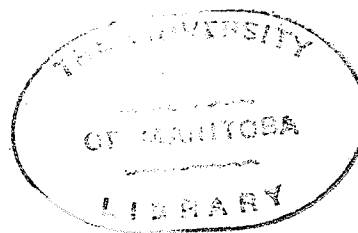


FLUCTUATIONS IN THE FLOW OF REFUGEES FROM THE SOVIET
ZONE OF GERMANY TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC
(OCTOBER, 1949 - JULY, 1957)

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ABSTRACT

Developments in the Soviet Zone of Germany depended to a great extent on the general considerations which influenced the world policy of the Soviet Union. In particular, the Soviet Union feared that Germany might rise again to a position where, in conjunction with the Western powers, it might threaten the Soviet Union. At the same time, Germany offered an opportunity for the Soviet leaders to round out their system of satellite states -- thus, East Germany was both a "bridgehead" for the attempt to secure the adherence of West Germany to the Soviet bloc (or, after 1953, the neutralization of Western Germany), and, at the same time, valuable in itself as an essential part of the Soviet orbit. But to secure these ends, the Soviet leaders had to implement a policy of Sovietization which, they hoped, would lead to the moulding of a Communist-inclined population, or, at least, a population which would be passive.

Soviet Occupation was based on the allied wartime agreement, which, by 1947, had broken down. Reparations

played a great part in the decline of allied cooperation; other reasons, however, were operative. Among these were the drive for Communist-dominated political gleichschaltung in the Zone. This began in 1945-1946 with the forced establishment of the Socialist Unity Party, the communist dominated party to whose development political life in the Zone was subordinated. Other political parties were subject to coercion, the Communists dominated all aspects of life through the mass organizations which were established, and, by 1949, they felt secure enough to direct the Volkskongress, a movement originally serving Communist propaganda for an all-German settlement, to establish the separate "German Democratic Republic" (October 1949).

The period 1949-1952 may be termed the period of "consolidation", during which political, economic and social Sovietization was introduced and carried out. The object of this was to crush all classes and social groups which might threaten the regime, and thus to have a clear title to the domination of youth, intellectual life, and economic activities -- the props for the totalitarian system. The refugee movement in these years is indicative of the negative attitude the population took towards such policies.

The refugee movement reached its highest peak in the months immediately preceding the June uprising of 1953. The

uprising and the refugee movements are linked together as evidence of the desperate situation of the population, especially after Sovietization was intensified in the autumn of 1952. At the same time, the weakness betrayed by the "New Course", the shift of policy inaugurated after Stalin's death, gave the workers the courage to demonstrate against new raises in the norms -- a move which sparked the uprising.

After the uprising, the regime turned definitely towards integration with the Soviet bloc as one method of achieving a certain degree of stability. This shift to the East was dictated in part by the failure of Communist efforts to subvert, or at least to neutralize, West Germany. However, closer ties with the Soviet bloc also meant that the regime felt the repercussions of events which took place elsewhere -- Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU (February 1956) and the events of October and November, 1956, in Poland and Hungary. General dissatisfaction was indicated during this period by the fact that the monthly flood of refugees, which had fallen somewhat after the 1953 uprising, began to rise and, generally, surpassed the pre-1953 level.

This preliminary study of refugees, although restricted somewhat by certain limitations of material and method, has indicated that refugee study may be a profitable method of gauging public opinion with reference to regime policy in

Communist states. Above all, it has shown that although the Soviets have succeeded in maintaining their hold on East Germany, they have not thus far succeeded in forming a population which will acquiesce to this fact.

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CHAPTER I

THE ROLE OF GERMANY IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY

The bases of Soviet policy in Germany are to be found in the role which Germany plays in the strategic planning of Soviet foreign policy. In the minds of the Soviet leaders, in their public pronouncements, the German problem is not one which is considered in isolation; rather, Germany is seen as but one front in a never-ending struggle for supremacy between the "camp of Socialism" on the one hand and the "Western Imperialists" on the other. Out of this concept have sprung the particular policies which the Soviet leaders have developed with regard to Germany. It is within this framework that these policies are implemented, in their specific applications, by the ruling Communist regime in East Germany,¹ and it is against this background that the Western democracies must view the interplay between Communist policies, on the one hand, and the attitude of the population of East Germany, on the other.

The comprehensive world-outlook of Soviet foreign policy is illustrated best by contrast with the outlook of

¹See Appendix A, "Terminology".

the Western powers. Whereas the Western powers seemingly are intent on facing one problem at a time, defensively, -- as in the case of Germany, Iraq or Formosa -- Soviet policy seems to be one of constant irritation on a broad front. Utilizing the weapons of diplomacy, military strength and economic aid, Soviet policy has shifted its emphasis backward and forward from Europe to the Middle East to Asia in a rapid series of feints, jabs and offensive breakthroughs, with the objective of exploiting each crisis to the utmost and at the same time searching for new opportunities to keep the West off balance. Thus, each crisis is followed either by a new crisis in another area, or by a change of pace -- sabre-rattling followed by talk of peaceful coexistence. The strategy is one of total diplomatic warfare, aimed at consolidating one's own ranks while at the same time inducing weariness and collapse in the ranks of one's opponent and, thus, achieving victory by default, rather than by the more costly method of all-out war.

In the development of this strategic concept, emphasis has been placed on the role of the colonial or ex-colonial areas of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Priority, in the offensive stage of the struggle, follows the line laid down by Lenin, who wrote:

The outcome of the struggle depends in the end on the fact that Russia, India and China contain a mighty majority of the population and precisely this majority

is with unexpected rapidity in recent years being drawn into the fight for its own freedom. So there can be no doubt of the final outcome of the struggle. In this sense, the final victory of socialism /read: Communism/ is fully and unconditionally secured.²

Stalin reduced this to a strategic dictum when he stated that Leninism taught that victory over the West was to be achieved not, primarily, through direct action in the advanced states themselves but rather "through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism."³

Even though the main, long-range battle was to be in Asia and Africa, Europe was by no means neglected. Basic to the state-mentality of the Soviet Union was the belief, current at least up until the time of Stalin's death, that the Soviet Union was being persecuted and victimized by the developed capitalist states. This belief was exemplified by the theory of "capitalist encirclement"; its corollary was that the Soviet government, and Communist movements throughout the world, should use every possible opportunity to strengthen the defense of the "Socialist Motherland." Thus, although emphasis was placed on Asia and Africa so far as the long-

²Lenin, March 1923, cited in Chester Bowles, The New Dimensions of Peace, New York; Harpers and Brothers, 1955, p. 131.

³Stalin, cited Bowles, op. cit., p. 47.

range offensive was concerned, the defensive obverse of the Leninist-Stalinist strategic concept was one of neutralizing any enemies who might pose a danger to the security of the Soviet Union, and, especially, the security of European Russia, the center of the Communist system.

During the World War II period, the Soviet Union pursued a policy of territorial aggrandizement and expansion of her zone of influence, calculated at achieving security for her nerve-center in European Russia. This was manifested in the annexation of eastern Poland and the Baltic states (1939-1940) and in the post-war establishment of a system of satellite states stretching as far as possible to the West. Thus, by 1949, the western land frontiers of the pre-war U.S.S.R. were protected by a zone of annexed areas and satellite states extending over seven hundred miles westward into the heart of continental Europe.

At the western extremity of this zone was the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany, whose status as a satellite state was dignified in 1949 by the creation of the "German Democratic Republic." As a result of historical experience, the Russian rulers well appreciated the importance of Germany in the struggle for hegemony in Europe. Two World Wars, during both of which the Russians and Germans had engaged in bitter battles on the eastern front, had served to emphasize the formidable strength of the German war machine. Between the

wars, during the period of the Rapallo Treaty and subsequent agreements (1922- c. 1934), the Soviet Union had experienced the benefits of economic and diplomatic cooperation with Germany, thus continuing a policy which the Tsars had pursued in the nineteenth century. Further, concealed beneath typical inter-war Communist propaganda about Germany as an example of "decadent finance capitalism" there lurked a genuine admiration, similar to that shown towards the United States, for German progress in the development of modern industrial techniques which might be used as models in the drive to implement Stalin's ambitious series of Five Year Plans. Thus, from all three viewpoints -- military, diplomatic and economic -- the Soviet Union had reason to appreciate the opportunities which a share in the postwar occupation of Germany afforded her.

The use which the Soviet Union made of its opportunities in Germany was influenced both by hope and by fear. On the one hand, the Soviet Union feared that Germany might rise again to an economic and military position, where, possibly in conjunction with the Western powers, she might once more threaten the Soviet Union and the Communist system which was being built up, under Soviet auspices, in Eastern Europe. Therefore, as an occupying power, the Soviet Union used every opportunity to weaken Germany immediately after the war; in the years that followed, the Russians used both threats of reprisal and promises of eventual reunification in vain

efforts first to halt the creation of a West German state, and, later, to block the integration of this state into Western European defensive, economic and political systems.

Just as the Russians feared the rise of West Germany to a position of respectability and responsibility in the western alliance, so they had high hopes of the use to which they might put their own zone in East Germany. From the beginning, the Soviets hoped to exploit the chaotic postwar situation to secure the adherence of all of Germany to the Communist system. In pursuit of this objective, East Germany might be used as a "bridgehead" for political infiltration and for a campaign based on reviving German nationalism and on exploiting hopes for reunification, though keeping these ideas strictly subordinate to the dictates of Soviet realpolitik. Even after 1949, (and, especially, after c. 1953-1954), when the Soviets must have known that hopes, in the foreseeable future, for an all-German Communist state were slim indeed, East Germany and the reunification question were used as bait in the attempt to minimize the aid which the Federal Republic might be able to give to the Western Alliance.

Besides being useful as a "bridgehead," the Soviets had high hopes for East Germany's value in its own right. Even a separate East German satellite state would be most useful in rounding out, both politically and economically, the Communist system in Eastern Europe. Economically, East

Germany would bring to the Communist bloc a highly developed industry with a skilled working force. Politically, a separate East German state would ensure that on the Oder-Neisse boundary there would be a state which would not "upset the applecart" and thus start a series of tremors that might break up the Soviet empire. These two policies, -- on the one hand, the maintenance of East Germany's links with West Germany, so that the eastern zone might serve as a bridgehead for future expansion, and, on the other, the attempt to integrate East Germany as fully as possible into the satellite system -- were used, sometimes concurrently, generally in alternation, as the Soviet strategy in Europe and the postwar world unfolded.

Such a policy, however, could not be fully implemented unless the foundation were properly laid. In this case, in order to provide a firm foundation for Soviet plans, it was necessary to mould a population, which, at the least, would not dare oppose the policies of the regime, and which, preferably, would be in accord with the regime. Thus, as Raymond Aron has pointed out, "once the party has gained possession of the state," in East Germany, as throughout the Communist orbit, it becomes necessary

to create the new man, to accomplish the spiritual transformation that will render the ruling elite and the masses permanently loyal to the rules, conceptions and mode of living of the Communist society.⁴

⁴Raymond Aron, The Century of Total War, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955, p. 142.

Thus, from a practical point of view, in terms of the judgments of the Soviet leaders themselves, the success or failure of Communist policy in Germany and of the Soviet use of East Germany in the fulfillment of Soviet plans must be assessed, ultimately, on the basis of how far the Soviet leaders, through the German Communist regime, succeed in implementing their policies while at the same time holding the loyalty, or at least the acquiescence, of the East German population. Indoctrination and control -- on these rest Communist hopes for success in East Germany, and further hopes for using East Germany to advance the Communist cause.

CHAPTER II

EAST GERMANY UNDER SOVIET MILITARY OCCUPATION (1945-1949)

Hitler's "Thousand Year Reich" outlived the German Fuehrer by only a week. With the unconditional surrender of Germany (May 8, 1945), the victorious Allies had time to look around and to survey their situation as occupiers of this once-dreaded country. For the Soviet Union, the situation was very good indeed. The defeat of Nazi Germany went far deeper than defeat purely on the military level. Heavy bombing, the victorious advance of the Allied armies from both the west and the east, and the utter collapse of a totalitarian regime which for years had held in its sway not only the captive peoples, but also the Germans themselves -- all these resulted in political vacuum, economic collapse, and social dislocation. As their world came apart around them, the majority of the German people were left in a state of shock, without bearings to steer by in pursuit of a future. For the Allies, this situation created vast social and political problems, since a primary job of Allied Military Government was, of necessity, the revival of ordinary civil government. But for the Soviet leaders the situation contained the seeds of future domination, since conditions in Germany at war's

end closely approximated that state of chaos which, as H. Seton-Watson has pointed out,¹ is conducive to the establishment of Communist rule.

The Soviet position at the end of World War II was enhanced by the substantial fund of goodwill which the Soviet Union, as an important wartime ally, had built up in the hearts of the Anglo-American peoples. Much bad feeling, particularly over the Nazi-Soviet accord of August 1939, was wiped away by the heroic stand of the Red Army at Stalingrad and countless other battles on the long road from the Volga to the Elbe. People tended to forget that the Soviet system was basically totalitarian and that it had sacrificed countless numbers of its own people, as well as Poles, people from the Baltic States, and members of other ethnic groups, in the pursuit of its own ends. A mood of optimism prevailed as to the possibility of cooperation between the western democracies and the Soviet Union, and this optimism was not confined to the soldiers who, in April, 1945, met the Russians at the Elbe; nor was it confined to the populations of such states as the United States, Great Britain and Canada. The prevalent mood, as it existed on the highest level of government, is well illustrated by a remark of President Roosevelt's:

¹H. Seton-Watson, The Pattern of Communist Revolution.

I have just a hunch that Stalin doesn't want anything but security for his country, and I think that if I give him everything I possibly can and ask for nothing from him in return, noblesse oblige, he won't try to annex anything and will work for a world of democracy and peace.²

Unfortunately, there was little conception of the way in which Stalin defined the "security" of the Soviet Union and the extent to which he was willing to go to gain his ends. Optimism and trustfulness were probably of great advantage in the conduct of the diplomacy of the wartime alliance, but they were bound to cause difficulties and disappointments if carried into the postwar period without the balancing factor of calm and realistic appraisal of specific situations. Such appraisal was too often lacking, especially on the part of the man in the street; towards the Germans, the prevailing attitude, reflecting the bitterness and lack of generosity engendered by years of total war, was that they deserved any punishments that came their way and that little effort should be made to protect them against our Russian allies.

The Inter-Allied Agreements and Their Decline

The legal basis for the Soviet occupation of East

²Roosevelt to William Bullitt, prior to Teheran Conference, December, 1943, Chester Wilmot, The Struggle for Europe, London: Collins Fontana Books, 1959, p. 156.

Germany was provided by the series of inter-Allied agreements which grew out of the conferences of the wartime leaders.

During the war, many plans were drawn up for the occupation and future treatment of Germany. Such plans were the work both of private individuals and of extensive staffs working in the foreign offices of all the major Allied powers. However, the first important step in developing an inter-Allied policy on postwar Germany did not come until November 1st, 1943 when, as a result of the Moscow Conference of Allied Foreign Ministers, a European Advisory Commission was set up. It was the task of this commission to study questions relating to the post-war settlement in Europe and to make joint recommendations which might serve as the basis for further discussion at the conferences of the Allied leaders.

Of these conferences, the most important, so far as the German question was concerned, were those which took place at Yalta and Potsdam in 1945. At the Yalta conference (February 4 - 11, 1945), the German settlement was high on the agenda. In a series of discussions, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin succeeded in hammering out the broad principles which they hoped would serve as the basis for the Allied occupation of Germany. The Allied leaders reaffirmed their determination that the German surrender be unconditional. After the surrender, Germany would be split into a number of occupation zones whose affairs were to be coordinated through a central Control

Commission. Within this administrative framework, the Allies would proceed to implement their policy of re-educating the German people and purging Germany of elements of militarism and Nazism.

The question of dividing Germany into occupation zones was a major concern of the conferees. In general, the occupation zones were to follow the lines suggested by the planners on the staff of the European Advisory Commission. The British and Americans were to occupy zones to the West of a line running roughly south from the Bay of Lubeck to a point West of the tip of Czechoslovakia; the zonal boundary would then run along a line running in an easterly direction to the Czech border.³ Territory East and North of this line was to be under Soviet occupation. Berlin was to be exempted from this division into zones and, as headquarters of the agencies for inter-Allied coordination and control, was to be placed under four-power administration. At Yalta, the original plan was amended to allow for a French Zone of Occupation, to be carved out of the original British and American zones.

At Yalta there was some talk of the possibility that the division into zones might be the basis for permanent dis-

³For a map sketching the zonal boundaries, see Richard Hiscocks, Democracy in Western Germany, London: Oxford University Press, 1957, facing page 36.

memberment of Germany,⁴ but the question was left in abeyance. However, the loss of territory in the east of Germany was implied in the discussions on Poland which resulted in the decision that the eastern frontier of Poland should follow the Curzon line and that Poland should be compensated by territorial accessions in the West and North.

Discussions on Germany were carried on, in greater detail, two months after the German surrender. In the course of their discussions at Potsdam (July 17 to August 2, 1945), Truman, Churchill (replaced, after July 25, by Atlee) and Stalin sought to tie together the threads of the wartime agreements and discussions on Germany. The boundaries between the respective Allied zones were not changed, but the Allies did discuss the question of Germany's eastern frontier. Pending a final peace settlement, Königsberg and the northern part of East Prussia were to become part of the Soviet Union, while all other territory in the Soviet Occupation Zone east of the Oder and western Neisse Rivers was to be placed, provisionally, under Polish administration.⁵

⁴Q.v. minutes on the Yalta Conference prepared by Charles E. Bohlen (extracts from U.S. State Department, The Conferences at Malta and Yalta 1945, Washington, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1955), in "What the Big Three Really Said at the Yalta Conference," U. S. News and World Report, March 25, 1955, pp. 64, 137-138.

⁵Hiscocks, op. cit., p. 35.

Having reached agreement on boundaries, the heads of government settled down to the main business at hand -- the working out of basic policy for the control and re-education of the German people. The main lines of policy had already been agreed upon at the earlier conferences, and, especially, at Yalta, where the general purposes of the common policy had been defined as "demilitarization, denazification and democratization." At Yalta, the Allied leaders had agreed that such goals would be arrived at through the disbanding of the Wehrmacht and the removal or destruction of its equipment, the elimination of the armaments industry and the control of all industry likely to contribute to the establishment of war potential, and through war crimes trials and denazification procedures.

At Potsdam, it was agreed that such policies had little chance of success unless they were pursued in common, on a supra-zonal level. Although, for the time being, no central German government was to be established, the Allies affirmed their intention to treat Germany as a single economic unit and to establish certain common policies for the regulation of its industries and its general economic life. Among these common principles were decentralizing, to eliminate excessive concentration of economic power, and restricting production of metals, chemicals, machinery and all items directly necessary to a war economy. It was

widely believed that pursuit of common political and social policies, and, ultimately, the establishment of an all-German government, would follow from the recognition of the need to treat Germany as an entity in the economic sphere.

The reparations question was a key issue in Allied discussions at Yalta and Potsdam and, indeed, at subsequent conferences. Because of its prominence, many authorities⁶ have singled out the failure to agree on, and implement, a common reparations policy as the major reason for the deterioration of Allied unity in Germany. Although reparations were a major cause of friction and certainly contributed to the deterioration in relations, they should not be considered as the sole cause of Allied division; nor should the blame for the Allied deadlock be laid solely at the door of the Soviet Union.⁷

It is true, however, that the reparations question was the storm center around which much of the subsequent controversy revolved. Even before the end of the war, there was

⁶See, for example, J. Peter Nettl, The Eastern Zone and Soviet Policy in Germany, 1945-1950, London: Oxford University Press, 1950, especially Chapter II, passim, on which much of my discussion of the reparations policies is based.

⁷For example, some share of the blame should go to the French, who "had not been represented at Potsdam and did not consider themselves bound by the agreement. As late as the summer of 1947 representatives from the Soviet zone were aiming at administrative unity, while the French authorities opposed it." (Hiscocks, op. cit., p. 39).

general agreement that Germany should be made to pay some form of reparations. However, the extent of reparations and the way in which reparations should be allocated -- both in terms of payments to the respective Allied states and in terms of charges against the various sectors of the Germany economy -- were topics on which there was to be disagreement.

The reparations question came to the fore at the 1945 conferences, where, says Nettl,

The Russian demands were considered ... exorbitant by the Western powers. The shape of reparations was tacitly settled: solid reparations as opposed to financial exactions. The sharing of reparations was based on two considerations, but ... by skilfully balancing the scale of her own war efforts and her needs, Russia could make the demands of other countries fade into relative insignificance.⁸

The Russian position was put forth at the Yalta Conference by the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, I. M. Maisky. At the second plenary meeting (February 5), Maisky based Russian demands primarily on Soviet needs, rather than on Germany's ability to pay. According to Maisky,

... the Soviet plan ... envisaged ... (1) the removal from the national wealth of Germany of plants, machine tools, rolling-stock, etc., to be completed within a period of two years after the end of hostilities, (2) yearly payments in kind to last for ten years.

... In order to restore Soviet economy which had suffered so much from German aggression, and to safeguard

⁸ Nettl, op. cit., p. 39.

the future security of Europe, it would be necessary to reduce German heavy industry by eighty per cent ... Specialized industry useful only for military purposes should be 100% removed. ... The Soviet Government felt that with twenty per cent of her heavy industry Germany would be in a position to cover the economic needs of the country.

... The list of goods to be delivered during the ten year period would be fixed later on.

Mr. Maisky further proposed that ... there should be an Anglo-Soviet-American control over German economy which would last beyond the period of the reparations payment. All German enterprises which could be utilized for war purposes should be placed under international control.

As to allocation of reparations payments among the Allied powers,

Mr. Maisky stated that

... losses as a result of German aggression ... had been so astronomical that ... the establishment of a system of priorities for compensation had been necessary ... Even direct material losses ... had been so large that no reparations could cover their loss ... Priorities had been established according to ... (1) the proportional contribution of any one nation to the winning of the war, (2) the material losses suffered by each nation. ... Those countries which had made the greatest contribution to the war and had suffered the highest material losses would come into the first category of priorities and all others would fall into the second.⁹

In accordance with the position outlined above, the Soviet government placed the amount of German reparations due in capital goods and out of current production at a minimum

⁹ Maisky's speech is summarized in Bohlen's minutes, op. cit., p. 139. I have taken the liberty of breaking up the report of Maisky's speech into paragraphs.

of twenty billion dollars.¹⁰ Of this amount, the Soviet spokesmen claimed fifty per cent as due to their country.

The Soviet stand on reparations was motivated by two considerations -- the desire to gain as much as possible in capital goods and the desire to cripple Germany economically. Capital goods were urgently needed to repair the damage done to Soviet industry and to help the Soviet Union get back onto the ambitious program of forced-draft industrialization inaugurated in the 1920's. Reparations, particularly the shipment to Russia of completely-dismantled factories, would provide the quickest means of filling this need. The by-product of such a stringent program of reparations as was envisaged would be the reduction of Germany to a state of economic weakness. Thus, not only would Germany be eliminated as a potential economic and military threat, but also it would be rendered more vulnerable to attempts at Communization.

While the western powers agreed that the suffering inflicted on the Russian people as a result of the war certainly entitled the Soviet Union to extensive reparations, they had their reservations about the Soviet demands. The British, particularly, were determined that reparations should not be calculated exclusively on the needs of the victors, but, rather, that the amount which Germany was capable of paying

¹⁰ Nettl, op. cit., p. 40.

without requiring Allied aid should also be taken into consideration. Churchill reminded the Allies at Yalta that German reparations following World War I had been exacted at the cost of extensive American credits to the defeated nation. While no one realized more fully than he the suffering which the Soviet Union had undergone, said Churchill, he doubted very much whether it was feasible to exact large reparations from Germany. In particular, he was

haunted by the specter of a starving Germany which would present a serious problem for the Allies ... we could either say "It serves them right" or endeavour to help them. In the latter case, who would pay for the help?¹¹

Although the Americans accepted the Soviet memorandum as the basis of the reparations policy, they also were to have their doubts. After all, as Roosevelt reminded his colleagues at Yalta, the Americans had lent over ten billion dollars to Germany following World War I; they did not want to have to repeat the experience. In the months that followed, the United States veered more and more towards support of the British position, as it became increasingly evident that much aid would have to be pumped into the Western zones of Germany, only to have it drained out again in the form of reparations to the Soviet Union -- reparations for which there was little compen-

¹¹Bohlen Minutes, op. cit., p. 140.

sation in terms of deliveries from the Soviet Zone.¹²

Reparations were only one aspect of the Allied policies, worked out in the atmosphere of wartime unity, which could not be implemented in the emergent postwar situation of disunity and rivalry. Yalta really represented the high-point of inter-Allied discussions; Potsdam was somewhat of a tragic anachronism, since it was characterized by "the assumption of a non-existent state of unity among the Allies and the acceptance of incorrect facts about Germany as the basis for future policy."¹³

Potsdam marked the end of wartime agreement. In part, disagreement stemmed from differences of policy in Germany itself -- differences over reparations, differences over economic and political policies, differences over the way in which the German population should be treated. In large measure, it must be remembered, the breakdown in Germany was but a reflection of a world-wide deterioration in relations among the erstwhile Allies. This deterioration was caused by many things -- the situation in Yugoslavia and Trieste, the Greek

¹²For a discussion of the implementation of Soviet reparations policy in the Soviet Zone and of the effects of reparations on the zonal economy (as distinct from the foregoing discussion of the Allied policy on reparations), see below, "Economic Policy and Social Classes."

¹³Nettl, op. cit., p. 54.

civil war, the Polish question, the Soviet intrigue in Iran and the Russian attitude towards European recovery, among other things. In Germany the progressive deterioration of relations was to lead to such events as the Berlin blockade and the establishment of rival German states.

Establishment of Basic Administrative Machinery

The establishment of the basic administrative machinery for the Soviet Zone of Germany dates from June 1945. At that time, the basic organs of the Soviet Military Administration (SMAD) were established. In the course of the next few years, the Soviet occupiers followed a policy, through the direction of zonal political and economic life and the establishment of Communist-dominated civilian agencies, which was to provide the basis for the post-1949 satellite republic.

On June 5, 1945, the Allied military commanders, meeting in Berlin, signed a declaration "Regarding ... the Assumption of Supreme Authority with Respect to Germany ...". Supplementary to this declaration, a statement was issued by the Allied governments providing that, during the occupation period,

supreme authority in Germany would be exercised, on instructions from their Governments, by the British, United States, Soviet and French Commanders-in-Chief, each in his own zone of occupation, and also jointly, in matters affecting Germany as a whole. The four Commanders-in-Chief ... together constitute the Control Council.¹⁴

¹⁴Beate Ruhm von Oppen, Documents on Germany Under Occupation, 1945-1954, London: Oxford University Press, (under the auspices of the R.I.I.A.), 1955, p. 36.

Four days later, Marshal Zhukov, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Forces of Occupation, issued "Order Number 1", establishing the Soviet Military Administration (Sowjetische Militaradministration -- SMAD) with himself at its head. Simultaneously, local military administrations were formally inaugurated throughout the Soviet Zone; these, subordinated to the central authority at Berlin-Karlhorst, were to become the centers of administration in the five Laender (provinces) which were ultimately to emerge in East Germany.

The Soviet Military Administration was divided into Civil and Military Departments, each headed by a Deputy to the Supreme Commander. One of the most important agencies in the Civil Department was the Economic Planning Division. This agency acted as a liason between the military government and the representatives of the Soviet State Planning Commission (Gosplan) and the Soviet ministries, all of whom had representatives in Berlin who were directly responsible to Moscow; the demands of these Soviet government departments were channeled through the Economic Planning Division in the form of orders to the German administrations which were set up on the Land and central levels of government. Even with the attempt of coordination through the Economic Planning Division, there was still considerable confusion and rivalry, particularly in the early period of Soviet Military Occupation. Each Soviet ministry was trying to get out of Germany as much as possible in

tangible assets; the Military Administration had to keep on the good side of the Moscow ministries (particularly the NKVD, which was also represented independently in the Zone) and yet, at the same time, to attempt to bring about some form of order out of chaos in the Zone, no matter whose toes might be trampled on.

The network of German administration in the Zone, subordinated to the Soviet authorities, was built up on the basis of municipal and Land authorities. The Soviets were able to establish a provisional framework of local authority much more quickly than the Western Powers. To a great extent, this was due to the fact that the Anglo-American and French political administrators were anxious that German local authority develop, ultimately, into a responsible, democratic German government and therefore took great pains (sometimes bordering on the absurd) in screening German personnel. In contrast, the Soviets did not intend to grant any real measure of independent authority to German administrators in their zone and therefore used freely the talents available to them. Indeed, while the Soviets were careful to exclude prominent Nazis from the administration, since this would provide a good propaganda point for opponents of the SMAD, they actively used people who were compromised and who therefore could be relied upon to act as willing puppets of Communist overseers. From the Soviet point of view, minor Nazis and militarists were more reliable than Social Democrats,

Liberals or Christian Democrats, who might be expected to resist attempts to push Germany back into a form of totalitarian rule.

The establishment of municipal authorities and the extent to which they functioned during the period from May, 1945 through the period of initial adjustment to Soviet rule depended, to a great extent, on the character and, especially, the initiative, of the respective local Soviet commanders. Greater uniformity is seen in the administrations of the Laender, since these were established as part of the overall plan of the central Soviet Military Administration. Only after the establishment of Laender governments were the municipalities and rural districts brought into some sort of overall administrative framework.

The Laender of the Soviet Zone were five in number. Brandenburg existed in name as before the Soviet occupation, but lost those districts lying east of the Oder. To the former Land of Mecklenburg was added the western part of the former Prussian province of Pommern (offset by the loss of Stettin to Poland), while Saxony gained the western part of the former Prussian administrative district (Regierungsbezirk) of Liegnitz. Thuringia included the old Land of the same name, as well as Erfurt and Schmalkalden, formerly Prussian. Finally, a new composite Land of Saxony-Anhalt was created, consisting of the former Prussian provinces of Halle-Merseburg and

Magdeburg, plus the former province of Anhalt and, in addition, minor accessions from the old Brunswick and Thuringia.¹⁵

Communists occupied key positions in the Land administrations. Prior to the election of provincial assemblies (Landtagen) on October 20, 1946, the Communists were assured a place in the appointed provisional ministries; afterwards, they ruled through their dominant position in the Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands -- S.E.D.), which, according to the official returns, had won a plurality (from 43.8 to 49.5 per cent)¹⁶ of the votes cast in

¹⁵Karl Loewenstein, "Germany", in James T. Shotwell (ed.) et. al., Governments of Continental Europe, New York: The Macmillan Company, (Revised Edition) 1952, pp. 503-504.

Loewenstein supplies the following statistical table, which may be of some use. Statistics correspond, generally, to those obtained in the 1946 German census.

<u>Land</u>	<u>Capital</u>	<u>Area (sq. Km.)</u>	<u>Population</u>
Brandenburg	Potsdam	27,061	2,527,492
Saxony	Dresden	16,910	5,558,566
Mecklenburg	Schwerin	22,954	2,139,640
Saxony-Anhalt	Halle	24,657	4,160,539
Thuringia	Weimar	15,598	2,927,497
		<u>107,180</u>	<u>17,313,734</u>
Berlin (Eastern Sector)		400	1,170,300
Total (Soviet Zone and East Berlin)		<u>107,580</u>	<u>18,484,034</u>

¹⁶Die Wahlen in Der Sowjetzone: Dokumente und Materialien, Bonn: Bundesministerium fur Gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 1958, p. 16.

each of the Laender. This dominant position was an essential prerequisite for Communist policy throughout the Zone, since the Soviet authorities sought to implement legislation through the Laender governments, thus preserving a facade of democratic decision. The power of German administrations in the Laender was confirmed by Zhukov's order of October 22, 1945, authorizing these administrations

to issue, in the legislative, judicial, and executive fields, laws and decrees which shall have legal force, provided that they conflict neither with the laws and orders issued by the Control Council, nor with the orders of the Soviet Military Administration.¹⁷

Coordination of the policies of the Laender administrations was the task of the central administrations which the Soviet authorities soon established. Indeed, centralization, of the most rigid kind, was the policy of the SMAD, since it lent itself most readily to overall control by the military authorities. Centralization in fact, concealed by pretended federalism was the tactic of the Soviet authorities at Karlhorst. To this end, July 27, 1945 saw the promulgation of Zhukov's ordinance establishing twelve German Central Administrative Authorities (Zentralverwaltungen) for the Zone. Besides administrations for the various spheres of the economy -- for example, Finance, Industry, Agriculture and Forests -- the

¹⁷ von Oppen, Documents, p. 83.

list also included (as of June, 1947) agencies responsible for Culture, Justice and Interior.¹⁸

These agencies, with headquarters in Berlin, functioned completely independently from one another. Each of the administrations was headed by a president and one or more vice-presidents, and, in the larger bodies, the staff numbered from 200 to 600 civil servants. Besides coordinating the activities of the responsible ministries in the Laender (which, in effect, amounted to little more than transmitting the orders of the SMAD), the Central Administrations provided the nucleus and training ground for the civil service of the future "German Democratic Republic." Further, the Administrations were an important pawn which the Soviets attempted to use in the struggle for control of all of Germany. At the core of each agency were Communists, sympathizers, and compromised civil servants, under the direction of small groups of German Communists who had been trained in Moscow and who had been flown back from exile at the end of the war. Presumably, had the negotiations which were

¹⁸ Kurt Glaser, "Governments of Soviet Germany," in Edward H. Litchfield, et. al., Governing Postwar Germany, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1953, p. 158.

Much of my discussion of the administration of the Zone from 1945-1959 is based on Glaser's study, which was originally undertaken while the author was an official in the Civil Administration Division of the Office of Military Government for Germany (U.S.).

taking place in 1945 and early 1946 for German central agencies for all four zones borne fruit, the Central Administrations would have been incorporated in the larger body and the Communist administrators thus insinuated into a position of decisive import for the future of the whole of Germany.

With the breakdown of Allied negotiations to establish over-all German civil authority, the Central Administrations began to take on more and more the characteristics of ministries foreshadowing the establishment of a German regime in the area of Russian control completely and openly independent of any other which might be independent. This movement was hastened when the British and Americans, in exasperation, established a Bizonal Economic Council. The Soviets chose to ignore the clause in the Byrnes-Bevin "Bizone Agreement" (December, 1946), which would have permitted them to join in the economic fusion (as the French did later). Instead, they placed responsibility for the division of Germany on the West and openly strengthened the separate civil administrations in their own zone.

An important step in this direction was the "agreement", reached under pressure from the SMAD, by which the Land governments relinquished to the Central Administrations primary responsibility for planning, control of raw materials, and production goals, as well as general control of the coal industry. This was followed in June, 1947, by the establish-

ment of a permanent Economic Commission for the Zone, with the assigned responsibility of implementing the February agreement. For the first time, overall direction of the Central Administrations was coordinated by a German body, to which the SMAD could assign some supervisory duties.

This body was reorganized and expanded by SMAD Order Number 32 (February 12, 1948) and was re-named "German Economic Commission" (Deutsche Wirtschafts Kommission -- DWK). Certain changes were effected in the composition of the governing body.¹⁹ In order that it might fulfil its assigned tasks of coordinating the activities of the Central Administrations and of supervising the delivery of reparations, the German Economic Commission was empowered to issue instructions, subject to SMAD directives, legally binding on all levels of government.

After its first meeting, the DWK issued a series of

¹⁹The original Economic Commission had been comprised of the presidents of the Central Administrations for Industry, Transportation, Fuel and Power, Agriculture and Forests, and Trade and Supply, plus the chairmen of two of the "mass organizations" -- the Free German Trade Union Federation and the Peasants' Mutual Aid. The new German Economic Commission consisted, in addition to these, of the presidents of the Central Administrations for Post and Telegraph, Labor and Social Welfare, Finance, Interzonal and Foreign Trade, plus one representative from each of the five Laender. Heinrich Rau became head of the agency, replacing Bruno Leuschner as general secretary of the S.E.D.

regulations converting the Central Administrations into directly subordinate departments (Hauptabteilungen). Thus, by May, 1948, a "ministry" in all but name had developed, consisting of eighteen functional departments in charge of essential economic and social services.^{19(a)}

The old Central Administrations for the Interior (which controlled the Volkspolizei or "People's Police"), for Justice, and for "Popular Education" rounded out the embryonic state apparatus; these however were not put directly under the German Economic Commission.

Basic Media of Political Life

The basic media of political life in the Zone were, and still are, the political parties and the mass organizations. These provided the basic underpinning for the administrative structure, as well as a "democratic" facade for its

^{19(a)} A list of these departments is given in Glaser's essay; q.v. Litchfield, op. cit., p. 162.

operations. Indeed the story of the establishment of administration in the Zone and the story of the political struggles which took place between 1945 and 1949 are inextricably interwoven; chronologically, they marched apace, while, functionally, they supported each other. That is, under Soviet auspices, the administrative power was wielded in such a way as to weight the balance against any opponents of the Communists (through allocation of rations, housing, et cetera, and through perversion of normal judicial procedures), while, at the same time, the major end of the political struggle was to remove or neutralize any possible opposition to a monolithic administrative system, leading, ultimately, to totalitarian rule.

The legal basis for political life in the Soviet Zone was provided by SMAD Order Number 2, authorizing the establishment of anti-fascist parties and trade unions. This order permitted the

formation and activity of all anti-fascist parties having as their aim the final extirpation of all remnants of fascism and the consolidation of the foundations of democracy and civil liberties in Germany; the development of the initiative and independent activities of the broad masses of the people directed towards these ends is to be permitted

2. The working population ... is to have the right to unite in free trade unions and organizations to protect the interests and rights of all working people. Trade union organizations and societies are to have the right to conclude collective agreements with employers and to form friendly societies and other institutions for mutual aid, as well as cultural, educational and other

institutions and organizations of enlightenment.²⁰

However, political parties and other organizations were required (as in the other Zones) to register their regulations, programs, and a list of executive officers with the competent authorities. Furthermore, throughout the occupation period political parties were to operate only under the license and control of the SMAD.

The SMAD order was issued without prior consultation with the other occupying powers. By taking an early lead in the establishment of political life in their Zone, and by "guiding" the development of zonal political parties, the Soviets hoped to provide the Communist Party (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands -- KPD) with a firm base which could be used to secure a leading position throughout the whole of Germany.

Initially, the German Communists were guided by an unwarranted optimism. They felt that they could so turn the German internal situation to their advantage that they would need no allies in their struggle for power. They alone would claim to represent the working class and they alone would enjoy the fruits of victory -- "to the victor belong the spoils." However, the behavior of Russian troops, the experiences of German expellees from east of the Oder-Neisse line and the stringent

²⁰Von Oppen, op. cit., p. 38.

reparations policies of the Soviet Union turned German opinion strongly against the Communists. By the end of 1945, both the German Communists and the Soviet authorities recognized that the KPD could not hope for victory singlehandedly. A change in tactics was needed. The Communists would have to seek allies and, merging into a broader political party, keep their objectives concealed for the time being while seeking to establish their political hegemony.

The facts of the situation dictated a merger with the Social Democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands -- SPD). As Communist popularity (to the extent that the Communists had ever been popular) decreased, the popularity of the Social Democrats increased. If events in Austria were any indication, the Social Democrats would emerge as the strongest single party in any forthcoming German elections. Further, the Social Democrats possessed a strong corps of personnel on the middle level of political life. While the Communists had preserved intact, throughout the Nazi era, some of their pre-war top level leaders (such as Walter Ulbricht), they had lost most of their activists on the cell level. On the other hand, while the Social Democrats had few leaders of any real stature (by inter-war standards) they did manage, immediately after the war, to reactivate a network of local and trade union organizations. The capture of this organizational weapon was the key objective of Communist strategy.

In their campaign to force the Social Democrats to merge with them, the Communists first used the weapon of propaganda. That is, they appealed to the general sentiment for "working class unity", in the effort to force the Social Democratic leaders to bow to this sentiment without conditions and without reservations. It is often forgotten that, much to his credit, Otto Grotewohl (then Social Democratic zonal leader, now Premier of the German Democratic Republic) refused initially to surrender abjectly to this pressure. On November 11, 1945, after the Communist "Unity Campaign" had been launched, Grotewohl publicly announced the viewpoint of himself and his colleagues in the Central Committee of the SPD:

1. The unity of the working-class movement can not be decided in a moment; it must be the unequivocal and certain will of all the German class-comrades.
2. The unity of the working-class movement is impossible and of no consequence if it is the result of outside pressure or indirect compulsion
3. The unification of the German working-class movement can only be the work, and the result, of a socialist and democratic reconstruction, and of the determination to bring this reconstruction to a successful conclusion in the spirit of enthusiastic devotion and friendly rivalry in effort. Ideological clarification will be profitable, but it can not be predetermined. Unity must be brought to fulfillment as a result of common effort, before this effort can be consummated through an organizing resolution.
4. The most rapid creation of a united, all-German party of the working class is an urgent necessity. Unification of a zonal basis will probably not advance unification on an all-German basis; rather,

it will only render this more difficult, and further divide Germany.²¹

Throughout the unification campaign, the Communists used both the carrot and the stick. It was necessary to disguise Communist intentions, as far as possible, and thus to create a favourable atmosphere for their proposals. This was done as early as June, 1945, as exemplified by the "Founding Proclamation of the German Communist Party" (June 11, 1945). This document departed completely from the pre-Hitler traditions of the KPD. It did not appeal exclusively to the industrial working class, but rather to the entire productive part of the population; its slogans were those of a broadly-based "anti-fascist democratic regime" rather than "the dictatorship of the proletariat." The concepts of revolution and class war were absent, and references to Lenin and Stalin were played down. Instead, an appeal was made to German national pride, to the concept of a German road to Socialism. This concept, which was to be the basic dogma of the next few years, was ex-

²¹ Otto Grotewohl, speech on the anniversary of the German revolution of November, 1918, as reported by the West Berlin newspaper, Telegraf. Cited in Carola Stern (pseud.), Portrait einer Bolschewistischen Partei, Entwicklung, Funktion, und Situation der SED, Cologne: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1957, pp. 28-29. To the best of my knowledge, this book is the most complete examination of the SED available; though written from an anti-Communist, West German point of view, it seems to be relatively objective and free from the distortions which mar most "official" West German publications.

pressed in the following words:

It is our opinion that the course of action which would seek to force a Soviet system on Germany is incorrect, since this way is not in accord with the present conditions of development in Germany.

We are much more of the opinion that the decisive interests of the German people in the present situation prescribe for Germany another path, namely the path of establishing an anti-fascist democratic regime, a parliamentary, democratic republic, with all democratic rights and freedoms for the people.²²

Thus, the erstwhile opponents of "bourgeois democracy," the one-time radical revolutionaries who had contributed so much to the destruction of the Weimar Republic, now sought to pose as the heirs of the moderate liberal tradition of 1848!

The illusion of respectability was given its fullest formulation in February, 1946, at the height of the "Unity Campaign." This took the form of the celebrated "Ackermann Theses," the work of Anton Ackermann, member of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party. In an article entitled "Is there a specific German way to Socialism?", Ackermann answered his own question; given the high state of industrial development in Germany, and the weakening of reactionary forces as a result of the Allied victory, it was possible that in Germany a socialist state could arise as the

²² Stern, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

result of peaceful, parliamentary evolution.²³

The Communists had other weapons in their arsenal besides those of persuasion and propaganda. Throughout the autumn and winter of 1945-1946, they used their favoured position with the Soviet authorities to inaugurate a campaign of pressure and bribery. Social Democrat newspapers were denied newsprint, while at the same time the Communist papers got everything they needed. Communist functionaries and those willing to support the Communists received special advantages in the allocation of rations and housing; staunch Social-Democrats ran into unexpected difficulties in securing the necessary documents. The newly-organized mass organizations circulated petitions expressing the "people's will" that the two working-class parties merge. Local units of the SDP, more susceptible to pressure, were isolated from the Central Executive and coerced into passing resolutions criticizing Grotewohl and his colleagues for not proceeding with the unification. Worst of all, leading SDP politicians were browbeaten by the political officers of the SMAD; indeed, some less well known functionaries disappeared, allegedly after having been "detained for questioning" by the police of the Military Administration.

All this pressure was more than Grotewohl could bear,

²³ Ackermann's article was published in the first issue (February, 1946) of *Einheit* ("Unity") a joint KPD-SPD theoretical journal. See Stern, *ibid.*, p. 39.

and he finally succumbed. His action was repudiated by the Western Zone Social Democrats under Schumacher; he was read out of the party and heavily criticized for suggesting that the merger be an All-German one. Despite all that has happened since, it should be emphasized that, at the time of the merger Grotewohl did not act the part of a knave. He held out as long as he could; then, when he saw that unity would be forced by the Soviet authorities sooner or later, he sought to persuade his colleagues in the West to join in the merger. In the light of subsequent developments he has been severely criticized as having fallen in with Communist plans for gaining control of the whole of Germany. However, his appeal might conceivably be interpreted as an attempt to swamp the Communist cells by bringing into the new party the large and well-organized Social Democratic association in the western zones. Further, the wider merger might have induced the three western powers to accept some measure of responsibility for the maintenance of political freedom in the Zone. Grotewohl realized that if the more limited merger were to go through, rather than the wider alternative, it would be one more step towards the division of Germany, a division which would leave the Social Democrats and other freedom-loving groups in the Soviet Zone isolated in their struggle.^{23(a)}

^{23(a)} Of course, Grotewohl's behavior and his motivation are matters shrouded in great mystery. A great deal of

In West Berlin, in a referendum held in March, 1946, over 80 per cent of the members of the Social Democratic Party registered their opposition to the merger.²⁴ However, this

controversy has developed on this subject; it is unlikely that a full answer will ever be known. The alternate explanation offered here is a matter of personal judgment on the part of the author, based on such evidence as Grotewohl's speeches at the time (cited by Carola Stern - q.v. above, pp. 35-36, for example) and relative strengths of the KPD and SPD (q.v. p. 34 above). Such an interpretation would appear to be a plausible alternative to the various "official" explanations; however, based as it is on incomplete evidence and somewhat presumptive reasoning, it should not be regarded as more than a personal judgment.

²⁴ Glaser, op.cit., p. 155.

was the only place the party members had a chance to voice their opinion openly, in complete freedom and security. By April, the process of intimidation had succeeded to such a degree that on the nineteenth and twentieth of that month the zonal Social Democrats voted in convention to merge with the Communists. This conclusion was also reached by a Communist convention, and on April 21 the Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands -- SED) was formed at a joint "Unity Convention."

Originally, the SED organization followed the "partnership" principle, with equal representation of former Communist and Social Democrat members in all party organs. This was carried on up to the highest level; heading the party were co-chairmen, Wilhelm Pieck (formerly KPD) and Otto Grotewohl. Even during the "partnership" stage, the Communists were unfairly represented. With a membership at the time of the merger much smaller than that of the Social Democrats, the Communists automatically gained half of the controlling positions in the new party. Further, they combined the opportunities of office with the favoured position they enjoyed in the agencies of the Soviet Military Administration. Thus, by a process of infiltration and of pressure, they managed to squeeze out their opponents within the SED and so transform the party that, by 1949 - 1950, even the pretence of "partnership" was dropped. The SED then entered quite openly into a

new phase, contemporaneous with the establishment of the "German Democratic Republic."

The Social Democratic Party and the Communists were not the only political groups licensed by the zonal authorities. The old traditions of the Weimar "Center" party and the pre-war Liberals survived in the zonal "bourgeois" parties -- the Christian-Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union -- CDU) and the Liberal Democratic Party (Liberal-Demokratische Partei -- LDP). However, a number of measures were adopted to prevent these parties from effectively exercising any real weight in zonal politics. They were intended, by the authorities, to help maintain the appearances of a democratic regime, and to provide avenues of contact through which their counterparts in the western zones might be infiltrated and subverted. The Liberals and Christian-Democrats were forbidden to merge with each other, for fear that this might offset the forced merger of the Socialists and the Communists. The Communists and the Soviet authorities were even more careful, during the "Unity Campaign," to prevent the "bourgeois" parties from forgetting old ideological differences in the interests of offering support to the SPD in its struggle to maintain its identity.

The non-SED vote in the zone was further split by the creation of two patently artificial "shadow" parties, in reality satellites of the Communist-controlled SED. These

parties were founded towards the end of the period of Soviet Military Administration (founding conventions were held in April, 1948, to be exact) and were intended as instruments of control. One party, the Democratic Peasants' Party (Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands -- DBD) was intended for small farmers; it was actually founded by activists from the Communist-front association, the Peasants' Mutual Aid (Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe -- VdgB) and from the first maintained the closest links with this organization. The second party, the National Democratic Party (National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands -- NDP), demonstrated, if nothing else would, the duplicity of Communist slogans. The Communists had trumpeted the "anti-fascist" nature of their regime, and yet, side by side with such organizations as the Opfer des Faschismus (OdF -- Martyrs of Fascism) and the larger Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes (VVN -- Union of the Victims of the Nazi regime) they fostered the creation of the NDP, a political party whose avowed purpose was to recruit into its ranks "reformed" ex-Nazis and extreme nationalists, and whose platform was one of militant nationalism, -- nationalism which envisaged a revived Germany marching in close step with the policies of the Soviet Union.

The regime's security was cemented by the creation of over-all political organizations -- "roof organizations" which were intended to coordinate the activities of all the political

parties. The first of these organizations for Communist control of zonal political life was founded on July 14, 1945, four days after the two major "bourgeois parties" were licensed by the SMAD. At the founding meeting of this organization, the Anti-Fascist Democratic Block, a resolution affirming the joint tasks of the four zonal parties (then the SDP, KPD, CDU and LDP) was passed. The parties engaged

1. To cooperate in purging Germany from the remains of Nazism;
2. To take joint action to restore the German economy as soon as possible;
3. To erect the legal system on the basis of a democratic constitutional state;
4. To guarantee freedom of religion;
5. To regain the confidence of the other nations.

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This document was laudable in its affirmation of purpose. However, beneath the innocuous terminology there lay the seeds out of which were to spring the "Unity List" and other devices for Gleichschaltung (enforced conformity) which were to stifle political freedom in East Germany.

The organization of the Democratic Block was followed by the inclusion of all parties in municipal and Land government. Thus, democratic appearances were kept up, even though the

²⁵The Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany 1945-1953,
Berlin, Federal Ministry for All-German Affairs, 1954, p. 9.

agreements entered into by the political parties generally precluded any real debate. However, opposition was not immediately cowed, and some examples testify to the obstinacy with which certain groups maintained their integrity. Thus, in West Berlin, a group of Social Democrats organized the Independent Social Democratic Party at the time of the SED formation; this group maintained close links with the Social Democratic organization in West Germany, and to this day has persisted in keeping open channels of communication with "underground" Social Democrats in the east.²⁶

The independence of the CDU was asserted by its zonal chairmen when, in December, 1947, they rejected the idea of participation by the zonal Christian Democrats in the People's Congress (Volkskongress) movement then being organized by the SED. The Chairmen, Jakob Kaiser and Ernst Lemmer, decried the People's Congress as the first step to sovietization; because of their outspokenness, the SMAD forced their removal from their posts. Ultimately, they were to flee to the West, and the CDU, under its new zonal chairman, Otto Nuschke, was to

²⁷The Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany, pp. 19-20. Further evidence of last efforts to assert political independence is given by the CDU and LDP decisions to withdraw their representatives from the central council of a mass organization, the Free German Youth, on the grounds that, contrary to agreement, the Free German Youth no longer maintained a non-party character. (January 28, 1948 -- ibid., pp. 21-22).

heed the will of the administration.

The political picture in the zone was rounded out by the creation of the mass organizations. These organizations, of which there were literally hundreds, covered every phase of economic and social matters, and existed for all segments of the population -- from music lovers, who were encouraged, during the Stalinist period, to sign resolutions asking for greater output of heroic compositions suitable for Soviet-style choral singing, to farmers, bound together for mutual aid and, from the point of view of the regime, easier control. They differed fundamentally from the voluntary associations which are the fountainhead of functioning democratic societies. Like other aspects of life in the Soviet zone, they came under central direction. Every aspect of their administration was permeated, in the course of time, with SED cells. It would be no exaggeration to say that the mass organizations, whether formally linked with the ruling party or not, were adjuncts of the SED -- training grounds from which future party members and leaders were recruited, and agencies by which the party propaganda and control apparatus reached down to the most intimate and basic levels of everyday life.

There are so many mass organizations in East Germany, many of which participated from the beginning in government and politics, that only a few can be singled out for special mention. From the beginning, the SED claimed to rely, for

the rebirth of a new and "democratic" Germany, on three main groups -- youth, labour and the small farmers. Each of these groups naturally had its own "mass organization." For youth, the Free German Youth (Freie Deutsche Jugend -- FDJ) was organized, a group which, with its monopoly of all youth activities and its militant policies, soon invited comparison with the infamous Hitler Youth. The FDJ was used as a direct arm of the regime; for example, in 1949 strong-arm squads of the FDJ were formed in an attempt to break the Berlin transit strike. This anti-labour attitude throws an ironic light on another Communist-front organization, the Free German Trade Union Federation (Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund -- FDGB), which, from its foundation, claimed to be the exclusive democratic voice of labour throughout Germany. A parallel organization, but somewhat less reliable from the SED point of view, was the Union for Peasants' Mutual Aid (Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe -- VdgB), which all farmers had to join if they were to maintain any sort of existence on the land.

Besides these organizations, there were others. The Cultural League for the Democratic Revival of Germany (Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands) harnessed artists, writers and musicians to the service of the regime. Solidarity with the Soviet Union and the "People's Democracies" was demonstrated by the Association of Friends of the Soviet

Union (Gesellschaft der Freunde der Sowjetunion), while the vaunted anti-fascist character of the new order was underlined by the Union of the Victims of the Nazi Regime (the VVN, mentioned above, page 42). And finally, the family, which had already been infiltrated through the work of the FDJ was further assailed by the creation of the Democratic Women's Association (Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands - DFD). There was no aspect of life which was not touched upon by one or another of the many semi-official organizations.²⁸ People might be unwilling to join them, but the Communists had high hopes that they would play a vital role in the transformation, not only of German political life, but also, and most important, of the very fabric of social life.

Economic Policy and Social Classes

The ends of Soviet economic policy in the eastern Zone, during the period of military administration, were multiple, and often contradictory. On the one hand, the reparations policy of the Soviet Union dictated certain immediate, and pressing, objectives -- the extraction from

²⁸ For a more complete list of key organizations, see those listed under "Glossary of Abbreviations" in Appendix I, Terminology. This, in turn, is but a limited selection from the much larger listing compiled under the heading "Verzeichnis der Abkürzungen" (List of Abbreviations) in SBZ von 1945 bis 1954, (a detailed chronological account of events in East Germany), Bonn: Federal Ministry for All-German Affairs, 1956, pp. 349-350.

Germany of the greatest possible stock of capital goods, raw materials, machinery, medicinal stocks and consumer goods. This was a policy in which the major calculation was the greatest positive advantage to the Soviet economy; its negative facet was revealed in its intended repercussions on Germany -- the emasculation of German economic potential and the intensification of a state of social disruption which would render it easier to remould German society according to the desired Communist pattern.

As time went on, the positive side of Soviet policy began to assert itself. From the beginning, certain local Soviet commanders had made honest efforts to restore some basis for economic and social life in the area under their jurisdiction. Indeed, to some limited extent, the officers in the Soviet Kommandatura did make some representations to the agents of Gosplan to the effect that it would be necessary to mitigate demands on the German economy if military government was to be made to work at all. However, in this early stage (especially 1945-1946) the dictates of the dismantling policy were predominant; only afterwards, when the authorities began to worry about the creation of a Communized German state and society was there some relaxation of demands.

Soviet economic policy had to work, of course, in the context of the East German economic base which had already been built up. When we examine this base, in which agricul-

ture and specialized industry were well mixed, we find that the Soviets indeed had captured a prize. East Germany, traditionally, was less heavily industrialized than most of West Germany (particularly the Ruhr) and even leaving out of account the vast farmlands of the parts of Prussia East of the Oder-Neisse line, had been self-sufficient with regard to basic foodstuffs. In the years since industrialization began it had become one of the world's great centers for the manufacture of specialized articles. Here was shipped much of the fine steel of the Ruhr, to be fashioned into intricate machinery. While dependent on outside supplies of steel, East Germany had yet become the great European center of the machine-building industry. Further, it had capitalized on its resources of soft, brown coal, and on the achievements of German science, to become the world's greatest producer of chemical products, and, especially, synthetics. All this was nicely balanced by light and precision industries -- among these, the production of fabrics and of optical equipment might be mentioned.

If anything, the East German economy had benefitted somewhat from the war. From the beginning, Hitler had decentralized some part of Germany's heavy industry; driven by the great Anglo-American air raids, he intensified this process. By the closing stage of the war, with most of the Ruhr's industries knocked out by aerial bombardment, the Wehrmacht was fighting on an industrial supply base centered on Leipzig.

Only in the closing hours of the struggle, with the advance of the Red Army and the greater range which improved methods and advanced bases gave to the British and American air forces, did destruction of industry really begin to take its toll in East Germany.

The first Russian economic policy was that of dismantling. Not only did this encompass such direct military objectives as the great rocket research center at Peenemunde, and such ancillary industries as the Zeiss optical works and the ball-bearing factories, but also it included almost every category of economic goods, including much that was useless. What the Soviet authorities themselves did not dismantle, the individual Russian soldier took. However, the looting process was, at least, not glorified by the hypocrisy practised in other eastern European countries through which the Red Army marched. The rape of Belgrade had been accompanied by Russian assurances that they came as "liberators"; in Berlin, there was no such hypocrisy -- the Russians had come as victors, to exact a just and ruthless vengeance from the vanquished.

Reparations were not solely material, from the Soviet point of view; human resources were also taken into account, though in no way diminishing the material total owed the Soviets. Thus, many factories were shipped to the Soviet Union complete with their technical staffs -- a form of slavery

which was, however, only a pale imitation of Nazi practices. Further, the Soviet authorities took measures to ensure that those who were left in the Zone, particularly the middle classes, would have little in the way of financial independence and would have to toe the line if they were to exist at all. Thus, bank balances were frozen, and, by order of July 26, 1945, the Soviet Military Administration ordered that all gold and silver articles and all foreign currency, whether in possession of individuals or of firms, was to be delivered to the authorities within five days.

The Potsdam agreement had authorized the Soviet authorities to extract reparations primarily from their own Zone. After the first wave of dismantling, which was completed by the summer of 1946, reparations arrangements were put on a more regular basis. By this time, also, reparations from the west to the Soviet zone had come almost to a standstill; in order to fulfil requirements, it became necessary to shift emphasis to reparations out of current production. For this purpose, the Soviet government divided reparations into two categories: goods to be produced by enterprises under direct Soviet control and those to be delivered out of regular East German industrial production.

The first group of enterprises were each organized in the form of a Soviet Joint Stock Corporation (Sowjetische Aktiengesellschaft -- SAG). These were not part of the SMAD

organization. Rather, they were run by representatives of, and were directly responsible to, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade (Ministerstvo Vnezhnii Torgovli) in Moscow. Among the most important of the SAGs was the Soviet Bismuth Joint Stock Company, primarily organized for the exploitation of uranium deposits at Erzgebirge and other places throughout the Zone. According to Max Seydewitz, Premier of Saxony in 1948, these mines employed some 25,000 workers;²⁹ what the SED minister forgot to mention was that many of the miners were forced into working in the unsafe conditions prevailing. Other SAGs were organized for the exploitation of all or most of the production in such basic fields of the economy as the copper and aluminum mines, the production of synthetic rubber and gasoline, the electrical machinery industry, the chemical works, and the automobile industry, among others.

The Russians also participated to a certain extent in Zonal retail trade, supplying the German retailers with certain surplus items from their own and satellite economies -- for example, Bulgarian cigarettes, and stocks of German uniforms, captured by the Russians, and sold back to the population for transformation into civilian clothing.³⁰ On such goods, which cost the Russians little or nothing, enor-

²⁹The Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany, p. 21.

³⁰Personal talk with a refugee who lived in East Germany till 1948.

mous profits were reaped, both by the official Soviet agencies and by individual officers and soldiers who arranged black market transactions.

In that portion of the economy which remained in German hands, whether under government or cooperative control, or under private ownership, almost every field of endeavour and every individual enterprise had to provide some goods which were used to offset Soviet demands for reparations out of current production. This was a constant drain on the East German economy, both in its industrial and consumer goods aspects. Soviet Order Number 32 (issued by the head of the SMAD, Marshal Sokolovsky, February 12, 1948) provided that coordination of reparations payments and the supervision of punctual delivery both of reparations and of deliveries necessary to supply the needs of the occupation forces should be one of the functions of the German Economic Commission. Thus, responsibility for deliveries out of current production was turned over to the German Communists.

Some statistics are available showing the reparations paid out between 1945 and 1950. According to West German sources, the following is a true picture (in millions of marks):³¹

³¹Anonymous, Die Reparationen der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in den Jahren 1945 bis Ende 1953, Bonn, Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 1953. Figures are taken from statistics covering 1945 to 1953, printed in tabular form, p.15. Evidently, reparations are calculated in terms of the 1938 world exchange value of the mark (p.17), with one dollar equal to 3.83 1/3 marks (my calculation).

Payments from official management (1946-1950)	27,800
Additional cash payments (1945-46)	4,200
Profit from SAG enterprises (1947-1950)	<u>1,750</u>
Total	<u>33,750</u>

Within the zonal economy itself, certain changes were effected during the 1945 to 1949 period. These measures may generally be classified under the heading of "reform measures." That is, there was greater justification for them than there would have been for a policy of outright economic sovietization. What can be criticized are not some of the measures themselves, but the fact that the Communists did not keep faith with the population and did not intend to do so; from the first, they intended measures of reform to serve only as a prelude to Sovietization.

"Reformism," a policy of concentrating on piecemeal economic and social reforms (such as are generally advocated by Social Democratic parties) is generally a policy which calls forth the greatest terms of derision and invective in the vocabulary of Communism. Communists themselves only resort to it as a tactical manoeuvre -- either as a preliminary stage during the process of taking over a nation or as a temporary expedient in order to avert a crisis (as in the case of Lenin's "New Economic Policy," or the "New Course" policies which pre-

vailed through most of the Soviet bloc in 1953-1954). The history of German Communism shows many examples of this tactical flexibility; the period from 1945 to 1949 is shot through with "reformism." During this period, no policy was ever advocated on the grounds that it would lead to the Communist utopia (at least, until towards the end of this period); everything was justified on the grounds of expediency and a "return to normalcy."

Nothing illustrates this process better than the agricultural policy of the administration. Like many of the other countries in the Soviet bloc, East Germany experienced a land reform during the 1945-1949 period. Perhaps East Germany (that is, that portion west of the Oder-Neisse, in contrast to the eastern lands which were baronial to a large extent) originally stood less in need of a division of land than did many of the countries of East Europe. However, the situation was aggravated immediately after the war by the influx of German expellees from Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries, and especially from the territories newly placed under Polish administration. According to official West German sources, 12,000,000 expellees were absorbed by Germany; of these, approximately 4,000,000 settled originally in the Soviet Zone.³² This, of course, considerably aggravated the

³² Helmut Arntz, Facts About Germany, Bonn: Press and Information Office of the Federal German Government, 1956, p.21.

problem of land allocation in the Zone.

The new arrivals and the existing farming population might have been herded into collectives, but, in fact, this was not the case. Prior to 1950 there was almost no attempt at collectivization of agriculture in the Zone. Whereas, by 1950, collective farms accounted for ten percent of cultivated land in Poland and state farms accounted for a further three percent of the land, East Germany, by contrast, had only collectivized three percent of its arable land as late as December of 1952. (In October of that same year, forty-four percent of cultivated land in Czechoslovakia belonged to collective and cooperative farms.³³) Thus we can see that East Germany did not proceed very far or very fast along the road to collectivization.

Of course, the progress of land reform (begun in September 1945 by ordinances of the Laender governments confiscating all holdings of over two hundred and forty-seven acres without compensation) benefited the Communists. Enemies of the regime could be economically ruined. In contrast to the belief of some people in the United States and elsewhere, all

³³ Figures are quoted from The U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, London: Oxford University Press, 1956, pp. 37-40. (This is one of the series of regional economic atlases, prepared in partnership with the intelligence unit of the London Economist. Statistics are based on original sources, insofar as information has been made available by officials in the Governments of Eastern Europe; however, as the editors note [p.vii] they have not hesitated, when necessary, "to reconcile conflicting estimates in the light of probabilities.") In future, this publication will be referred to as Oxford Regional Economic Atlas.

land owners in the Soviet Zone were not Nazis or militaristic Junkers; in many cases, the charge that the former owner had been an active Nazi were trumped up (the owner of course was probably a Nazi, as were a great many Germans; the distinction, which was to bedevil occupation officials in all Zones, was one between "active" and "passive", "major" or "minor", et cetera).

Further, the new smallholders, to each of whom was allocated $29\frac{1}{2}$ acres, could be brought within the network of Communist control. In order to be assured of regular deliveries of seed, fertilizer and tools, it was necessary to belong to the Bauernhilfe. Further, the farming population was assigned delivery quotas, which were supervised by the Central Administration for Agriculture; by raising individual quotas, recalcitrants could be brought into line very easily.

Some measure of nationalization was introduced during the period of military administration, although generally in the name of "anti-fascism" rather than nationalization. The SAGs of course were a form of nationalization, though control was not in German hands. The flaw in the rationalization used to justify these and other confiscations may be seen if one considers certain large enterprises which, before the Nazi period, had been owned by "non-Aryans" or by others whom the Hitler regime attacked; in almost all cases, the Communists only considered that the last owner had been either the Reich

government or an individual Nazi or sympathizer. There was little hope that former owners or their heirs, who had already been ousted by the Nazis, would see from the Communists restoration of their property or adequate financial compensation.

Banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions were nationalized almost as soon as administration was established. This was one point on which the Social Democrats (prior to the merger) were in accord with the Communists, since for years they had been criticizing in no uncertain terms the monopoly of finance capital and the intimate connection between financial institutions and reactionary policies. Further, it could be argued that bank nationalization was essential if the Potsdam decisions to decentralize the German economy were to be carried out.

Actually, there were a number of reasons why the process of nationalization in East Germany was neither as obvious nor, in fact, as far-reaching as the corresponding developments in neighbouring satellite countries during the period 1945 to 1949. For one thing, many of the industries which would have been nationalized by a German Communist administration were already under Soviet control. While these SAG enterprises were not privately owned, they generally did not figure in lists of nationalized enterprises until they were handed back to the East German state by the Soviet Union (after 1949). Further, the Soviets did have to contend with the fact that

in the minds of the German people and in the law of nations Germany was a single unit; nothing obvious could be done to alienate those forces which might be duped, out of nationalist sentiment, to support a Soviet propaganda drive. Thus, nationalization was gradual and unobtrusive; when it did take place, it was as a result of action by Laender authorities. On the Land level, it was thought, measures of economic control would not be noticed so readily.

If the hand of the state was to be enclosed in a velvet glove, out of respect for the decorum of political hypocrisy, its iron weight yet bore down heavily on the zonal population. This was particularly true of the economic sphere, on the level of everyday life. Through the laws and regulations passed by the DWK, as administrating agent of the SMAD, a new and depressing way of economic life came into being which was to have a profound effect on the various social classes of the zone; in these regulations were the seed for much of the discontent which led to migration from the Zone.

The DWK continued the basic principle of the old Nazi requisitioning law in its own Anforderungsgesetz. This empowered the DWK or the Laender economic ministries to control price policy and conditions of production throughout the economy. Business concerns could be ordered, without recourse to appeal, to sell or rent products, machinery or premises at administratively determined prices; the law also empowered the

economic authorities to interfere in contractual arrangements or to order individuals to go out of business altogether. Particularly hard hit by this law were the small factories which managed to resume production after the war, the retail enterprises, and the farmers. The latter were put under a system of delivery quotas and, although not yet collectivized, were, in effect, tools of the regime.

To guard against opposition to economic decrees (for example, slowdowns or abstinence from production) the Economic Punishment Law (Wirtschaftsstrafgesetz) was passed (September 23, 1948). This added to the category of offenses against the state the crime of "economic sabotage"; since the crime was not specifically defined in law, it could come to mean anything. Interpretation and enforcement powers were vested, not in regular courts, but, rather, in administrative commissions directly responsible to the DWK. The penalty for "economic sabotage" was confiscation. In this way, the regime was provided with an important weapon with which to act against the middle class and against workers who might take it into their heads to strike.

The workers specifically were affected by SMAD Directive Number 32 and the DWK's corresponding "Principles for Production" which introduced the piecework system. Although such methods in the West were attacked by Communists as "exploitation of the workers", the DWK had no hesitation in claiming the piecework was justifiable on the grounds that it would

contribute to greater efficiency in production.

Towards the end of the period of military administration, the DWK and SMAD went one step further in the movement towards open Sovietization of retail trade and manufacturing. In November, 1948, the publicly-operated system of retail shops was inaugurated. The pattern of development of "Trade Organization" (Handelsorganisation -- HO) is shown by the following table illustrating changes in the distribution of retail trade (percentage volume of sales) in the years 1946 to 1949:³⁴

	<u>Private Shops</u>	<u>Cooperatives</u>	<u>HO Stores</u>
1946	86	14	
1947	83	17	
1948	82	17	1
1949	63	16	21

A parallel development was inaugurated by SMAD Order Number 76 (April 23, 1948), authorizing the bringing together of most of the larger factories, already socialized by the Land governments, into "Unions of People's Owned Enterprises" (Vereinigungen der volkseigenen Betriebe -- VVB). At the time of their subsequent transfer to the Ministry of the Interior of the German Democratic Republic, the VVB controlled forty percent of the industrial

³⁴ SBZ von A-Z: Ein Taschen - und Nachschlagebuch über die Sowjetische Besatzungszone Deutschlands, Bonn: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, (fourth edition, revised and enlarged), 1958, p. 126, column 1.

production of the Zone.³⁵

All these developments not only had profound effects on the economy, but also wrought a social transformation in the Zone. The middle class were being squeezed out and only awaited further developments before being almost entirely liquidated. In many cases, their children were denied educational opportunities by the State. The farmers, many of whom had been installed on the land as a result of the post-war land reform, now found that they had to pay many times over in the form of enforced deliveries to the local representatives of the Agricultural Administration of the DWK. The intellectuals, many of whom had hailed the Red Army as liberators, while others had shown their confidence in a "socialist" New Order by returning from exile abroad, soon found that if they were to eat they must find favour in one of the official or semi-official organizations which controlled artistic patronage. The ordinary working people found that they had been delivered from the control of the Nazis only to be granted trade unions that were not really free, unions which were precluded by the "economic sabotage" law from demonstrating in favour of higher wages or better conditions.

All that remained was for the economic and social basis of power to be capped by a political superstructure

³⁵ Glaser, op. cit., p. 163.

along the lines of the "people's democracies" that had been established in eastern Europe since 1945.

Towards the Establishment of the
"German Democratic Republic"

The movement to establish a separate Communist-dominated state in Germany had its foundations in the People's Congress (Volkskongress) movement. Originally, the Volkskongress movement was created for quite a different purpose -- as a propaganda vehicle for the political campaign intended to bring all of Germany within the Soviet sphere of influence -- but when the attempt to gain all of Germany had obviously failed, it was converted into a preparatory commission charged with the drafting of a constitution for the so-called "German Democratic Republic," whose sphere of authority would be limited to the territory of the Soviet Occupation Zone.

The first "German People's Congress for Unity and a Just Peace" came into being on December 6, 1947, at the time of the London Conference of Allied Foreign Ministers. At this Congress, a resolution was passed expressing the wish that the London conference receive a three-man German delegation (Grotewohl and Pieck of the SED, and Dr. Wilhelm Kulz, chairman of the LDP). This delegation was to propose that in negotiations for a peace settlement, on the basis of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, the German central government of the future should be represented. Obviously, the Volkskongress, Communist-

dominated and boycotted by the CDU, claimed to represent the popular basis of such a future government.

The Volkskongress movement was of vital importance in the "legitimization" of the administrative structure which had already developed in the Zone and its transformation into a "people's democracy" which would claim authority in all of Germany. According to Soviet political theory, all power stemmed from the "people's will." Accordingly, the Volkskongress was chosen as the agency for the production and manipulation of the "spontaneous" will of the people.

At the first People's Congress, the 2,215 delegates (many of them representing the western zone KPD and its front organizations) were so chosen as to give a majority to the SED and the "mass organizations" under its control. The delegates elected a Permanent Committee; when the failure of the Molotov Resolution^{35(a)} (almost identical to the Volkskongress resolution) led to the dissolution of the London Conference, this

^{35(a)} Molotov insisted, inter alia, that the Four Powers agree upon the immediate establishment of a German central government. The Conference broke up because the West could not accept this demand; as Secretary of State Marshall stated, "until the division of Germany had been healed and conditions created for German political and economic unity, any central government would be a sham and not a reality." Other problems contributing to a breakdown were failure to agree on the boundaries of the future German state and the continuing reparations controversy. See, U. S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Documents on Germany, 1944-1959, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1959, pp. 51 ff., and Heinrich von Sieglar, The Reunification and Security of Germany: a Documentary Basis for Discussion, Bonn, Vienna, Zurich, Verlag fur Zeitarchive, 1957, parts A and B, passim.

Permanent Committee met to consider changes in tactics and to plan a second Congress.

The preparations for this second Volkskongress were elaborate. The existing "Anti-Fascist Committees" on the Land, district and municipal levels were transformed into "People's Committees" and charged with propagandizing activities preliminary to the People's Congress. Petitions calling for a new People's Congress were circulated, but the pre-Volkskongress campaign

was prohibited by the authorities in the Western Zone. On March 17, 1948, meeting in Berlin the second Volkskongress endorsed two resolutions prepared by the Permanent Committee. The first called for the establishment of a German People's Council (Volksrat); the second, for a referendum, in the form of a mass petition, on the "Unity of Germany."

The 400-member Volksrat, with advisory and some executive powers, was elected by the Second People's Congress on March 18. Its Presidium was under the co-chairmanship of Wilhelm Pieck (SED), Otto Nuschke (CDU) and Wilhelm Kuelz (LDP). A number of committees covering various aspects of government and economic life were set up, under the general supervision of the executive Presidium. Of these, the most important was the constitutional committee, which, on April 27, began drafting a constitution for the Soviet Zone, a constitution which the Soviets and their German followers hoped to extend to the whole of Germany.

In the campaign to extend Communist power in Germany, the petition circulated between May 23 and June 13, 1948, was a major propaganda weapon. As a result both of playing on nationalist sentiment and resorting to economic and political pressure, the Communists were able to claim 13,000,000 signatures by the time the campaign ended.

The "unity campaign" and the work of the preparatory committees of the Volksrat took place against the background

of the Berlin blockade of 1948-1949. By blockading Berlin, the Soviets hoped to force the West to relinquish its foothold in the middle of the Soviet Zone, and, perhaps, even to forget about plans to cap the economic consolidation of the three western zones by the creation of an independent West German state. If the West surrendered Berlin and gave up its political plans in its zone, the Volkskongress and the "Unity Movement" could be used to persuade West Germans that hope in the West was useless and that the quickest way to the revival and reunification of the German nation lay in acquiescing to the Russian plans. Thus, the Soviets would be able to gain the whole of Germany. But the failure of the blockade, and the Allied determination which led to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany in May, 1949, led the Communists to the realization that their plans had received a grave setback. They would have to be content, for the moment, with the creation of a satellite regime in the Soviet Zone.

By the end of 1948, coordination had been achieved between the activities of the Volksrat and those of the DWK. This was accomplished by an expansion of the Economic Commission to 101 members (Sokolovsky's order of November 26, 1948), including forty-eight from the political parties and ten from the mass organizations; this meant that there was some overlapping of membership between the German Economic Commission and the Volksrat. At the same time, the Council,

with the approval of the zonal authorities, began to take upon itself the authority of a zonal parliament and, accordingly, to receive reports from the DWK.

The first draft of the proposed zonal constitution was discussed by the Constitutional Committee of the Volksrat on July 6, 1948, and a "statement of principles" was adopted. As the committee completed its work, expanding and revising the draft constitution, other committees called for the election of a third Volkskongress, presumably to ratify the document. The completed document was first published under the title "A Constitution for the German Democratic Republic" in the October 29, 1948, issue of the official zonal newspaper, Tagliche Rundschau. By implication, the constitution was still intended for all of Germany.

A meeting of the Volksrat on March 19, 1949, saw the adoption of the new constitution and Wilhelm Pieck's announcement that a new Volkskongress would be elected shortly to take action on establishing a zonal government. As outlined, the plans for the new election envisaged a single list of candidates, divided among the various parties and mass organizations according to prior agreement. In the allocation of candidates, the SED only allotted itself 450 out of approximately 2,000 candidates; however, SED control was assured by the grip which it maintained on the candidates of the mass organizations and those of its two "satellite" parties, the National Democrats

and the Democratic Peasants. The voters were allowed only to signify their reaction to the list in toto, by voting either "yes" or "no"; they were not allowed to vote outside the list or to write in candidates of their own.

The Volkskongress was "elected" on May 15-16, 1949, and met on May 30. Declaring itself to be the only representative all-German body, it proceeded to approve the constitution of the German Democratic Republic, though the constitution was not yet put into effect. At the same time, the Volkskongress elected, from a single list, a new Volksrat (400 members, of whom 70 were from Western Germany) and a Presidium of thirty-eight members, all from the Soviet Zone.

At its meetings in the summer of 1949, the Volksrat protested against the August elections in the Federal Republic and "recognized" the "fraternal border" with Poland (the Oder-Neisse line). Steps towards the main business at hand, the putting into effect of the constitution, began in October with the engineering of "spontaneous" demonstrations of popular support. Using the numerous resolutions passed on "World Peace Day" (October 2, 1949), calling for the establishment of a "provisional democratic all-German government", as a facade of popular support, the Presidium of the Volksrat was able to get around LDP and CDU demands for the holding of elections prior to the establishment of the German Democratic Republic. The Presidium of the Volksrat called a plenary session of that body for October

7; that body was then to be requested to bring the constitution into effect, to transform itself into a provisional People's Chamber (Volkskammer) and to establish a provisional government.

At the October 7 meeting all this was carried into effect without a hitch. Four basic laws were passed: the "Law on the Formation of the Provisional People's Chamber of the GDR" (transforming the Volksrat into the Volkskammer), the "Law on the Provisional Government of the GDR" (establishing and determining the composition of the cabinet), the "Law on the Formation of the Provisional Laender Chamber" (establishing the Upper House) and the "Law on the Constitution of the GDR" (automatically putting the constitution into effect). The Volksrat, before it transformed itself into the Volkskammer, once more addressed itself to the question of persuading all concerned to accept the Communist proposals for the future of Germany as a whole. To this end, a resolution was adopted and sent to the foreign ministers of the occupying powers. Further, to continue propaganda work among the German population, in both East and West, a "National Front of Democratic Germany" was established. The assembly concluded its session by electing as Minister-President the co-chairman of the SED, Otto Grotewohl.

Special sessions of the Landtag in each of the five provinces were held on October 10. These elected delegates to the provisional Laenderkammer and passed laws postponing the Landtag and local elections to October 15, 1950 (the same date

on which the deferred German Democratic Republic elections were to be held).

On the same day, Chuikov, Commander-in-Chief of the SMAD, informed the Presidium of the Volkskammer that SMAD functions were to be transferred by the Soviet Union to the provisional government of the GDR; further, military administration was to be replaced by a supervisory body, the Soviet Control Commission, which would deal with all matters still affected by the quadripartite decisions on Germany.

On the eleventh of the month, a joint meeting of both of the provisional Chambers elected Wilhelm Pieck as President of the Democratic Republic. The next day, Grotewohl introduced his cabinet to the Volkskammer and secured the passage of a "Law on the Transfer of the Administration", assigning the functions of the old DWK and the Central Administrations for Interior, Justice and Popular Education, to the cabinet and the respective ministries of the GDR. Budgetary provisions were also transferred, and the cabinet was given administrative authority to make any changes and develop any organizational plans necessary to the implementation of the administrative transfer.

On the evening of October 12, the cabinet was sworn in by President Pieck. Thus, five days after the "German Democratic Republic" had been formally established, the process of legalizing the structure of power was completed. It

is doubtful, however, that many people, either inside or outside the Zone, were impressed by this aura of legitimacy.

Many must have agreed with Dr. Adenauer, who addressed the West German Bundestag on October 21, 1949:³⁵

These People's Congresses were not the result ... of free elections in which everyone could freely have taken part. For the Third People's Congress only one list of candidates was permitted. The elections to a People's Chamber, envisaged by the Constitution passed by the People's Council on 19 March 1949, were not held. The People's Council established itself on 7 October 1949 as the Provisional People's Chamber, contrary to the Constitution it had itself passed. Simultaneously it was stated that the elections ... would be postponed until 15 October 1950. After the unconditional surrender and the complete collapse of all the state institutions in Germany, it is not possible for any organization in Germany to claim that it is a legitimate state unless it rests on the freely expressed will of the people.

Nobody can claim that the organization now created in the Soviet Zone rests on the freely expressed will of the people of that zone. It has come about on the orders of Soviet Russia, with the participation of a small minority of Germans devoted to her.

It is doubtful even that the Russians had any illusions about their new satellite state having any genuine popular support. True, they had seen fit to establish the Democratic Republic, but this was motivated more by the existence of a propaganda war against the western powers than by any real confidence in the ability of the local Communists to secure, unaided, the support of the zonal population. This was a grave weakness, whose effects were to become more obvious as time went on.

³⁵ von Oppen, Documents, pp. 431-432.

CHAPTER III

THE YEARS OF CONSOLIDATION (1949-1952)

The simple fact of the establishment of the German Democratic Republic did not, of itself, render the Communist situation in East Germany secure. The regime was, in fact, erected on rather shaky foundations, especially insofar as popular support was concerned. During the period of military occupation, approximately 1,400,000 persons (not counting expellees) had migrated from East Germany to the Western Zone and West Berlin; this notwithstanding the closing of zonal boundaries (June 30, 1946) by the Allied Control Council, at the request of the SMAD. The public reaction to the establishment of an "independent" German Democratic Republic is shown by the fact that, in the last three months of 1949, immediately following the establishment of the GDR, approximately 42,000 persons fled East Germany.¹

¹There are many conflicting series of statistics claiming to represent the number of refugees coming from East Germany. Throughout this thesis I have used the figures compiled by the Federal Statistical Office, Wiesbaden. These figures take into account those persons who are processed by the reception centers or who subsequently apply for residence permits in West Germany. Expellees from the territories east of the Oder-Neisse line are not included, unless they resided in the territory of the GDR prior to coming to West Germany.

The monthly figures for the period September 1949

In the light of these facts, it was obviously necessary to tighten still further control over the zonal population and to attempt so to indoctrinate the population that they would be amenable to such control. Thus, a great period of attempted consolidation was inaugurated, during which steps were taken to bring all aspects of life in East Germany into the greatest possible degree of conformity with conditions prevailing in the Soviet Union and the "People's Democracies."

The Institutions of the German Democratic
Republic During the Formative Period

Consolidation took place, in the first instance, in the manner in which the institutions of the GDR were made to function. Every state, even a totalitarian one, has a constitution of some sort; even though the institutions of the

through October 1955 are generally available, as given out by the Federal Statistical Office, in the Die monatlichen Zuwanderungen aus der Sowjetzone u. Ost-Berlin als Folge der dortigen politischen und sozialen Vorgänge. This chart, distributed by the Federal Ministry for Expellees, Refugees and War Victims was originally prepared by Dr. Johannes Kurt Klein for an article, "Ursache un Motive der Abwanderung aus der Sowjetzone Deutschlands," Das Parlament, Vol. XXIV, No. 55, June 15, 1955, pp. 361-383, and was subsequently brought up to date.

Supplementary figures, for the period November 1955 through July 1957 were supplied from the Federal Statistical Office by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ottawa. I am particularly indebted for this assistance to Mr. E. Gerwin and Dr. M. Emge, of the Embassy.

A full list of the monthly statistics, together with a breakdown into occupational and age groups for part of the period under discussion, is appended to the thesis.

state are not "constitutional", in our sense of the term, it is useful to examine the structure of government in terms of the avowed purposes and structure of the regime.²

From the Preamble to the last sentence, the Constitution of the GDR has every appearance of being a model democratic constitution. It has often been noted that, in its definition of the rights of the various Laender the GDR Constitution followed much more closely the example of Weimar than did the Basic Law of the Federal Republic. Similarly, in its definition of individual rights, the Constitution of the GDR followed closely the "Stalin Constitution" adopted by the Soviet Union in 1936, a constitution which, on paper at least, gives to every citizen all that could be desired in the way of human rights. But there is all the difference in the world between what is written on paper and what is done in practice; when we come to examine the workings of the constitution of the GDR, we find, that like the constitutions of the U.S.S.R. and the various "People's Democracies", it may be described as one

incorporating democratic forms, counterweighted with totalitarian controls....

... The existence of a democratic form gives no

² An official copy of the East German constitution, with introductory note, is contained in Die Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Berlin (East), VEB Deutscher Zentralverlag, n.d.

assurance that it will function automatically in truly democratic function.³

By maintaining such institutions as elections, political parties, parliaments, labor unions, cooperatives, courts and codes of law, and by paying lip service to these institutions, the regime in East Germany and throughout the Soviet bloc is able to rule by a multiplicity of means. The people are controlled, when necessary, by the maintenance of a system of terror and a cynical disregard of any notions that there exists a higher law than that of the State. At the same time, by maintaining democratic pretensions, the leaders cater somewhat to the democratic aspirations of the people and thus lighten the task of maintaining order.

The Constitution of the GDR is divided into three sections entitled: "Bases of State Power" (Articles 1-5), "Scope and Limitations of State Power" (Articles 6-49, "Bill of Rights"), and "Structure of State Power" (Articles 50-144). All this is prefaced by a Preamble, which states that

In compliance with the will to guarantee the freedom and rights of man, to form the communal and economic life according to the concept of social justice, to serve the cause of social progress, to further friendship with all peoples and to safeguard peace, the German people has given unto itself this Constitution.⁴

³John N. Hazard, The Soviet System of Government, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957, pp. 9-11.

⁴Verfassung, p. 8.

The Volkskammer is the "highest organ of the state" and the "bearer of State power" (Article 60),⁵ elected, according to the Constitution, by free elections and under a system of proportional representation. In elections to the People's Chamber, the mass organizations are allowed to put forth candidates, in the same way as do the political parties. However, a check on the right to put forth candidates is contained in Article 13, paragraph 2, which provides that only those political parties shall be allowed which

according to their by-laws strive for the democratic consent of the political and social life of the entire Republic,

a blanket injunction which, in the absence of provision for judicial interpretation, may be interpreted any way the regime desires. Regional parties are excluded, in the same section, by the statement that only those parties may participate in elections "whose organization extends over the entire state territory."

The concept of separation of powers does not exist in the Constitution of the GDR. While in established parliamentary democracies this concept of assembly government may lead to responsible government, in such states as East Germany

⁵This outline of the constitution of the GDR, as it stood in 1950, is based on that included in Loewenstein, "Germany", in Shetwell (ed.), Governments of Continental Europe, pp. 641-646.

it simply means that the Communist-run assembly is not subject to checks or balances or to constitutional limitations which are not subject to its own interpretation. Dissolution of parliament is possible only by an act of the Volkskammer itself, or, in theory, by a vote of non-confidence in the Government. The Volkskammer appoints a steering committee, the Presidium, in which each party is represented, under the Fraktion system. Similarly, the concept of a united "bloc", composed of all political parties, is seen in the formation of the ministry, which is also appointed by the Volkskammer. The strongest party -- the SED -- designates the Prime Minister (Minister-president), who in turn chooses the Ministry. He is guided, however, by the constitutional provision that coalition government is mandatory; that is, according to Article 92, every party with over forty members is to be represented according to its strength. Thus, the concept of a parliamentary opposition simply does not exist. Government is by pre-arranged unanimity.

At the top of the formal state structure is the President of the Republic (since its foundation, Wilhelm Pieck). The President is strictly a figurehead, elected, for ceremonial purposes, by a simple majority of both houses -- Volkskammer and Laenderkammer.

Until July, 1952, the Laender governments were preserved, and thus, the outward shell of a federal structure

existed. However, from the beginning, the Constitution was "definitely slanted so far towards centralization that ... no serious obstacle would prevent an outright unitary government."⁶ There was little individuality among the five Laender, nor was the Laenderkammer vested with any obligation or authority to defend the interests of the Laender. The Laenderkammer did not really represent the states themselves; rather it consisted of delegates appointed by the individual Landtage (Provincial Assemblies), one for each 500,000 of population, appointed in proportion to the strength of the parties in each of the provincial houses. It could exercise only a suspensive veto, easily overridden by a simple majority of the Volkskammer.

The distribution of legislative powers also showed that there was no real intention to introduce the federal principle. Most positive law-making power was vested in the central government, as were those powers pertaining to the raising of revenue through taxation. Further, in the absence of an enumeration of fields of concurrent legislation, the central government benefited; there was no mention of "residual powers" reverting to the governments of the constituent States.

Actually, the Laender were little more than administrative units, vested with the authority to administer the various federal services. Coordination by the central government was

⁶Loewenstein, op. cit., p. 643.

so strict and effective, including the right to bind the Laender governments by written instructions or by examining officers directly attached to provincial and local government, that there was little room for independence of policy. Further, it could not be presumed that there would be any important difference of opinion between the Laender and the central government, since, by the time the GDR came into existence the local units of political parties and mass organizations had become so dependent on their central organizations, and these, in turn, had fallen so much under the sway of the SED, that true Gleichschaltung may be said to have prevailed. And even if such a conflict of views had arisen, the odds were all with the central government, since the constitution provided that controversies over jurisdiction were to be decided, not by an independent judicial tribunal, but by an enlarged Constitutional Committee of the Volkskammer itself.

Just as the federalistic principles written into the constitution were largely offset by provisions for control, so also the elaborate formal guarantee of civil liberties, patterned closely on those enjoyed during the period of the Weimar republic, tends to melt away on closer analysis. All rights are guaranteed as part of the basic legal system, including the right of freedom of religion (Articles 41 to 48). Education is strictly secular and free (Article 39); however,

the denominational groups are guaranteed the right to maintain religious instruction (Article 40).

As in the Soviet-bloc constitutions, and, indeed, the constitutions of many advanced democratic states, great emphasis is placed on social justice. The constitution includes guarantees of the right to work (Article 15), recreation, annual leave with pay, and social insurance (Article 16). As in the case of West Germany, provision is made for workers' co-determination -- a voice in such matters as production schedules, wages, and conditions of labour (Article 17).

The key to the economic and social purposes of the regime is to be found in the section of the GDR Constitution dealing with the Economic Order (Articles 19-20). Economic planning through the State (Article 21) is to be introduced, and, as in other Soviet-bloc countries, this is justified by the promise of a golden tomorrow; the aim of such planning is "to guarantee to all an existence compatible with the dignity of man" (Article 19). Economic rights are outlined, but are counterbalanced by a series of caveats and reservations. Thus, freedom of enterprise is guaranteed the individual, but only "within the scope of the ... aims and tasks" defined by the State planners (Article 19). Private property is guaranteed, but only within "scope and limitations ... determined by the law" (Article 22). What this alleged freedom for enterprise and property really meant is spelled out in further sections.

Private monopolies were abolished (this had already been effected in fact long ago). At the discretion of the authorities, remaining private enterprises might at any time be transferred to the public sphere (Article 27). Any enterprises not already nationalized relating to mineral resources, natural power, mining, the iron and steel industries and the electric power industry were made subject to immediate nationalization (Article 22). As to private property, estates of over 100 hectares (247 acres) were subject to confiscation without indemnity (Article 24, paragraph 5).

A major weapon which the central authority can wield is that these rights are not inalienable or indefeasible. The courts do not uphold individual rights against the encroachments of government; the concept of natural rights is unknown and all rights are said to spring from the "people's will". Accordingly, the Volkskammer, as the repository of the "people's will", can make or unmake so-called "rights" by simple legislative process. In this, it is guided only by its own Constitutional Committee, to which are added three members of the Supreme Court and three consultant professors of public law.

Further, extra-constitutional administrative machinery exists to ensure conformity. The rights of workers may be guaranteed in the constitution, but workers and others are still subject to the "economic sabotage" law originally enacted by the German Economic Commission. Further, numerous control agencies exist. Among these, the most important is the GDR

secret police, the Staatssicherheitsdienst (SSD -- State Security Service). Policing of economic life is the function of the State Control Commission (Zentrale Kommission für staatliche Kontrolle -- ZKK) which, like the State Planning Commission (Staatliche Plankommission) with which it works in close harmony, is attached directly to the office of the Minister-President. The Ministry of the Interior is generally responsible for internal security; its Personnel Administration supervises the loyalty of all public employees and officials and ensures that SED cells exist on all levels of administration. Finally, the SED itself is tightly policed by its own Control Commission (Zentrale Parteikontrollkommission - ZPKK) operating on all levels of Party life and responsible directly to the SED Central Committee.

Justice was subordinated completely to the interests of the state.⁷ Judges were either elected (by the Volkskammer or the respective Landtage) or, in the case of the local magistrates, appointed by the Land governments. "Ideological reliability" is a condition of tenure, since judges are subject to recall or dismissal. Thus, to all intents and purposes, the

⁷ For an indictment of the judicial system of the GDR, see Catalogue of Injustice, Berlin, Investigating Committee of Free Jurists, 1956, and other publications now released under the auspices of the International Commission of Jurists, the Hague.

provision that judges "in the exercise of their functions, are independent and subject only to the Constitution and the laws" (Article 127) is nullified. Thus, once again, the illusion of "democratic forms" is checkmated by the reality of totalitarian countermeasures; the alleged rule of the people's Parliament, under a regime unchecked by legal safeguards, is, in fact, synonymous with omnipotent authoritarian government, in which consent is engineered and conformity is assured.

Political Sovietization During the Period of Consolidation

Although, as can be readily seen, the Constitution of the GDR, from its inception contained many features which could be, and were, harnessed to the services of totalitarianism, yet much had to be done to transform the general political climate before the rulers of East Germany could say that their state had been brought into line with the more highly developed Stalinist structures prevailing in the "People's Democracies" and the Soviet Union. To this end, a campaign of Sovietization was inaugurated, with the avowed purpose of establishing a state and society of the "New Type" (i.e., the Stalinist type); the ultimate aim, as in the Soviet Union, was to create an environment which would breed the "new Soviet Man" -- the man who would so discipline himself that he would be a self-censoring automaton, expending the last bit of

his strength in the service of the State and never questioning the purposes for which the State apparatus existed. The net effect of this Sovietization campaign was to increase immeasurably the pressures on the population of East Germany, with effects which were soon obvious to all observers.

The first steps in the Sovietization campaign were taken within the ruling SED party itself. During the period of the formation of political life under Military Administration, relative toleration had been practiced for a while. Until approximately 1948, lip service at least was paid to the "Ackermann Thesis" and even afterwards the Party, in the hope of duping fellow travellers or possible sympathizers in the West, paid lip service to the thesis that the road to Socialism could be constructed within the context of parliamentary democracy. This left room for toleration within the Party apparatus itself, and, indeed, the SED took pains to prove, by its organization and its declarations, that it was a genuine coalition between Communists and Socialists. With the foundation of the GDR, however, the picture changed somewhat. Entrusted with the administration of a satellite state, and constantly aware that their every action, their failures and their successes, were being watched by the men in the Kremlin, the ruling elite within the SED grew more ruthless. The leit-
motif of the post-1949 period was one of increasing monolithism within the Party. Many former Social Democrats, absorbed into the united party in the 1946-1949 period, were regarded with

suspicion as reformists who had not been thoroughly imbued with partiinst (that is, full commitment to Communism). The risks inherent in this situation were made even more serious by the existence of the Titoist heresy and the consequent dangers of "revisionism" among even the supposedly reliable Communist core of the SED.

Therefore, during the period 1949-1950, the Party Control Commission inaugurated an extensive revision of membership files. The results of this purge, in terms of total Party membership, may be seen by comparing statistics giving SED membership from 1946 through the autumn of 1951:⁸

	<u>Full Members</u>	<u>Candidates</u>
1946 (April)	1,298,415	
1947 (September)	1,793,951	
1949 (January)	1,770,000	
1950 (July)	1,550,000	122,000
1951 (autumn)	1,298,000	

However, these bare membership figures tell only part of the story of the transformation of the SED. Besides reduc-

⁸ Branko Lazitch, Les Partis Communistes d'Europe 1919-1955, Paris: Les Iles d'Or, 1956, p. 71. Lazitch's figures are derived from official Communist sources -- those for 1946 through 1950 from the Reports to the respective Party congresses and conferences; those for 1951 from "official figures", but their source is not given. These statistics, insofar as identical periods are dealt with, are confirmed by Carola Stern, Portrat einer bolschewistischen Partei, p. 281, which book, however, does not round off the figures for 1949, as did Lazitch. According to Stern (who cites the official Party collection, DOCUMENTE DER SED, Berlin, 1956), membership reached, in June 1948, a figure approximating 2,000,000.

tion in membership, in the interests of establishing a more easily managed political party, the purges also involved changes in the composition of membership -- that is, more members were expelled than the figures themselves would indicate. The difference was made up by the infusion of new blood in the form of younger members recruited from such organizations as the Free German Youth, recruits whose reliability was considered unimpeachable and who had undergone long training in the official dogma of State and Party before even joining the SED.

The purges were but one part of the transformation of the SED, a transformation whose objective was epitomized by the phrase "Party of the New Type."⁹ This development was inaugurated by a resolution passed at the First Party Congress of the SED (January 25-28, Berlin). This resolution called for "the evolution of the SED into a Party of a new type, that is, a party which would operate on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism and the Bolshevik party methods, and which would be oriented to the model of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union."¹⁰ The aim was to rid the party of all dissident

⁹For an examination of the theory of the "Party of the New Type" and the implementation and consequences of this development, see Stern, Portrat einer bolschewistischen Partei, pp. 78-104 and chapters IV - V, passim.

¹⁰ibid., p. 293.

elements and of all pretence of coalition, to make it sufficient and responsible unto itself alone.

Ideologically, the Party of the New Type, in accordance with Stalin's "Twelve Theses on the Bolshevization of the Communist Parties" (1925) oriented itself exclusively according to "scientific Socialism", that is, Marxism as preached by Lenin and Stalin. This stood in sharp contradiction to the Ackermann theses which, in theory at least, had allowed the Social Democratic elements to pay lip service to some of the great German revisionists so long as they recognized the hegemony of Marxism-Leninism. Further, the old line of a multi-group anti-fascist regime now shifted; emphasis was placed on the need to develop Socialism -- that is, to develop a state and society on the Russian model.

This slavish belief that the SED must follow the Russian road, as exemplified by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, stands in sharp contrast to earlier statements, made while the then Communist Party was attempting to lure the Social Democrats into its net.¹¹ Steps to ensure ideological conformity with the CPSU were in evidence as early as the autumn of 1948, when the standard History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) -- Short Course was made required reading for party members (Central Secretariat Directive,

¹¹ Compare with earlier statements, cited above, p.37.

September 20, 1948.)¹² In 1950, in the course of the purge and after a great deal of pruning had occurred in the membership lists, the Party carried this educational program one step further. Thus, the Politburo decreed (June 7, 1950) that, from December 1, 1950, all remaining members and all new candidates would have to undergo an intensive nine months' evening course in Marxist-Leninist doctrine; in this course, instruction about Stalin and the CPSU would figure prominently.¹³

Throughout the ideological reorientation campaign, specific attacks were launched against the Social Democratic elements. This was inaugurated as early as September 1948, when the SED Central Executive issued an official declaration entitled "The November Revolution and its Lessons for the German Working Class Movement."¹⁴ This article gave the signal for a general revision of interwar German history (a revision of the type characterized by Trotsky earlier as "the Stalin school of falsification"); the keynote was incessant villification of the policies of the pre-Hitler Social Democrats.

The lessons which were to be drummed into the heads of the Party members during the re-orientation campaign were

¹²Cited Stern, op. cit., p. 87.

¹³The Soviet Occupation Zone -- A Chronological Review, p. 37.

¹⁴Stern, op. cit., p. 87.

indicated, succinctly, by a statement which appeared at the start of the campaign:¹⁵

Right-opportunism, reformist Revisionism, in a word, Democratic Socialism, lead to criminal activities in the service of imperialism ... Today, right-wing Socialist leaders and Trotskyite leaders are working in common as the Fifth Column of American imperialism against the workers of the whole world and, especially, against the Soviet Union.

This was to lead, by 1953, to a state of mind which could completely falsify past history (in which the Communists had actively supported the Nazis, for their own purposes) and which could announce:

When they [the Social Democratic leaders] did not have to serve Hitler, it is true that they did not do so; however, this was not because they did not wish to do so, but, rather, because Hitler would not have them ... The attempt, at that time, of right-wing Social Democratic leadership to remain, without condition, in Fascism and to conform completely is a significant lesson for the present time. The rightist leadership of the SPD is today following the same policy.¹⁶

At one time, such a calumny would have aroused an outcry among former SPD members in the SED, for, estranged as they were from the Social Democratic leadership at Bonn, they too had participated in the fight to preserve the Weimar Repub-

¹⁵ Hans Teubner, principal of the teaching staff of the SED Party High School, in Einheit, July 1949, cited ibid., pp. 88-89.

¹⁶ Hermann Matern, "How the Social Democratic Leaders Assisted the Fascist Struggle for Power," Einheit, April 1953, pp. 491 ff., cited Stern, op. cit., p. 89.

lic. At one time, there would have been enough courage and decency left in such men as Grotewohl and enough of a remainder of social democracy acting as an undercurrent in the SED to rouse a protest against the dishonour being done to the comrades who had perished in the Nazi concentration camps. But, by 1953, little was left of honour, courage, decency or the will to resist. The former Social Democrats had compromised themselves from the first by associating with the Communists, even though this had been against their will. Any remainder of independent thought had, for the present, been stamped out by the reorganization and reindoctrination campaign of 1949-1951. The re-education campaign, the purges, the great examination of party membership cards (1951-1952) -- all these had led to the "Party of the New Type", a strictly controlled cadre party (rather than a mass party), following every change in policy with unswerving devotion.

The campaign to establish a "Party of the New Type" also had repercussions in the other political parties of East Germany. The chosen instrument of their complete subordination to the SED was the "National Front of Democratic Germany," established by a Manifesto adopted at the same meeting of the Volksrat that established the provisional regime of the GDR (October 7, 1949). The founding Manifesto stated that the National Front would be composed of representatives from all political parties and mass organizations in East Germany and

that, under the direction of its executive National Council, it would be a rallying point for all Germans who supported its alleged aims -- the restoration of German unity and the signing of a peace treaty. Accordingly, as Grotewohl said, it was alleged that

every honest German, whatever his party ties or his ideology, can subscribe to the postulates laid down in the manifesto of the National Front ... But it is not enough to agree with these postulates and to approve their aims. They must be fought for, fought for by all Germans who profess them.¹⁷

Of course, in this struggle, there would be need for a central direction of strategy and tactics; what better direction could there be, asked the Communists, than that of the SED which, thanks to its profound knowledge of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism had been vested with a penetrating insight into the mainsprings of historical development?

Extracts from the "Resolution on Improving the Work of the Committees of the National Front"¹⁸ (adopted by the executive of the SED on March 15, 1950) demonstrate the com-

¹⁷ Policy declaration of Otto Grotewohl, on taking office as Minister-President of the GDR. Neues Deutschland, 13 October 1949, cited von Oppen, Documents, p. 430.

¹⁸ The resolution is printed in full in von Oppen, Documents, pp. 483-486, as it appears in Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, Dokumente der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, Berlin (East), Dietz Verlag, 1952, Vol. II, pp. 460 ff.

manding role which the Communists aspired to play in this so-called "non-political" national movement. The Resolution calls for intensive study

of the points in the programme which show the criminal activities of the American war-mongers and their German satellites ... The threat to our nation by the imperialists and their German hirelings, Heuss, Adenauer, Blucher, Schumacher and others can only be overcome by sincere and friendly co-operation with the Soviet Union, the unconquered and unconquerable bulwark of peace in the world.

The task of the National Front is to

unmask to the people the policy of brutal annexation and colonization of the Anglo-American imperialists, which is a policy of brutal annexation and national oppression of the people of the Saar; a policy of preparation of war, of concrete military rearmament and of the enlistment of German mercenary troops; a policy of sucking the country dry by means of occupation costs; a policy of robbery, impoverishment and lowering of the wages and the standard of living of all working strata of the population by the Marshall Plan; a policy which condemns millions of unemployed to starvation while at the same time shop windows are full, and which destroys the centres of production in Germany by senseless dismantling aimed at eliminating production.

In this elaborate hymn of hate, aimed at arousing German nationalism to vengeance against the West, there was not a single word about the true state of affairs in East Germany: the shackling of East Germany to the cause of Stalinist imperialism, the permanent annexation of former territories east of the Oder-Neisse line (which had long figured, like the Saar, as a cause of friction between Germany and its neighbours), the ill-concealed militarization of the

East German police, the continuation of exorbitant Soviet occupation costs, the sucking dry of the country by forced deliveries of goods to the satellite countries and the USSR, the consequent pauperization of the working classes (without even the compensation of having full shop windows to look at), and the consequences of the early dismantling program, a program never even approximated in the West.

Instead, conditions in the GDR were painted in rosy colours; in the GDR, it was alleged,

progressive laws and measures of the Government ... safeguard the nation's existence, promote a progressive German culture, and endeavour to improve the living conditions of the population.

The National Front was inextricably linked with the policies of the regime:

The Committees of the National Front ... are playing a decisive role in the consolidation of the democratic order and in the fulfilment, ahead of schedule, of the Economic Plan of the German Democratic Republic, the main pillar of support in the fight for a democratic Germany. It is the task of the committees to convince and mobilize the masses in the execution of the Economic Plan and in the keeping of the democratic law; in this they must not replace the democratic state and the administrative bodies, or exercise any tutelage, but must help them, by developing criticism and self-criticism, to remedy abuses and to unmask saboteurs.

Thus, it became manifest that the major role of the National Front was to control the population, to channel their hate against the imagined enemy in the West, rather than against conditions in the East. The National Front would control

the population; it in turn would be controlled by elements which the SED considered reliable. An earlier official pronouncement¹⁹ had outlined the key position played by Communist-indoctrinated youth in the regime's schemes:

"Youth is one of the master builders of the Democratic Republic and forms an active part of the National Front of Democratic Germany." Further elements of control were built into the National Front by the Resolution of March 15, which advocated special care to include in the Front

activists and workers from enterprises, particularly from those undertakings that are the people's property ... It is equally necessary to include working farmers, agricultural labourers, tractor drivers of the Machine Lending Stations, and workers of the People's Farms ... The National Front ... will gain in importance if the representatives of the main strength of the nation, workers and farmers, have their appointed place in leading positions in the national movement. The working class, in particular, should be in the front ranks of the National Front ... since it is the most consistent fighter against all forms of oppression. Trade union leaders ... are therefore being asked to delegate the best activists and the most progressive workers to the Kreis district, municipal, ward, and local Committees of the National Front of Democratic Germany.

It was the loyal core of SED supporters who were to be the

¹⁹"Law on the Participation of Youth in the Building Up of the Democratic Republic and on the Promotion of Youth at School and at Work, in Sport and in Recreation", (Gesetze der Jugend der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Berlin, Deutscher Zentralverlag, 1953, p. 12 -- Law of February 8, 1950), cited von Oppen, Documents, p. 462.

guiding spirits in the "enlightenment groups" which were to exercise the real control over the National Front.

The role of the "National Front" was to be seen in the establishment of classic Communist electoral machinery for the long-deferred elections, finally held on October 15, 1950. That the election was to be a foregone conclusion, a mere formality, was seen by the part played by the National Front in establishing the "Unity List." Through its zonal auxiliary, the "Anti-Fascist-Democratic Block", a pre-election allocation of seats was determined. On July 7, three months prior to the "elections", seats were distributed as follows:²⁰

25 percent to the SED;

15 percent each to the Christian Democrats and the Liberal Democratic Party;

7.5 percent each to the SED "satellite" parties, the National Democrats and the Democratic Peasants' Party;

10 percent for the Free German Trade Union Federation;

5 percent each for the Free German Youth and the Cultural Union;

3.7 percent each for the Union of the Victims of the Nazi Regime and the Democratic Women's Association;

²⁰The Soviet Occupation Zone -- A Chronological Review, pp. 37-38. This meant that 55 percent of the seats were allocated in advance to the SED and the mass organizations under its control; 70 percent if one includes, in the category of groups controlled by the SED, the two "satellite" parties (NDP and DBD) originally established at the instigation of the SED leadership.

1.3 percent each for the Peasants' Mutual Aid and the agricultural associations.

In the rigged elections that followed, 12,144,597 persons voted (98.5 percent of the population); of these, according to the official figures released by the Minister for the Interior, Dr. Steinhoff, only 34,060 (less than one-third of one percent) voted against the unity list.²¹

The elections of 1951 cleared the way for changes in the administrative and judicial systems, some of which had been foreshadowed by events that had followed the 1950 purges of civil servants and administrative personnel. One very important shift came within the ministerial system itself, in which the SED consolidated its position by increasing the proportion of ministries under its direct control.²²

²¹Cited in Die Wahlen in Der Sowjetzone: Dokumente und Materialien, Bonn: Bundesministerium fur gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 1958, p. 55. The official West German account of this election, with selected documentary material, is presented in this publication, pp. 26-63.

²²A comparison of SED strength in the Ministry, as of October 7, 1949 and May 23, 1952, may be made by examining the charts (Beilage Nos. 6 and 7) included in SBZ von 1945-1954, Eine chronologische ubersicht, Bonn: Bundesministerium fur gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 1956. The following facts come to light:

- 1) In both years, the head of the Ministry, the Minister-President, was the SED co-chairman, Grotewohl.
- 2) With reference to offices attached directly to the Minister-President:
 - a) In 1949, there was only one such major

Besides changes in the structure and composition of the central administration, a number of other changes were instituted in the political system during the period of con-

office -- the Central Commission for State Control, and this was under SED control.

- b) By 1952, a State Planning Commission had been added. Both this and the Central Commission for State Control were under SED control.

3) Deputies to the Minister-President:

- a) In the 1949 ministry, there were three deputies, one from the SED, one from the LDP and one from the CDU.
- b) By 1952, there were six such positions -- of which two were held by the SED and one each by the CDU, LDP, National Democrats and Democratic Peasants.

On first glance, it is obvious that the SED, proportionately, is in an unchanged position; that is, both in 1949 and in 1952 it held one-third of the positions on this level. However, by giving the puppet National Democrats and Democratic Peasants offices as Deputies to the Minister-President, the regime reduced combined CDU and LDP representation on this level by half; these parties now held only one-third of the positions, as contrasted to two-thirds in 1949. Since the NDPD and DED could be relied upon to function as satellites of the SED, the SED's position was immeasurably stronger in 1952.

- 4) By 1952, the Ministry had grown to such an extent that it boasted a Ministerial Council (Ministerrat) and a Presidium of the Ministerial Council. Intermediary between these bodies and the various ministries there existed a group of five coordinating and control divisions. Of these five divisions -- none of which had existed in 1949, four -- Administrative Reform, Industry and Transport, Domestic Trade, and Education, Learning and Culture -- were under SED control. The fifth, responsible for Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries, was headed by a member of the Democratic Peasants' Party.
- 5) Responsibility for the work of each individual ministry

solidation. One of the most important of the measures adopted was the abolition of the Laender. In conformity with the program of administrative reform advocated by the Second Party Conference of the SED (July 9-12, 1952), the Volkskammer, in

was divided between a Minister and a State Secretary.

- a) In 1949, SED-members occupied the position of both Minister and State Secretary in three of the fourteen ministries -- Interior, Planning and Industry. By 1952, they were in this position in four out of seventeen ministries -- Interior, State Security, Labour, and Metallurgy and Metal Mining. Further, by 1952, in two other ministries -- Foreign Trade and Interzonal Trade, and Popular Education -- the SED not only controlled the position of Minister, but also had a share in the State Secretaryship, whose functions were divided in each case between SED members and members of, respectively, the CDU and the LDP.
- b) In 1949, the SED filled the position only of Minister in three Ministries (Foreign Trade and Material Supply, Popular Education, Justice); in 1952, it occupied this position in two -- Machine Tool Industry, Justice.
- c) In 1949, the SED occupied only the position of State Secretary in four ministries -- Health and Labour, Finance, Agriculture and Forestry, and Foreign Affairs. In 1952, it held only the position of State Secretary in five ministries -- Foreign Affairs, Finance, Agriculture and Forestry, Trade and Supply, Health -- while it shared the position in one other, Transport.
- d) Ministerial position of the other parties:
 - CDU -- 1949, three ministers (Foreign Affairs, Health and Labour, Post and Telecommunications); three state-secretaries (Foreign Trade and Material

an extraordinary plenary session (July 23) passed the "Law on Further Democratization in the Structure and Working Methods of the Organs of Government in the Laender of the GDR." The Laender governments were instructed to carry out a revision of their boundaries. In accordance with this Law, and the Government Ordinance of July 24, the parliaments and governments of the Laender dissolved themselves. To take the place

Supply, Transport and Justice.

- 1952 Three ministers (Foreign Affairs, Health, Post and Telecommunications); one state-secretary (Justice); two state-secretaryships shared with SED (Foreign and Interzonal Trade, and Transport.)
- LDP -- 1949 two ministers (Finance, Trade and Supply); two state secretaries (Construction, Popular Education);
- 1952 two ministers (Finance, Trade and Supply); two state-secretaries (Light Industry, Construction) one state-secretaryship shared with SED (Popular Education).

National Democratic Party --

- 1949 one minister (Construction)
- 1952 two ministers (Construction, Light Industry); one state-secretary (Machine-Tool Industry).

Democratic Peasants' Party --

- 1949 one minister (Agriculture and Forestry); one state-secretary (Trade and Supply).
- 1952 one minister (Agriculture and Forestry).

of the Laender, fourteen new districts (Bezirke) were created; these were directly responsible to the central administration. Also, the counties (Kreise), which had functioned as administrative units of the Laender, were subdivided into new municipalities (Gemeinde), although the Kreise were not themselves dissolved. The new Gemeinde were, by the beginning of 1953, placed under local administrations, centrally appointed (on the model of the Soviet Union); thus the old system of electing local officials was, for the time being, abandoned.

The judicial system was also Sovietized -- or, one might say, "proletarianized" -- during the period of consolidation. That is, the law of the GDR provided that "lay assessors"²³

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- 6) Independents occupied positions as follows:
 - a) Ministers -- 1949, 1952, Minister of Transport;
 - b) State-Secretary -- 1949, 1952, Post and Telecommunications.
 - 7) In neither the 1949 nor the 1952 ministry did any party, other than the SED, control simultaneously both top positions in any ministry. Further, at neither time were the CDU and LDP together in possession of the top positions in any Ministry.
 - 8) In the 1952 ministerial structure, there were six State Secretariats, without corresponding ministries. Five of these -- Coal and Energy, Chemicals, Stone and Earth (Industries), Requisition and Purchase of Agricultural Produce, Technical Training, Higher Education -- were in SED hands; the sixth (Foodstuffs and Entertainment Industries) was in the hands of the CDU.

²³ Provision for such lay assessors is contained in Sections 43, 51 of the GDR Judicial Organization Act, as printed in the Gesetzblatt der DDR, 1952, p. 983 (Catalogue of Injustice, p. 119).

be chosen to sit alongside regular judges when cases were being tried. One might ask whether the use of laymen as judges differs, in its purpose, from the jury system in use in most democratic countries. However, laymen who serve on juries are considered competent only to ascertain matters of fact; with reference to matters of law, admissibility of evidence, et cetera, they are subject to the interpretation and guidance of the presiding judge. In the GDR, on the contrary, the lay assessors are given equal weight with the presiding judge in determining both law and fact. Indeed, since lay assessors generally serve in pairs, with the judge as third member of the panel, their vote generally outweighs that of the judge. From another angle, "lay assessors" also differ from jury members. Prior to the beginning of a trial, in democratic countries, every effort is made to ensure that the jurymen selected are as impartial as humanly possible. In the GDR, however, this is not the case -- "lay assessors" are most often trusted members of the SED, untrammelled by excessive legal knowledge or by a devotion to the niceties of judicial independence or equitable court procedure; they are men who can be relied upon to deal out "proletarian justice" to those whom the State indicts.

One of the earliest acts of the Volkskammer had been the establishment of a Supreme Court and an Office of the Public Prosecutor-General (December 8, 1950). By its decision

to "strengthen democratic legal order" (March 27, 1952), the Council of Ministers of the GDR consolidated in the hands of the Prosecutor's office full power to initiate, and carry through, investigation and prosecution of a wide variety of actions, all loosely defined as "criminal." Besides those categories covered in the still-standing regulations regarding economic sabotage, these actions encompassed such matters as making derogatory remarks about the Head of State and members of the Government, German-Soviet friendship, and about the Republic in General.²⁴ All of these were punishable as "offenses against the democratic order", as were also listening to western radio stations and spreading controversial opinion. Towards the end of 1950, another important "blanket law" (that is, one which could be interpreted by the State to cover a wide variety of alleged offenses) was passed. This "Law for Safeguarding Peace" (December 15, 1950), though purportedly intended to punish all those who sought to revive "aggressive German militarism and imperialism or the inclusion of Germany in an aggressive military bloc" (Paragraph 3, (1)), was focused primarily against West Germany and against all those inhabitants of East Germany who sympathized with the Federal

²⁴ Statement of Public Prosecutor-General, Dr. Ernst Melsheimer, January 12, 1950, cited in The Soviet Occupation Zone ... A Chronological Review, p. 35.

Republic's alignment with the West. Proof of the unilateral intent of the Law is furnished by the fact that in no case whatsoever was anybody who was concerned with the remilitarization of East Germany brought to trial under its provisions. Indeed, the tenor of the Act is epitomized by Paragraph 10 (iii), which states:

The competence of the Supreme Court of the German Democratic Republic also extends to cases where the act was committed by a German national outside the territory of the German Democratic Republic, even if the offender does not have his official or usual residence in the territory of the German Democratic Republic.²⁵

As part of the changes introduced in the ministerial structure, increasing the number of ministries and making the State Planning Commission part of the government (May 23, 1952),²⁶ a new Juvenile Courts Law and the Law on the Office of the Public Prosecutor-General were passed. The former empowered either the court or the prosecutor-general, at their own discretion, to apply the general criminal law in cases where juveniles had committed "crimes against the state or people." The Law on the Office of the Public Prosecutor-General made the latter's office, according to Grotewohl, "the most important auxiliary office of the State." Speaking at the time of the passage of this law, the GDR Minister-

²⁵ von Oppen, Documents, p. 538. (Italics mine.)

²⁶ See above, pp. 96-100, fn.

President charged the prosecutor's office to a full realization of its duties:

The Public Prosecutor must be crystal hard towards the enemies of the People, imperialist bandits, spies, agents and diversionists.²⁷

The conscientiousness with which the Public Prosecutor's office, and the other organs of State and Party, discharged the duty outlined by Grotewohl is demonstrated by the purges which took place throughout this period. Countless numbers of private citizens and ordinary citizens were dealt with according to "proletarian justice." "Terror trials," whose purpose was as much to warn the general public as to punish specific offenses, became a feature of the system. Even before the establishment of the GDR, purge tactics had been applied, especially against "bourgeois politicians." By the time the GDR was established, the more courageous of these²⁸ had been ousted from office and replaced by more tractable successors. But even after the establishment of the State, even after the various purges in the course of which, one might have thought, all possible opposition had been eliminated, new scapegoats had to be found in order to

²⁷ The Soviet Zone ... A Chronological Review, p. 38.

²⁸ For example, Dr. Jacob Kaiser, one-time Zonal chairman of the CDU who was ousted from this post by the SMAD and who fled to the Federal Republic, where he became Federal Minister for All-German Affairs.

prove to the people that no one, no matter how highly placed, was beyond the reach of the State apparatus. The most celebrated case of this sort, among many less well-known, took place in August 1950 when a number of officials were removed from their posts because of communication with the "American spy" Noel H. Field. Among those affected, many of whom were subsequently arrested, were Paul Merker (Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture), Leo Bauer (chief news editor of the State radio station), Bruno Goldhammer (chief news editor of the radio station in East Berlin), Willi Kreikemeyer (Director-General of the East German railway system), Lex Ende (editor of the SED central committee organ, Neues Deutschland), and Maria Weiterer (secretary of the Democratic Women's Federation.)

Thus was asserted the fundamental principle of equality -- equality of insecurity, except perhaps for those who were adroit enough to shift with every turn of the wind.

Economic Sovietization

Perhaps of even greater importance than political Sovietization were parallel developments in the economic sphere, developments which had an important effect on the social structure of the Zone.

Early in the period of consolidation of the regime, the government quite openly opted for state planning of econ-

omic life, planning along Soviet lines. Like so many other developments in East Germany, this decision stood in sharp contrast to the early pronouncements and promises which had stated that the German "road to Socialism" need not be the same as that followed by the Soviet Union. Of course, toward the end of the period of military administration, two "reconstruction" plans had been introduced, but these plans, carried out in 1949 and 1950, had been of one year's duration each and had been limited to certain of the most pressing problems of revitalizing industry. These preliminary plans could not be compared with the GDR's first Five Year Plan, worked out by the State Planning Commission, and formally inaugurated, on January 1, 1951, by the foundation of an ambitious new Iron and Steel Combine at Fuerstenberg-on-Oder.

As in similar plans elsewhere, the rationale of the GDR's Five Year Plan was fundamentally one of making sacrifices in certain fields -- consumer goods, the rights of labour, et cetera -- in order to achieve abnormal results in others -- capital goods, heavy industry. Further, the criteria which were used in setting up the plan were not exclusively, or even primarily, economic; rather, the plan was adopted to meet certain political ends and to produce certain social conditions. If economic facts (the basic fact, for example, that a profit in one area of the economy must mean sacrifice in another) did not conform with what was desired,

said the Communists, then the facts would have to be trimmed to fit the pattern -- rather than the pattern to fit the facts!

Emphasis was placed on long-term capital goods production -- that is, State investment and increased incentive to effort in such fields as coal mining, iron and steel, machine-building industry, et cetera. To achieve this meant sacrifices in the consumer goods field. At the same time, it was necessary to attain greater gross production in key fields, and this meant that workers had to have some incentive, even if it were a modest one. Under the piecework system, it was possible for some workers (by being less conscientious perhaps and cutting corners) to increase their own production, though this might be at the expense of overall net production. Increased production meant some increase in wages and, hence, an increase of purchasing power; however, this increased purchasing power operated in an economy in which, because of planned emphasis on heavy industry and capital goods, consumer goods were scarce. Therefore, there existed throughout a classic inflationary situation, which the government, although refusing to recognize that such a condition could exist in a planned economy, attempted to alleviate. However, much of the government's effort was mere verbiage -- appeals to "patriotic" workers to invest in government bonds rather than spend their money, frantic reassurances that the situation was not really so bad, that once Socialism had been

built up, a new era would be inaugurated in which consumers' goods would be plentiful, and that therefore any sacrifices of the present would be well worth the effort in terms of future returns.

A key factor in the government's planned economy was the continued existence and open expansion of the People's-Owned enterprises (VEB). These VEB, which had previously existed on the Land level, had been brought under direct central control by the abolition, on December 12, 1950 of the Laender offices formerly responsible for their operation. By this time, 71 percent of industry in East Germany had been socialized (in terms of gross output of all industries).²⁹

Only very small workshops and craft industries were allowed, for the time being, to remain privately owned. A serious blow was dealt these industries, the remaining toehold of the middle-class artisan group, by the Law on Taxation Rates for Independent Skilled Tradesmen (passed by the Council of Ministers, April 13, 1951). This law imposed such a widely differentiated, steeply graduated scale of taxation on this remaining independent class as to stop the development of such enterprises. Many skilled craftsmen, unable to continue their customary work on their own terms, were forced either to join the VEB or to flee the zone.

²⁹ Oxford Regional Economic Atlas ... p. 106.

A similar development is shown by an examination of the growth, in the retail trade, of the state-owned HO stores. In 1949, 63 percent of retail trade had been transacted by private retailers, 16 percent by consumers' cooperatives and 21 percent by HO stores. Between 1950 and 1952 inclusive, the picture was as follows:³⁰

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>
Private outlets	53%	44%	37%
Cooperatives	17%	18%	20%
HO Stores	26%	34%	40%
Other State outlets	4%	4%	3%

Thus, by 1952, cooperatives, HO Stores, and other state outlets, combined, accounted for the same proportion of retail trade turnover (63 percent) as that which had come under the heading of private trade in 1949. Of this proportion, approximately two-thirds was directly under State auspices, while the remaining one-third, that which represented the activities of the cooperatives, was under the control of SED-dominated mass organizations.

Besides developments in the industrial and distributive system, the Five-Year Plan (according to the Law adopted

³⁰ SEZ von A-Z, 1958 edition, "Handelsabgabe", p. 126.

by the East German Volkskammer on November 1, 1951)³¹ also envisaged a 57 percent rise in agricultural production. Initially, the State apparently had hoped to extract without collectivization the increased food supplies necessary to support, at least in a minimum fashion, the population engaged in building up industry; this is indicated by the fact that, by December, 1952, only three percent of available cultivated land had been collectivized.³² This was startlingly low as compared with percentages in other satellite countries: for example, 44 percent in Czechoslovakia (October, 1952), 24.6 percent in Hungary (1952), and 18.4 percent in Poland (total of both state farms and collectives, 1952). But deliveries, without collectivization, did not meet the needs of the State; according to an official of the Ministry of Trade and Supply who fled to the West, shortages by the end of 1952 amounted, for example, to 176,000 tons in the production of meat, 200,000 tons of vegetables and 55 tons of animal fats.³³

To remedy this situation, the East German regime took steps, in December 1952, preparatory to the intensification of collectivization. On December 19, model statutes and work

³¹The Soviet Occupation Zone ... A Chronological Review, p. 45.

³²Oxford Regional Economic Atlas, p. 40; other figures, ibid., pp. 37, 40.

³³Fritz Hantke (LDP), cited in SBZ von 1945-1954, p.216.

regulations were published for the "Agricultural Production Associations" which were to come into being throughout the Republic. Machine lending stations, already in existence, and the long-established Union for Peasants' Mutual Aid (VdgB) were to serve as the centers for "voluntary" pooling of resources. Three different levels of collectivization were envisaged:

1. Pooling of land only. Machinery and livestock, if previously under individual ownership, were to remain under such ownership; however, each member was obligated to put machinery and livestock at the disposal of the Association, at minimal rental.
2. Both land and machinery were to be pooled, as well as draft animals; only stud stock was to remain under individual ownership.
3. "Kolkhoz type" -- all land, draft and stud stock, machinery, building, fodder and grain supplies were to be pooled.

As an inducement to the establishment of collectives, offsetting the low returns which would be given individual members, members were allowed to reduce by 10 percent their delivery quotas under the 1952 system of agricultural norms. Of course, this penalized those farmers who chose not to join,

since they would have to make up the difference. Further, the machine stations were to give first priority to the Associations, to charge them the lowest rates, and to defer collecting rental on machinery until after the 1953 harvest.³⁴

By the new agricultural policy, the smallholders (individual peasants) were, eventually, to be reduced to the same fate that had already befallen the individual artisans and small private entrepreneurs. This was particularly ironic for, according to the declarations of the regime, the peasants, along with the urban working class (the "proletariat") formed the core of the East German social system. Now the peasants were being squeezed out; their liberty, hitherto severely restricted in fact, formally extinguished. This fate had already befallen their urban comrades. "Collective Works Agreements" (Betriebskollektivvertrage) had been introduced in June, 1950; these, in effect, made the workers servants of the State and eliminated their right to take collective action on their own initiative. On April 9, 1951, the Central Committee of the SED declared that such agreements were irrevocable; "since the People's Own Works belong to the people, there is therefore no exploitation," hence no need for the workers to have to protect themselves. In fact, this merely

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The Soviet Occupation Zone, p. 57.

set the seal on the system of exploitation -- a system of state capitalism, in which the State was both master and economic policeman, and in which the trade union movement, far from making criticisms in the interest of the working class, acted as the foremost agency for the transmission of the orders of the masters.

Further, entry into the industrial system was no longer a matter of free choice; regimentation was the rule. Such regimentation was exemplified in the establishment (July 24, 1952) of the "Service for Germany" (Organization "Dienst fur Deutschland" -- ODD), a parallel to the NSDAP Labour Service. Youth was to be conscripted into the ODD immediately after leaving school and was to spend six months in uniform, working on reconstruction projects and receiving paramilitary training in special camps.

Indoctrination of Youth

At the same time as it pressed its campaign for economic sovietization, the regime intensified a complementary campaign of social pressure, aimed at eliminating free-moving economic groups (q.v. above) and at destroying the influence of Church, family and free intellectual activity. A key part in this campaign was the drive to indoctrinate youth in the official ideology and harness its energies to the aims of the regime.

The ODD, mentioned above, played an important part

in this development, since it was the channel for entry into the mainstream of economic activity. However, the Free German Youth and the Young Pioneers were the major agencies of the SED's youth campaign. The importance of this campaign was indicated in the SED Politburo Resolution of January 17, 1950. This resolution showed that the SED relied for the preservation of its rule on its hope of converting the youth of the country. The Party docu-

ment outlined the need to enlist youth "in all fields of daily life,"³⁵

... in the struggle for the fulfilment of the Economic Plan, the use of progressive methods of work, and the development of the patriotic movement of the young activists.

Among the farming population the activity of progressive youth is to be supported in striving for high yields in agriculture, the consolidation of Machine Lending Stations and People's Farms and the organization of agro-technical and cultural institutions in villages.

It is necessary to enlist youth for active participation in the work of houses of culture, theatrical and amateur dramatic groups, etc., and in the organization of the sports movement on a broader basis.

In order to emphasize the importance which it attached to youth, the Politburo decreed, inter alia, that "the best representatives of youth ... be enlisted ... in all administrative, economic and cultural tasks and ... are to be entrusted with responsible work ... Special importance should be given to the support and promotion of the movement of young activists in industry and agriculture for the overfulfilment of our Economic Plan."

The Party's injunction was put into legislative form in the "Law on the Participation of Youth in the Building Up of the German Democratic Republic and on the Promotion of Youth at School and at Work, in Sport and in Recreation" (Feb-

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von Oppen, Documents, p. 460.

ruary 8, 1950).³⁶ "Youth," stated the law, is

one of the master builders of the Democratic Republic ... Youth must increase still further its activity in all fields in order to solve, in common with the whole people, the daily practical tasks of reconstruction in the factories, villages, administrations, and schools. Youth itself will reap the fruits of its own activity.

The Law itself provides some interesting information about the situation in the German Democratic Republic. The preamble speaks of the efforts made to ensure that the children of the working class be given a better education, a policy in itself highly commendable. Thus, it is stated, the regime's policy has meant that

the doors to science have been opened wide to the children of the workers, the farmers, the working intelligentsia, and the artisans.

Some statistics on this trend were supplied:

A third of all pupils in the secondary schools of the Republic are children of workers, farmers and artisans; in 1939 they numbered only 5-7 per cent. The number of students in colleges and universities has been doubled since before the war. Of the students of the Republic 34 per cent are children of workers and farmers; in 1939 they numbered between 2.5 and 3 per cent only. Workers' and Farmers' Faculties have been set up. The number of pupils in vocational schools has grown by 150 per cent.

What the GDR Law did not state was that its extension of educational opportunity to a wider group was not based on a

³⁶Gesetze der Jugend der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Berlin (East): Deutscher Zentralverlag, 1953, pp. 12 ff.; trans. von Oppen, pp. 461-465.

humanistic belief that educational opportunity was the inherent right of every child, without distinction as to race, religion or social background; rather, the aim of the educational policy was to recruit a trained technological base composed of young people whose class origins would indicate a certain reliability -- and, on the other hand, to exclude from higher education a great many children whose only fault was that of being born to parents whose former class origin was not one approved of by the regime.

Political education was introduced, in extended form, in the schools. Further, authors were enjoined

to assist in the creation of a new literature for children and young people, which will promote the democratic education of the rising generation. All scholars and popular writers have the lofty task of conveying knowledge concerning the main problems of modern natural science and technology to youth by the creation of a popular scientific and technical literature. (Section VI, Paragraph 35, 1)

Control over youth was maintained in the case of those who had left school. One of the boasts of the GDR government was that "juvenile unemployment has been eliminated,"³⁷ and youth integrated into the economic system. The role of working youth was dealt with in Section I of the Law ("Participation of Youth in the Building Up of the German

³⁷ Ibid., p. 462.

Democratic Republic"); this section, essentially a paraphrase of the relevant sections of the Politburo resolution of January 17, envisaged the use of youth as shock teams to promote efficiency, overfulfilment of norms, and the introduction of "Stakhanovite" methods. In the participation of youth in the active life of the State, a special role was allocated to the Free German Youth which was, it was stated,

entitled to display its initiative ... in all questions concerning the position of youth, the improvement in the work of factories, administrations, teaching institutes, and all other offices, as well as in the fight against bureaucracy, sabotage and shortcomings at work.

The way in which the official leaders of youth regarded the role of youth in the state is seen by numerous documents released from time to time by the Free German Youth. One of the more important of these was the resolution adopted by the Second Meeting of the Central Council of the FDJ, meeting at Halle, August 14-16, 1952. The FDJ had as its role, it was stated,³⁸

the honourable task ... of being a loyal and reliable helper of the party of the working class in the building of socialism and of instilling into youth enthusiasm and devotion for the great work of national reconstruction. ... The Free German Youth has the obligation, in accordance with the inspiring words of the Secretary General of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, Walter Ulbricht, "to imbue youth with fighting spirit in order to protect our great work

³⁸ Neues Deutschland, 19 August 1952, trans. von Oppen, Documents, p. 582.

of reconstruction from the imperialist enemy and to defend the homeland.

The Free German Youth Central Council Resolution referred openly to the Leninist-Stalinist Komsomol as its prototype in political activity. Such activity centred around the use of the FDJ in the regime's "enlightenment campaign". The role of the FDJ was to

initiate the still broader development of ... socialist competition for the fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan. [The FDJ] must instil social consciousness among the young people in socialist industry and agriculture, and must train youth for the accomplishment of great heroic achievements in work, for the protection of socialist property, for the strengthening of the popular-democratic foundations of the state, and for respect for the laws of the German Democratic Republic. ... The organizations of the Free German Youth have the task of developing the mass vigilance of youth and of training youth for the implacable fight against agents, spies and traitors. ... The members and functionaries of the Free German Youth must be examples ... of a heightened readiness to fight, and must strengthen the will of young people in the constant struggle to overcome all difficulties in the building of socialism, under the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

Taken as a whole, the document betrays in almost every sentence the fact that the FDJ accepted as inevitable the relegating of Germany to the role of a mere camp-follower of the Kremlin. Besides the aforementioned reference to the Komsomol, that section of the resolution dealing with youth in industry referred to the need to apply the lessons learnt from "the experience of Soviet Innovators and Stakhanovites."

Further, a whole section was devoted to the need for thorough and slavish study and imitation of Soviet Communism (Section 4):

It is the task of the members of the Free German Youth to study the laws of the building of socialism. Every member of the Free German Youth must see a noble task in becoming familiar with the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, which enable him to solve still better the great tasks in the building of Socialism.

Of special importance is the study of the best traditions of the German people, in particular, the study of the history of the German workers' movement and the history of the CPSU (B) [Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)]

At colleges and universities the Free German Youth must intensify the fight to raise the scientific level, to increase study discipline, to assimilate Soviet science, to study Marxism-Leninism and the subjects of natural science and technology. The organizations of the Free German Youth at colleges and universities have the duty of conducting an implacable fight against the unscientific attitude, cosmopolitanism, the machinations of agents and spies, and of training the students to a strict vigilance. Students who show themselves unworthy of the high honour of being able to study at the places of education of our republic are to be removed from them.

The militaristic aspect of youth policy and the subordination of youth to the needs of the State were revealed in Section 6 of the document:

The Free German Youth trains the younger generation for the fulfilment of their patriotic duty of protecting the homeland and defending its achievements against all attacks and provocations by the American and German imperialists. Therefore, the adoption schemes linking the German People's Police with the Free German Youth are a constant task of the latter. For the protection of socialist construction it is necessary that members of the Free German Youth

should prepare themselves for the defence of their homeland and should acquire the necessary military knowledge for this. The organizations of the Free German Youth in the People's Police have the duty of achieving good results in their training and of training members to fulfil their duties in a responsible way.

The greatest encouragement is to be given to the many-sided activities of young people in sport and technical groups and their cooperation in the Society for Sport and Technology.

The Free German Youth has the great task of aiding in a decisive way the development of the organization "Dienst fur Deutschland" and bears the responsibility for the political and social training of young people belonging to this organization.

Besides using the FDJ as a means of securing "voluntary" enlistment in the militarized People's Police (Kasernierte Volkspolizei, a euphemism for an East German Army), the FDJ itself was, from the end of May, 1952, provided with small arms which were to be used for military training of members. The militarization of the young was furthered in August, 1952, with the formation of the "Association for Sport and Technology" (Gesellschaft fur Sport und Technik -- GST). This paramilitary organization offered instruction in such "sports" as gliding, parachute training, weapons training (including automatic weapons), handling and servicing of automobiles, and use of radio equipment. A high level of efficiency and proficiency was maintained by the organization, whose system was modelled on the Soviet DOSAAF, successor to the pre-war Osoviakhim. However, an observer familiar with inter-war Germany would have

seen something more indigenous: he might have felt himself transported back in time to the days of the Hitler Youth.

As well as offering a positive program to capture and indoctrinate youth, one which would capitalize on the natural desire of adolescents for excitement, belonging to a group, et cetera, the Communists took care to negate the effects of such groups -- the family and the Church in particular -- that, traditionally, could claim some influence over the future generation. The concept of the social responsibility of the family was written into the laws of the Republic; that is, the highest duty of the family was to raise the children to be true servants of the State. As in the Hitler Youth, the impressionable members of the FDJ were taught that it was their duty to help convince their parents of the beneficial nature of the State -- the State was pictured as the higher mother and father, from whom all good things flowed. Children from "bourgeois" families were constantly reminded, in word and deed, of the concept which laid it upon them to prove, by their actions, that they were willing to make amends for their "unreliable" social origins. Thus, in its concept of familial relations, as with other aspects of social life, the SED regime sought to warp the normal bases of non-political life and to bring within its control the component parts and sum total of life within the borders of the German Democratic Republic.

Religion and Culture

The Church, in many ways, was a tough nut to crack. Having experienced the results of an a-political stand during the Nazi period, having attempted, too late, to take positive action against totalitarianism, the church organizations, and in particular, individual socially-conscious pastors, had learnt the necessary of making religion and life come together. As

religious life throughout Germany began to revive and to develop an organizational base after the war, the Church (through study groups, Evangelical Academies, et cetera) had taken a lead in encouraging the discussion of political and social problems on the basis not of party lines but rather the needs of the people. East Germany was, in contrast to the Western Zones, predominantly Protestant; the German Evangelical Church, the major Protestant group, had, as its head in and for East Germany, a very resolute individual -- Bishop Dibelius. It soon became evident that a revived Kulturkampf between Church and State was in the offing.

For one thing, the Church could not and would not ever agree to the harnessing of Christianity to the chariot of expanding Communism. It could not but regard as blasphemy statements such as the one made by the zonal CDU chief, Otto Nuschke, who addressed the Sixth Party Conference of the zonal CDU (October 16, 1952) and took as his slogan: "Christians, fight with the CDU for Unity, Peace and Socialism." This might, out of context, appear innocuous, but by the end of the period of consolidation, the zonal CDU had become a group subordinated to the control of the SED regime, and could twist a phrase with the best of Communist dialecticians.

The East German constitution guaranteed freedom of religious practice and it was not expedient for the regime, during its campaign for reunification of Germany according

to Communist plans, to depart too openly from this promise. For, in its campaign to prevent the rearmament of West Germany, the Communist Party there relied on religious and humanitarian scruples on the part of the non-Communist population to provide a fertile seedbed for its propaganda against the Western alliance. Should the SED proceed too openly against the Church, should the East German regime proscribe religious life entirely, a yawning chasm would open up between the West German Communists and those whom they hoped to use as unwitting tools. Therefore, in its struggle against Christianity, the SED regime had to proceed piecemeal -- religious newspapers were prevented from circulating, compulsory FDJ meetings were held at hours which conflicted with private religious lessons, religious groups were heavily taxed and forced to make "voluntary" contributions to various State and Party fund-raising drives, and individual clerics were accused of crimes against the State. Most important of all was the all-pervasive anti-religious indoctrination carried out among youth; religion was pictured as reactionary and effete, a folly of the older generation to which "enlightened" youth need not subscribe.

One other group also posed some danger to the Sovietized system which was being built up. Traditionally, in all societies, intellectuals have formed a free-moving social group, not susceptible to traditional division of societies into social and economic classes. If, in "bourgeois" societies,

disaffected intellectuals provide a medium in which the germ culture of totalitarian change can develop, so also, if not properly tended to, intellectuals in totalitarian societies may form a nucleus from which dangerous concepts of freedom and the full life may spread to the population at large. Therefore, the first care of a totalitarian regime, whether of the left or the right, is to gain control over the media by which ideas are disseminated (radio, the press, et cetera). This is a relatively easy task, since it is axiomatic that a State party will arrogate to the State the established channels of communication and influence and will not scruple to dictate to the agencies in charge of press and communications exactly what line is to be followed. The next step, however, is a more serious one -- the control, not only of the agencies by which ideas are disseminated, but also of the very people who create these ideas and put them into communicable form.

The extent to which the SED had gained control of intellectual life -- at least, of open intellectual activity -- may be seen by examining the official pronouncements of the regime itself. For example, on March 17, 1951, the Central Committee of the SED issued an important resolution concerning "the fight against formalism in art and literature and for a progressive German culture."³⁹ This resolution cited

³⁹ Dokumente der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, Berlin (East): Dietz Verlag, 1952, Vol. III, pp. 431 ff., trans. von Oppen, Documents, pp. 554-561.

government decrees of March 31, 1949, and March 16, 1950, as providing the basis for "the development of a truly democratic culture in Germany." What this type of culture meant was illustrated by a quotation from the resolution of the SED's Third Party Congress (Berlin, July 20-24, 1950):

Cultural policy teaches men to be true democrats, citizens to act independently and responsibly, highly skilled expert personnel to put all their abilities at the service of peace, progress and democracy.

Education to this end can only be given in an implacable fight against the cannibalistic teachings of the imperialist war-mongers. Every attempt to present these hostile ideologies in an objectivist manner means the dissemination of, and therefore the strengthening of, these ideologies. It is therefore a decisive task of cultural policy to bring about a fundamental change in all fields of cultural life and thus to put an end once and for all to lukewarmness and conciliation.

Art in the service of the State, ideas under the domination of official ideology -- these were the watchwords which the SED took from the experience of the Soviet Communist Party. No longer was art to be allowed to serve its own ends, the quest for truth and beauty; no longer was intellectual achievement to be measured by the standards of humanism and hedged about with the scruples of scholarly objectivity. The tree of culture, so recently felled by one totalitarianism was not to be allowed, by the successor totalitarianism, to establish its young roots in the fertile soil of uncircumscribed inquiry. Rather, it was to be bent to the dictates of the ruling elite and was to be a chained symbol of an

enslaved people.

Therefore, the SED resolution lashed out against "useless ... formalist art" and against those who would "deny the fact that the decisive importance lies in the content, the idea, the thought of a work." According to the Communists, the quest for expression through form which might not be immediately recognizable was a criminal fallacy:

When form in art is not determined by the content of the work of art we get abstractionism ... [which, since it is] in contradiction to objective reality cannot convey knowledge of objective reality. If art does not convey knowledge of reality, it does not fulfil its high mission, since, according to Karl Marx, art is the practical artistic method at all stages in the development of humanity of assimilating the world in an act of cognition.

Not having too much confidence, perhaps, in its ability to persuade the intelligentsia to regard Marx as the paragon among art critics, the SED resorted, as had the Nazis earlier, to an appeal to nationalism:

In order to prepare the peoples of the American satellite states for their task of pulling the chestnuts of American imperialism out of the fire in a third world war and in order to paralyse the resistance of the peoples in the camp of democracy and peace, those who look after the interests of the imperialists make all efforts to destroy the national dignity and the national consciousness of the peoples.

A decisive ideological weapon used by imperialism for attaining this criminal aim is cosmopolitanism. In art it is formalism in all its variations which in the first place fulfils the task of undermining and destroying the national consciousness of the peoples. It is therefore one of the most important tasks of the German people to preserve their national cultural

heritage. The task of our artists and writers must therefore be to develop a new German democratic culture on the basis of the cultural heritage.

Whence was the "German democratic culture" to arise? Was it to arise from the heart of all that was best in German intellectual history -- from the tradition of Goethe, whose birthday had been the occasion for SED festivities in Weimar? Was it to be based, in music, on the tradition of Beethoven, or in lyric poetry, on the tradition of Heine? Decidedly not. The GDR might picture these intellectual giants on its postage stamps, but to follow in their footsteps would be condemned as "petty bourgeois nationalist particularism." Who were Goethe, Beethoven, or Heine, in comparison to Stalin? Therefore, writers, artists, musicians were officially reminded that "in order to develop a realistic art, we take our orientation from the example of the great socialist Soviet Union, which has created the most progressive culture in the world."

Perhaps one is too hasty in condemning the SED's resolution, perhaps, after all the regime does revere the works of the giants of German intellectual life. Does not the resolution state "It is necessary for students to be introduced to the classical heritage and for the works of the classics to be made the subject of special study"? But no, the classics are not those which come to mind immediately. For the very next sentence states, "A study of the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin

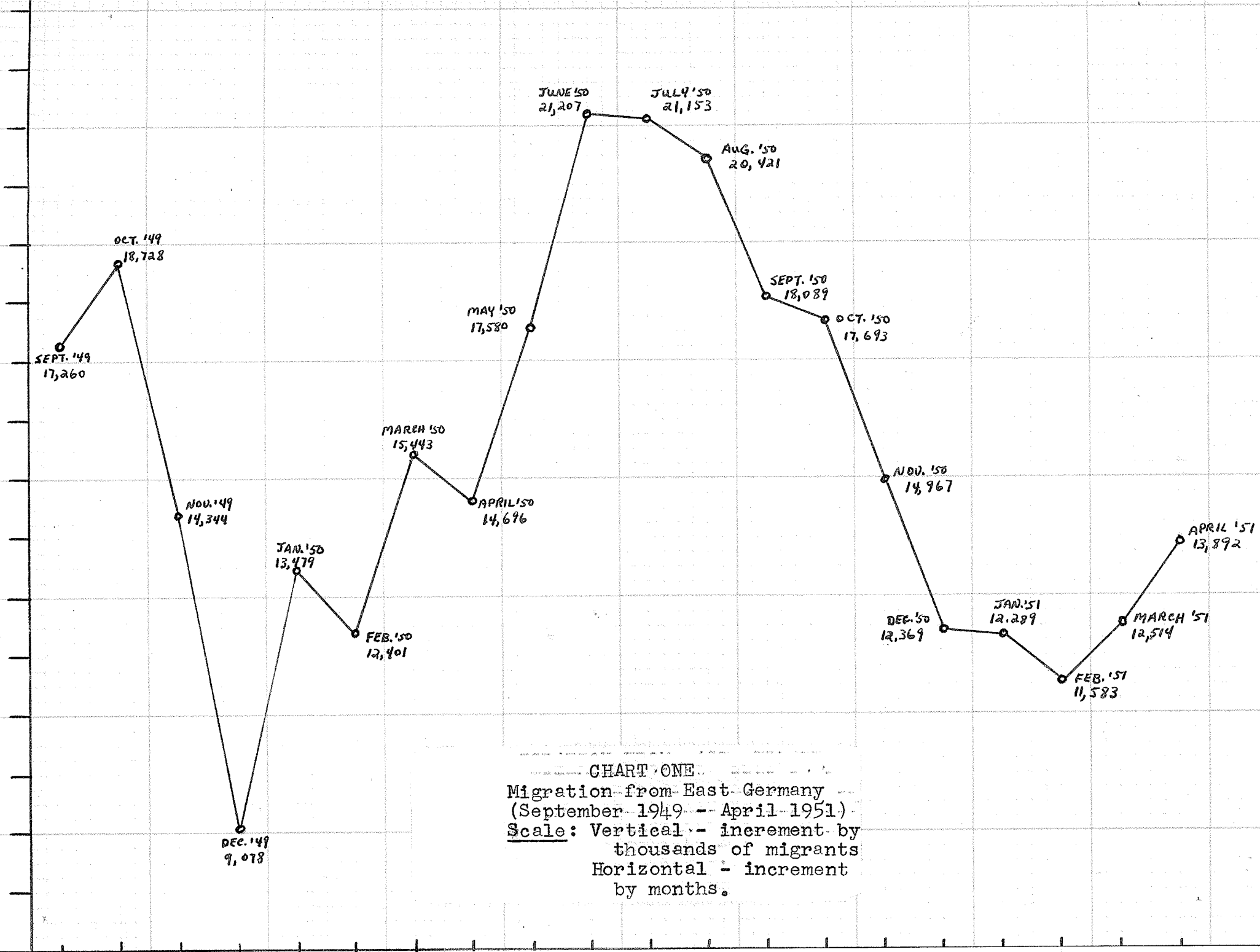


CHART ONE
 Migration from East Germany
 (September 1949 - April 1951)
 Scale: Vertical - increment by
 thousands of migrants
 Horizontal - increment
 by months.

and Stalin [the Communist classics] on dialectical and historical materialism and on art and literature is the decisive precondition for a correct understanding of the role of art in the development of society."⁴⁰

Thus the intelligentsia was to be subject to "criticism and self-criticism" on the Soviet model, a practice which tended to degrade the creative intellect. Unfettered creativity was to be debased, "realism" exalted, and the artist strictly regimented. His purpose and methods were brutally spelled out for him:

... Our artists must depict life correctly, i.e. in its progressive development. This requires knowledge of the development of life as it is. The typical circumstances of our time in which typical characters are to be depicted truthfully are the new social conditions in the German Democratic Republic, that is, the struggle for the solution of the vital problems of our people.

In accordance with these conditions, a truthful and historically concrete artistic rendering must be connected with the task of educating men and women in the spirit of the struggle for a united democratic, peace-loving, and independent Germany, for the fulfillment of the Five Year Plan, for the fight for peace.

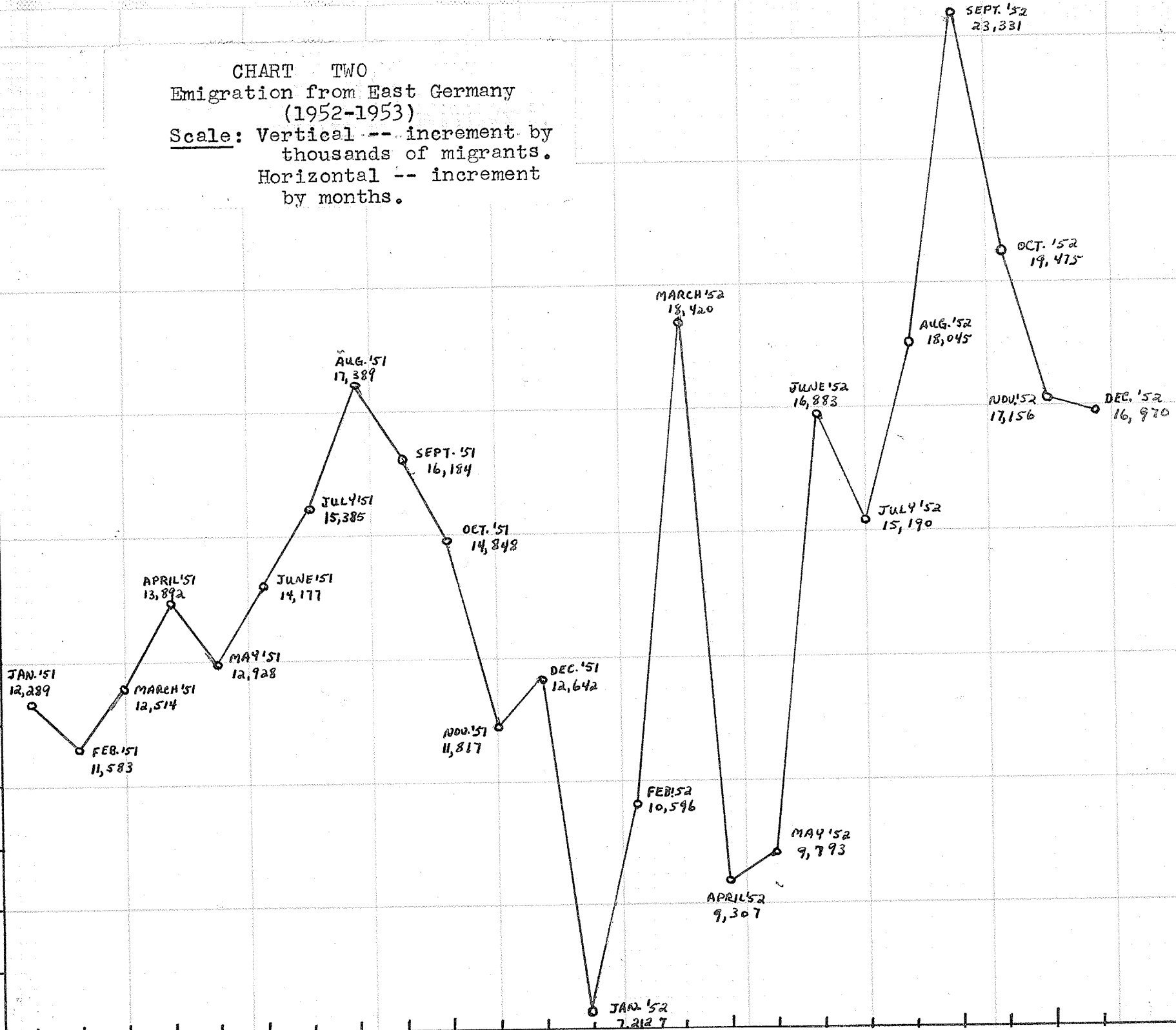
The Refugee Movement During the Period of Consolidation

It is highly improbable that one important aspect of East German life was included among the list of suitable topics to be subjected to "truthful and historically concrete artistic rendering." This was the refugee movement, whereby hundreds of thousands of East Germans undertook, by flight, to

⁴⁰ Von Oppen, Documents, op. cit., p. 559.

CHART TWO
Emigration from East Germany
(1952-1953)

Scale: Vertical -- increment by
thousands of migrants.
Horizontal -- increment
by months.



solve for themselves their "vital problems," without waiting for the State-approved solution.

Ostrich-like, the SED hid its head in the sand and dismissed much of the refugee movement as flight of fascistic elements, agents, provocateurs, slackers, et cetera. This is rendered ridiculous once one realizes that, in the period October 1949 to December 1952, inclusive, some 589,689 refugees were registered officially by the officials of the Federal Republic's reception centres. The influx varied from a minimum of 7,227 registered refugees entering West Germany and West Berlin in January, 1952 to a maximum of 23,331 in September of the same year.⁴¹

The breakdown of these statistics according to six-month periods (with the exception of the period October-December, 1949) is as follows:

1949 (October to December)	42,150	
1950 (first six months)	94,806	
(last six months)	104,692	
Total 1950		(199,498)
1951 (first six months)	77,383	
(last six months)	88,265	
Total 1951		(165,648)

⁴¹ See accompanying chart, showing fluctuations in the number of registered refugees entering West Germany and West Berlin each month from September 1949 to December 1952, inclusive. For the exact monthly figures, as compiled by the Federal Republic's Statistical Office, see the relevant Appendix to this thesis.

1952 (first six months)	72,226	
(last six months)	110,167	
Total 1952		(182,393)

A fruitful analytical standard of comparison is arrived at by analysing the more prominent variations (highs and lows) of migration during the period under consideration. Four groups of statistics may be isolated:

	<u>Months Selected</u>	<u>Mean Average</u>
1. Extremely low	January 1949 (7,227)	7,227
2. Moderately low	December 1949 (9,078); February 1951 (11,583); April 1952 (9,307).	9,989
3. Moderately high	October, 1949 (18,728); August, 1951 (17,389); March, 1952 (18,420).	18,179
4. Extremely high	June 1950 (21,207); September 1952 (23,331).	22,269

For the year 1952, percentage figures are available showing the breakdown of the flood of refugees into occupational classes. The bulk of the flow of refugees (aside from 11.7% classed as miscellaneous) was comprised of workers and artisans (20.3%), transporters and tradesmen (13.7%) and farmers and

stock-breeders (7.5%) -- in all, accounting for some 41.5% of the flow of refugees. The leading role played by these occupational classes reflects the social pressures which were at work against them during the period of Sovietization. A number of other classes contributed to the total refugee movement to a lesser degree, either because their relationship as a whole to the overall population total was, in itself, small, or because, as a group, these occupational classes were especially necessary to the regime and were, accordingly, granted certain concessions: thus, technicians and graduate engineers accounted for 1.8 percent of the total, doctors and hospital personnel for 4.9 percent, civil servants, lawyers and judicial personnel for 2.6 percent, intellectuals and artists for 3.2 percent, and retired people for 1.5 percent -- a further 14 percent. Wives, school children, and children arriving with parents completed the picture with a total, for these classifications, of 32.8 percent.⁴²

Many of the reasons for the ebb and flow of the refugee movement during this period will already be apparent, both from the detailed account of political, economic and socio-cultural Sovietization in the years under discussion, and from the class

⁴²"Qui sont les refugies est-allemandes?" Est et Ouest, Bulletin de l'Association d'Etudes et d'Information Politiques Internationales, Paris, 1-15 January, 1959, p. 22.

composition of the refugees. However, certain leading causative trends might be summarized at this point. The first is the general campaign against the middle class, small entrepreneurs et cetera; these classes contributed most noticeably to the flow of refugees during these years. Further, in the period when the campaign against the bourgeois parties was being pressed with vigour, the ranks of the refugees were swelled by great numbers of minor civil servants, petty municipal, trade union and party officials, who did not, however, receive the publicity accorded the leading party figures who came to the West.

Insofar as a cause-and-effect pattern can be traced, it should be noticed, at least, that certain fluctuations in the flow of refugees either coincided with or followed closely upon certain key internal developments. Of course, this does not mean that post hoc, ergo propter hoc. However, we should not overlook the fact that June, 1950 and September, 1952 were the months of the highest flow of refugees for the period; in the former month, the "Collective Works Agreements" were introduced, while the latter month followed hard upon the foundation of the "Society for Sports and Technics," and forced recruiting for the ODD and the People's Police, and the general intensification of radical Sovietization.

The flow of refugees was also affected by the regime's control measures. In view of the serious situation, which was draining off a proportion of the population alarming not only in its total sum but also in its composition, the GDR regime took steps to render "flight from the Republic" more difficult.

These steps became more noticeable in the summer of 1952, beginning on May 16 when the Frontier Police (Grenzschutzpolizei) were reorganized as troops under the operative control of the Ministry of State Security. This was followed by requests from the various Land governments to the central administration to the effect that the latter should assume full responsibility and should take vigorous steps for the "defense" of the demarcation line (for example, the Saxon appeal of May 23).

In late May and early June the central government began to implement such measures. On May 26, an extraordinary session of the Council of Ministers authorized the Ministry of State Security to take the necessary steps for completely sealing off the frontier; requirements for the issue of interzonal passes for East Germans and of residence permits for visitors to the territory of the GDR were tightened, and supervision of the pass system was centralized in the Volkspolizei of the central government. This was supplemented by the Ministry of the Interior's regulation of June 11, 1952, calling on all persons who were maintaining a second domicile in the GDR either to withdraw from their major place of residence or leave East Germany. A further provision for serious penalties for residing in the GDR without a validated Identity Card or a residence permit and interzonal pass was followed by a careful check on the passes held by inhabitants of East

Germany.

One of the most important measures enacted at this time was the regime's ordinance on continued steps for defence of the Republic. The State Security Service was empowered to extend its actions against "diversionists, spies and saboteurs" into the whole of the territory of the regime, rather than solely along the border, as had hitherto been the case.

The ordinance further provided for the creation of three "security" zones along the whole length of the frontier.^{42(a)} Immediately on the frontier, a strip 10 yards wide was denuded of all trees and shrubbery and ploughed up; anyone entering this strip was liable to be fired upon without warning. Next to this 10 yard "death zone" was a further 550 yard "security zone", which could be entered only by holders of a special Security Forces pass. Finally, over the whole of the frontier, a three-mile strip was marked off paralleling the border; all inhabitants were evacuated, except especially trustworthy persons; entry was only by special permission of the Ministry of State Security.

The entire system was sealed by the passage of a harsh punitive measure directed against those who had fled

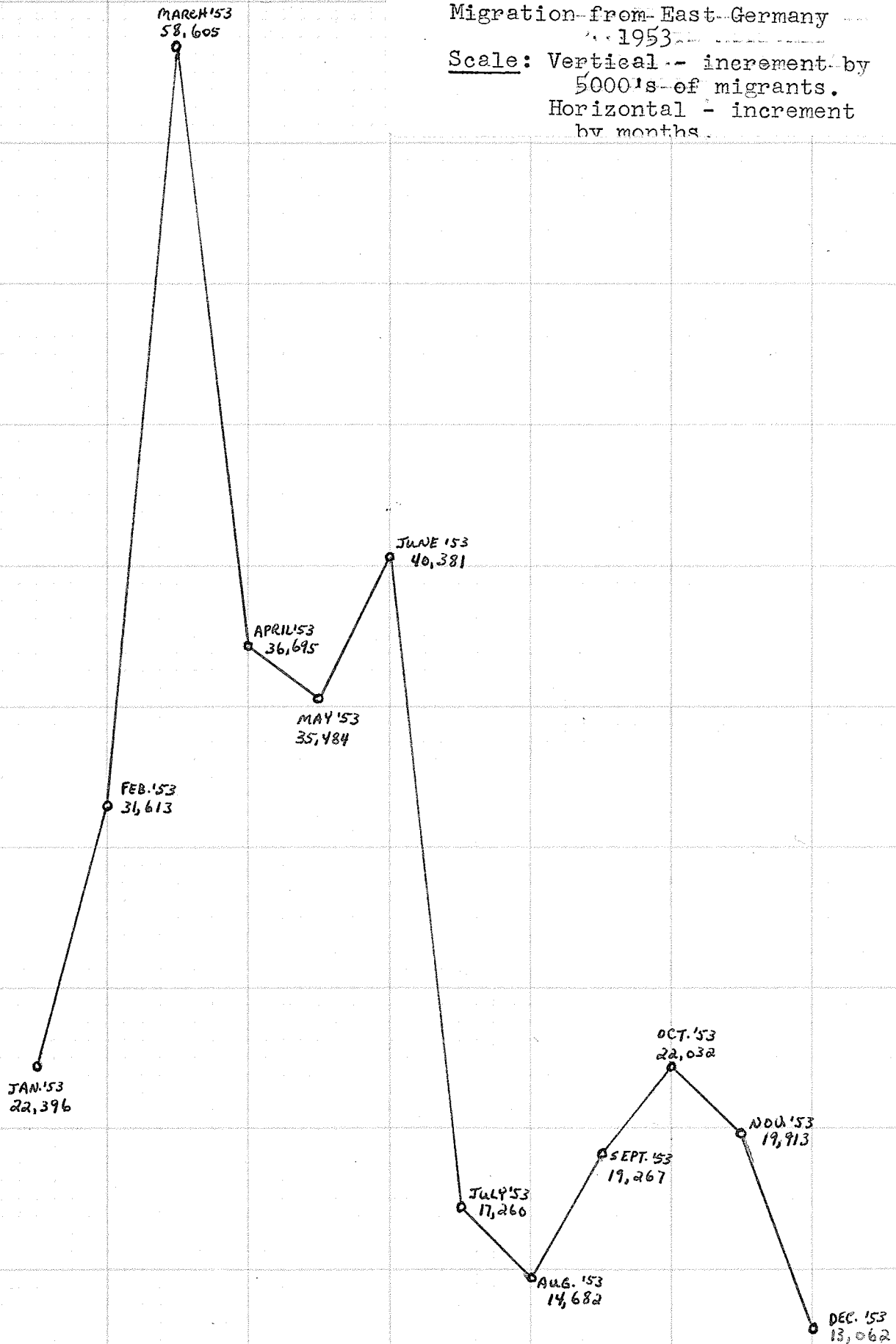
^{42(a)} "Frontier", in this context, refers to the frontier between Eastern Germany and the Federal Republic, but not the boundary around Berlin as a whole or between the eastern and western parts of that city.

the Republic; more important, the new law was intended to scare off those who might contemplate a similar move. This so-called Ordinance for the Protection of Property, passed by the Council of Ministers on July 17, 1952, provided that

the property and possessions of persons who leave the GDR without carrying out police regulations as to notification of address or who prepare to leave the GDR is to be confiscated. Confiscated agricultural property will be dealt with under the regulations on the carrying out of democratic land reform. In addition property in the GDR of persons domiciled or permanently residing in the western occupation zones or in the western sectors of Berlin will be put under the protection and provisional administration of the GDR.

These measures were to provide the bases of the regime's counter-measures against the refugee movement. In its struggle to fight the flow of refugees, the government relied on strong measures; however, these strong measures often only proved to be a confession of weakness, a factor which intensified the difficulties in the regime. The very law which sought, by evacuating persons from the three-mile zone, to render flight through this zone more difficult, set up a wave of flight among prospective evacuees which was to prove the hollowness of the regime's efforts.

CHART THREE
Migration from East Germany
1953
Scale: Vertical - increment by
5000's of migrants.
Horizontal - increment
by months.



CHAPTER IV

1953: YEAR OF STRIFE

The strains on the population of East Germany, caused by intensification of Sovietization during the years of consolidation (1949-1952), reached a maximum of tension in 1953. Pressed beyond endurance, grasping at signs that seemed to point to a disintegration of the internal rationale of the Soviet system, the population of East Germany, in one brief and blazing instant moved, without apparent planning, into a state of open resistance to the State system. The popular demonstrations throughout East Germany, and, particularly, in East Berlin in mid-June, 1953, were, at the time, called a "revolt." Whether, in comparison to events a few years later in Hungary, this appellation is still valid is a moot point. However, as a manifestation of the workers' hostility to a system of totalitarian rule, a system which claimed, falsely, to rule in their name, the events of mid-June, 1953 were a revolt -- a revolt not so violent perhaps, but one which deserves to be remembered, along with Kronstadt and Budapest, in the annals of the twentieth century.

Prelude to Revolt

Sovietization in the German Democratic Republic reached a new level of intensity in the latter part of 1952

and the first half of 1953. In considerable measure, this was but a local reflection of the frenzied intensification of terror and uncertainty which marked the last, fear-ridden year of Stalin's life, a year when even the Soviet dictator's immediate underlings did not know what fate was in store for them.

In East Germany, the intensification of Sovietization was launched at the second SED party conference (July 9-12, 1952). This conference was characterized by the official slogan: "The building up of Socialism in the German Democratic Republic according to the model of the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies." In this process, it was declared, "the most important instrument in the establishment of the bases of Socialism is the power of the State."¹

The future course of East German development was outlined in a seven-hour opening speech by the General Secretary of the SED, Walter Ulbricht. Ulbricht announced the decision "that socialism be systematically built up in the GDR." The conference then went on to discuss the changes which were to be made in the State and economic systems -- complete reliance on the "systematic Socialism" of the USSR as a guide to East German practice, administrative reform (change in the structure of the State, both as regards central administration and local

¹Carola Stern , Portrat einer bolschewistischen Partei, p. 294.

government), reform of the judicial system (strengthening of "proletarian justice"), setting up of armed forces (actually, the open admission that such forces, the "Militarized People's Police" had already been set up), and the advancement of agricultural collectivization.²

The effects of the collectivization drive were felt immediately. At the time the decree on the formation of agricultural associations (collectives) was passed (December, 1952), only 3 percent of cultivated land in East Germany was in the hands of collectives. By March of 1953, three months later, this proportion had risen to 7 percent, and by June to 12 percent.³ This resulted in a mass flight of farmers from the territory of the German Democratic Republic. Exact figures for the first six months of 1953 are not available, but during the year as a whole, farmers and stock breeders accounted for 11.9 percent of the refugee movement (in contrast to 7.5 percent during 1952.⁴) This aggravated the food shortage in the

²Many of these "reforms" have already been discussed, in Chapter III, above. See also The Soviet Occupation Zone ... A Chronological Review, p. 52, SBZ von 1945-1954, pp. 198-199, and Carola Stern, op. cit., pp. 146-151, passim.

³Oxford Regional Economic Atlas ... Eastern Europe, p.40.

⁴These percentages, which do not include wives and families of farmers, are taken from the tables (based on West German statistics) printed in "Qui sont les refugies est-allemandes?" Est et Ouest (Bulletin de l'Association d'Etudes et d'Information Politiques Internationales), Paris, No. 207, 1-15 January, 1959, p. 22.

Tables showing percentage breakdowns of refugees according to (a) major occupational classifications, and (b) age groups, are taken from this article and appear in the statistical appendix.

Zone, since fields were left unsown and could not be properly tended to by the hastily-impressed FDJ work crews. An East Germany refugee, during the summer of 1953, presented the situation most graphically:⁵

We hadn't seen butter, margarine, or any other fats for months Potatoes /the normal staff of life in East Germany/ were first rationed and then disappeared entirely. In recent months there had been less food than ever ... The farmers were afraid of collectivization and ran off to West Germany, leaving their fields to go to seed /that is, grass/ ... Our bread became dark and very expensive ... The price of everything was going up all the time. The distribution system had broken down ... There was a widespread feeling that life simply could not go on like that much longer.

Partly in an attempt to remedy the shortage of food-stuffs and partly in order to further the nationalization of small retail enterprises, the government, in February 1953, announced new measures for the Sovietization of trade. The crisis in the food supply situation had already been illustrated, in December, 1952, by the "Hamann-Albrecht Affair." On December 9, in view of existing food supply shortages, Grotewohl announced the suspension (followed later in the month by dismissal and arrest) of the Minister for Trade and

⁵Interview with East German refugee, in Joseph Wechsberg, "A Reporter in Germany -- the Seventeenth of June," The New Yorker, August 29, 1953, cited George Sherman, "The Russians and the East German Party (Prelude to June 17, 1953)", St. Antony's Papers, No. I, (Soviet Affairs, No. 1), London: Chatto and Windus, 1956, p. 100.

Supply, Dr. Karl Hamann (LDP) and the Secretary of State for food and luxury industries, Rudolf Albrecht (DBD). In the subsequent shakeup of the distribution system, a "State Commission for Trade and Supply" was set up, with widespread powers. On February 8, 1953, the head of this Commission, Ellie Schmidt, gave notice, in Neues Deutschland, of a reorganization of the distributive system. This reorganization was to be based on the experience of the delegation which had travelled to the USSR to study the internal trade organization of the Soviet Union. It was hoped, said Frau Schmidt, that reorganization would be effective in combatting "serious shortages in the supplying of our population," shortages which she attributed to economic sabotage.⁶ In essence, the reorganization measures, implemented in the year 1953, meant the reduction of the private sector in the retail trade business from 37 percent in 1952 to 31 percent in 1953; the bulk of this reduction, by the end of the year, was taken over by a proportionate increase in the volume of trade done by consumers' cooperatives.⁷

⁶SBZ von 1945-1954, pp. 232-233.

⁷Table, "Anteil am Gesamteinzelhandelsumsatz", included in article "Handel", in SBZ von A-Z (1958 revised edition), p. 126. It should be noted that this does not present a strictly accurate picture for the first part of 1953; the bulk of the commercial reform was concluded prior to the June uprising and, initially, encompassed a somewhat sharper reduction of private trade, the bulk of which was shifted to the state retail enterprises. As a concession to

The most crucial decision made during the period was that which envisaged the establishment of "technically-based work norms." These norms were part of the government's efforts to meet, in some fashion, the drastic economic crisis in the German Democratic Republic. In his discussion of the causes of the East German rising of June 1953, George Sherman has stated⁸

... The imperative behind this drive [to increase "norms" or, as we would call them, production quotas] was the galloping inflation in the zone. Not only was industry severely dislocated by its rapid reorganization and socialization, but there was also an overwhelming stress on heavy industry to the detriment of consumer goods industry. The largest section of the population -- the workers -- were being paid money wages out of all proportion to actual production; at the same time, what was being produced did not satisfy either their needs or the needs of the peasantry. There was no incentive for increased agricultural production, a production which was already falling sharply due to the drastic collectivization of the peasantry simultaneously with the socialization of industry. There was money but no goods -- a classic inflationary situation.

What could the regime do to meet this situation? In theory, given a regime which was allowed to exercise initiative, there were a number of alternatives. One of these would have involved a relaxation of struggle on both the industrial and

workers' demands, raised in the course of the June uprising, there was some relaxation of restrictions on private trade -- by the end of the year, some enterprises had been re-established. Also, some enterprises were shifted from state to cooperative control.

⁸ Sherman, loc. cit., p. 106.

agricultural fronts. In industry, emphasis might have been shifted, in part at least, from heavy industry and the production of capital goods to light industry and the production of consumer goods. A parallel policy might have been followed in agriculture, a policy which would have involved calling off or limiting the collectivization drive, thus giving the peasantry an incentive to stay on the land and to produce the food necessary to relieve urban shortages. Such a two-fold policy, similar to that inaugurated by Lenin during the period of the "New Economic Policy," was, in fact, initiated, to a limited extent, after the events of June. However, prior to June, 1953, the SED regime could not institute such measures because they would have run contrary to the avowed policy of "building Socialism," a policy which, according to strict Stalinist doctrine, meant concentration on increased production of capital goods (with priority going to heavy industry) and, as a corollary, forced collectivization in order to provide a captive food supply which could be drawn upon by the government in order to sustain the urban proletariat.

Ulbricht had not maintained his position as "Number One" among the German Communists by departing from Stalinist practice; neither Grotewohl nor the other members of the Central Committee and the Presidium had sufficient force of character to suggest, in the first half of 1953, new lines

of departure. However, the SED neglected (or forced itself to neglect) certain basic differences between conditions in the Soviet Union and those prevailing in the German Democratic Republic. For one thing, the worker in the Soviet Union, no matter how bitter his daily existence, felt that he was making sacrifices for the sake of his own country and for his own future benefit. The worker in the German Democratic Republic could not buy this Communist propaganda line. East Germany was already moving away noticeably from possible reunification and towards greater integration with the Eastern Block. Therefore, it was evident to the East German worker that any sacrifices he made were being made, not for himself and his country, but rather for the aggrandizement of the Stalinist regime in the USSR.

Further, whereas in the Soviet Union, the farmers could not flee the country and had had to accept collectivization or perish, here, in Germany, despite increased control of the border areas, they could still escape to the West. As we have seen, many farmers, workers, and others availed themselves of this opportunity. Emigration mounted rapidly; whereas the migration in September 1952, the highest in the period October 1949 to December 1952, had been 23,331 persons, the flood of refugees exceeded this figure greatly during five out of the first six months of 1953:

January,	22,396;
February,	31,613;
March,	58,605 (highest for October 1949 to July 1957 period);
April,	36,695;
May,	35,484;
June,	40,381.

This was but a reflection of the more stringent policies of the regime. There was, however, a rationale to these policies -- that is, a rationale in terms of Communist ideology and practice. Other than increasing the supply of consumer goods and food by making concessions to the farmers and by shifting the emphasis in industry, the East German regime could seek to alter the inflationary relationship between the amount of money in circulation and the goods available in one of two ways. One way would have been to reduce wages by direct action. However, the dangers implicit in such a step were so obvious that even the East German regime shied away from it.

The other course of action, the one actually adopted, was to increase production while, at the same time, maintaining the old level of monthly gross wages. This, of course, would result in an actual fall in net wages -- wages in relation to the working hours and additional effort necessary to increase production without a proportionate increase in mechan-

ization. As Sherman has observed,⁹ in order to combat the inflationary situation caused by

the excess purchasing power which caused a constant upward pressure in prices of consumer goods ... the obvious solution was to cut down the purchasing power of the worker, and this could best be achieved by an increase in production without a corresponding increase in wages. In practice, it meant increasing the working norms.

It should be noted that had this increased production gone into consumer goods (a modification of the policy, unacceptable to Ulbricht and the Stalinists, of authorizing a general shift to consumer goods), the worker would have benefited, and there would have been a general decline in inflation, and even, possibly, better relations between regime and populace. Instead, however, the government sought to increase production primarily in the fields in which it was already concentrating in order to "build Socialism" -- that is, to continue and increase the prevailing emphasis on heavy industry. This betrayed the regime's selfish desire to escape inflation only in those areas of the economy in which the regime itself was directly involved. Costs would be cut in heavy industry through increased productivity, achieved by raising enforced norms. But the basic unit in industry, the individual worker, would be left to fend for himself in a retail world of continuing shortages, where each item would

⁹Sherman, op. cit., p. 107.

now cost even more in terms of actual work-equivalents.

At the same time that the population of East Germany was being driven to a state of desperation, important events occurred which, in their eyes, indicated a certain weakness on the part of the dreaded regime. The most important of these events was beyond the control of even those who claimed to possess the key to historical development -- the knowledge of the dialectics of that historical materialism which allowed for no accidents of chance or frailties of the human kind. For twenty-five years and more, the Communist world had been guided by one man, a man elevated to the stature of a god, dreaded and held in worshipful awe. During his lifetime, all the threads of the Communist world seemingly led to the Georgian's office in the Kremlin; it was he, Stalin, the Vozhd, "Number One", who seemingly kept the Communist world spinning on its axis. As one writer on Soviet affairs has recently observed, "Stalin was an absolute ruler who centralized to the point of lunacy and tried to make all his own decisions. If he took no action on an affair of policy, nobody else did."¹⁰ Yet, in early March, 1953, this demi-god died, and a shudder went through the Communist world. In the Politburos of the Communist Party, men, so long trained by dread experience to obey implicitly, wondered what the new "Collective Leadership"

¹⁰ Edward Crankshaw, "The Men Behind Khrushchev", The Atlantic, Vol. 204, No. 1, July, 1959, p. 27.

in the Kremlin meant, wondered whether "Stalinism" would be replaced, wondered what would happen to the sinecures they had built up so carefully over the years. And, among the population at large -- even in the Arctic prisons at Vorkuta and in the isolators of East Germany -- wild rumours of hope, of changing policies, flew from person to person. A mood of flux, a state of change, seemed in the air; no one, whether in the regime or part of the general population, knew precisely where he stood or what the morrow would bring.

The First New Course and the June Uprising

Early in the month of June the change came in East Germany -- suddenly, and too late. On May 28, 1953, the system of control in East Germany was changed to bring it into line with that which had long prevailed in the West: the military Control Commission was replaced by a Soviet civilian High Commissioner, Semionov, the former political adviser to the military body. Policies worked out during Semionov's consultations with Stalin's successors in Moscow were announced on June 9, four days after he returned to Berlin to take up his new position. This pre-uprising "New Course" was announced suddenly:

whether or not ... there was any discussion in Party circles about a possible change, the fact remains that there was absolutely no intimation of its impending enactment. The harsh policy of "rapidly building the bases of socialism" was the mainstay of East German policy up to the sudden reversal of June 9.¹¹

¹¹ Sherman, loc. cit., p. 102.

The announcement of the "New Course" decisions, as printed in the Party organ Neues Deutschland (June 11, 1953)¹² reads like a catalogue of errors, a "self-criticism" indulged in by the highest Communist authorities in East Germany. The communique reads in part,

At its meeting on 9 June 1953 the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED decided to recommend a series of measures to the Government of the German Democratic Republic which will help to bring about a definite improvement in the standard of living of all parts of the population and will strengthen security under the law Rechtssicherheit in the German Democratic Republic. The Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED started from the fact that in the past a number of mistakes were made by the Party and by the Government of the German Democratic Republic, which found expression in orders and decrees, such for instance as the decree on the reorganization of ration cards [note -- part of the policy of "starving out" the remaining middle class], the taking over of derelict agricultural units, extraordinary measures of registration and collection [of agricultural deliveries], and more rigorous methods of tax collection, et cetera. The interests of such sections of the population as individual farmers, retail traders, artisans, and the intelligentsia were neglected. Moreover, serious mistakes were made in the implementation of the above-mentioned

¹²Von Oppen, Documents, pp. 585-588.

orders and decrees in the Bezirke, Kreise, and small towns and villages. One of the results was that numerous persons left the Republic.

The regime had made a deliberate effort to eliminate the middle class -- artisans, retail traders, et cetera -- as a social and economic unit, and to coerce their agricultural counterparts, the small holders, into joining collectives. The regime had succeeded -- but too well. Neither the rural nor the urban middle class had felt that, under the intensified Sovietization, there was any sort of future left for them in East Germany and, consequently, many members of these groups had fled the Republic. Therefore, the government had, in large measure, succeeded in eliminating the middle class; having done that, however, the government was faced with a crisis in those areas of the economy which had previously been partially under private control.

The New Course announcement tried to remedy this situation by making promises of a return to legality and by catering, in word at least, to the interests of the middle class -- the peasants, shopkeepers, artisans, and non-SED intellectuals. An appeal was made, not only to those who remained in East Germany, but also, to those who had already fled to the West. Among the specific promises made were the following:

In order to increase the production of articles of mass consumption which are produced by small and medium-sized private firms, and in order to increase the network of trade, it is suggested that artisans, retail and wholesale traders, and private industrial,

building and transport firms should be granted adequate short-term credits. Compulsory measures for the collection of tax and social insurance arrears up to the end of 1951 are to be suspended ... in the whole of the private sector of the economy.

Where owners who have recently closed or sold their shops express a desire to open them again, the wish is to be complied with without delay. Furthermore, the HO is to conclude at once subcontracts with the private retail trade so that the population should be better supplied.

Parallel measures were suggested in agriculture:

... decrees on the taking over of derelict agricultural units should be repealed ... Farmers who have left their farms because of difficulties in running them and have fled to Western Berlin or Western Germany (small, medium and big farmers) are to be given a chance of returning to their farms ... or to ... an equivalent substitute. They are to be helped with credits, stocks and implements ... Penalties imposed for non-fulfilment of delivery obligations or non-payment of taxes are to be reviewed.

In general, it was suggested, persons who had fled and who would subsequently return to the GDR were to "get back the property confiscated under the decree of 17 July 1952" or to receive compensation for such property. Further, "persons who have fled from the Republic and who return must not be discriminated against because of their flight" but "should be reintegrated into economic and social life."

A general relaxation of restrictions on East-West travel was envisaged, including reconsideration of "the issue of interzonal passes ... with an eye to facilitating traffic between Eastern and Western Germany." Also envisaged was

expedition of granting of temporary residence permits for West Germans who wished to visit relatives in the GDR. Special consideration was given to intellectuals -- "Scientists and artists in particular are to be enabled to attend conferences in Western Germany and artists from Western Germany are to be enabled to attend conferences in the German Democratic Republic."

Class and social warfare which had been a permanent fixture of the educational system was to be relaxed. According to the communique,

All pupils relegated from secondary schools in connection with the investigation of pupils in secondary schools and discussions of the activities of the Junge Gemeinde [the youth association of the Protestant Evangelical Church] should be given the opportunity of taking the examinations which they have missed. Similarly, the dismissals and transfers of teachers ... are to be cancelled. The dismissals of students from colleges and universities announced in the last few months are to be reviewed at once and decisions made by 20 June 1953. Able young people from the middle classes must not be discriminated against in the matter of acceptance at colleges and universities.

All this was an admission of error, even of guilt, by those who claimed to be the government of a "democratic" state. The subsequent paragraphs dealing with judicial reform and changes in the rationing system were but a tacit confirmation of the charges which had long been levelled against the GDR -- that "justice" and rationing were but forms of civil and economic discrimination against those classes whom the Communists regarded as unreliable. Thus, it was stated,

... the legal authorities should be told to set free at once persons sentenced to between one and three years' imprisonment under the Law for the Protection of the People's Property [that is, those persons under sentence for so-called "economic sabotage"] It is also advisable to release those prisoners awaiting trial ... where no heavier sentences are to be anticipated than the legal minimum of between one and three years.

The economic parallel of class warfare was also implicitly criticized. Earlier, certain middle-class groups had been denied ration cards or relegated to a lower occupational category; now, it was recommended "that as from 1 July 1953 ration cards should once more be issued to all citizens of the German Democratic Republic and of the democratic sector of Greater Berlin in accordance with the occupational categories laid down by law."

This "first New Course" (that of early June, as distinct from that which followed the uprising) was not a policy which developed primarily in response to the internal situation in East Germany. Rather, it was a reflection of broad Soviet foreign policy decisions -- decisions characterized by a revival of the slogan of "peaceful co-existence" and by propaganda in favour of a summit conference. The general hostility between the Communist world and the West was epitomized by the division of Germany; now that Moscow's slogan was "co-existence," the continued division of Germany was a matter which had to be attended to. This division was aggravated by the antagonism

of the people in West Germany to the harsh "Stalinist" policies of the previous years, policies which had resulted in the establishment of an alien system in East Germany. The "New Course" in Germany was intended, therefore, to so modify conditions in the territory of the German Democratic Republic as to enable the Soviets to persuade the West to return to the old "comradeship" of World War II.

A year earlier, six months earlier, such concessions as were contained in the "first New Course", if carried out in good faith, might have resulted in a genuine improvement in the relations between the regime and the people. Now, however, the time for such action had passed; depressed by more serious matters (such as the raising of work norms), matters not mentioned in the communique, and, on the other hand, emboldened by the death of Stalin, by rumours of the May demonstrations in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, and by the sudden about-face by the SED Politburo, the population felt that the decisive moment had come to ask for further concessions. The sharp reversal of policy, the announcement of errors and the promise of certain limited concessions contributed to the unrest which led to the revolt, since it betrayed to the population the hitherto unrevealed weakness and indecision in the ruling elite.

Particularly stinging to the general population was

the failure to make any concessions with regard to the working norms. The communique of June 9 had made no specific mention of major concessions to the working-class as a distinct group. The Communique of the Council of Ministers meeting of June 11,¹³ authorizing most of the reforms "suggested" by the leaders of the State Party, had only hinted at certain general concessions in passing:

In his explanatory statement ... the Minister-President ascribed these mistakes ... to the fact that the budget had provided for considerable expenditure not envisaged in the Five-Year Plan. Moreover, tasks laid down for the next planning year were partly taken into the planning year 1953, and certain parts of the Five-Year Plan were transferred too soon from 1955 to 1952 or 1953 in order to expedite the development of heavy industry.

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The coming period will see changes in the Five-Year Plan making possible a further improvement in the standard of living.

The failure to revise the work norms was a mistake both because the raised norms had an appreciable economic effect on the working class and also because, despite the emasculation of the trade unions, the workers seemed to possess an innate ability to organize spontaneously. According to Western estimates, net losses in real pay would amount to roughly 30 percent in the case of bricklayers, up to 42 percent in the case of carpenters (depending on class-

¹³ Von Oppen, Documents, pp. 588-590.

ification) and, in the wages of general construction workers, a reduction in daily take-home pay which would leave the worker with from 13 to 16 Ostmark in contrast to his former 20 to 24 Ostmark.¹⁴ The effect of the raised norms and the proportionate decline in real wages was realized with particular acuteness in the building trade, among the construction brigades working on the East Berlin showpiece, Stalin-Allee.¹⁵

The ten percent increase of norms had been introduced in the building trade with effect from first of May on the ground of the order of the IG Bau /Industriegewerkschaft Bau -- Industrial Union for Construction/. Up till that date the maximum wage of building workers had been about DM 3.50, thereafter DM 3.00 at most, while the average wage was only 1.60 to DM 2.00. When the men received their advances on wages on 10th and 20th May as well as on 1st June, the wage cuts were not yet perceptible. Only when the balance was paid out on 9th and 10th June did the workers realize the enormous drop in their wages. The result of this was universal dissatisfaction ...

The dissatisfaction was able to convert itself into action because the workers possessed, even under the dictatorship of the State Party, a comparative influence and a capacity for self-organization unknown by any of the other classes in East Germany. The power they had stemmed from

¹⁴United States Information Service, "The Rebellion of June 17, 1953" (unpublished report, privately circulated, prepared by the Research and Library Unit, Munich Radio Center, Voice of America), p. 14, cited Sherman, loc. cit., p. 112.

¹⁵17th June 1953: Day of Decision (no information as to date or place of publication), p. 2.

their knowledge that, in the last analysis, the regime depended upon them; that is, the regime could coerce the workers, could force them to serve the State, but it could not afford to smash, wholesale, the working-class in the same way that it had attempted to smash other social classes. The capacity for organization was one which rested on a paradox: in order to control the workers, the SED had established the captive FDGB trade union movement and had introduced a system of "work brigades"; yet, when the decisive moment came, the workers were able to brush aside the Communist functionaries, seize control of the brigades and the brigade-meetings, and use the organization, imposed by the State, as a weapon to wring concessions from the authorities.¹⁶

It is now evident that

the sudden and blundering change of policy [i.e., the decision to change from draconic measures to the so-called "New Course"] forced on the regime from without, and the attempt to implement the old norms policy already repudiated by the workers, were a combustible combination. The workers, already in a restive state from the harshness of the previous policy, took strength from the shattered morale of the Party following the about-face in policy. Its

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This is a striking illustration (in this case, an illustration of anti-Communist action) of the validity of Seton-Watson's thesis that revolutionary action depends on the weakness and lack of confidence of those who control the established organs of state power, and the ability of the would-be revolutionaries to capture the organizational weapon, already existing, and turn it to their own use.

shattered self-confidence and the obvious lack of confidence in its ability shown by the Soviet authorities, left the SED in no condition to force its demands on anyone, least of all the one cohesive class left in Eastern Germany.¹⁷

Prior to June 16, a number of manifestations of discontent occurred among the working-class in East Berlin and throughout the territory of the German Democratic Republic.¹⁸

On Friday, June 12, 1953, trouble came to a head at the East Berlin building sites. At the "Rudersdorfer Schule"

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Sherman, loc. cit., p. 121.

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A number of events are cited in Revolt in June, Bonn: Federal Ministry of All-German Affairs, 1953, pp. 2-4. These may be summarized as follows:

- May 13 Spokesmen of striking Eisleben breeze-block makers are arrested, but are quickly released after sympathetic strike in other departments.
- May 25 Forty railway construction workers give notice and there are heated discussions among other Reichsbahn workers.
- May 27 The 1000-man staff of the VEB "Fimag" strike because of norm increases.
- May 28 Three thousand workers of the Kjellberg Electro-machinery VEB go on strike.
- June 1 General sit-down strike at VEB "Negenia," Chemnitz.
- June 4 Miners at Eisleben quit work, set up barricades of empty wagons, resume work only when old norms are reintroduced.
- June 9 Some 2,000 employees protest raised norms at the important VEB Steel Works at Henningsdorf, and go on a sit-down strike until arrested co-workers are released. Raised norms are cancelled.
- June 11 Debate between farm workers and officials at Apolda.
- June 12 Riot in Brandenburg forces release of political prisoner.
- June 13 Strikes and mass disobedience at "Abus Machine VEB", Gotha, and Kopenick Cable Works.

building site, together with the "E South" site, all work stopped as workmen downed tools in opposition to the increase in norms. SED officials were able to achieve a partial resumption of work by promising to pass on the protest. In the afternoon of Saturday, June 13, a picnic outing was held to which all workers of the VEB "Industriebau" were admitted. At this meeting, individual workers came into contact with each other's point of view and the realization grew that discontent was general throughout the construction site. At the outing,

Workers from many of the different construction sites had a chance to communicate their mutual grievances to one another and to feel their united opposition ... The increased norms were the major topics of conversation ... On the steamer trip back from the outing, some who had drunk a good deal had particularly violent discussions with members of the SED. For the first time the word "Generalstreik" was heard.¹⁹

The party was not unaware of the dangerous situation, but seemed powerless to avert it. It was caught in the horns of a dilemma: the "better life" promised to the general population could not, it was felt, be realized unless the raised norms were continued; at the same time, the Party had to keep up the pretense of listening to the workers and only introducing norms "voluntarily," for the workers would be alienated completely by too forceful insistence on the norming

¹⁹ Sherman, op. cit., p. 116.

policy.

The realization, on the part of the Party -- or, at least, the revived intellectual conscience of the Party -- that something was seriously wrong with the general situation in the economy, is exemplified by an article which appeared as the Neues Deutschland leader on Sunday, June 14.²⁰ This article was pervaded throughout with the Party's new tone of self-critical weakness. It centred on the attempts to raise the norms at the Stalin-allee building site and portrays, graphically, the desperate and resentful reaction of the workers, workers over whom, in the critical situation, the SED could no longer claim any hold. According to the report, a virtual state of strike -- characterized by refusal to return to work, slow-downs, et cetera, -- had actually existed for the past few weeks. The Party hadn't handled the situation properly, for, instead of seeking honestly to remedy the causes of difficulties, the Party representatives on the site had turned, instead, to a vindictive hunt for "troublemakers." This characterized the general deterioration which the article found in relations between the Party and the People: instead of being "helpers to the brigades and working together with

²⁰ Siegfried Gruen and Kaethe Stern, "Es Wird Zeit der Holzhammer Beiseite zu Legen" ("It is time to put aside the wooden hammer!") Cited Sherman, pp. 112-113.

them [to] carry through the assessment of progressive norms", the Party workers had avoided intimate knowledge of the workers' practical problems and, without bothering to keep in touch with the men on the spot, had used bureaucratic methods to establish arbitrary norms and regulations concerning manner of work. The writers came close to the moral problem of the "party of the proletariat", the problem of how to rationalize the basis on which it ruled (allegedly, on behalf of the working class) in the following words:

... by authoritarian and administrative introduction of measures we shall repel our workers from us instead of binding them closer and closer to us.

However, all the members of the leading organs of the SED and its affiliated organizations obviously did not recognize this truth. The same day, the trade union newspaper, Die Tribuene, carried an editorial by Otto Lehmann, Secretary of the Central Council of the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB) rejecting all talk of abolishing the norms. Indeed, said Lehmann, the New Course announcements of June 9 and 11 only made it more imperative that the norms be carried out to the letter. The New Course was intended to raise the living standard of all parts of the population, but this could not be achieved without fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan, which meant, in fact, the absolute maintenance of higher work norms in order to achieve "growth in workers' productivity through the strictest economy."²¹ In other words, the

²¹Cited Sherman, p. 117.

workers would have to work harder and faster to pay for long-overdue reforms which the government was introducing as a kind of "blackmail" to the hostile population.

The Tribuene article was discussed by workers coming to the building sites in the early morning of Monday, June 16, and was taken as an indication that the regime had no real intention of meeting the requests forwarded to the government, through the SED representatives, at the end of the previous week. By 8:30 in the morning, SED functionaries found it impossible to stop the workers from meeting. At the meeting of workers at Bloc 40, Stalinallee, during the breakfast break, it was decided not only to send representatives to the government but also to have the entire work brigade accompany them when they presented their demands.

Spontaneously, word reached other sites of this action, and the original group was joined by workers bearing crude banners stating "We demand a lowering of the norms." By ten o'clock the procession included approximately 1,000 to 2,000 construction workers, and work had halted throughout the building sites. By two o'clock, the time the marchers had reached the "House of Ministers" on Leipziger Platz, the original march had grown into a full-fledged mass demonstration, a demonstration which SED speakers from the Agitprop section were unable to halt.

The first effects of the demonstration -- not yet

an uprising -- on the government were seen in an announcement that the norms had been rescinded. This announcement was first made over the East Berlin radio at 3:30 P.M., Monday, June 16.²² The concessions contained in this announcement had been wrung out of the government by the alarming demonstrations. The increase in norms was, in fact, only withdrawn provisionally, pending a review of the decision of May 28 by a joint government and trade union body. The Party, although it stated that it realized that norms should only be introduced voluntarily, stated that it had not changed its basic position:

A new way of life can be built and the living conditions of workers and the population as a whole can only be improved by raising labour productivity and production ... The initiative of the most progressive workers in voluntarily raising their working norms is an important step on the road to building a new way of life -- a step which shows the whole people the way out of existing difficulties.

But this concession was no longer satisfactory in itself. The demonstrations had spread and reached a new intensity. In Berlin, by the seventeenth, the demonstration had turned into an uprising which was only aggravated by the introduction of Russian troops and tanks to coerce the population. Moreover, the Berliners were not alone -- throughout

²² British Broadcasting Corporation, Summary of World Broadcasts, Part III (Germany and Austria).

East Germany, as the news spread, the government and the Soviet authorities were faced by outbreaks of popular discontent, outbreaks varying in intensity from place to place, but, in total, serious enough to cause the Communist authorities to fear for the security of their regime. In most places, as in Berlin, the local German communists lost confidence in themselves and proved unable to quell the demonstrations; Soviet arms had to redress the balance.

Most important, the very aims of the people's movement were transmitted, as the demonstrators began to feel their united strength. In sum,

though the demonstrations and strikes began over the question of working norms, they soon went far beyond to more basic economic and political problems. The culmination was nothing less than a demand for the removal of the Government. Its penitence was not enough to placate the strikers and demonstrators. Somehow prior to June 17 they felt that the Soviet Occupation Authority, already upset by the dire conditions brought about by past policy, would let the regime fall under the popular pressure.

Yet, the uprising was something more than a fulfilment of predictions made, for many years, by the West German government through its Bundesministerium fur gesamtdeutsche Fragen.

For

at the same time, there seemed to be no clear programme for unity with the regime in Western Germany. For instance, a crude banner displayed in Magdeburg on June 17 read: "Out with Ulbricht and Adenauer. We want to deal with Ollenhauer" leader of the West German Social Democrats. There was general agreement on what they did not want -- the continued puppet SED government -- and also on what they wanted -- German unity and a

better standard of living; however, this did not include a wholesale approval of the specific system established in Western Germany.²³

The costs of the uprising were high. Loss of life probably ran considerably higher than the estimate of 25 dead and 378 wounded given by Wilhelm Zaisser, Minister of State Security, before a meeting of the GDR Council of Ministers (June 25, 1953).²⁴ Further, the uprising had been accompanied

²³ Both quotations from Sherman, p. 121. The Magdeburg banner was originally mentioned in an article by Terence Prittie, Manchester Guardian, June 24, 1953.

²⁴ Zaisser's report is quoted from the BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, III, No. 215, p. 35 (cited Sherman, pp. 122-123). Among the dead, Zaisser listed 3 members of the Volkspolizei, 1 member of the SSD (security service), 2 innocent civilian bystanders, and 19 demonstrators; the wounded, according to the official report, included 191 Volkspolizei, 61 innocent civilian bystanders, and 126 demonstrators.

Sherman also cites (p. 123) an uncorroborated dispatch which appeared in the West Berlin newspaper Die Welt, purporting to give statistics, for which no source is given, based on an alleged report made by Zaisser on July 15 to a Colonel Ilnitzki of the MVD division of the Soviet High Commission. According to this report, the total dead on or after June 17, in both Berlin and the GDR proper, amounted to some 569, composed as follows:

- 267 demonstrators killed during the riots;
- 116 SED functionaries and SSD members killed during the demonstrations;
- 141 persons shot under martial law (including 52 members of the Volkspolizei or the SSD who had refused to obey orders);
- 14 persons hanged as a result of death sentences imposed in the courts;
- 31 persons shot during violation of curfew.

The total wounded numbered 1744, including 1071 demon-

by a great deal of destruction of government property, wholesale defection of police and minor functionaries to the West, and, as soon as it seemed clear that the uprising was being crushed by the Soviet Army of Occupation, a flood of refugees that brought the June total to 40,381. In view of the drain on the basic human resources of the country and the serious threat to the regime, it was clear that ameliorative measures were called for. Thus the "second New Course" came into being.

"Carrot and Stick" -- the Aftermath
of the Uprising

The official attitude of the East German regime towards the revolt and its causes was well indicated in the proclamations released at the time over the signature of Grotewohl, the Minister President.²⁵ These blamed the revolt on the "provocations" of "fascist and other reactionary elements in West Berlin ... agents provocateurs and fascist

strators, 645 functionaries, SSD and police, 28 hurt while violating the curfew.

Soviet dead comprised an additional 18, wounded 126.

Arrests (up to July 10) amounted to 5,143 demonstrators, of whom 2,917 had been released without sentence, 1,076 had been given jail sentences (totalling 6,321 years) and 1,150 were still under investigation at the time. In addition, 1,756 police, members of the SSD, and members of the SED had been arrested, for not proceeding energetically enough against the demonstrators.

²⁵"Statement" and "Further Statement by the Government of the German Democratic Republic on the Berlin Riots" (June 17), Neues Deutschland, June 18, 1953, quoted by von Oppen, Documents, pp. 590-591.

agents of foreign Powers and their accomplices from German capitalist monopolies." The official line was that

while the Government of the German Democratic Republic directs its endeavours towards the improvement of the standard of living of the population by new and important measures, paying special attention to the situation of the workers, mercenary elements, i.e. agents of foreign Powers and their accomplices belonging to the circles of German monopoly lords, have tried to foil these Government measures.

Nevertheless, as the East Berlin broadcast of June 16 seemed to indicate,²⁶ there was some recognition of the real causes of the revolt, the general dissatisfaction with continuation of certain rigorous policies -- for example, raised norms -- at the same time that the regime had already made concessions in other fields. Thus, Ulbricht and the SED-regime in general came to realize that it was necessary to placate the population (offering them "the carrot") at the same time that punitive measures were being adopted (threatening the population with "the stick").

The government was hard-pressed and did not know where to turn. The only path that seemed to offer some hope was that of negotiation with the Soviet Union for the abolition of certain requirements established during the occupation period. Thus, it came about that an East German delegation travelled to Moscow in August of 1953; they were able

²⁶Q. v. above, p. 161.

to secure certain concessions, beginning with an agreement on reparations and financial assistance. These concessions were to be rounded out in the first quarter of 1954 by the transfer to East German control of the last of the Soviet Joint-Stock Companies (SAGs) and by the conferring on the German Democratic Republic of full recognition as a sovereign state.

The Moscow Conference of August 20-22, 1953, devoted a great deal of its time to the question of German unity and its communique reiterated the traditional Communist propaganda line on this point:²⁷

... the abnormal conditions must be abolished under which Germany, ... eight years from the time when the war in Europe ended, has no peace treaty, is split into western and eastern parts and occupies an unequal place in relation to other states.

With this aim in view, a peace conference must be convened in the near future and the participation of Germany at all stages of the preparation of the peace treaty must be assured as well as her participation at the peace conference. For the restoration of the national unity of Germany on the basis of peaceful, democratic foundations, a provisional all-German government must be set up by means of a direct agreement between Eastern and Western Germany. Its main task will be the preparation and carrying out of all-German elections, as a result

²⁷ "Joint Communique on Negotiations Between the Soviet Government and the Government Delegation of the German Democratic Republic, 20-22 August 1953" (August 22, 1953), New York Times, August 24, 1953, Neues Deutschland, August 24, 1953, /some variation in texts/, cited von Oppen, Documents, pp. 592-594.

of which the German people alone, without interference from foreign states, will settle the question of the social and administrative structure of a united, democratic and peace-loving Germany.

Actually, such a declaration served, in the minds of the German Communists, to shunt aside demands for political reform in the territory immediately under their control. This declaration, in effect, served warning on the populace that political questions would not really be settled until such time as Germany was unified. Meanwhile, it was hoped, the attention of the population of East Germany would be diverted from the need for immediate political reform within the German Democratic Republic and channeled effectively into serving as pawns in the Communist campaign for reunification along the lines advocated by the Soviet Union.

In the economic sphere, the negotiations were more fruitful. According to the communique, the Soviet Government had decided "on the alleviation of the financial and economic obligations of Germany connected with the consequences of the war", including

the termination of reparations from the German Democratic Republic as from January 1, 1954;

the handing over without payment to the ownership of the GDR the Soviet enterprises in Germany;

the reduction of expenditures incurred by the GDR in connection with the existence of Soviet Forces on GDR territory to a sum not more than 5 percent of the revenue of the GDR state budget;

the release of the GDR from payment of debts in foreign currency, incurred for external occupation expenditure, which have accumulated since 1945;

the release of Germany from paying back to the Soviet Union debts incurred in post-war years.

The cynic may observe that this generosity was a very hypocritical one; in actual fact, the Soviet Union had already been paid back whatever had been assessed against the GDR, in the form of both open and "hidden" payments. Nevertheless, the Soviet government might have continued to exact occupation and reparations payments, had it not been concerned for the fate of its puppet regime. The elimination of certain categories of payment must have certainly been regarded by Ulbricht and Grotewohl with gratitude.

The communique also mentioned "agreement regarding the putting into practice of a number of political and economic measures aimed at assisting the further development of the material economy of the German Democratic Republic and the rise of the material well-being of its population." It was these measures, based on Soviet assistance, to which the SED-regime turned in its search for a sop to offer the population. Thus, following mention of "agreement ... on ... the strengthening and development of economic, cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between the USSR and the GDR", special attention was directed to the agreement

providing for

deliveries in 1953 by the Soviet Union to the GDR of goods in addition to the present trade agreement, to the value of 590,000,000 rubles, including food, coal, rolled ferrous metals, copper, lead, aluminum, cotton and other goods.

It should be noted that, with the exception of food supplies, most of the categories specified listed raw materials. Such materials were already being imported into the GDR from the other satellites; but, instead of being converted into consumers' goods for the benefit of the population, they were being processed and re-exported. It was up to the regime, and to the general staff of Soviet area economic planners, whether the new supplies would be used in the same way.

Further, the agreement also provided for "credits to the value of 485,000,000 rubles, including 135,000,000 rubles worth of free currency, ... granted on a computation of 2 percent per annum to be paid off during two years, beginning in 1955."

Finally, the communique mentioned "certain measures ... [to] be taken to release German prisoners of war ... with the exception of those who committed particularly wicked crimes against peace and humanity."

The economic aspects of the Soviet-East German accord were spelled out in a Protocol appended to the communique.²⁸

²⁸"Protocol Concerning the Ending of German Reparations Payments and Concerning Other Measures to Ease the Financial and Economic Obligations of the German Democratic Republic Connected with the Consequences of the War," (August 22, 1953), Neues Deutschland, August 24, 1953, quoted von Oppen, Documents, pp. 594-596.

According to this Protocol, the cessation of reparations payments to the Soviet Union and Poland would amount to a saving to Germany of some 2,537 million dollars (1938 world prices) which would have been still outstanding as of the 1st of January, 1954.

The transfer to Germany of Soviet Corporations is interesting, in that the Protocol gives some indication of the extent of Soviet control. Included in the transfer were to be

33 engineering, chemical, metallurgical and other enterprises in Germany, which became the property of the USSR through reparations payments, to the total value of 2,700 million marks.

Further, according to the Protocol,

the Soviet government releases the German Democratic Republic from indebtedness to the sum of 430 million marks, arising as a result of the concession of 66 Soviet industrial enterprises in Germany, made in 1952 by the Soviet government to the government of the German Democratic Republic.

Within the German Democratic Republic, certain measures were adopted as a direct result of the June uprising. On June 24, a week after the rising, the SED Central Committee ordered a mass propaganda campaign, centered on the larger industrial centers. This campaign, during which all high party officials spoke, was devoted to an attempt to quiet the workers; in the course of the campaign, speeches were made which were notable for their "self-critical" attitude. A

further indication that the Party, in its anxiety to restore equilibrium, was anxious to placate the workers, was contained in the announcement by Max Fechner, Minister of Justice, that membership in a strike committee would not be considered, of itself, a punishable offence (June 29, 1953).

Numerous high officials were made scapegoats in the regime's efforts to restore calm. Thus, for example, on July 14, Albert Hengst, a member of the SED Central Committee, was expelled from the Party for "capitulatory conduct and tactical support of provocateurs" and Bernd Weinberger, Minister of Transport and Agricultural Machinery Construction, was severely admonished for similar offences. The purge was continued on the 16th of July with the dismissal and arrest of Fechner, accused of "activity hostile to the Republic," and his replacement by Hilde Benjamin, who could be relied upon to enforce more stringent "proletarian justice" in proceedings against the strikers of June 16-17. At the fifteenth plenary session of the Central Committee (July 24-26, 1953), the "defeatists", Wilhelm Zaisser (Minister of State Security) and Rudolf Herrnstadt (former editor of Neues Deutschland) were expelled from the higher organs of the Party. All these cases were but examples of a more widespread purge which was taking place at all levels of both the Party and the Government.

The fifteenth assembly of the SED Central Committee

was notable for the announcement of "the New Course and the tasks of the Party," officially endorsed by both Grotewohl and Ulbricht. The "New Course," which paralleled similar programs adopted in the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies (for example, in Hungary, under Imre Nagy), was intended, according to the official announcement, to effect

a serious betterment of the economic situation and the political circumstances in the German Democratic Republic ... and on this basis, to raise significantly the living conditions of the working classes and of all productive persons.²⁹

According to the discussions following this announcement, the SED planned to shift emphasis, to some degree, from heavy industry to light industry; this was a result both of the events in East Germany and of the general shift, throughout Eastern Europe, which paralleled the early Malenkov policy in the Soviet Union. Similarly, relaxation was shown in the State policy with regard to artists and writers, education, et cetera.

The economic aspects of the "New Course" were, to some degree, implemented during the following months. Thus, for example, a new secretariat of State was established for local economy (November 26, 1953), which was, according to promises, to effect improved deliveries of goods, easier financial credit, and a revision of tax schedules for private

²⁹Carola Stern, Portrat einer bolschewistischen Partei, pp. 169-170

enterprises.

Despite certain concessions, however, the "New Line" course also contained certain policies which had a definite connection with the worst features of the pre-June situation. Thus, at the sixteenth meeting of the SED Central Committee (September 17, 1953), Ulbricht announced that work norms, which had been in a state of flux since the uprising, would be raised, although not to the level earlier attempted. This policy he justified as being necessary if production was to be raised to a level which would enable the regime to meet the increased demand for consumer goods. Further, the appeal launched on October 4 for the return of farmers who had fled the Republic contained a definite threat that the property of all those who did not return by October 15 would be turned over to the collectives (that is, the Agricultural Production Associations).

In spite of these dark spots, an examination of refugee movements in the last six months of 1953 shows some confidence in the regime on the part of the population. Of course, tighter controls over attempts to leave the territory of the GDR, controls which were part of the overall revision of the security system following the June uprising, had some effect in reducing the number of refugees entering West Germany. Nevertheless, although the monthly flow of refugees was generally higher than that prevailing through much of the

pre-1953 period, it stands out as distinctly lower than that of the first six months of 1953.³⁰ A great deal of this reduction in the flight from the territory of the GDR must be attributed to the ameliorative measures introduced by the regime.

Taken as a whole, 1953 was a year of crisis for the East German regime, and this is reflected by overall refugee movements. Not only the gross refugee statistics, but also those percentages which divide the refugees into occupational and age groups betray this fact. The year saw the East German population depleted by the flight of almost a third of a million persons (331,390), almost double the number who fled in 1951, and 150,000 more than those who fled in 1952. A comparison of available figures on composition of the refugee movement is also enlightening.³¹ In 1953, the total included

³⁰The figures for the last six months of 1953 are:

July	17,260	October	22,032
August	14,682	November	19,913
September	19,267	December	13,062

As can be seen, with the exception of the September and December figures, all of the above are approximately the same as or higher than the "moderately high" level established for the 1949-1952 period (q.v. Chapter II); the October figure stands close to the 1949-52 high of 23,331 for September 1952. However, in none of the last six months of 1953 did the monthly statistics on refugees approach the scale of from 31,613 to 58,605 which prevailed during the period February to June, 1953.

³¹As throughout the thesis, the information on occupational and age-level composition of the refugees is taken from "Qui sont les refugies est-allemande?", Est et Ouest, Paris, No. 207, 1-15 January 1959, p. 22.

4,731 soldiers (compared to 2,900 in 1952), the highest figure for this occupational group to be reached at any time during the period 1952 through 1957. Actually, the percentage rise in occupational groupings (and, we should remember, these percentages operated on a much larger absolute numerical base) was shown only among three main groups:

	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>
Farmers and stockbreeders	7.5	11.9
Retired people	1.5	3.5
School children, children arriving as part of family groups	19.8	23.9

Among a number of occupational groups -- technicians and graduate engineers, doctors and hospital personnel, civil servants, lawyers and judicial personnel, and housewives -- the statistics remained relatively the same in both years. One group, students enrolled in universities and professional and technical schools, for which 1952 figures are not available, contributed only negligibly to the total flood of refugees -- some one-tenth of 1 percent. However, even this gains some significance if we figure, on the basis of normal distribution in advanced countries, that the total higher school and university population of the zone would amount only to about 1 to 3 percent of the total population.

The percentage figures for a number of occupational groups show a decline in 1953, as compared with 1952. Thus, for example, the category "workers and artisans" shows a decline from 20.3 percent (1952) to 15.8 percent (1953),

despite the state of tension existing in industry. We should remember that the artisan class, which contributed to the refugee movement in this category, had gone through its greatest trials in the pre-1953 period; the number of artisans who still might be left in the Republic and who might be tempted to flee was small, relative to the population in general and compared to earlier years. The workers, on the other hand, had felt their strength in the course of the June uprising; they were guided, in part, by a willingness, after the demonstrations, to wait for a while and see whether the government was going to pay heed to their protests. Further, some downward pressure on refugee movements among the industrial workers was caused by the prevailing opinion that the West German boom, which had continued to mushroom since 1948, had passed its peak, and that the demand for workers in West German industry would not be as heavy as had hitherto been experienced.

To some extent, both in relation to events and in relation to the refugee movement, the last six months of 1953 are characterized by a temporary pause. Thus, 1953 stands out as a turning point, during which both regime and people surveyed the past and looked anxiously towards the future.

CHAPTER V

YEARS OF FLUX (1954 TO MID-1957)

The years after the uprising should be compared to the earlier periods in the history of East Germany and the Communist regime. The years 1949 to 1952, during which the figure of Stalin had dominated the situation in the Communist world, had been the years of "Sovietization", the years in which the regime had consolidated its strength in the GDR and eliminated or neutralized those political, social and economic groups which might, conceivably, pose a threat to its security. In this process, it had continued and intensified certain policies whose beginnings were to be found in the period of Soviet Military Administration. The year 1953 marked a turning point, in which the regime faced a crisis characterized by the hostility of that very group in whose name it claimed to rule -- the working class. The uprising had been crushed, mainly because of Soviet intervention, and the regime had attempted to gloss it over by spreading a thin coating of ameliorative measures, the so-called "New Course", over the raw wounds which had been left. However, it was still necessary to find a permanent basis for SED rule, one which would not demand, periodically, the use of Soviet tanks and bayonets if the Communist regime was to survive. One thing was certain,

as the regime moved into the new period -- whatever concessions might be made, the search for stability would have to be undertaken within the framework of a Sovietized East Germany, a Germany which was part of a general system of satellite states. The uprising had shaken the regime, but it had not convinced it that the main features, as distinct from some of the particular policies, established during the 1949-1952 period should be undone.

The Search for Stability

To a certain extent, events in East Germany had always been conditioned by what took place in the West. After all, the Communists always hoped to gain, or at least, neutralize the western part of Germany. A key factor in Soviet policy had been to prevent or to minimize the role which even a part of Germany could play in the Western alliance. Thus, great efforts had been made to prevent the establishment of an independent Federal Republic in West Germany. The Federal Republic having become a fact, the Communists, who had been working on an administrative plan for East Germany, used this as a pretext for the establishment of the German Democratic Republic. It was hoped that the GDR would counter the effect of the Western establishment of the Federal Republic.

Similarly, through most of the early 1950's, the Soviets, who were all along re-militarizing their satellite

state, used East Germany as a pawn in a propaganda campaign for German reunification intended to prevent the West Germans from re-arming and from becoming full members of the NATO alliance. The signature of the Paris treaty, providing for a European Defence Community of which West Germany would be a member (May 27, 1952),¹ and the entry into force, on July 25, 1952, of the treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, of which West Germany was an integral and essential part, proved to the Soviet Union that its attempt to isolate West Germany had failed. Despite the failure of the French assembly to ratify EDC, there could be no doubt that West Germany was considered an essential part of the Western defence system and that, sooner or later, the contractual and legal basis for this would be worked out. This was confirmed by the agreements reached in October, 1954 ending the occupation regime, and admitting West Germany to the newly-formed Western European Union, thus permitting her to join NATO; the whole system was capped on May 5, 1955, with the formal announcement of the full independence of the Federal Republic.

These developments made it clear that the German

¹The way for the Federal Republic's entry into the EDC was paved by the Bonn agreements, signed by the three Western powers and the Federal Republic (May 26, 1952, q.v. von Oppen, Documents, pp. 616-626, even-numbered pages). These signified West Germany's continued progress towards full sovereignty.

problem would have to be settled on the highest level, as part of general East-West talks; that is, having failed either to woo West Germany by reunification propaganda or to scare away the Western suitors, the Soviet Union would now have to face the alliance as a whole, as represented by the leaders of the West's "Big Three" powers. An abortive attempt at discussion of the German problem was made at the Berlin talks of the Foreign Ministers of the four powers (January 25 - February 18, 1954). At these discussions, the West based its stand principally on the demand for free all-German elections as the necessary prerequisite for the formation of a German government, which would then be allowed to exercise free choice whether or not to join any system of alliances. The Russians, on the other hand, proposed that a provisional all-German government be set up first, as a result of direct negotiations between the two opposing German regimes, elections under its auspices to follow only after such a regime had been set up; further, any future German government would be forbidden to join any alliance deemed hostile to the Soviet Union. The talks bogged down in a deadlock caused by inability to reconcile these positions.²

The Soviet reaction to the breakdown was to grant the

²Gordon Connell-Smith, Pattern of the Post-War World, Harmondsworth (Middlesex), Penguin Books, 1957, 105-106. For a fuller account, see The Efforts Made by the Federal Republic of Germany to Re-establish the Unity of Germany by Means of All-German Elections, and Die Berliner Konferenz der Vier Mächte, both issued by the West German government, 1954.

German Democratic Republic full legal and diplomatic recognition as a sovereign state and to proceed to bind her even more closely into the system of satellite states, thus sealing, for the foreseeable future, the division of Germany into two fully-established, sovereign states, each with its own attachment to rival political, economic and military alliance systems. The statement of the Soviet government on the occasion of its full recognition of the German Democratic Republic as a sovereign state observes that in view of the failure to achieve

a solution of the German problem in accordance with the interests of strengthening peace and securing the national reunification of Germany on a democratic basis ... by practical measures for a rapprochement of Eastern and Western Germany, the holding of free all-German elections, and the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany,

the Soviet government found it necessary to take certain steps -- the end of the occupation regime and the establishment of full diplomatic relations -- "even before the unification of Germany and the conclusion of a peace treaty."³

With reference to the granting of sovereignty, the East German government crowed

The German Democratic Republic is now a sovereign state conducting a policy of democracy, peace and European security, in accordance with the Four-power Agreements.

Western Germany, on the other hand, finds herself in a dependent and degrading position as a result of

³Von Oppen, Documents, pp. 597-598.

the policy of the three Western Powers and the Adenauer Government. She is shackled by the Occupation Statute of the three Western Powers and is in danger of enslavement for the next fifty years by the Bonn and Paris war treaties.⁴

In fact, the German Democratic Republic was bound, at least to an equal degree, to the Soviet system of security in Eastern Europe. Some of the aspects of the East German arrangements may be regarded in a favourable light, or, at least, ambiguously. Thus, for example, the various East German agreements with Poland and Czechoslovakia, for example, that with Poland demarcating the frontier along the Oder-Neisse line, though far from ideal went a long way towards alleviating the long-standing hostility between Germany and these states.⁵

One of the early steps taken for the integration of the GDR into the satellite system, economically, had been its inclusion in the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (COMECON)⁶

⁴"Statement by the Government of the German Democratic Republic Concerning Sovereignty" (March 27, 1954), Neues Deutschland, March 28, 1954, cited von Oppen, Documents, p. 599.

⁵See ibid., pp. 497-500 for the German-Polish frontier agreements of June 6 and July 6, 1950. The eventual agreement by West Germany to a similar arrangement, sometimes rumoured, would probably be of great importance in alleviating European tension and in reducing somewhat Polish dependence on the Soviet Union.

⁶Tagliche Rundschau (organ of Soviet Control Commission), September 30, 1950, cited ibid., p. 520.

the so-called Soviet bloc counterpart of the OEEC (September 30, 1950). The inclusion of East Germany in this agency for the coordination of the economies of the Soviet bloc and for their subordination to the needs of the USSR was followed, in October, by the Prague meeting of the representatives of the Soviet Union and all the satellite states, including the German Democratic Republic. This conference issued a communique outlining the Eastern European plan for German reunification, and, more important, discussed the steps which were to be taken for the full integration of the GDR into the East European system.

Naturally, the move towards solidarity was somewhat concealed during the period in which the last desperate attempts were being made to hamper West Germany's adherence to the Western system. However, after the decision to grant "sovereign status" to the GDR, the move towards integration was intensified and brought into the open.⁷ Thus, in December 1954, representatives of the parliaments of the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia met in Prague to declare their unshakeable opposition to Western rearmament

⁷The tendency of this move towards integration was revealed in late 1958 and early 1959 with the announcement that East German economic planning, as was to be the case throughout the Eastern bloc, would be synchronized with the Soviet long-range fifteen-year Plan.

and their loyalty to the "Socialist camp" headed by the USSR. This was followed, on the 14th of May, 1955, by the establishment of the Warsaw "Mutual Defence Pact." The GDR was a signatory to the Pact and to the appended instruments creating a joint command under Soviet Marshal Konev; however, since the East German army was not officially "created" until January, 1956, it was not until the 28th of that month that it could become an active partner in the Soviet-bloc pact.^{7(a)}

The shift from emphasis on reunifying Germany along Communist lines to recognition that, for the time being at least, this was impossible and that emphasis should be placed on firm alliance with the other satellite states, had an intangible but nevertheless definite effect on the refugee movement. Human emotions are not readily discernible. Yet, who would deny that one of the most deep-seated of human emotions is love for one's own home, leading to reluctance to leave that home. During the period of reunification propaganda (that is, the pre-1954 period), many East Germans endured all suffering, privations and repression rather than flee from their homes.

^{7(a)} For documents relating to the setting up of the Warsaw Pact and the joint command (May 14, 1955) and the incorporation of East German forces (January 28, 1956) see United States of America, 84th Congress, 2nd session, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Disarmament, Disarmament and Security: A Collection of Documents, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1956, pp. 551-555.

In part, this was due to an emotional belief that, despite the insincerity of communist reunification propaganda, Germany unity might eventually come about. In part also, this was dictated by the fear that, even if they fled the Zone, they would soon have to face a reunified Germany under Communist domination -- that is, there was no place to hide. But, after 1954, a great many East Germans gave up hope in reunification and, at the same time, encouraged by Western steadfastness, fled the territory of the East German state. They, like many others, saw West Germany's entry

into NATO along with the open signs of East Germany's complete integration with the Soviet bloc as the irrefutable and final marks of the division of Germany.

While the East German regime was searching for some stabilizing balance as part of the general East European system, a similar search for stability was taking place with regard to the internal affairs of the German Democratic Republic. On the one hand, the Party clung to its determination to continue the old policies of "building Socialism", but it had realized, after the June 1953 uprising that these measures had been tempered by real or apparent concessions to the population. However, this was rendered most difficult, since it was seemingly impossible to reconcile the regime's objectives with the demands of the population. The people of East Germany demanded not only apparent reforms, but also, real measures of social, economic and political change, tending away from Sovietization. In the given situation, it was neither the intention nor within the capacity of the regime to launch such a sweeping popular program.

Thus, by the summer of 1955, Ulbricht was forced to shed all pretences and to plump solidly for semi-Stalinist measures. Speaking before the twenty-fourth plenum of the SED Central Committee he denounced "the dissemination of false theories concerning the pre-eminence of the consumer

goods industries" and attacked those in the Party who sought to deny the pre-eminence of building up heavy industry.⁸ He stated emphatically that

At no time did we intend to adopt, nor did we ever adopt, such a false policy ... Many of you have wondered to yourselves that I have not used the designation "New Course." The distinctive feature of such a policy is not that it is "new" but, rather, that it is false. And I can not help but draw the fangs of those "gentlemen" who would indulge in such notions.

To some extent, this reversal of the "New Course" in industry -- a policy which, in any event, had not really caught on -- was made possible by the downfall, in February, 1955, of Malenkov, the Soviet Premier who had seemed to show a more flexible policy with regard to meeting the demands of the people. His successors seemed, for a time at least, to be more devoted to orthodox methods of economic planning, and the East German government followed suit, prompted by Ulbricht's very noticeable leanings towards unreconstructed Stalinism.

In agriculture, available figures show that by December, 1954 the proportion of arable land under the control of the collectives had reached 14 percent,⁹ as compared to 3

⁸Carola Stern, Portrat einter bolschewistischen Partei, p. 173.

⁹Oxford Regional Economic Atlas ... Eastern Europe, p. 4.

percent two years earlier. Further intensification of the campaign is indicated by Ulbricht's decision, announced in December 1953, to press for the introduction of "State Farms" along the model of the Soviet Kolkhozi; in these, there would be no pretense that the farmers were co-owners, associating voluntarily -- rather, they would be simply hired employees, working for the State. There is a dearth of figures showing the progressive socialization of agriculture during this period, but it must have been rapid, for, by 1958, the combined proportion of agricultural production under "social ownership" -- that is, the total both of "State Owned" and "Agricultural Production Society" land -- amounted to some 37.8 percent of arable land.¹⁰

In the retail trade, the situation of the private stores remained about the same as in 1953, although there was some small shift away from the consumer cooperatives to the HO's and the other outlets under direct state control.¹¹ While the State had its doubts about making any sacrifices in the production of industrial goods in order to produce more consumer goods, it seemed satisfied that the commercial class which distributed these goods had been brought under

¹⁰Article "Landwirtschaft", in SBZ von A-Z, Bonn: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 1958, table, p. 187.

¹¹See table "Anteil am Gesamteinzelhandelsumsatz", in article "Handel", ibid., p. 126.

control and that, given the critical situation, all available outlets should be utilized to distribute what goods were available.

One of the most notable examples of neo-Stalinist policy during the post-1953 period was the continued campaign against the Church, a campaign which was raised to a new level of intensity. A particular concern of the regime was the continued hold of church organizations on the young people, many of whom were secretly initiated into religious life by their parents. The refugee movement and other events had led the Communists generally to despair of their ability to deal with the present generation, but they had hoped to raise a new generation that would know nothing but Communist rule and would believe in nothing but the Party's slogans. To this policy, the Church provided a stumbling block. On Dibelius's instructions, clerics did not join the general exodus of refugees from East Germany. They chose, rather, to regard their churches as battle-stations under siege, and not to show the same complacency towards Communism as many of them had been accused of showing towards Naziism during its formative period. In order to counter the Church's determination, the Communists inaugurated, by the end of 1954, a general FDJ and school campaign against the confirmation ceremony. For this religious ceremony they substituted a nationalistic one, under Free German Youth auspices, that

took on many of the aspects of the youth ceremonies of the Hitler period.

One aspect of East German policy which overlapped both the domestic and the foreign fields was the development of the Nationale Volksarmee. The army was started in 1948 by order of the Soviet Military Administration, and was disguised by being given the name Kasernierte Volkspolizei ("Barracked Armed People's Police"). Its nucleus was composed of German officers captured during the war and indoctrinated in the Soviet Union. Spread among them were key Communist personnel, and the whole was made responsible to the highest organs of state security through the "Training Office" of the Ministry of the Interior.

By 1952, the "Barracked Police" numbered 110,000, a size which was to remain generally constant throughout the next seven years.¹² The intention was to purge the army of unreliable or inefficient personnel and to keep it in being as a hard-hitting nucleus capable of rapid expansion. Party control was established at all levels, as was liason with and responsibility to the Soviet armed forces in Germany.

By the late 1950's the essential shape of the East German army had become clear. The army was composed of seven

¹² Information on the East German armed forces is taken, in the main, from John Rich, "The Reluctant Warriors," The Reporter, June 11, 1959. Further information, from a West German point of view, is contained in Helmut Bohn et. al., Die

divisions on the Russian model (two tank, five motorized infantry), organized as high-speed self-contained units, carrying with them everything needed to maintain themselves as hard-hitting units with a high degree of firepower.

In addition to the actual Volksarmee, with its air and naval counterparts, there were a number of auxiliary forces of a military nature. The Frontier Police (Grenzschutzpolizei) is a forty-thousand-man force, armed with tanks and heavy weapons and responsible, not only for the defense of the frontier proper but also for the cordoning off of an area around Berlin, to enter which a pass must be shown. In addition, heavily armed auxiliary forces are organized as "Alert Police", garrisoned in strategic spots for emergency duties. Also, there is a "Railway Police" whose job it is to protect the rail network; the seriousness which the German Democratic Republic assigns to this task is evidenced by the fact that these so-called police have been provided with their own anti-aircraft units.

Beside regular, full-time auxiliary military forces, certain paramilitary groups exist. The most important of these is the Kampfgruppe, organized after the 1953 uprising,

Aufrüstung in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands, Bonn: Bundesministerium für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 1958. The same agency has also printed a book of photographs, purportedly of the new East German army, under the title Die "Nationale Volksarmee" in der SBZ.

and now fairly strong in numbers. These groups, armed mainly with rifles and low-calibre automatic weapons, are composed of trusted men, such as the factory foremen and the technical intelligentsia -- men on whom the regime has relied for the prevention of a recurrence of 1953. Also, an important paramilitary group exists for youth and for citizens not enrolled in the Kampfgruppe. This Gesellschaft fur Sport und Technik (Association for Sports and Technology) is modelled on the similar Soviet society for physical fitness and elementary military training.

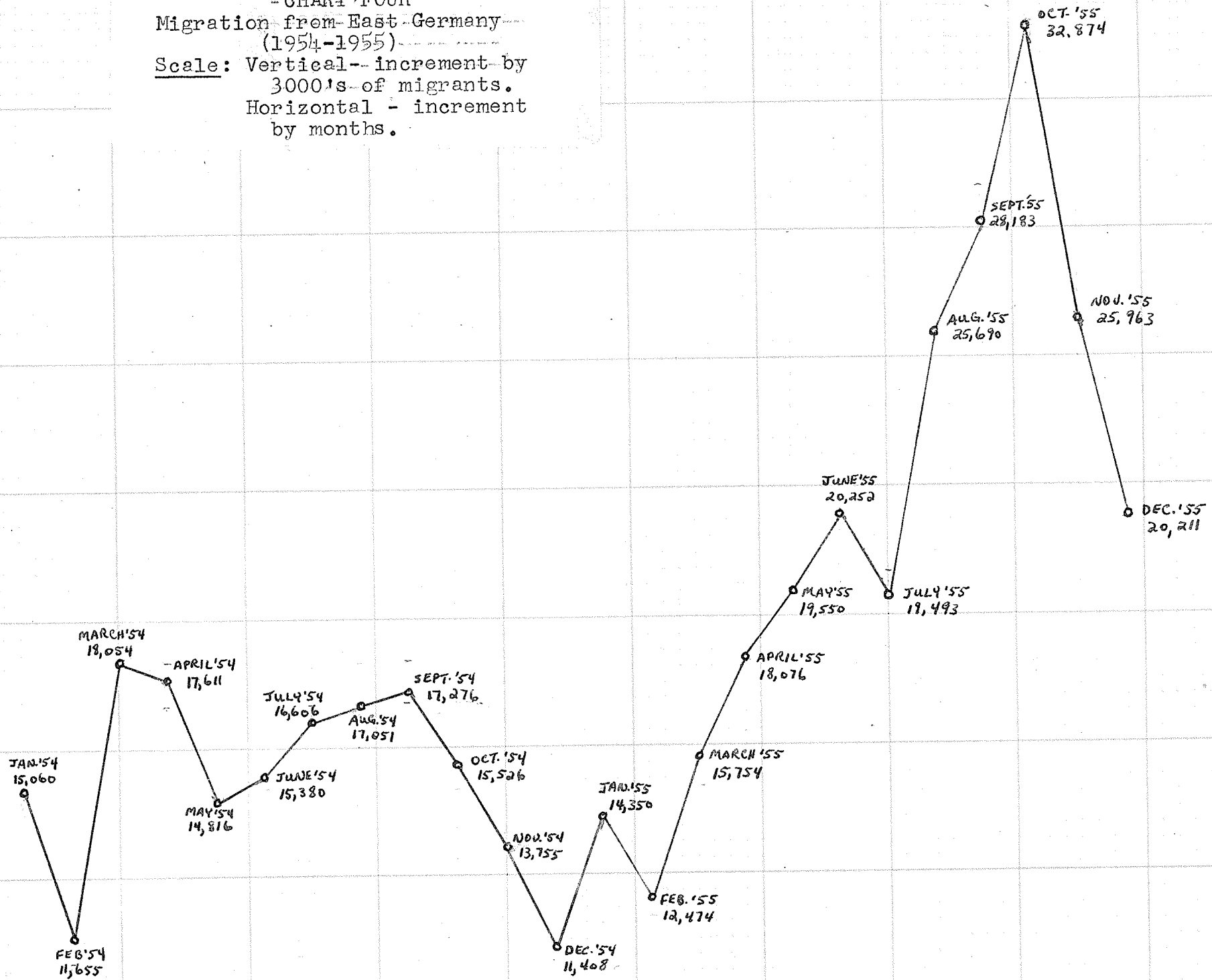
The culmination of the military police of the German Democratic Republic came in January, 1956, with the completion of the transformation of the "Barracked People's Police" (KVP) into the National People's Army, and the inclusion of Germany as a full member of the Warsaw Pact.

Recruiting for the Volksarmee is supposedly voluntary, but a form of conscription does exist. Thus, a youth must show proof of having put in time in the army or as an active worker before he can apply for higher education. Also, such organizations as the FDJ, as well as many factories and enterprises of various sorts, regularly offer up to the State a quota of "volunteers" for military service.

One noticeable result of this policy has been the small but steady stream of deserters.¹³ Another has been

¹³Est et Ouest, Paris, 1-15 Jan. 1959, p. 22. The exact figures are 2,900 (1952), 4,731 (1953), 1,848 (1954), 2,553 (1955), 2,170 (1956), and 2,706 (1957).

- CHART FOUR
 Migration from East Germany
 (1954-1955)
 Scale: Vertical-- increment by
 3000's of migrants.
 Horizontal - increment
 by months.



the regular influx of young men under twenty-five which has accounted, largely because of the de facto draft, for about one-half of the refugee figures each year since 1952.¹⁴

During the years 1954 and 1955, the overall refugee figures declined somewhat from those of 1953 and fell generally between the "moderately low" and "moderately high" levels established for the 1949-1952 period. True, the figures tended towards the high end of the scale (usually from about 14,000 to 18,000) but there was no significant reversal of the trend until the last half of 1955, when the figures began to climb again.

Thus, for example, the high for 1954 was in September, when the influx of refugees to the West German reception centres reached 17,276 (well below the mean moderately high figure of 18,179 established in Chapter III), and the low occurred in December (11,408 -- somewhat higher than the moderately low mean for the 1949-1952 period). Thus, even in

¹⁴ The same publication offers statistics on refugees under the age of twenty-five (percentage total refugee flow for given year):

<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>
52.6	48.7	49.1	52.4	49.0	52.2

Similar percentages for the age group under twenty-five and without parents shows:

<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>
19.7	17.8	20.6	24.7	17.7	20.6

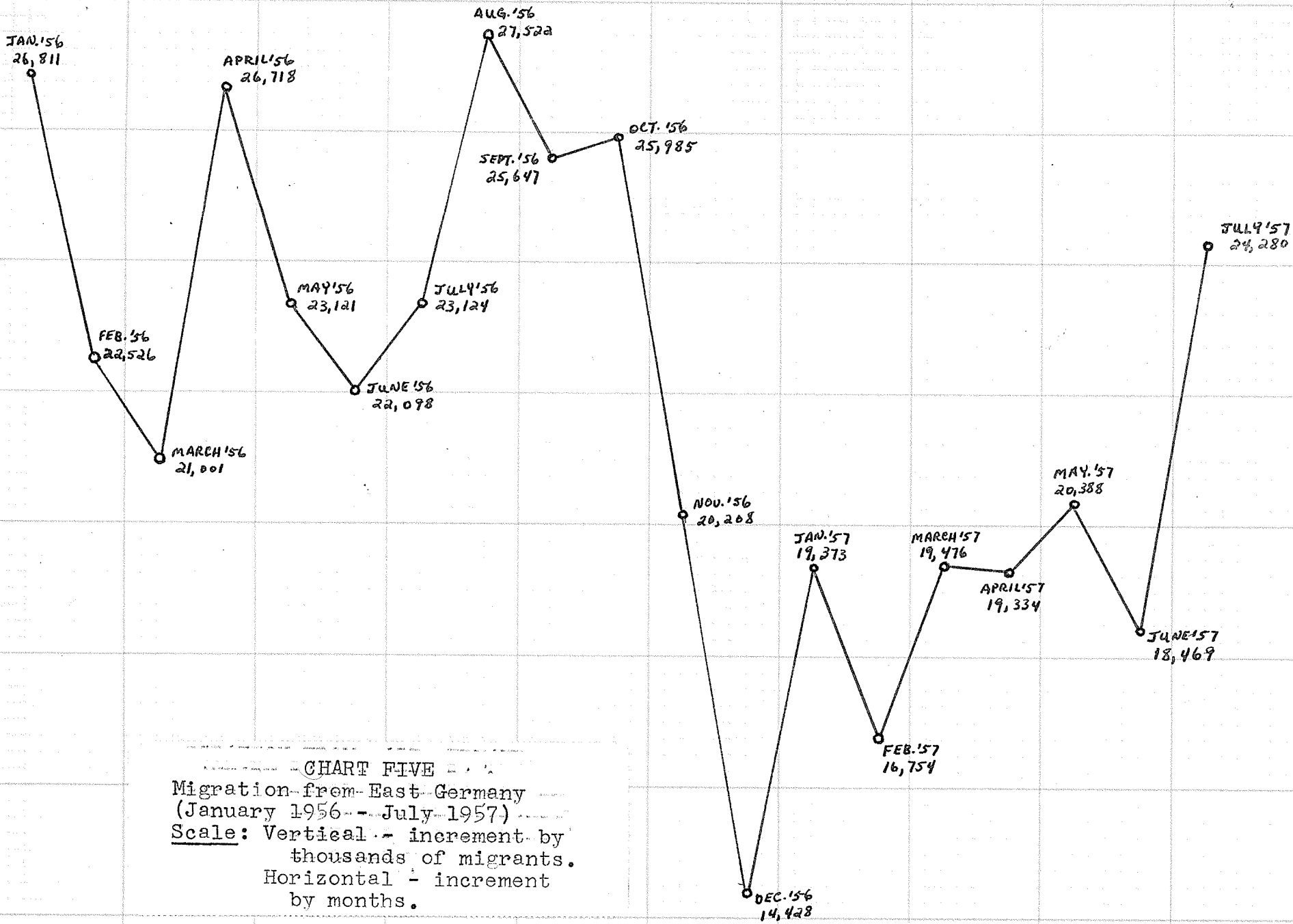


CHART FIVE
 Migration from East Germany
 (January 1956 - July 1957)
 Scale: Vertical - increment by
 thousands of migrants.
 Horizontal - increment
 by months.

1954, refugee movements had moved a notch higher than in the period of consolidation. At the same time, the 1954 figures did not approach those of the first six months of 1953, which ranged from 22,396 (January) to 58,605 (March). For that matter, with the exception of two months (August, 1953 -- 14,682; December -- 13,062) even the highest figure for 1954 did not exceed those for most of the last six months of 1953, which, after the fever wave of the uprising, were a period of general decline in refugee movements.

The statistical breakdown, by occupational groups, shows that for the 1954 and 1955 periods, the largest occupational group among the refugees were the workers and artisans (20.5% and 23.9% in 1954 and 1955 respectively, as compared to a low of 15.8% in 1953). Since, as we have seen, the independent artisans, part of the middle class, were especially hard pressed during the pre-1953 period, and reacted accordingly, it is reasonable to suppose that in the 1954 and 1955 figures for the combined group, the part which industrial workers played was greater than before. That is, the regime was losing increasing numbers of persons from that very class on whose support it supposedly depended. This but confirms the analysis of what occurred during the June, 1953 uprising. The workers' attitude of "watchful waiting" immediately after the June uprising was followed by an increase in working-class refugees, percentage-wise, in 1954-55,

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by which time it had become clear that concessions granted in the post-uprising "New Course" were not to become permanent features of regime policy.

With the stabilization of the agricultural situation, and in view of the fact that many smallholders had

already emigrated, the proportion of farmers and smallholders declined among the refugees, from 11.9 percent in 1953 to 6.8 percent and 6 percent in 1954 and 1955 respectively. Thus it yielded second place, among the working occupations, to the transporters and tradesmen whose percentage share of the total exodus remained approximately the same in 1954 as in 1953 (10.8% compared to 10.7%), and then, in 1955, rose somewhat to 12.3 percent.

Among other groups, there were in many cases relatively stable proportionate contributions. Thus, for example, we may compare the percentages for a number of the smaller groups during the years 1953, 1954 and 1955 (figures shown are percentages);

	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>
Technicians and graduate engineers	1.6	1.5	2.1
Doctors, hospital personnel	4.8	5.3	4.7
Civil servants, lawyers, judicial personnel	2.6	2.4	2.6
Intellectuals, artists	1.3	1.6	1.6
Retired people	3.5	5.0	4.4
Housewives	12.3	12.3	11.5
School children arriving with their families	23.9	21.7	20.5

	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>
Students	0.1	0.5	0.7
Miscellaneous	11.5	11.7	9.7

Thus, to a considerable degree, although the gross figures went up, the proportionate composition of the refugee movement remained somewhat similar throughout this period, and, with the exception of the farmers giving way to the transporters and tradesmen, showed no real changes in comparison to 1953, except perhaps for a slight rise in the share which professional men and technicians played in the movement as a whole.

The Crisis of 1956-1957

The development of East Germany during the post-1953 period was disturbed twice, within the space of one year, by events in the Soviet bloc which took place outside its own borders. That is, in 1956, East Germany was shaken, as was the rest of the Communist world, first by Khrushchev's February speech to the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU, and then, before the furor caused by the defamation of Stalin and the dethronement of Stalinism had properly died down, by the revolution in Hungary and the about-face in Poland.

At the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (February 14-25, 1956) a serious frontal attack was made upon the Stalin myth by Khrushchev and Miko-

yan. The History of the CPSU(b) -- Short Course, hitherto the catechism of the world's Communist Parties, was stigmatized as a false and misleading document; a serious attempt was made to turn away from the "cult of personality" and much of the terrorism of the Stalin period was officially revealed and denounced.

At the same time, a new mood of confidence was evidenced in Communist speeches and with this confidence came relaxation. The Khrushchev thesis was that the Soviet Union was no longer "encircled" by capitalist states but rather, existed as part of a world camp of friendly "Socialist" states. The relaxation which this tone of speech seemed to indicate had already been manifested a year earlier, when steps had been taken towards healing the breach which had developed between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union after 1948. Although the Communist leaders made it clear that all States in the Soviet bloc and all Communist parties everywhere would have to base policy on Leninism, there seemed, during the 1955-early 1956 period, to be some hope both that revisionist Communists might be tolerated and that peaceful co-existence might be adopted vis a vis the Western countries.

Even up to the time of Mikoyan's preliminary speech, sounding out the conferees on their ability to swallow denunciation of Stalin, the Eastern German newspapers were still full of praise for Stalin, and, for example, for his last book

-- the "Economic Problems of Socialism." Communists were enjoined to follow the wise advice of this book; one official newspaper, Des Volk, even went so far as to praise Khrushchev as Stalin's worthy disciple at the very moment when the putative disciple was busy tearing to shreds the myth of the old master.

As the implications of the Twentieth Party Congress began to be realized, certain measures began to be adopted in East Germany, some of which, of course, merely echoed world-wide Communist policy. Thus, for example, Stalin's works were no longer rated among the classics of Marxism-Leninism. Further, Puritanism reasserted itself, in reaction to the terroristic debauchery of the Stalin period; the parties, including the SED, were enjoined to revert to a course of Leninist morality, according to which all Party offenders were to be ensured a fair process of inquiry before being subject to disciplinary action.

East German papers, by the middle of March, were echoing other papers throughout the satellite bloc and the world Communist parties in pointing out the weaknesses of Stalin -- for example, his ridiculous efforts at conduct of military operations in detail. This must have been a particularly hard pill for Ulbricht to swallow, for of all the remaining Communist leaders, Ulbricht was the one who had probably the greatest claim to being called a Stalinist. If

his hero, now dead, was decanonized, so too might the disciple be required to make attonement for deeds which he had earlier carried out.

Ulbricht's position seemed weak indeed. Paradoxically, however, the threat came within the SED from young "Stalinists" rather than revisionists; that is, the threat came from those who would like to see the SED become even more of a State cadre party, even less a party which would still tolerate "petty bourgeois" elements. One part of the rebellious group based its opposition to revisionism out of a feeling that their own positions, reached during the Stalinist period, might be endangered; the other, that a concession of the mistakes made during the Stalin period would expose the Party once more to a manifest weakening of its position which would clear the way for another June uprising.

On top of this internal discussion, there came news that Poland had rehabilitated Gomulka and Bulgaria Chernikov; therefore, the SED called its third Party Conference to discuss the road which the Party should follow were it not to rely on Stalinism.

In July 1955 Khrushchev and Bulganin had visited Berlin on their way to the Geneva Conference. At that time, prior to the Conference, the Germans had been led to believe that the Russians genuinely wished to offer a chance for East-West cooperation. At the same time, the Russian leaders

spoke to the East Germans about improvement of methods in industry and in the general economy. If it were impossible to raise production by raising norms, then it would actually be necessary to establish a big mechanized production centre which would raise production by creating a level of efficiency which would render man, physically, almost obsolete. The watchwords would be "Modernization, Mechanization and Automation." The people of the German Democratic Republic were told that the technical advances of the Soviet Union would be joined to the economic achievements of the German Democratic Republic, but that in order to effect this, the people would have to work strenuously in order to fulfil the current economic plan.

Ideologically, the German Democratic Republic propagandists attempted, during 1956, to take advantage of a recession in the Federal Republic -- a recession which was a natural short-term result of the end of the post-war reconstruction boom. Thus, the people were told that East Germany would catch up with and surpass the Federal Republic, not only in the production of industrial goods, but also in the making available to the public of consumer goods. Further, much was made of the introduction of a certain measure of decentralization in the economic and administrative structure -- decentralization which was characterized by the general line "Democratization of the Administration." Greater

scope was offered, in theory, for "people's representatives" in the economy and in the administrative field to present petitions to the government, et cetera.

A sharp reversal occurred, after October 1955, in the avowed attitude of the SED towards the West German Social Democrats. Thus, the SED proposed a common front for the reunification of Germany and the struggle against "atomic death." According to Grotewohl's pronouncements in the first four months of 1956, reunification could be achieved if three conditions were met:

1. signature of a non-aggression pact between the Federal Republic and the GDR;
2. the banning of propaganda on behalf of, and military preparations for, atomic war on German soil;
3. the normalization of economic and cultural relations.

The tendency towards de-Stalinisation was offset by the reaction in the German Democratic Republic to the Hungarian revolution and the reversal of policy in Poland (October-November, 1956). The SED feared that continued de-Stalinisation might lead to similar events in their territory and, accordingly, denounced the Hungarian revolution as a "fascist" adventure, while, at the same time, showing a certain amount of coolness towards the new Gomulka regime. At the same time, on October 25, the Kampfgruppen and other

loyal armed forces were alerted to the possibility of having to take action to defend the regime (Neues Deutschland). However, the German population perhaps remembered all too well the repression which occurred after the June 1953 rising and no open violence materialized. General unrest did materialize, however, among the students and intellectuals, although this was more of an undercurrent. At the Humboldt University in East Berlin and the Karl Marx University at Leipzig, demands were heard for educational reform -- particularly, for the divorce of scientific education from political shibboleths. Further, a widespread movement developed among the intellectuals for a revival of the "national Communism" which had earlier been identified with the Ackermann thesis. If other countries could travel separate roads to Socialism, why not Germany? This movement was "headed" -- if there really was a head -- by Dr. Wolfgang Harich, chief editor of the East German Deutsche Zeitschrift fur Philosophie, a noted scholar who had established a reputation beyond the borders of the GDR.

Harich and his supporters demanded certain reforms in the GDR.¹⁵ Among these were

1. the basing of production and planning upon the need to raise the living standard, as promised

¹⁵For information on the Harich case, q.v. Carola Stern, op.cit., 214 ff., from which the main points of Harich's program are abstracted. Also useful is the article by Irving Louis Horowitz, "East German Marxism: Renaissance and Repression," Dissent, IV, 4, Autumn 1957, pp. 393-401.

by the New Course;

2. dissolution of the collectives and the legalization of the right to possess small and middle-sized farms privately;
3. re-introduction of the spirit of freedom and the intellectual autonomy of the University; ending of the struggle against the church;
4. changes in the "block system", under the leadership of a reformed SED; allowing of a choice of candidates from among those presented by the Block; an end to bureaucratic rule, and the re-introduction of the sovereignty of parliament;
5. continuation of the alliance with the Socialist camp, but on the basis of non-interference and self-respect.

These policies were repudiated by the regime. Harich suffered degradation and his followers were sought out and subjected to interrogation and loss of their jobs. Further, the campaign for the local and district elections of June 1957 stretched out for a full five months, so evident was the need to eradicate discontent in the Zone. Everything evil was blamed on the socialists and revisionists -- in fact, the campaign was a general attempt at re-education of the populace -- an attempt, once more, to convert them to docile acceptance of the status quo.

That the populace did not accept the existing state of affairs was indicated by the refugee statistics for 1956-1957. Figures once more were reaching over twenty thousand (through most of 1956, with the exception of December), or close to it (there was some fall for the first half of 1957). In general one may say that this was a period of preparation, a period of flux -- the definite movement towards a flight of pro-

professionals and technicians was gathering shape. The German Democratic Republic could not escape the consequences of its inability to satisfy its people.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS: REFUGEE MOVEMENTS AND THE STUDY OF EAST GERMANY

The study of refugee movements, against the background of the political, social and economic development of East Germany as part of the Soviet area of influence, and in relation to the general international problem, provides a valuable clue to the study of Communism in practice. The central point of such a study may very well be the relationship between public opinion and the policies of the totalitarian regime. However, information as to the public reaction to Communism is very hard to come by. Only in the course of such events as the Hungarian revolution or the events following Gomulka's return to a leading position in Poland is it possible to gain some insight into the workings of the system, as it actually affects the people who are ruled. But, even then, certain complications arise -- for example, those attendant on the availability of a vast mass of detail which is of varying degrees of reliability and which cannot easily be verified.

Germany provides a unique "window" into the Communist world. Because of the existence of a common frontier with the West, and because of the policies of the Federal Republic, which make it relatively easy for refugees to come across, we

have a constant picture of changing conditions in the East. Common language, the sense of unity which persists despite fifteen years of division, make West Germany a magnet which draws to it the refugees. It is inconceivable that an attraction of similar force exists in the case, let us say, of the Czechs and Slovaks, whose entire country is under Communist domination. Further, despite intensification of controls, the peculiar situation of Berlin provides a break in the border through which many of the refugees pass in a comparatively easy fashion. It may be difficult for an inhabitant of East Germany proper to reach Berlin, but once he does so it is relatively easy for him to travel from the eastern to the western sectors of the city, declare himself a refugee, spend some time at a reception centre, and then, either settle down in West Berlin or fly out, at government expense, to be re-located in the territory of the Federal Republic. Thus, in the last year over 95 percent of the refugees have come through this "escape hatch."*

The relative ease of movement provides the student of refugee fluctuations with a barometer of public opinion which is certainly more reliable than the votes recorded in the official Communist state elections. Indeed, Bertram Wolfe has made this point when he speaks of the "two types of Soviet election." After having examined a model Soviet election campaign, with its customary single list and over

*One writer puts this figure as high as 99 percent. Arthur J. Olsen, "Exodus from East Germany," New York Times Magazine, April 10, 1959, p.10. Olsen states that 3 million persons fled East Germany from the founding of the GDR to April, 1959; this would equal some 18 percent of the population, according to his computations.

99 percent positive result, Mr. Wolfe observes:¹

In the same Soviet Empire there is another type of election which takes place in the mind of each citizen who finds himself faced with, or seeks out, the opportunity to cross the line that separates the known from the unknown, the Communist world from the uncertain world outside.

The most dramatic instance of the exercise of this franchise has occurred in East Germany, where Berlin itself is divided and where opportunities for making a physical break are greatest and the chance to choose therefore becomes a real one. This election, too, has its statistical record.

.....

Thus there are two kinds of elections in the Soviet Empire. There is the rigged mockery in which there is only one party and everyone is driven to the polls to "vote" though there is nothing to vote about. And there is this other election, real, dangerous, illegal, punishable by concentration camp or instant death. This is the election in which men can sometimes choose between Communism and the uncertain freedom of the refugee and wanderer. In every Communist land, men have made this choice. "They have voted," as Lenin so well said of the Russian Peasant soldiers in World War I, "they have voted with their feet."

Methodology: Limitations and Possibilities

Ideally, an inductive method would be followed in any attempt to establish a correlation between refugee fluctuations and the specific policies, events, and feelings

¹ Bertram D. Wolfe, "The Two Types of Soviet Election," in Six Keys to the Soviet System, Boston: The Beacon Press, 1956, pp. 155-157.

which precipitated an increase or decrease in the monthly total. That is, one would work backward from the refugee to the specific policies: one would trace the cause by working backward from the effect. For any given period, one would examine a general grouping of statistics and then select from available interviews, case studies, et cetera, of individual refugees those which one considered most relevant for further, detailed study.² After this has been done, the researcher may then fit the information gained into the broad pattern of events, as he sees them.

Unfortunately, even if one were to have the resources and the patience to carry out such a study, the material necessary -- individual case studies, recorded at the time the refugee entered the reception camp and during the "processing" period -- is not generally available.³ Thus any

²A method similar to the one described above was used by the Harvard Russian Research Center in its study, under the supervision of Messrs. Bauer, Inkeles, and Kluckohn, of World War II and post-World War II Russian defectors. This study has yielded valuable results as to the state of public opinion in Russia at the time when the defectors were residing there.

³Of course, the West German government has on file the results of the interrogations to which each refugee is subjected. But, to the best of my knowledge, after consultation of bibliographies (including those appended to official West German publications), these materials have either not been released to the general scholarly body or they have not been systematically used.

study of the refugee fluctuations in relation to East German policies can only be tentative, preliminary to the launching of a full-scale study utilizing the basic raw material. This holds true even in the case of studies which might presently be launched by scholars with a highly sophisticated knowledge of statistical methods.

However, there is some scope for a preliminary study, and it does offer some possibilities of gauging East German public opinion. Such a study must, however, in contrast to the "ideal" postulated above, proceed in a different manner. The student begins with the establishment of basic policies for each period. He then establishes a pattern of refugee movement in general, since he is precluded from coming to grips with the problem because of lack of the essential raw material -- individual studies. Thus, he cannot work inductively, fitting each fluctuation to its proper cause; he can only work deductively, in a generalized sort of way. He cannot say, "Refugee situation A was caused by political (or social, or economic) situation B." He can only say, "During the period 1949 to 1950 certain events took place in the political sphere. At the same time, certain changes occurred in the monthly rate of refugees entering the Western part of Germany. Without denying the possibility that the fallacy post hoc, propter hoc is operative in this case, it would

seem that the change in the refugee situation may well have been caused by the change in the political situation." Thus, as we can see, the author of such a preliminary study is not attempting to establish a "cause and effect" relationship between political events and refugee fluctuations; rather, the best he can hope to do is to indicate that certain parallel trends existed in both the realm of events and the fluctuations among the refugee figures; therefore, there may or may not be some relationship between these events, but, in his opinion, it is likely that such a relationship exists (or does not exist, as the case may be).

The first task is to establish a basic pattern for the refugee fluctuations, both for individual periods and for the periods as a whole. For the periods as a whole, in the case of East Germany, the trend may best be explained in terms of a topographical analogy. The period 1949-1952 represents the foothills, marked by ridges and valleys, but characterized in general by a sort of upward slope. Next come the sharp pinnacles of the mountain peaks, immediately distinguishable from the rest of the terrain (the events of 1953). Then comes a plateau, which may, after some interval lead again to a sharp outcropping of mountain (as events of 1958-1959 seem to indicate); in any event, the plateau is generally higher than the foothills, though not to be compared to the mountains, and about half way through (that is,

by mid-1955) shows a distinct tendency to rise again rather more noticeably than the foothills had risen (that is, the pre-1953 period).

These of course are the gross or "lump" statistics. Other sets of statistics may be used, for example the occupational and age-group percentages which are often so useful. Or, one may use statistics for different sorts of movements as checks on such matters as intensity of interzonal traffic control (travel statistics are good for this) or the extent to which the refugees were convinced believers in the Western system, taking the bad along with the good (in this connection, statistics on returnees to East Germany may be useful). For example, visitors from the GDR to the Federal Republic amounted to 115,800 in January 1957 (as compared to 19,373 refugees), while in January 1958 the total number of such visitors was only 48,000; comparable figures for February 1957 and 1958 were 113,800 (while refugees amounted to 16,754) and 40,800 respectively.⁴ Thus, one can ascertain the rigidity of the barriers to travel erected at various times by the regime and gauge, roughly, by a comparison of the number of legally permitted visitors, the effect this would have at

⁴Article "Interzonenverkehr: (a) Personverkehr", in SEZ von A-Z (Bonn, 1958 revised edition), p. 145.

various times on refugee movements. For, of course, refugee movements of themselves, taken as gross or "lump" statistics, do not provide a completely accurate gauge of reaction to policy; many more persons might like to emigrate, but may be prevented from doing so by the closeness of the watch which is being kept both within the East German territory and at the borders. This, of course, is particularly noticeable after the passage of the laws of 1951-1952 and in the aftermath of the June revolt. Thus, an attempt must be made to gauge the severity of measures taken to prevent refugee movement.

Similarly, some information about "returnees" -- those who emigrate and then subsequently return to the GDR -- may also be useful. Some of these may, of course, be agents who are infiltrated into the Federal Republic among the streams of refugees, manage to get past the interrogative procedures, and then, once their job is done, return to the GDR. However, the vast majority of these may well be persons who left the GDR and then were disillusioned by the West; one is told of young people who detested Communism but who returned to the GDR because, being idealists, they became disillusioned by what they sensed was an overriding materialism and lust for the shoddy and the tawdry in West Germany. Official sources in the Federal Republic estimate that out of every ten refugees, one returns to the German Democratic

Republic.⁵ However, these sources also like to emphasize their claim that many of these returnees subsequently re-emigrate for good, after having had a fresh taste of life in the GDR.

There is a certain intangible factor which is prevalent throughout the study of the refugees, including the study of the statistics themselves. Thus, although most of the refugees are processed through the regular reception camps -- the most important of which are located at Uelzen, Giessen and in West Berlin -- a small proportion of refugees cross the borders and manage to evade patrols on both sides. These then melt into the general West German population and are not, accordingly, registered as part of the gross refugee figure for the appropriate month. Some, of course, are recorded when, subsequently, they apply at police stations for various necessary documents; however, in many cases these are not assigned to the appropriate month. A small proportion, perhaps using forged papers, are never properly registered.

Again, we run into some trouble when we attempt to establish the cause -- or at least the general spur -- for a particular flood of refugees. Both sides would like us to believe that all those who flee from the opposite side

⁵ Article "Rückkehrer" in SBZ von A-Z, (Bonn, 1958 revised edition), p. 266.

of the border are noble heroes, suffering political persecution, while all those fleeing from their side are inconsequential elements which the state is well rid of. Thus, East Germany claims that all those who flee from its territory are incompetents or wastrels, if not actual traitors; West Germany, in the same way, claims that those who flee to the GDR are criminals or Communist agents.⁶ But, as The Statesman's Yearbook points out, it is probable that much of the so-called "refugee movement" in both directions is not really a refugee movement in the proper sense of the word, that is, a movement spurred by the action of some government. Rather, many of these people may leave for personal reasons -- for example, to rejoin their families, from whom they have been separated by war and by the continued division of the country. This is of course a completely intangible factor.

In dealing with the causes of the refugee movement -- that is, fluctuations of the refugee movement in relation to specific social, political and economic policies of the regime -- the problem of the "tangible" vis-a-vis the intangible again comes to the fore. In general, we may discern

⁶In this connection, it is useful to remember that The Statesman's Yearbook, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1958) estimates that some 40,000 persons annually cross the border in a direction opposite to that described in this thesis -- that is, some 40,000 refugees from West Germany cross into East Germany annually.

certain long-range causes -- for example, the shifting attitude towards reunification and the corresponding raising or lowering of popular morale; these causes are perceptible only over a long-term period and their relationship to a specific increase or decrease in the number of refugees at any given time is not a tangible one.

On the other hand, certain events, especially those operative over a short run period, bear a relationship to the refugee movement which is relatively easy to discern although, perhaps, because of the lack of firsthand reports, it is difficult to pinpoint with exactitude. Such events may be of two kinds. On the one hand, there are policies which are carried out over a long period of time -- for example the Sovietization of trade; although these policies are protracted ones, their effects, within any given time period, may be fairly accurately discerned. On the other hand, there are certain specific events -- such as the June revolt -- which come but once and which so overshadow all other events that they stand out by themselves as the cause, or effect, of certain other events and of the refugee movement for a given period.

Tangible and Intangible Causes of Refugee Fluctuations

Of the causes of refugee fluctuations which are most difficult to measure precisely, the most important is the

ebb and flow of the movement for German reunification. Indeed, the attitude of the various parties concerned -- the Western Allies, the Soviet Union, the West Germans, the German Communists -- towards the reunification question, at various times during the postwar period, forms a continuing theme, the variations on which may be felt to account for much of the fluctuation in the monthly flow of refugees. Such words and expressions as "patriotism", "love of one's own soil" are much bandied about; however, it is difficult to assess, with any pretense at scientific exactitude, the effect of such emotional ties. Yet, indubitably, such emotions do have an effect. It would appear that the reunification problem accounts for much of the discrepancy between the pre-1953 and post-1953 refugee movement fluctuations. Prior to 1953, there was some feeling that, although Germany, in its Eastern and Western portions, had travelled a long way towards the establishment of two opposing systems or ways of life, there was still some hope that these might be reconciled and that German unity would become, once more, a reality. One might say that the optimists in East Germany believed that this would result in a non-totalitarian system, and that, if they only showed patience and followed the natural human tendency to stick by their homes, they would find, eventually, that the bad times had passed. The pessimists, on the other hand, believed that the Soviets would succeed in

forcing the West to give way; in this case, sooner or later, they would be living in a Soviet Germany, and, if they fled to the West, they would be subject to the most rigorous measures of Communist revenge. But by 1953-1954, the situation had changed. The division of Germany had crystallized; what existed was not one country divided into two parts, but, rather, two separate states, each turned in a different direction, and mutually irreconcilable towards one another. In this case, flight was precipitated; the optimist no longer had cause for hope and delay but must needs make up his mind sooner or later; the pessimist found that conditions were so bad that he might well risk the uncertainties of the future to escape the unpleasant realities of the present.

Another intangible factor was the influence of West Germany. It has already been mentioned that West Germany acted as a magnet, but the force of the magnetic field varied in intensity from time to time. Sometimes this was perceptible, as when the West German government broadcast to the East Germans during and immediately after both the Berlin uprising and the Hungarian revolt some three years later, telling them to be patient and not to do anything which might precipitate Soviet intervention, the spilling unnecessarily of precious blood, and, possibly, a third World War. Often, however, this influence could only be gauged in the long run. For one thing, there was a certain feeling, especially keen

among young people, that for all its faults Communism did provide certain goals, certain objectives, perverted as the ideology itself may be. Sometimes people search for a rudder, even though the rudder can only steer in a direction which does not interest them. Sometimes, people desire leadership for leadership's sake alone -- to such people, West Germany, even with its prosperity and its relative freedom and security, seemed a cloud-cuckoo land, a land in which many of the prizes and motivations of everyday life would turn into dust in one's grasp.

To the vast majority, however, the very materialism of West Germany was an important attraction. The Federal Republic, through most of the period after its foundation, underwent a marked economic boom; where there was prosperity, there were bound to be jobs available. Indeed, in 1956 there was a shortage of workers in the Federal Republic, a shortage so acute that, for the first time in many years, Italian workers had to be imported.⁷ When conditions of this sort prevailed, when employers, for instance, chartered planes and flew to waiting jobs in West Germany refugee workers who were rushed through the classification procedure in record time, the story filtered through to the East zone; thus, it was obvious that a prosperous West Germany that could use skilled

⁷ Helmut Arntz, Facts About Germany, Bonn: Press and Information Office, 1956, p. 63.

workers was more likely to attract such refugees than one from which reports filtered back about interminable detention in the refugee camps.

Many of the short term causes have already been discussed in the respective chapters. It can only be emphasized that these were particularly obvious during the early period of the regime, up to the end of 1953, during which many of the retail traders, landowners, et cetera were being eliminated. Where the Communists wished to eliminate or to gain control of a certain social group, measures were enacted which were quite noticeable. Similarly, Communist measures to discourage migration - for example, sealing the border, regulating intra-zonal travel, and passing confiscation laws - were also quite noticeable.

One factor has not been mentioned. The refugee movement, itself caused by the interaction of so many factors, in turn influenced developments within the zone. To at least a minimal extent, one may say that it caused a certain mitigation in, and "go slow" attitude towards, the State's policies. Whether the SED regime read fully the evidence of the refugee movement, and really learned from it, is a more difficult question to answer.

What can we learn, from the study of the refugee movement, about the relative success and failure of Soviet policy in Germany? First, Soviet policy has succeeded inso-

far as it seems unlikely that East Germany, in the foreseeable future, could be weaned away or would be able to break away from the Soviet camp. But, equally unlikely is the prospect that, barring the unthinkable eventuality of major war, all of Germany would fall into the Soviet camp. This must be counted a failure for Soviet foreign policy, and a decisive role in this failure must be attributed to the streams of refugees who have presented a living example to the West Germans of the realities of adherence to the Soviet camp. Further, of even greater importance, the refugee movement, as a whole, indicates that the Soviets have failed in their deeper, long-run objective -- the moulding of a population amenable to Communist rule.

What of the future? The historian or the analyst of international affairs treads on dangerous ground when he attempts to project a trend into the future, attempts to tear aside the veil which separates tomorrow from today. This task is better left to the more confident newspaper analysts. All that one can do is affirm one's basic faith in humanity's ability to survive and, ultimately, to defeat or transform totalitarianisms. This may not happen in our lifetime, but we cannot accept the prediction that the spirit of man can be permanently crushed. Especially noticeable is the survival and periodic regeneration of the spirit of natural inquiry, the very antithesis to the totalitarian

system of thought control. Therefore, no matter how all-powerful the totalitarian system seems to be, there still must be hope. We may not be able to express this hope on the basis of rational analysis -- indeed, this may well be a task beyond the province of the historian. But we can join in the act of faith of the poet, the true guardian of humanitarian faith, when, as in the case of the contemporary German poet, Friedrich Georg Junger, he writes

As the Titanic conceit now boils away,
Everything it forged grows rusty.

Foolishly mad, they hoped to succeed. Now, everywhere
The sheet metal and the couplings are breaking up.

The shapeless lumber lies about in great dumps.
Patience! This remnant, too, will pass away.

All the time they were creating what has destroyed them,
And they fall with the burden which they set up.^g

-- FINIS --

Saul Norman Silverman
September 1958 - July 1959.

⁸ Friedrich Georg Junger, "Ultima Ratio", trans. in Leonard Forster (ed.), The Penguin Book of German Verse, Harmondsworth (Middlesex); Penguin Books, 1957, pp. 448-449.

A P P E N D I X E S

APPENDIX A.

TERMINOLOGY

A Note on Terminology

As a result of Cold War propaganda, a problem of terminology exists for the serious student of German affairs. In this thesis, in common with North American usage, I have used the term "East Germany" to refer to the area west of the Oder-Neisse line and extending to the western borders of the former Lander of Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. These Lander, together with Land Saxony, comprised the Soviet occupation zone set up in Germany at the end of World War II. Geographically, official West German sources refer to this area as "central" Germany (in terms pre-World War II boundaries) and reserve the term "East Germany" for those parts of Prussia now under Polish administration (areas known in Poland as the "Western Provinces.") Similarly, politically, West German sources use the term Sowjetische Besatzungs Zone Deutschlands (Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany), this being part of the policy not to recognize the existence of a Sovietized German regime in any way, but rather to treat the Socialist Unity Party simply as agents of the Russians. Since the "German Democratic Republic" (GDR) was set up in 1949 and the legislation concerning the Soviet Military Administration and

Soviet Control Commission was officially repealed by the Council of Ministers of the USSR on August 6, 1954 (following the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the GDR and the USSR on March 25, 1954) it would seem inaccurate to use terminology relating to the occupation regime throughout this thesis. Therefore, I have used the terms "Soviet Occupation Zone", "occupation regime," et cetera only for the period up until the establishment of the "German Democratic Republic", October 7, 1949 (see Chapter II), during which authority was exercised through the Soviet Military Administration. For the following period (1949-mid 1954), during which the German administration functioned subject to the supervision of the civil Soviet Control Commission, and for the period following the "German Democratic Republic's" assumption of full "sovereign" status as a member of the Eastern European bloc, I have generally used the term "East German regime." In those cases where I have used the term "German Democratic Republic" (whether in quotation marks or otherwise) I have done so for the sake of convenience in indicating the precise legal terminology adopted by the East German regime (for example, I may speak of laws enacted by the Volkskammer of the German Democratic Republic, rather than speak of laws enacted by the East German People's Parliament.) My use of such terminology should in no way be construed as implying recognition of the validity of the claim that the "German Democratic Republic" should be treated as an independent, sovereign state in international law and relations.

Abbreviations of Organizations

- CDU Christlich-Demokratische Union
Christian Democratic Union.
In East Germany, forced to cooperate with ruling SED.
- DBD Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands
Democratic Peasants' Party
"Satellite" party organized by Communists to split
the peasant vote in first post-war elections.
- DDR Deutsche Demokratische Republik
German Democratic Republic (GDR)
- DFD Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands
Democratic Women's Association
- DNB Deutsche Notenbank
German Note-Bank
Central bank of issue in East Germany.
- DWK Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission
German Economic Commission
- FDGB Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund
Free German Trade Union Federation
The East German official Trade Union organization.
- FDJ Freie Deutsche Jugend
Free German Youth
Communist youth organization of East Germany.
- GDSF Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft
Association for German-Soviet Friendship.
- GdFSU Gesellschaft der Freunde der Sowjetunion
Association of Friends of the Soviet Union.
- GST Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik
Society for Sports and Technics
Para-military organization.
- HO Handelsorganisation
State retail outlet in East Germany.
- HV Hauptverwaltung
(lit.: High Administration) High Authority.

- KB Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands
Cultural Front for the Democratic Revival of Germany.
- KG Konsumgenossenschaft
Consumer Cooperative
- KPD Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
The German Communist Party (merged in 1946 with the SPD in East Germany to form SED; continued to exist separately in West Germany until banned.)
- KVP Kasernierte Volkspolizei
Barracked People's Police
Organized and armed as a military force, concentrated in barracks throughout the zone; served to mask the existence of the National Volksarmee, which was officially announced in 1956.
- LDP Liberal-Demokratische Partei
Liberal Democratic Party
- LVA Landes-Versicherungs-Anstalt
Land Insurance Institute
- MAS Maschinen-Ausleih-Station
Machine Lending Station
Corresponds to former Machine-Tractor Stations (MTS) in the Soviet Union
- NDP National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands
National Democratic Party
A "satellite party" formed as a receptacle for Nazi and extreme nationalist elements, which, being compromised, could be relied upon to support the SED.
- NF Nationale Front des Demokratischen Deutschland
National Front of Democratic Germany
- ODD Organisation "Dienst für Deutschland"
Organization for Service for Germany
(Labour corps, similar to the Labour Front organized by the Nazis.)
- OdF Opfer des Faschismus
Martyrs of Fascism
- SAG Sowjetische Aktiengesellschaft
Soviet Joint Stock Corporation
- SED Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands
Socialist Unity Party of Germany
The official Communist-Dominated ruling party of East

Germany, formed in 1946 as a result of the forced union of the Communist and Social Democratic parties in the Soviet Zone of Occupation.

- SKK Sowjetische Kontrollkommission
Soviet Control Commission
- SMAD Sowjetische Militäradministration
Soviet Military Administration
- SPD Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
Social Democratic Party
- SSD Staatssicherheitsdienst
State Security Service
Political secret police in East Germany.
- VdgB Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe
Farmers' Mutual Aid Union
(Union for Farmers' [Peasants'] Mutual Aid)
- VEB Volkseigener Betrieb
People's Own Enterprise
- VEG Volkseigenes Gut
People's Own Property (Good)
- VVB Vereinigung volkseigener Betriebe
Union of People's Own Enterprises
- VVG Vereinigung volkseigener Guter
Union of People's Own Property (Goods)
- VVMAS Vereinigung volkseigener Maschinen-Ausleih-Stationen
Union of People's Own Machine-Loaning Stations.
- VVN Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes
Union of the Victims of the Nazi Regime
- ZK Zentralkomitee
Central Committee (C.C.)
- ZKK Zentrale Kontrollkommission
Central Control Commission.
Officially Zentrale Kommission für staatliche Kontrolle
a state agency which like the Staatliche Plankommission
is attached directly to the Presidium of the Council
of Ministers.

ZPKK Zentrale Parteikontrollkommission
Central Party Control Commission.

ZV Zentralverwaltung
Central Administration.

APPENDIX B

STATISTICS

Emigration
September-December 1949

September..17,260
October....18,728
November...14,344
December....9,078

Emigration
1950

January.....13,479	July.....21,153
February.....12,401	August....20,421
March15,443	September.18,089
April14,696	October...17,693
May.....17,580	November..14,967
June.....21,207	December..12,369

Emigration
1951

January.....12,289	July.....15,385
February.....11,583	August....17,389
March.....12,514	September..16,184
April.....13,892	October....14,848
May.....12,928	November..11,817
June.....14,177	December..12,642

Emigration
1952

January.....7,227	July.....15,190
February.....10,596	August.....18,045
March.....18,420	September.....23,331
April.....9,307	October.....19,475
May.....9,793	November.....17,156
June.....16,883	December.....16,970

Emigration
1953

January.....22,396	July.....17,260
February.....31,613	August.....14,682
March.....58,605	September.....19,267
April.....36,695	October.....22,032
May.....35,484	November.....19,913
June.....40,381	December.....13,062

Emigration
1954

January.....15,060	July.....16,606
February.....11,655	August.....17,051
March.....18,054	September.....17,276
April.....17,611	October.....15,526
May.....14,816	November.....13,755
June.....15,380	December.....11,408

Emigration
1955

January.....14,350	July.....19,493
February.....12,474	August.....25,690
March.....15,754	September.....28,183
April.....18,076	October.....32,874
May.....19,550	November.....25,963
June.....20,252	December.....20,211

Emigration
1956

January.....	26,811	July.....	23,124
February.....	22,526	August.....	27,522
March.....	21,001	September....	25,647
April.....	26,718	October.....	25,985
May.....	23,121	November.....	20,208
June.....	22,098	December.....	14,428

Emigration
January-July 1957

January.....	19,373	April.....	19,334
February.....	16,754	May.....	20,388
March.....	19,476	June.....	18,469
July.....	24,280		

Classification of Refugees by Profession
(Percentages)

	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>
Farmers and Stockbreeders	7.5	11.9	6.8	6.0	6.2	6.0
Workers and Artisans	20.3	15.8	20.5	23.9	21.3	23.6
Technicians and Graduate Engineers	1.8	1.6	1.5	2.1	2.0	2.1
Transporters and Tradesmen	13.7	10.7	10.8	12.3	12.0	12.0
Doctors and Hospital Personnel	4.9	4.8	5.3	4.7	4.7	5.2
Civil Servants, Law- yers, Judicial Personnel	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.6	3.5	3.3
Intellectuals, Artists	3.2	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.4
Retired People	1.5	3.5	5.0	4.4	5.4	5.8
Housewives	13.0	12.3	12.3	11.5	12.4	10.0
School children, Children arriving with parents	19.8	23.9	21.6	20.5	20.6	18.9
Students	--	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.7
Miscellaneous	11.7	11.5	11.7	9.7	10.0	11.0

Source

This table and the one following are taken from those published under the heading "Qui sont les refugies est-allemandes?" Est et Ouest, Bulletin de l'Association d'Etudes et d'Information Politiques Internationales, Paris, 1-15 January 1959, p. 22.

Refugees Divided According
to Age Groups

Age	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Under 25*	52.6	48.7	49.1	52.4	49.0	52.0
25 - 45	29.3	30.0	29.4	27.1	27.4	26.2
46 - 65	16.7	18.8	17.2	16.5	18.9	16.9
Over 65	1.4	2.5	4.3	4.0	4.7	4.9
*Under 25, and without parents	19.7	17.8	20.6	24.7	17.7	20.6

APPENDIX C.

CHRONOLOGY FOR EAST GERMANY¹

1945

- May 7 Armistice signed at Rheims
- June 9 Formation of Soviet Military Administration (SMA)
- June 25 Communist Party officially registered in Eastern Zone.
- July 15 The four-party anti-fascist bloc established the Eastern zone.
- October 14 Suspension of Control Council discussions on all-German Central Administrations owing to French objections.
- December 16-26 Conference of Foreign Ministers in Moscow.

1946

- February 27 Fusion between Communists and Social Democrats in the Eastern zone announced.
- March 1 Social Democrats in Berlin protest against fusion.
- March 6 Large banks in Soviet sector of Berlin occupied by Russians and closed.
- April 2 The new Unity Party holds its first rally in the Eastern zone.
- April 22 Fusion formally takes place at conference of new Socialist Unity Party of Germany in Berlin.

¹The first part of this chronology (May 7, 1945 - June 7, 1950) is taken from J. P. Nettl, The Eastern Zone and Soviet Policy in Germany, 1945-50, London: Oxford University Press, 1951 (pp. xvii-xix).

May 26 Delivery of reparations to the USSR from the U.S. zone stopped by order of General Clay.

June 15-July 12 Conference of Foreign Ministers in Paris.

September 6 Speech at Stuttgart by Byrnes, the U.S. Secretary of State.

September 18 Speech in Paris by Molotov, in answer to Byrnes, stating that the Polish-German frontier had been settled at Potsdam.

October 20 Provincial elections in the Eastern zone and Berlin.

December 3 Announcement of fusion of US*UK zones of occupation.

1947

February Measures of industrial nationalization adopted by the Diet of Land Saxony and enforced throughout the zone.

March 10 - April 24 Conference of Foreign Ministers in Moscow

June 6 Conference of Prime Ministers of all provinces throughout Germany at Munich. Eastern zone representatives withdraw on the first day.

June 15 Economic Commission established in Soviet zone.

August 17 Relaxation of De-nazification in the Soviet zone ordered by Sokolovsky.

November 21 Statement by Sokolovsky to the Control Council containing an all-round denunciation of the Western Powers

November 25 - December 15 Conference of Foreign Ministers in London

1948

- January 14 Publication in a Berlin paper of alleged Communist plan ("Protocol Mⁿ") to disrupt West German economy and administration.
- February 13 Economic Commission broadened and given extensive powers by an order of Sokolovsky.
- February 17 East European conference on Germany in Prague.
- March 20 Soviet delegation withdraws from Control Council.
- June 7 London Conference on Germany.
- June 20 Currency reform in Western Germany. Communications cut off by the Russians between their zone and Western Germany.
- June 23 Warsaw Conference on Germany.
- June 24 Soviet blockade of Berlin begins with the closing of rail, water and road communications.
- June 29 Soviet zone Two-year Plan announced by SED party congress.
- July 17 Democratic Peasants' Party founded in Soviet zone, followed by foundation of National Democratic Party.
- July 25 Soviet zone Currency Reform completed after issue of temporary currency since 22 June.
- July 26 Western economic counter-blockade of Soviet zone announced.
- October 15 Large-scale reorganization of police reported in Soviet zone. Re-institution of armed mobile squads of police (Kasernierte Polizei).
- October 22 "German People's Congress" meets in Berlin to draft a constitution for a united Germany and to press for a "just peace." A "People's Council" (Volksrat) is elected.

1948 (continued)

December 11 Dissolution of work councils, and their replacement by Trades Union directorate entirely composed of Unity Party members, announced in Berlin.

1949

March 19 People's Congress reconvened to approve draft constitution.

March 29 Chuikov replaces Sokolovsky as Soviet Military Governor.

May 5 Agreement reached in Washington to lift blockade and counter-blockade, and for a quadripartite conference of Foreign Ministers.

May 9-12 Restrictions on traffic lifted in Berlin.

May 21 Berlin railway workers strike against payment in East German marks.

May 23 Conference of Foreign Ministers in Paris. West German constitution signed at Bonn.

May 30 Constitution of Germany adopted by People's Congress in Berlin.

June 20 End of conference of Foreign Ministers in Paris.

June 28 Railway strike ends in Berlin.

July 26 Ulbricht, deputy Chairman of the Unity Party, announces the activation of the National Front.

October 7 Proclamation of the "German Democratic Republic."

October 8 Trade agreement between East and West Germany signed at Frankfurt.

1949 (continued)

- October 10 Chuikev announces the end of Soviet Military Government and the creation of a Soviet Control Commission with supervisory functions.
- October 14 Stalin's congratulatory message to Pieck and Grotewohl.
- October 28 Central Control Commission (Zentrale Kontrolle-Kommission --- ZKK), for economic control, is made into a governmental court.
- December 8 Establishment of the "High Tribunals" (Obersten Gerichtshofes) and the "General States' Attorney's Department" (Generalstaatsanwaltschaft) for the Soviet Zone. (This part of what the West Germans call "Terror-Justice").

1950

- January 12 Political criticism and listening to western radio stations declared to be political crimes.
- January 16 Chuikev writes to Ulbricht announcing the closing of Russian internment camps in the Eastern zone.
- January 27 Purge begins in the Liberal Democratic Party.
- February 3 National Front formally inaugurated by election of National Council.
- February 6 Purge begins in the CDU (Christian Democratic Union).
- February 6 Iron and steel deliveries from Western Germany stopped owing to East German Government's failure to carry out the provisions of the Frankfurt trade agreement.
- February 8 Creation of East German Ministry of State Security.

1950 (continued)

- February 18 Ministry for State Security (Staatssicherheit -- SSD -- Staatssicherheitsdienst -- State Security Service) formed.
- April 7 East German political parties form a "Unity List" (Einheitsliste) for Volkskammer elections.
- April 21 Terroristic decree "for the protection of internal German trade" is proclaimed.
- May 13 Whitsun rally of the FDJ in Berlin.
- May 16 Stalin, in a letter to Grotewohl, announces reduction of reparation demands from \$10,000 million to \$6,342 million, of which \$3,658 will have been paid by the end of 1951.
- May 24-May 28 Whitsun rally of Youth, under Communist sponsorship, in Berlin.
- June 7 East German treaty with Poland announced at Warsaw.
- June 8 "Collective Works Agreements" (Betriebskollektivvertrage) introduced (against the will of the working class).
- July 25 High point of the LDP crisis (Kastner removed from office, Stempel taken into custody /arrested/.)
- August 9 Election campaign for Volkskammer begins. "Unity List".
- August 31 Arrest of Merker and Ende (and other) high SED functionaries.
- November 15 Beginning of a great purge in the S.E.D.
- December 15 Enactment of the "Law for the Defense of Peace" (Friedensschutzgesetz), the basis of "terror justice."

1951

- April 9 "Collective Works Agreements" were designated as irrevocable by the S.E.D. (complete exploitation of the worker.)
- June "People's Plebiscite Against West German Rearmament" is carried out through the use of coercive measures.
- August 2 "World Festival" (*WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL*) of the FDJ in East Berlin.

1952

- March 27 General State's Attorney's Department receives new plenary powers for political justice.
- May 23 "Law Concerning the State's Attorney's Department" (intensification of terrorist "justice").
- May 26 Closing off of the zonal borders; inter-zonal travel made more difficult.
- June 7 Evacuation of a prohibited zone, 5 km. wide, along the Baltic coast.
- June 9 Creation, and evacuation, of a prohibited zone, 5 km. wide, along the zonal borders.
- July 5 Establishment of four army groups of "barracked /or: "garrisoned"/ People's Police" (Kasernierte Volkspolizei).
- July 9 Walter Ulbricht announces the "planned upbuilding of Socialism", the beginning of radical Sovietization of administration, justice and agriculture.
- July 24 Foundation of the new "Labour Service" (ODD).

1952 (continued)

- August 7 Beginning of military sports formations through the "Society for Sports and Techniques" (Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik); forced recruiting for the ODD (Organisation "Dienst für Deutschland") /labour front/ and for the VP ("People's Police.")
- September 24 LDP brought fully in line with the policy of "Building Socialism", expropriations, recruiting for the VP and the ODD and purge of the administration.
- October 16 CDU in the zone also brought fully in line with the policy of "building Socialism"; serious supply crisis.
- December 9 Minister of Supply, Dr. Hamann, arrested; purge of the supply organization.
- December 19 Beginning of the formation of "Agricultural Productive (Cooperative) Societies" (Landwirtschaftlichen Produktionsgenossenschaften) -- forced collectivization.

1953

- January 15 Arrest of the East German Foreign Minister, Dertinger.
- January 21 Beginning of a complete purge of the CDU (begun with a check of all responsible CDU officials).
- February 27 Intensification of forced collectivization under the slogan "Socialism on the Land" -- HIGHPOINT OF SOVIETIZATION in the political parties, agriculture, industry -- radical campaign against the Churches; great difficulties in supply situation.
- March 5 Death of Stalin
- April 9 Food ration cards withdrawn from all inhabitants of East Berlin and the Soviet zone employed in West Berlin and from a number of groups of independent professions - lawyers, independent business people, house owners.

1953 (continued)

- April 22 Evangelical youth groups declared "illegal and hostile to the state."
- May 14 Ulbricht's opponent Franz Dahlem is deprived of his positions; with him the group within the SED comprised of Communist emigrants from West Germany.
- May 28 Raising of work norms by 10 percent, strong workers' opposition, continuation of forced Sovietization.
- June 6 Forced measures against flight of farmers.
- June 9 Announcement of the "New Course" -- weakening of forced Sovietization campaign.
- June 17 People's uprising.
- July 11 Wave of arrests in the Soviet Zone; Uprising in Jena; End of the state of emergency.
- July 16 Arrest of the SBZ Justice Minister, Fechner.
- July 26 Beginning of great purge in SED -- expulsion of Zaisser, Herrstadt, and Fechner from Central Committee.
- August 17 Work norms again raised.
- November 21 East German regime permits relaxation of restrictions on inter-zonal traffic.
- December 5 Ulbricht announces an intensification of State Farms (Kolchosierung -- from Rus. Kolkhoz).

1954

- January 22 Crisis in S.E.D. leadership -- Zaisser and Herrstadt expelled from party and Ackerman from Central Committee (among others)
- May 13 East German regime has recourse to stern measures against the flight of farmers

1954 (continued)

- May 26 Plebiscite against European Defense Community begins (coercion used).
- June 18 Relaxation in zonal border territories.
- July 26 Unity-list for Volkskammer elections agreed upon.
- July-August Arrests of so-called "Gehlen-agents".
- October 17 "Elections" in East Germany.
- December 27 Beginning of a new wave of arrests of alleged western agents.

1955

- January and February Highpoint of the propaganda offensive against the Paris Treaty
- January 15 The Soviet Union declares its desire to normalize relations with the Federal Republic.
- March 10 The East German Notenbank denies that it is preparing for a new currency reform.
- March 31 Beginning of the recruiting campaign for the Volkspolizei.
- April 3 Forced recruiting for the Volkspolizei intensified.
- April 12 The East German regime announces an intensified campaign against alleged Western agents.
- May 14 Signature of the Eastern block's Mutual Assistance Pact in Warsaw.
Supply crisis reaches a high point.
- June Show trial against alleged Western agents.
- June 7 The Soviet regime invites Dr. Adenauer to Moscow.

1955 (continued)

- July 24 Soviet delegation stops in East Germany on way home from Geneva Conference and declares its unaltered viewpoint on the reunification question.
- August 12 East German regime declares: reunification possible only according to Soviet plan. Serious supply crisis.
- September 14 Soviet attitude towards reunification rigid at Moscow conference with Adenauer.
- October Serious depression among zonal population in view of supply shortages, VoPo recruiting and slim hopes for unification with the West.
- November 16 Molotov at Geneva: reunification possible only as a result of the Bolshevization of all Germany.
- December Serious VoPo campaign against attempts to leave the GDR.

1956

- January 16 Arrest of 30 members of Evangelical Church railway mission on charges of alleged spying.
- January 28 Formal admission of German Democratic Republic into Warsaw Pact.
- February Twentieth Congress of Communist Party of the Soviet Union; Khrushchev speech revealing the full nature of Stalinist rule.
- March 4 Ulbricht speech, praising collective leadership on a multi-party coalition basis.
- March 18 Ulbricht repeats the essence of Khrushchev's criticisms of Stalin's leadership.
- March 25 Ulbricht indicates a "softening" of policy, promising closer contact with West German

1956 (continued)

- March 25
(cont'd) socialists, increased trade with all countries, and a rise in the standard of living (including an end to food rationing, a 4 percent rise in the supply of consumer goods, and increases in the pay scale).
- June 25 Grotewohl calls for reform in judicial system.
- October-November Revolution in Hungary and changes in Poland.
- Mid-October Work stoppages reported in four factories at Magdeburg and in factories in Erfurt and Chemnitz.
- November Socialist Unity Party organizes "discussion evenings" throughout East Germany; sharp discussion develops as a result of demands for more thorough information as to the state of affairs.

1957

- March New status of Soviet forces in East Germany comes into effect, as a result of negotiations between the governments of the GDR and the USSR. Soviet forces come under jurisdiction of East German authorities for certain categories of offenses.
- Admission by Minister for Foreign Trade, Heinrich Rau, that, contrary to 1956 promises, rationing of sugar, fats and meat would have to be continued.
- June Local elections, resulting in a 99.5 percent favorable vote reported for the single National Front list.
- Visit of Wladyslaw Gomulka to East Germany; ceremonious cementing of friendship between the two "Socialist" states.

1957 (continued)

July

Announcement of Grotewohl plan for reunification, based on an initial period of confederation, during which each government would continue to exist; withdrawal from German soil of the armed forces of the great powers; an "atom-free zone" in Germany; West German withdrawal from NATO.

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