains the present and what will happen in the future. In this composition, I intend to examine how my performance as a history major improved with eight papers: a ten page book review from History of World Civilizations Part II; a twenty page informal essay examining the evolution of revolution in theater from Theater History; a biographical research sketch of Theodore Roosevelt from Recent History of the United States; a research paper examining educational reforms in the Soviet Union; an examination of Karl Marx and how his philosophy sparked an inspiration for political revolutions in the twentieth century; a research paper examining the life of a Civil War soldier whom lived in Shippensburg; a book
review examining the life of a woman dealing with American occupation during the Vietnam War; and a seminar paper dealing with the development of the German Green Party, demonstrating the cooperation of government and society from the 1980s. These eight documents demonstrated improvement in my writing, as well as expanded my historical curiosity, as each of these eight papers demonstrated my historical growth about each of these regions.

When I entered my second survey world history course, one of the requirements that had to be fulfilled was to compose a seven page analytical paper. This was the first history paper that required analytical hindsight and built my historical curiosity. Though the topic dealt with the Opium Wars in China from 1839 to 1842, the purpose was to examine the causes to imperialism and Chinese response to British intervention.¹ The goal of composing the document was to provide a terse synopsis of the monograph, and to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the author. The student was also supposed to provide the critique of other authors—excluding Amazon.com—and then discuss why the monograph failed or succeeded to achieve interest for historians. In the conclusion, the student had to summarize all that was written from the work, reinforcing the thoughts that were discussed earlier in the paper. Even though this was a requirement for all freshmen taking Dr. Snow’s world history course, the intent was to have students develop analytical commentary based on what was read. This assignment was one that demonstrated the need to not rely on quotations; more importantly, it showed me that I had to strengthen analytical commentary. By reading this monograph, it reinforced the concepts of imperialism that were discussed in lecture. It strengthened my awareness and allowed me to spend more time to focus on the work. Though this was one of the first papers I wrote in the

history major, it allowed me to think consciously about how to strengthen my analytical commentary and improve on grammar, spelling, and word usage. Though I shared the ideas from the monograph by providing a synopsis, other reviews of the monograph, the strengths and weaknesses of the work, and gave a background on the historian researching the topic, much improvement had to be on style and strengthening of analytical commentary.

The eighteen page informal essay on creating my own theater season is significant, because it increased my awareness of a society and how changes—whether it was for women, technology, or government intervention—were significant, especially as time progresses. In the composition titled, “Evolution of Revolution,” my thesis was to imagine myself as a producer, explaining my rationale for when the theater season would take place, why I chose specific plays relevant to the season, the directors, the theater group, and showing how these plays would “segment the contemplation of figuring out ways to reform and revolutionize their own society.”

These plays selected—*A Doll’s House, Miss Julie, Ubu Roi, Rossum’s Universal Robots, The Adding Machine, Indians, Operation Sidewinder, Cloud Nine*, and *My Beautiful Laundrette*—each had a significant meaning for society; these plays were all intellectual pieces, mixing apocalyptic, technological themes, or gender identity issues, where audiences could think about the problems society faces and what they could do to solve them. The purpose of this assignment was to examine everything the student had learned in theater—including the notion that theater is not just a tool for socialization and relaxation; playwrights wished to address social inequalities, such as gender identity, women’s roles and statuses during the nineteenth and twentieth century, and the growing reliance of technology and how it impacted industrialization. Though this paper was written informally, it allowed the student to provide analytical insights as opposed to simple

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regurgitation. This assignment allowed increased my awareness of social classes, and how social classes have developed in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Though the course dealt with theater, it examined the importance of the art from 1870-1990.

The biographical sketch of Theodore Roosevelt was significant in Recent History of the United States, because the goal of the assignment was to examine the role of the individual “based on their childhood before their career, the contributions they provided to the current generation, the critical analysis of the character from other historians, and the strengths and weaknesses throughout their life.”3 Though my interest in American history declined during high school, I gained much appreciation for the assignment, because it was more than a biographical sketch of an individual; it was about the actions that the individual did, and how their efforts shaped the political, social, educational, and environmental change within the United States. When researching Theodore Roosevelt, I gained much knowledge about his passion for the environment, as well as endeavors of establishing good political relations with Britain and Japan.4

The purpose of the research report was to integrate research skills, combine them with analytical commentary, and make three personal insights on how individuals should examine history. Recent History of the United States was one of the first history courses where history and perception were important to learn about. Even though there was class discussion over the topic the first week, the professor wanted the concept reinforced in the research paper, emphasizing how perceptions of the past can shape the future; the more people are conscious about the past, the more active they will be for the future.

The research paper on Soviet history was one of the greatest compositions I have ever written. Originally intended to be a five page document, the twenty page paper was written to

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4 Ibid., 4.
examine an increase educational opportunities for the people of Soviet Russia. Even from an early age, children were to understand Soviet philosophy and how Lenin was responsible for allowing education to be possible. In kindergarten, children were forced to learn about the political responsibilities they would have for their country. They are being educated with the intention of spreading the understanding of Communism. Socially, the children have to show “Love and respect towards Lenin, the Motherland (Rodina), the native land, and the village, which are the highlights of political socialization.”\(^5\) After these children attend primary school, they have to attend ten years of secondary school.\(^6\) When secondary school is completed, they can exercise the option of entering a trade school or a university. This is the first paper that I gained intense interest in, because it showed how Communism was being taught in the classroom, and when these pupils become adults, their goal is to spread their educational philosophies to other people. There was intense concentration on the paper, and I spent a month compiling research and finding ways to structure the thesis to verify how important education was in an authoritarian Communist society. The other challenge was having a more recent bibliography; all the sources within the paper were published between 1961 and 1983.\(^7\) Though I could not find sources commenting on Soviet education after the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s, it made me question whether or not the Russian Federation censored publications regarding Soviet education after the government collapse in 1989. What I learned from this research project was that I had the ability to go beyond the parameters required, and to strengthen my analytical commentary on the research given. The research also allowed me to question the role politics played in the Soviet Union, and how Vladimir Lenin looked to the

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\(^6\) Ibid., 4.

\(^7\) Ibid., 21.
ideology of Karl Marx to spread the awareness of Communism.

Karl Marx was an important character for creating political revolutions. Though he published the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, the ideas were an inspiration for revolutions throughout Russia, Vietnam, and China.\(^8\) I never understood the ideologies Karl Marx had, nor was I cognizant on why his theories transpired revolutions throughout various parts of the world. Though I wrote this paper in a Political Science course, it allowed me to draw a direct connection between politics, society, and philosophy. Marx wrote the work in response to industrialization, illustrating why working class laborers should revolt from a capitalist society. Marx incorporated two terms—substructure and superstructure—and argued that superstructure is the “establishment of religious institutions in areas settled by proletariat because the lower classes look to God, with hopes of finding out what they need to do to survive in a capitalist society.”\(^9\) By understanding Marx’s thesis behind the *Communist Manifesto*—which illustrated why working class men should revolt—it allowed me to understand the role of revolution. Political theory and philosophy allowed me to understand the reasons such political revolutions occurred. Over time, my analysis strengthened, with the realization that those who follow Marxism are ones seeking power. The ability to understand Marx’s philosophy and how leaders misinterpreted the concepts could be illustrated through how they ruled their country.

The research paper for the Theory & Practice class was one of the first assignments where historians had to deal with primary sources. From these primary sources, students were to construct a historical interpretation of the event, whether it was with the regiment, the individual themselves—unless there was a lack of information concerning the individual—topics dealing with issues such as pensions, African-American treatment during the Civil War, or problems

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\(^9\) Ibid., 4-5.
concerning payment of the troops. In this research paper, I used enlistment records—as well as applications for pensions—to explain how and why Henry Galloway, a Shippensburg local, played a significant role in one of the first regiments of African American troops during the Civil War.\footnote{Jim Shaffer. “Henry Galloway and the 55\textsuperscript{th} Massachusetts Regiment.” Theory and Practice. Shippensburg University. 02 April 2008: 1.} Given the primary sources by the instructor, the only challenge for the student was to create a topic based on enlistment records and pension applications. Henry Galloway was noted for encountering several challenges with the regiment, such as encountering physical labor projects and not receiving pay for these projects; while Caucasian regiments received pay for their services, African Americans received a lower salary, and usually had to spend it on military equipment.\footnote{Ibid., 4.} The importance in the assignment was that it exposed me to primary sources, creating a topic from those resources, and creating a thesis that an African American soldier had when participating in the Civil War. This sort of historical research was inexplicable, because it allowed me to develop research skills, as well as improve writing. It also allowed my historical curiosity to increase about concerns I never examined carefully: the role African American military regiments played during the Civil War.

The book review I wrote during my junior year of Shippensburg allowed me to go deeper with the analytical skills that I gained from freshman year. This autobiographical account—\textit{When Heaven and Earth Changed Places}—allowed me to explore the impact autobiographical accounts can have on a historian. Though other students might find the autobiography another biased account of the Vietnam War, Le Ly Hayslip’s courageously in writing the account created two goals: being “able to display incredible graciousness by forgiving her perpetrators by arguing that war can even force good people to do bad things,” as well as “explain why Le Ly
wrote this account.”12 The problem I have with several historians is that they do not explain both sides of the story. Le Ly’s voice was one where she admitted that it was not easy to live in North Vietnam during this time period. She was considered an enemy to the Viet Cong, an enemy to American troops, and an enemy to her family. Trust was difficult for her to gain. This book review allowed me to realize that it was more than a historical perspective; it was the story of a woman who wanted her voice to be heard. As Le Ly showed to the readers is that “Vietnam was more than a political struggle divided by territories of the North and South; it was about a war where people did not know what they were fighting for. As Le Ly grew older, she had no idea what she was fighting for—and was one of many to think about what could be learned from the experiences in this war.”13 This book review was different from any that I have written in the past; as opposed to reading an author’s one side of the story, this autobiography brought about both sides—the United States and the Vietnam—and how it was difficult to survive.

The final paper—a capstone seminar paper—is the integrative tool for consolidating everything I have previously learned from prior assignments, book critiques, and research papers. This research paper was experience in advancing primary and secondary source research skills. The topic dealt with environmental culture in West Germany and China; a historiography was conducted involving secondary sources that would develop a thesis for what would be examined in the case study. From the research that was conducted between West Germany and China, I examined the government and societal interaction of West German societies. The main focus in the case study was to examine “West Germany’s political role in environmentalism.”

13 Ibid., 5.
showing that it transformed societies from 1980 all the way to today." Within the case study, I showed the importance environmental political parties have played on West Germany. I illustrated the brief history of the Green party, concluding with the influences one woman had on the political party. Overall, this paper taught me three important lessons: when researching the topic, the historian should spend a lot of time locating primary source research. If it is done last minute before the deadline, problems will surface. The second lesson gained is to focus on writing style—in the four years that I have been a history major, I could tell my writing style has changed considerably. If the instructor never gave the opportunity for constantly revising the historiography and case study, I would have never changed the writing style. The third lesson I have gained from the seminar paper is that it was good practice for graduate school. After writing many research papers, I was never exposed to the terms “historiography” or “case study;” the instructor aided historians in showing the importance of more documents. This assignment was considered my proudest achievement because I was able to consolidate all the tools gained from the history major and as researching occurred, my historical curiosity and enthusiasm grew, questioning how the role of environmental culture would impact government and societies in the next century.

By examining the writing samples of the eight documents written, I have to admit that I learned more from the history major at Shippensburg University than I did with chemistry. Over the four academic years that I remained here, I showed progress and growth in history, examining more interest in various topics and appreciating the history of how that society lived. Based on the ideas of the past, history allows individuals to be conscious, with hopes of making decisions that would impact future generations. By learning the past, people hope history never

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repeats itself. My goal after graduation is to illustrate these ideas to ambitious scholars who wish
to learn more about history and what could be done to prevent actions from occurring. As I have
been influenced by a historian who changed my outlook on history, I hope I can make that
difference with prospective scholars, molding and encouraging the social, political, religious, and
economic aspects of a civilization; and what I can do to assist with their writing, improving their
communication skills, and hope that the concepts that they use could be applicable to the future.
All of these skills grew in my last four years, and it has been the most exciting experience to gain
in college.
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