



# Wege der Totalitarismusforschung

Herausgegeben von Uwe Backes und Thomas Lindenberger

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Carl Joachim Friedrich, Henry Kissinger et al.

# The Soviet Zone of Germany

herausgegeben und eingeleitet von  
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Helmut Müller-Enbergs

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# Einleitung der Herausgeber

## I. Das vergessene Buch

*Helmut Müller-Enbergs\**

### 1. Entstehungshintergrund

„The Soviet Zone of Germany“<sup>1</sup> entstand in den Jahren 1955/56 an der Harvard University. Der Band war Teil eines groß angelegten Vorhabens, das 1948 unter der Leitung des Yale-Anthropologen Clellan S. Ford (geb. 1909, gest. 1972) begonnen worden war. Die „Human Relations Area Files“ (HRAF) sollten vor allem US-Diplomaten im heraufziehenden Kalten Krieg Daten und Analysen über politische Systeme, Gesellschaften und Kulturen verbündeter, vor allem aber verfeindeter Staaten liefern:

„Zwölf führende amerikanische Universitäten teilten die Welt unter sich auf und erstellten dickleibige Bände mit Informationen und Analysen zu wichtigen Schauplätzen des Kalten Krieges. [...] Mit Fördergeldern der Carnegie Corporation und der US-Regierung belieferte das HRAF-Projekt die amerikanischen Diplomaten mit Dutzenden Büchern. Häufig wurden Kurzfassungen erstellt und als Hintergrundlektüre an Tausende Angehörige der US-Streitkräfte in Europa und Asien verteilt.“<sup>2</sup>

Teil dieser Bemühungen war die 646 Seiten umfassende Studie „The Soviet Zone of Germany“, die an der Harvard University unter der Leitung des deutsch-amerikanischen Politikwissenschaftlers Carl J. Friedrich (geb. 1901, gest. 1984) entstand. Sie sollte eine Urteilsgrundlage für die Politik der USA im geteilten Deutschland liefern. Zwar war Friedrich davon überzeugt, dass in der 1949 gegründeten Deutschen Demokratischen Republik „most of the institutions built by the present regime would fall like the walls of Jericho“,<sup>3</sup> wenn sich die im westlichen Deutschland etablierte Demokratie unter freien

\* Der Verfasser dieses Beitrages berücksichtigt hierin Ausführungen, die bereits erschienen sind in: Ders., Als die Totalitarismustheorie das Laufen lernte. In: Sebastian Liebold/Tom Mannewitz/Madeleine Petschke/Tom Thieme (Hg.), Demokratie in unruhigen Zeiten. Festschrift für Eckhard Jesse, Baden-Baden 2018, S. 35–44.

1 Carl J. Friedrich (Hg.), *The Soviet Zone of Germany*, New Haven 1956.

2 Udi Greenberg, Auf der Suche nach „verantwortungsbewussten Eliten“. Carl J. Friedrich und die Reform der Universitäten. In: ders., *Weimarer Erfahrungen. Deutsche Emigranten in Amerika und die transatlantische Nachkriegsordnung*, Göttingen 2021, S. 35–81, hier 70f.

3 Friedrich, *General Character of the Society*, S. 9 im Original; in diesem Band, S. 95.

Bedingungen entwickeln und Anziehungskraft gewinnen könnte. Aber dies setze – wie der Juni 1953 in der DDR gezeigt habe – eine Veränderung der internationalen Kräftekonstellation und eine Übereinkunft der Weltmächte über eine mögliche Wiedervereinigung voraus.

Die Studie geriet nach ihrer Entstehung alsbald wieder in Vergessenheit. Im Zusammenhang mit den Totalitarismusdebatten der 1950er- und 1960er-Jahre wurde sie kaum rezipiert. In Deutschland ging sie nur selten in wissenschaftliche Studien ein – wie etwa bei Ernst Richert (geb. 1912, gest. 1976), einem Insider, der zunächst Redakteur der „Leipziger Volkszeitung“ war, aus politischen Gründen die Sowjetische Besatzungszone (SBZ) verlassen und dann als Rundfunkredakteur gearbeitet hatte und 1950 von Otto Stammer (geb. 1900, gest. 1978) in die Forschungsabteilung zur SBZ/Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (DDR) des Berliner Instituts für Politikwissenschaft (zusammen mit der Deutschen Hochschule für Politik – ein institutioneller Vorgänger des Otto-Suhr-Instituts) nach Berlin (West) geholt worden war.<sup>4</sup> Dass Richert die Studie überhaupt erwähnte, war teils seiner Kritik an ihr geschuldet,<sup>5</sup> teils dem Umstand seiner Mitwirkung zu verdanken. Daran schließen sich mehrere Fragen an, allen anderen voran: Was wissen wir über die Leitung des Projekts „The Soviet Zone of Germany“ und deren Assistenten?

## 2. Projektleitung und Assistenten

Die Projektleitung lag – wie bereits erwähnt – bei *Carl J. Friedrich*, der zum Zeitpunkt des Projektstarts Forschungsdirektor an der Harvard University war. Er besaß bereits große Erfahrungen in der Entwicklung von Studienprogrammen, die seit Ausbruch des Zweiten Weltkriegs zu einer zunehmend engen Kooperation der Universität Harvard mit staatlichen Institutionen und Förderinstitutionen geführt hatte.

Friedrich zählte nicht zum Kreis der aus NS-Deutschland geflüchteten Wissenschaftler, sondern war bereits 1926 in die USA gekommen und hatte sich dort nach schwierigen Anfängen im akademischen Bereich etablieren können. Friedrich besaß durch seine Geburtsstadt eine biografische Verbindung in die SBZ/DDR. Er war in Leipzig als Sohn des Chirurgen Paul Leopold Friedrich (geb. 1864, gest. 1916) und seiner Frau Charlotte, Tochter des Senatspräsidenten beim Reichsgericht, Karl F. J. Freiherr von Bülow (geb.

4 Zur Person vgl. Jens Hüttmann, *DDR-Geschichte und ihre Forscher. Akteure und Konjunkturen der bundesdeutschen DDR-Forschung*, Berlin 2008, S. 140–142; Peter Christian Ludz, In memoriam Ernst Richert. In: *Deutschland Archiv*, 9 (1976) 3, S. 234 f.

5 Vgl. Hüttmann, *DDR-Geschichte*, S. 143.



1834, gest. 1910), auf die Welt gekommen – ein betuchter, protestantischer Familienhintergrund also. Der Vater, zuletzt Generaloberarzt, verstarb während des Ersten Weltkriegs. Seine Mutter nannte ihn Karl-Joachim; an der Badischen Ruprecht-Karls-Universität in Heidelberg schrieb er sich als Joachim am 22. Mai 1922 ein.<sup>6</sup> Er firmierte als „stud. cam. et jur.“ [Kameralwissenschaft<sup>7</sup> und Jura] und befasste sich zunächst mit der „amerikanischen Eisenbahn unter Federal Control“.<sup>8</sup> Davor hatte er ein Semester Medizin, dann eines in Nationalökonomie an der Philipps-Universität in Marburg studiert.<sup>9</sup> Nun also das dritte Studienfach – und die USA, die ihn faszinierten. Schon nach einigen Monaten fuhr er „überraschend“ „für einige Monate“ dorthin, eingeladen von „amerikanischen Studenten auf eine Studien- und Vortragsreise“, wie Mutter Charlotte der Universität schreiben musste, weil er versäumt hatte, sich ordnungsgemäß abzumelden und seine Exmatrikulation im Raum stand.<sup>10</sup> In den USA blieb Friedrich über ein Jahr, hatte sich dafür vom Institut für Sozial- und Staatswissenschaften ein paar „Aufträge“ besorgt, bis er im Wintersemester 1923/24 sein Studium in Heidelberg fortsetzte<sup>11</sup> – nun schon als Hilfsassistent des Hauptassistenten des Instituts, Dr. Arnold Bergstraesser (geb. 1896, gest. 1964).<sup>12</sup> Friedrich hielt es nicht lange in Heidelberg. Schon im Wintersemester 1924/25 befand er sich wieder in den USA, und Geheimrat und Institutsleiter Alfred Weber (geb. 1868, gest. 1958),<sup>13</sup> Soziologe und „Ka-

6 Vgl. Abgangszeugnis Joachim Friedrich vom 11.7.1925 (UAH [Universitäts-Archiv Heidelberg]-StudA Joachim Friedrich Bl. 19251).

7 Vgl. Universität Heidelberg, Engerer Senat, 23.5.1923 (ebd., Bl. 19253).

8 Vgl. Schreiben von Carl Joachim Friedrich an das Sekretariat der Universität Heidelberg vom 28.5.1925 (ebd., Bl. 19255; ferner Schreiben von Carl Joachim Friedrich [sic!] an seine Magnifizienz, den Rektor der Universität Heidelberg, Prof. Dr. Anschütz, o. D. [1923] (ebd., Bl. 19258).

9 Vgl. Anmeldung zur Immatrikulation vom 4.5.1922 (ebd., Bl. 19251).

10 Vgl. Schreiben von Charlotte Friedrich an das Rektorat der Universität Heidelberg vom 8.12.1922 (ebd., Bl. 19257).

11 Vgl. Schreiben von Carl Joachim Friedrich an das Sekretariat der Universität Heidelberg vom 28.5.1925 (ebd., Bl. 19253).

12 Zu Arnold Bergsträsser vgl. Horst Schmitt, Ein „typischer Heidelberger im Guten wie im Gefährlichen“. Arnold Bergstraesser und die Ruperto Carola 1923–1936. In: Reinhard Blomert/Hans Ulrich EBLinger/Norbert Giovannini (Hg.), Heidelberger Sozial- und Staatswissenschaften. Das Institut für Sozial- und Staatswissenschaften zwischen 1918 und 1958, Marburg 1997, S. 167–196; ders., Existenzielle Wissenschaft und Synopse. Zum Wissenschafts- und Methodenbegriff des „jungen“ Arnold Bergstraesser. In: Politische Vierteljahresschrift, 30 (1989) 3, S. 466–481.

13 Zu Alfred Weber vgl. Eberhard Demm (Hg.), Alfred Weber als Politiker und Gelehrter. Die Referate des ersten Alfred Weber-Kongresses in Heidelberg, Stuttgart 1986; ders., Ein Liberaler in Kaiserreich und Republik. Der politische Weg Alfred Webers bis 1920, Boppard am Rhein 1990; ders., Von der Weimarer Republik zur Bundesrepu-

thedersozialist“, Bruder des noch bekannteren Soziologen Max Weber (geb. 1864, gest. 1920), mühte sich, seinen Schüler formal weiter immatrikuliert zu belassen.<sup>14</sup> Als Motiv gab Friedrich für seinen USA-Aufenthalt an: „Nur am Orte des Tatbestandes fühle ich mich in der Lage, mir ein wissenschaftlich einwandfreies und selbständiges Urteil zu bilden.“<sup>15</sup> Nunmehr sprang sein jüngerer Bruder Otto A. Friedrich (geb. 1902, gest. 1975)<sup>16</sup> ein, der spätere Präsident der Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (BDA), der die Immatrikulation zu sichern suchte.<sup>17</sup> Im Sommer 1925 promovierte Carl J. Friedrich bei Alfred Weber mit einer 111 Seiten umfassenden Arbeit über die amerikanische Eisenbahn.<sup>18</sup> Er siedelte schließlich in die USA über, war 1926 Lecturer, ab 1931 Assistant Professor of Government an der Harvard University in Cambridge (Massachusetts).

Ihm darf getrost eine in jenen Tagen eher linke Disposition nahegelegt werden. Dafür spricht seine Rezension einer 1928 veröffentlichten Studie von Herbert W. Schneider (geb. 1892, gest. 1984) über „The Making of the Fascist State“, die er in „The American Journal of International Law“ ein Jahr später veröffentlichte.<sup>19</sup> 1938 besaß er die amerikanische Staatsbürgerschaft. Er hatte zwar das NS-Regime (wie auch das SED-Regime) nicht durch eigenes Erleben erfahren, besaß jedoch eine antifaschistische Disposition, ablesbar auch an seiner späteren Mitwirkung bei der Entnazifizierung in Deutschland. Zudem wurde er unmittelbar in das politische Geschehen geworfen, als er in die Planung der Moskauer Außenministerkonferenz 1947, der Ausarbeitung des Marshall-Plans involviert und auch persönlicher Berater des Militärgouverneurs der amerikanischen Besatzungszone, General Lucius D. Clay (geb. 1898, gest.

blik. Der politische Weg Alfred Webers 1920–1958, Düsseldorf 1999; ders., Geist und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert. Gesammelte Aufsätze zu Alfred Weber, Frankfurt a.M. 2000; ders. (Hg.), Alfred Weber zum Gedächtnis. Selbstzeugnisse und Erinnerungen von Zeitgenossen, Frankfurt a.M. 2000; ders. (Hg.), Soziologie, Politik und Kultur. Von Alfred Weber zur Frankfurter Schule, Frankfurt a.M. 2003.

- 14 Vgl. Schreiben von Alfred Weber an das Sekretariat der Universität Heidelberg vom 25.5.1925 (UAH-StudA Joachim Friedrich 19254).
- 15 Schreiben von Karl Joachim Friedrich an seine Magnifizienz, den Rektor der Universität Heidelberg, Prof. Dr. Anschütz, o. D. [1923].
- 16 Zu Otto A. Friedrich vgl. Volker Berghahn/Paul J. Friedrich, Otto A. Friedrich, ein politischer Unternehmer. Sein Leben und seine Zeit. 1902–1975, Frankfurt a.M. 1993.
- 17 Vgl. Schreiben von Otto A. Friedrich an das Rektorat der Universität Heidelberg vom 17.5.1923 (UAH-StudA Joachim Friedrich 19259 und 192510).
- 18 Vgl. Carl Joachim Friedrich, Aus der staatlichen Regelung des Eisenbahnwesens in den Vereinigten Staaten. Geschichtliche, rechtliche und wirtschaftliche Grundzüge der Regelung der Finanzen der amerikanischen Eisenbahngesellschaften unter dem Esh-Cummins-Act 1920, Heidelberg 1925.
- 19 Vgl. Carl Joachim Friedrich, Rezension zu: Herbert W. Schneider, The Making of the Fascist State. In: The American Journal of International Law, 23 (1929) 2, S. 510.

1978),<sup>20</sup> war. 1950 zunächst Gastprofessor an der Universität Heidelberg, bekam er dort 1956 eine Professur für Politische Wissenschaft, pendelte jedoch bis 1966 zwischen Cambridge und Heidelberg.<sup>21</sup> Das Entstehen und Werden der DDR kannte er zwar gleichfalls nicht durch eigenes Miterleben, jedoch von der politischen, zugleich antikommunistischen Bühne aus, sowie durch seinen Bruder, der noch eine Zeitlang in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone lebte (s. u.).<sup>22</sup>

Als Carl J. Friedrichs engster Mitarbeiter und Assistent fungierte der über zwanzig Jahre jüngere Associate Director of Research *Henry Kissinger* (geb. 1923, gest. 2023), der Mann, der als Politikwissenschaftler eine politische Karriere in der Republikanischen Partei machen und in den Jahren 1969 bis 1977 die US-Außenpolitik prägen sollte. Während seiner Assistentenzeit bei Friedrich bereitete er eine wissenschaftliche Karriere vor. Nach seinem Bachelor 1950 hatte er zwei Jahre später seinen Master und weitere zwei Jahre später seine Promotion an der Harvard University abgeschlossen. Darin befasste er sich mit nichts Geringerem als „A World Restored. Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace 1812–1822“<sup>23</sup> – also mit einer der wichtigsten und dramatischsten Epochen der Geschichte Europas, das vom politischen Chaos zu einem ausgeglichenen Frieden übergang, der fast hundert Jahre währte. In den Jahren 1954 bis 1971 gehörte Kissinger dem Lehrkörper in Harvard an und forschte im Department of Government.<sup>24</sup> Als Leiter des Harvard International Seminars untersuchte er die militärische Herausforderung der USA durch die Sowjetunion. Die Studie erschien unter dem Titel „Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy“ im Jahre 1954.<sup>25</sup> Zunächst Associate Director of

20 Zu Lucius D. Clay vgl. Wolfgang Krieger, *General Lucius D. Clay und die amerikanische Deutschlandpolitik 1945–1949*, Stuttgart 1988.

21 Umfassender zur Biografie vgl. Hans J. Lietzmann, *Politikwissenschaft im „Zeitalter der Diktaturen“*. Die Entwicklung der Totalitarismustheorie Carl J. Friedrichs, Opladen 1999; ders., *Carl Joachim Friedrich (1901–1984). Leben – Werk – Wirkung*. In: Wilhelm Bleek/Hans J. Lietzmann (Hg.), *Klassiker der Politikwissenschaft*. München 2005, S. 179–191; Steffen Kailitz, *Totalitäre Diktatur*. In: ders. (Hg.), *Schlüsselwerke der Politikwissenschaft*, Wiesbaden 2007, S. 129–133; Klaus von Beyme, *Carl Joachim Friedrich. A founding father of comparative politics*. In: Hans Daalder (Hg.), *Comparative European Politics. The Story of a Profession*, London/Washington D.C. 1997, S. 7–14; Greenberg, *Weimarer Erfahrungen*, S. 35–81.

22 Nach Angaben des Stasi-Unterlagen-Archivs sind zu Carl J. Friedrich keine Akten verzeichnet.

23 Vgl. den Nachdruck: *Henry Kissinger, A World Restored. Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace 1812–1822*, Brattleboro 2013.

24 Vgl. Greg Grandin, *Kissingers langer Schatten. Amerikas umstrittenster Staatsmann und sein Erbe*, München 2016.

25 Vgl. den Nachdruck: *Henry Kissinger, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, New York 1969.

Research, war er von 1957 bis 1960 Direktor des Harvard Center for International Affairs und von 1958 an Direktor des Harvard Defense Studies Program.

Dieser Aufstieg war Heinz Alfred Kissinger, wie er bei seiner Geburt hieß, nicht in die Wiege gelegt worden. Er wuchs in Fürth in einer jüdischen Familie auf. Sein Vater Louis Kissinger (geb. 1887, gest. 1982) war Geschichts- und Geografielehrer am Fürther Lyzeum, seine Mutter Paula (geb. 1901, gest. 1998) Tochter eines wohlhabenden Viehhändlers. Er war neun Jahre alt, als die NS-Bewegung an die Macht kam. Kissinger erfuhr das antisemitische Klima unmittelbar und existenzbedrohend. Er durfte nicht auf das Gymnasium; sein Vater erhielt Berufsverbot. Er war 15, als die Familie nach London, dann nach New York City floh. 1943 wurde Kissinger amerikanischer Staatsbürger, war zunächst in der G-Kompanie des 2. Bataillons der 84. US-Infanteriedivision, wo er in den amerikanischen Militärnachrichtendienst als Special Agent beim 970. Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) eingebunden wurde. Im März 1945 war er mit der 84. US-Infanteriedivision in Krefeld, dann in Hannover, damit betraut, Angehörige der Geheimen Staatspolizei zu verhaften. Bei der Befreiung des KZ-Außenlagers in Hannover-Ahlem war er dabei. Er blieb beim amerikanischen Nachrichtendienst, dann in Bensheim, beteiligte sich an der Verfolgung von Kriegsverbrechen und wirkte bei der Entnazifizierung mit. Anschließend war er Lehrer an der amerikanischen Nachrichtendienstschule European Command Intelligence School im Camp King in Oberursel. Das dürfte sein antikommunistisches Profil geschärft haben. 1947 studierte er, wie schon ausgeführt, am Harvard College Politikwissenschaft.<sup>26</sup> Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit hatte ihn im Auge, auch bei seinen späteren, gelegentlichen Aufenthalten in der DDR, wo er intern stets als „Boy“ firmierte.<sup>27</sup> Gleichwohl hatte Kissinger, als er am SBZ-Projekt mitwirkte, keine unmittelbaren DDR-Erfahrungen.

Für das Projekt standen sechs wissenschaftliche Assistenten zur Verfügung: Der erste war *Melvin Croan*, zu dieser Zeit Teaching Fellow im Department of Government an der Harvard University und Associate am Russian Research Center. Später wurde er zum Professor am Department of Political Science der University of Wisconsin-Madison berufen.<sup>28</sup> An seiner Seite wirkte der ebenfalls an der Harvard University angestellte Historiker *Jürgen Herbst* (geb. 1928, gest. 2013). Herbst lebte mit Unterbrechungen bis 1952 in Wolfenbüttel, seine Geburtsstadt war Braunschweig. Seine Eltern Herrmann (gest. 1944),

26 Vgl. Henry Kissinger, *Jahre der Erneuerung. Erinnerungen*, München 1999; Evi Kurz, *The Kissinger-Saga – Walter and Henry Kissinger. Two Brothers from Fuerth, Germany*, London 2009.

27 Vgl. Kissinger, Henry, geb. 27.5.1923 (BArch, MfS, HA VIII Nr. 3690, Bl. 29–32); Beobachtungsbericht Kissinger, Henry (ebd., HA II Nr. 22021, Bl. 2–7).

28 Vgl. o. A., Introduction. In: *The Journal of Politics*, 20 (1958) 1, S. 1.

stellvertretender Direktor der Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, und Annemarie Herbst (gest. 1948) waren Lutheraner.<sup>29</sup> Er gehörte dem Jungvolk in Wolfenbüttel an, wo er eine führende Rolle einnahm; in seiner Familie galten preußische Militärideale und beinahe mythische Bezüge zur deutschen Geschichte. Der Hitlerjunge bewarb sich als Offiziersanwärter bei der Division Großdeutschland, war bis März 1945 Soldat und glaubte bis zuletzt an den Endsieg, an dessen letzten Kämpfen er in Ganderkesee teilnahm, was er in seiner Biografie als „A boyhood among the Nazis“ beschrieb.<sup>30</sup> 1945 studierte er in Göttingen, kam 1948 mit einem Fellowship des Quaker American Friends Service Committee zu einem Geografie-Studium an die University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Mit seiner 1951 dort geheirateten Frau Susan ging er 1952 nach Hannover, wo sie als Education Affairs Specialist für die U.S. Information Agency arbeitete. Herbst betrieb zuvor American Studies an der University of Minnesota (1950–1952), erhielt seinen Master of Arts,<sup>31</sup> und wechselte für sein Doctorate in The History of American Civilization an die Harvard University. Er nahm die amerikanische Staatsbürgerschaft an. Mithin verfügte Herbst zwar über eigene Erfahrungen aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus, nicht aber aus der DDR. Viel später (1977) hielt er sich dort mehrere Monate besuchsweise auf. Der inoffizielle Mitarbeiter „Mike“ charakterisierte den amerikanischen Professor als liberal und fortschrittlich.<sup>32</sup>

Ein weiterer Assistent war der Litauen-Emigrant und Soziologe *Vytautas M. Kavolis* (geb. 1930, gest. 1996). Dieser hatte unmittelbare Erfahrungen mit kommunistischer und nationalsozialistischer Besatzung in der Hauptstadt Litauens und seiner Geburtsstadt Kaunas gesammelt. Er besuchte dort das Jesuitengymnasium (Kauno jėzuitų gimnazija) und war neun Jahre alt, als die deutsche Wehrmacht ins Land einrückte; er war zehn, als es von der Roten Armee besetzt und für ein Jahr lang zur „Litauischen Sozialistischen Sowjetrepublik“ der Sowjetunion deklariert wurde. In den Jahren 1941 bis 1944 war es wieder in faschistischer Hand, um dann erneut kommunistisch besetzt zu werden. Die Eltern wanderten mit dem 14-Jährigen infolge der sowjetischen Besatzung aus; im hessischen Hanau besuchte Kavolis bis 1949 das Gymnasium. Nach dem Abitur ging er in die USA, studierte an den Universitäten von Wisconsin, im Sommersemester 1951 an der University of Chicago und

29 Vgl. Einwohnermeldekarte Jürgen Herbst (Stadt Wolfenbüttel, Altkartei ab 1958 Nr. 2234).

30 Vgl. Jürgen Herbst, *A Requiem for a German Past: A Boyhood among the Nazis*, Madison 1999.

31 Vgl. Studienkarte Jürgen Felix Herrmann Herbst (University of Minnesota, File Nr. 381457).

32 Vgl. BArch, MfS, HA II Nr. 22043, Bl. 29–41, hier 41.

schließlich an der Harvard University Social Science und Anthropologie.<sup>33</sup> Er schloss das Studium 1960 mit der Promotion ab. Kavolis war in antikommunistischen Zusammenhängen aktiv: Von 1952 bis 1954 war er Vorsitzender der Union litauischer Studenten in den USA, 1954/1955 Vorsitzender der litauischen Studenten „Santaros“, einer der Gründer und Leiter der Santaros Light Federation sowie Redaktionsmitglied der Zeitschrift „Santarvė“, deren Untertitel sie explizit als Zeitschrift des Widerstands („Rezisencinis“) ausweist. Von 1954 an unterrichtete er an der Harvard University.<sup>34</sup>

Als Assistent fungierte schließlich auch der spätere Professor *Horst Mendershausen* (geb. 1911, gest. 2003). Das ehemalige KPD-Mitglied zählte in den 1920er-Jahren zum Freundeskreis des Politikwissenschaftlers Richard Löwenthal (geb. 1908, gest. 1991)<sup>35</sup> und war in den 1930er-Jahren mit dem späteren Bundeskanzler Willy Brandt (geb. 1913, gest. 1992) befreundet. Mendershausen stammte aus einer jüdischen Bankiersfamilie in Köthen. Sein Vater starb bereits 1918, seine Mutter Jahrzehnte später im Konzentrationslager Theresienstadt. 1931 begann er in Freiburg im Breisgau ein Studium generale, wechselte zur Berliner Universität und dann nach Heidelberg. Als Zwanzigjähriger gehörte er der KPD an, kam 1933 in „Schutzhaft“ der Gestapo. Unmittelbar nach seiner Entlassung floh er in die Schweiz, promovierte an der Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales der Universität Genf.<sup>36</sup> Mit Unterstützung der Rockefeller-Stiftung ging er 1937 nach Oslo, dann nach Kuba, von wo aus er 1939 in die USA gelangte. Politisch hatte er sich aus dem kommunistischen Kontext gelöst, war amerikanischer Staatsbürger geworden und Professor am Bennington College in Vermont. Als Assistent von General Lucius D. Clay kam er nach Deutschland zurück, wo er bis 1948 blieb und die Währungsreform mit vorbereitete; zeitweise war er stellvertretender Leiter der Preiskont-

33 Vgl. Vytautas Marinas Kavolis (The University of Chicago, The Office of Registrar, Matrikel-Nummer 263091).

34 Vgl. Vytautas M. Kavolis, In: Laimonas Tapinas/Juozas Baušys/Jonas Bulota/Pranas Damijonaitis/Rimgaudas Eilunavičius/Gediminas Ilgūnas/Virgilijus Juodakis/Edmundas Juškys/Bronius Raguotis/Domijonas Šniukas/Skirmantas Valiulis (Hg.), *Žurnalistikos enciklopedija* [Enzyklopädie des Journalismus], Vilnius 1997, S. 215.

35 Zu Richard Löwenthal vgl. Mike Schmeitzner, Richard Löwenthal. Widerständler – Wissenschaftler – Weltbürger, Berlin 2018; ders., Einleitung. In: Richard Löwenthal, *Faschismus – Bolschewismus – Totalitarismus*. Schriften zur Weltanschauungsdiktatur im 20. Jahrhundert, hg. und eingeleitet von Mike Schmeitzner, Göttingen 2009, S. 9–61.

36 Vgl. Horst Mendershausen, *Les étudiants et les gradués de la Faculté des sciences économiques et sociales de l'Université de Genève de 1915 à 1935. Résultats d'une enquête*, Genf 1936.

rolle der US-Militärregierung für Deutschland in Berlin. Er kehrte in die USA (Santa Monica, Kalifornien) zurück.<sup>37</sup>

Assistent wie Mendershausen war *Albert A. Mavrinc* (geb. 1923, gest. 2006), später Professor am Colby College in Waterville. Mavrinc stammte aus einer katholischen Familie in Pittsburgh und gehörte zu jenen im Projekt, die weder einen biografischen Bezug zum Nationalsozialismus noch zum DDR-Sozialismus hatten. Seinen Bachelor of Arts erwarb er in Pittsburgh 1943, wo er von 1946 bis 1948 als Lecturer in Political Science wirkte. In den Jahren 1943 bis 1946 war er mit der US-Armee in Deutschland. Er studierte ab 1948 an der Columbia University in New York, wo er 1950 seinen Master of Arts erhielt. 1950/51 lehrte er am Institut Supérieur de Philosophie an der Université catholique de Louvain in Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgien). In den Jahren 1953 bis 1955 war Mavrinc als Teaching fellow an der Harvard University tätig, anschließend als Lecturer.<sup>38</sup>

Schließlich zählte *Herbert J. Spiro* (geb. 1924, gest. 2010) zu den Assistenten. Der gebürtige Hamburger aus jüdischer Familie war der Sohn des Wirtschaftsprüfers Albert John Spiro (geb. 1898, gest. 1957) und von Marianne Stiefel (geb. 1903, gest. 1982). Er besuchte das Wilhelm-Gymnasium und war 14 Jahre alt, als die Familie 1938 in die USA, nach San Antonio (Texas), floh. Drei Jahre später entzog ihm der NS-Staat die deutsche Staatsbürgerschaft; er erhielt die amerikanische. Am San Antonio Junior College schloss er die Schulausbildung ab und wurde als 19-Jähriger 1943 Soldat der US Army. 1945/46 war er in der amerikanischen Besatzungszone in Österreich tätig. Ab 1947 studierte Spiro an der Harvard University. Seine Bachelorarbeit (1949) galt dem „Marxian criticism of democracy“. Vier Jahre später promovierte er dort mit „A theory of responsibility in government“.<sup>39</sup>

Außer Mendershausen waren die Assistenten des Projekts zwischen 25 und 30 Jahre alt – zu jung, um eigene Erfahrungen aus der SBZ mitzubringen. Jedoch hatten sie zumeist familiäre Einbrüche durch Nationalsozialismus und Emigration erlebt, also konkrete Anschauungen vom Totalitarismus des NS-Systems und seinen inhumanen Folgen erlangt. In unterschiedlichem Grade hatten sie die ersten Jahre nach dem Krieg in amerikanischen Diensten

37 Vgl. Michael Naumann, Der Tod eines Emigranten. Eine deutsche Geschichte. In: Die Zeit vom 14.8.2013.

38 Heinz Hailey, Albert Mavrinc, 83. professor inspired students for 3 decades. In: The Boston Globe vom 30.7.2006.

39 Zu Herbert J. Spiro vgl. Werner Röder/Herbert A. Strauss (Hg.), Biographisches Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration nach 1933. Band 1: Politik, Wirtschaft, Öffentliches Leben, München 1980, S. 716f.; Peter J. Spiro, At Home in Two Countries. The Past and Future of Dual Citizenship, New York 2016.

verbracht, waren vom aufziehenden Kalten Krieg geprägt, etwa der Luftbrücke in Berlin (West). Eine Analyse der SBZ bedurfte somit weiterer Mitwirkender, die unmittelbare Eindrücke hatten gewinnen können und in der Lage waren, diese analytisch aufzubereiten. Das wirft die Frage nach den Beratern des Projekts auf. Wer waren sie?

### 3. Die Berater des Projekts

Nicht weniger als 15 Personen dienten dem Projekt in beratender Funktion: Gerhard Abeken, Fritz Baade, Wolfgang G. Friedrich, Ulrich Heinemann-Rufer, Hanns-Peter Herz, Herbert W. Kundler, Erich Matthias, Carl Mayer, Ernst Richert, Heinrich Rittershausen, Christamaria Selle, Otto Stammer, Carola Stern, Karl C. Thalheim und Siegfried Unseld. Diese Liste liest sich fast wie ein Who's Who derer, die sich im Westen damals mit der DDR befassten.

*Gerhard Wilhelm Abeken* (geb. 1900, gest. ?) war der Spross einer protestantischen Osnabrücker Familie. Der Vater Karl Arnold Abeken (geb. 1870, gest. 1941) war Kaufmann; die Mutter, Elisabeth (geb. 1874, gest. 1964),<sup>40</sup> lebte in den Jahren 1944 bis 1947 in Dresden. Gerhard war der Älteste von fünf Geschwistern.<sup>41</sup> Kurzzeitig war er noch während des Ersten Weltkrieges im September 1918 zu einem Infanterie-Regiment eingezogen worden.<sup>42</sup> Er studierte zunächst ab dem Sommersemester 1922 zwei Semester Staatswissenschaften an der Universität in München, ging dann für das Sommersemester 1923 an die Universität in Frankfurt am Main und belegte dort Sozial- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften.<sup>43</sup> Ab dem Wintersemester 1923 setzte er sein Studium in Freiburg fort,<sup>44</sup> danach in Münster und Berlin, um sich im Sommersemester 1926 für Staatswissenschaften an der Universität Rostock zu immatrikulieren. Nach zwei Semestern promovierte er dort 1927 mit einer 43-seitigen Studie zum „Kapitalprofit in der fortschreitenden Volkswirtschaft. Grundzüge einer Kritik an der Oppenheimerschen Kapitalprofittheorie vom Standpunkte reiner Wirtschaftstheorie“, einer kritischen Bewertung marxistischer Ansätze. Beinahe drei Jahrzehnte später veröffentlichte er seine nächste Arbeit: „Das Geld- und Bankwesen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone und im Sowjetsektor Berlins von 1945 bis 1954“. Sie erschien 1955 im Deutschen Bundes-Verlag

40 Vgl. Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv [NLA], Osnabrück [OS], Rep. 6443, Nr. 20, Geburtsregistereintrag StA Osnabrück Stadt Nr. 1444–1990.

41 Vgl. NLA OS, Dep. 3 c, Nr. 2000 Abeken, Wilhelm.

42 Vgl. ebd., Dep. 3 b XVIII, Nr. 110 Abeken.

43 Vgl. Anmeldekarte (Universitätsarchiv Frankfurt am Main, Abt. 604, Nr. 6696, Bl. 1–3).

44 Vgl. Universitätsarchiv der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, B 0044, Nr. 56-1.



in der Reihe „Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland“. Seit 1931 lebte er in Berlin. Über seine Tätigkeit während des Nationalsozialismus ist nichts bekannt.<sup>45</sup> Spätestens nach 1945 arbeitete Abeken als wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter beim Deutschen Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung,<sup>46</sup> dessen Abteilung für DDR-Forschung – zeitgenössisch „Abteilung Mitteldeutschland“ genannt – er ab 1956 leitete.<sup>47</sup> Zugleich gehörte er dem 1952 eingerichteten „Forschungsbeirat für Fragen der Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands“ an,<sup>48</sup> der die besondere Aufmerksamkeit des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit der DDR genoss; Abeken stand unter Beobachtung.<sup>49</sup> Ohne Zweifel zählte er während der Durchführung des Projekts zu den ausgezeichneten DDR-Kennern.

*Fritz Baade* (geb. 1893, gest. 1974) wuchs in einer evangelisch-lutherischen Familie in Neuruppin auf. Seine Mutter Anna war Seminardirektorin. Das Abitur legte er am Gymnasium in Schulpforta ab. Er studierte zunächst im Wintersemester 1911/12 an der Georg-August-Universität in Göttingen, wechselte aber mit dem Sommersemester 1912 an die Königliche Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin und studierte Philosophie. Er vertiefte sich in die Kultur des Hellenismus, um sich dann in den Wintersemestern 1912/13 und 1913/14 mit Geschlechtskrankheiten zu befassen, obgleich er im Sommersemester 1913 an der Theologischen Fakultät immatrikuliert war.<sup>50</sup> Zum Sommersemester 1914 schrieb er sich an der Großherzoglichen Badischen Ruprecht-Karls-Universität in Heidelberg für Theologie ein, ein Fach, das er dort bis zum Sommersemester 1918 studierte.<sup>51</sup> Dem folgten zwei Semester Medizin-Studium an der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität in Münster und

- 45 Im Zuge dieser Ausarbeitung erfolgten Recherchen zu allen Assistenten und Beratern in einigen deutschen, aber auch amerikanischen Archiven. Doch erreichte den Verfasser bis zum Redaktionsschluss lediglich ein eher kleiner Teil der Rückläufe. Insoweit bilden die biografischen Skizzen nur bedingt das Mögliche ab und verursachen Fehlstellen wie hier beispielsweise bei Gerhard Abeken. Das war teils durch die infolge der Pandemie bedingten Zugangsbeschränkungen verursacht, mitunter aber auch durch unvollständige Personenangaben.
- 46 Vgl. Karl Heinz Roth, *Anschließen, angleichen, abwickeln. Die westdeutschen Planungen zur Übernahme der DDR 1952–1990*, Berlin 2015.
- 47 Vgl. Markus Gloe, *Planung für die deutsche Einheit. Der Forschungsbeirat für Fragen der Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands 1952–1975*, Hamburg 2005, S. 88 f.
- 48 Vgl. Alexander Nützenadel, *Stunde der Ökonomen. Wissenschaft, Politik und Expertenkultur in der Bundesrepublik 1949–1974*, Göttingen 2005, S. 181.
- 49 Vgl. Dr. Abeken, Gerhard (BArch, MfS, HA VIII, RF 1771, Bd. 31).
- 50 Vgl. Universitätsarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Matrikel-Nr. 1875.103, laufende Nr. 2198; UK Personalien B001.
- 51 Vgl. Anmeldung zur Immatrikulation vom 19.5.14 sowie Abgangszeugnis vom 7.6.1918 (UAH-StudA Baade, Fritz). An anderer Stelle wird zudem auf einen Kriegsdienst während der Jahre von 1914 bis 1918 verwiesen. Aus den vorliegenden Studienunterlagen erschließt sich das nicht, erscheint jedoch nachvollziehbar.

anschließend (in den Jahren 1919 bis 1922) die Promotion an der Georg-August-Universität in Göttingen. Die Dissertation erschien unter dem Titel: „Die Wirtschaftsreform des Großbetriebes in vorkapitalistischer Zeit“. Allerdings hielt es ihn nicht durchgehend in Heidelberg und Göttingen. Er gehörte seit 1915 der SPD an und engagierte sich 1918/19 für die Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (USPD) als Vorsitzender des Arbeiter- und Soldatenrats in Essen, einer Stadt, in der er sich ab Juni 1918 aufhielt und wo er zeitweilig Stadtverordneter war.<sup>52</sup> 1922 trat er wieder zur SPD über.<sup>53</sup> Nach der Novemberrevolution war er bis 1925/26 Landwirt in Göttingen, stieg aber bald wieder aktiv in die Politik ein. Von 1925 an war er Leiter der Forschungsstelle für Wirtschaftspolitik in Berlin, 1926/27 Sachverständiger auf der Weltwirtschaftskonferenz in Genf und bis 1930 Mitglied des Enquête-Ausschusses zur Untersuchung der Erzeugungs- und Absatzbedingungen der deutschen Wirtschaft. 1927 war er Mitverfasser des ersten Agrarprogramms der SPD<sup>54</sup> sowie von 1929 an Reichskommissar bei der Deutschen Getreidehandelsgesellschaft in Berlin.<sup>55</sup> An der Berliner Universität war er von 1930 an Lehrbeauftragter für Landwirtschaftliches Marktwesen – vor allem aber SPD-Reichstagsabgeordneter in den Krisenjahren 1930 bis 1933.

Die Nationalsozialisten schlossen ihn bereits 1933 von allen Funktionen aus. Er arbeitete eine Zeitlang in einem landwirtschaftlichen Betrieb in Kirchmöser, emigrierte dann 1935 in die Türkei, wo er die türkische Regierung bis 1939 in Fragen der landwirtschaftlichen Marktorganisation beriet.<sup>56</sup> 1938/39

- 52 Vgl. Klaus Wisotzky, Zwei Essener Karrieren. Fritz Baade, Theodor Reismann-Grone und die Novemberrevolution in Essen. In: Karl Christian Führer/Jürgen Mittag/Axel Schildt/Klaus Tenfelde (Hg.), *Revolution und Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland 1918–1920*, Essen 2013, S. 337–356; vgl. Wilfried Reininghaus, *Verzeichnis der Arbeiter-, Soldaten- und Bauernräte 1918/19 in Westfalen und Lippe. Mit einer Übersicht der Quellen und Literatur*, Münster 2016. Das Thema scheint Baade auch späterhin beschäftigt zu haben, wie einem Artikel zu entnehmen ist: Fritz Baade, *Die November-Revolution von 1918*. In: *Die Heimatstadt Essen. Jahrbuch 1960/61*, Essen 1961, S. 49–60.
- 53 Vgl. Peter Engelhard, *Eine Geschichte sozialdemokratischer Wirtschaftspolitik in 45 Porträts*, Berlin 2014, S. 56.
- 54 Vgl. Peter Bucher (Hg.), *Der Parlamentarische Rat 1948–1949. Band 2: Der Verfassungskonvent auf Herrenchiemsee*, Boppard 2009, S. XVI.
- 55 Vgl. Karsten Linne, *Die Bruderschaft der „Entwickler“*. Zur Etablierung der Entwicklungspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1956 bis 1974, Göttingen 2021, S. 241.
- 56 Vgl. Paul Leidinger/Ulrich Hillebrand (Hg.), *Deutsch-Türkische Beziehungen im Jahrhundert zwischen Erstem Weltkrieg und Gegenwart. Grundlagen zur Geschichte und zum Verständnis beider Länder. 100 Jahre Deutsch-Türkische Gesellschaft Münster*, Münster 2017, S. 216.

war er Privatdozent an der Landwirtschaftlichen Hochschule Ankara.<sup>57</sup> Bis 1946 wirkte er als Wirtschaftsberater in der Türkei (1944/45 in Kırşehir aufenthaltsbeschränkt), hielt sich danach in den USA auf, wo er sich maßgebend gegen die industrielle Demontage in Deutschland („Morgenthau-Plan“) exponierte und für den Marshall-Plan eintrat. Zusammen mit dem Publizisten Christopher Emmet (geb. 1900, gest. 1974) veröffentlichte er „Destruction at our expense. How dismantling factories in Germany helps inflation in the United States and sabotages the Marshallplan“, zu der der ehemalige US-Präsident Herbert Hoover (geb. 1874, gest. 1964) das Vorwort schrieb. Die Publikation erschien 1947 in New York.

1948 wurde Fritz Baade als ordentlicher Professor für Wirtschaftliche Staatswissenschaften an die Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel berufen und wirkte dort zugleich als Direktor des Instituts für Weltwirtschaft. Im August 1948 war er als Bevollmächtigter des Landes Schleswig-Holstein Teilnehmer des Verfassungskonvents auf Herrenchiemsee. Im Juni 1949 wurde er zum Vorsitzenden des Verwaltungsrates der schleswig-holsteinischen Landeszentralbank berufen. Der Sozialdemokrat Baade gehörte dem Deutschen Bundestag während der ersten vier Legislaturperioden (1949–1965) an. Er war anfangs stellvertretender Vorsitzender des Ausschusses für Fragen des „European Recovery Program“ sowie in den Jahren 1953 bis 1957 stellvertretender Vorsitzender des Unterausschusses Kartellgesetz des Ausschusses für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten. Er zählte zu den Gegnern der Wiederbewaffnung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und scherte 1950 mit Stellungnahmen gegen die alliierte Wirtschaftspolitik aus der Fraktionsdisziplin aus.<sup>58</sup>

Damit rückte Baade ins Visier des Auslandsnachrichtendienstes der DDR, der späteren Hauptverwaltung A des MfS. Baade wurde in der fünfbandigen Akte eines für den SPD-Abgeordneten Otto Graf (geb. 1892, gest. 1971; ehemals Mitglied des Reichstags für die KPD<sup>59</sup>) angelegten IM-Vorgangs erfasst. Graf dürfte bewusst mit dem Nachrichtendienst der DDR kooperiert haben.

57 Vgl. Reiner Möckelmann, Wartesaal Ankara. Ernst Reuter – Exil und Rückkehr nach Berlin, Berlin 2015, S. 135.

58 Vgl. o. A., Friedenskämpfer mauerten Sprengkammern zu. Neue Erfolge der Volksbefragung in Westdeutschland und Westberlin. In: Neues Deutschland vom 8.7.1951, S. 1. In diesem Tenor vgl. auch: o. A., Wodurch werden die politischen Verhältnisse in Westdeutschland charakterisiert? In: Neues Deutschland vom 10.5.1951; o. A., Dem Volkammerappell folgen! Frankfurter Falken: Für Viermächteverhandlungen. Westdeutsche Stimmen zur Wiedervereinigung. In: Neues Deutschland vom 10.9.1954; o. A., Volkskampf gegen Adenauers faschistischen Regierungskurs. In: Neues Deutschland vom 19.12.1954.

59 Zu Otto Graf vgl. Ingelore Pilwousek (Hg.), Otto und Wolfgang Graf. Leben in bewegter Zeit 1900–2000, München 2003.

„Offen bleibt nur, wie intensiv die Zusammenarbeit war.“<sup>60</sup> Darüber könnte ein kritischer Bericht von Markus Wolf vom September 1952 näheren Aufschluss geben, worin Otto Graf explizit als nachrichtendienstliche Quelle „Herzog“ ausgewiesen ist:

„Herzog“, 8. März 1892 geboren, studierte Pädagogik, Germanistik und Geschichte, trat 1913 in die SPD ein, war Mitbegründer des Spartakusbundes in Bayern und der KPD in Bayern, schied 1923 aufgrund seiner Meinungsverschiedenheiten mit der damaligen Parteiführung aus der Partei aus und trat 1924 wieder in die SPD ein. 1927 ging er als Auslandskorrespondent der ‚Vossischen Zeitung‘ nach Nordafrika, Kleinasien, England und Spanien, 1932 kehrte er nach Deutschland zurück, baute angeblich nach Machtantritt Hitlers eine Widerstandsgruppe auf, wurde 1934 inhaftiert und dann unter Polizeiaufsicht gestellt, organisierte bis 1937 zwei andere Widerstandsgruppen, brachte angeblich durch Dütierung der NS-Schrifttumskammer ein Buch über englische Geschichte heraus, das ihm seine materielle Existenz ermöglichte, schloss sich nach 1945 wieder der SPD an, wurde Kommissar für das Hochschulwesen im bayrischen Kultusministerium. [...] ‚Herzog‘ hatte den Auftrag, die ihm zugänglichen Informationen zu liefern, wobei im Februar 1952 festgelegt wurde, dass er sich auf die Beleuchtung der SPD-Führung und der Bonner-Regierung auf außenpolitischem Gebiet konzentrieren sollte. Auffallend bei der Tätigkeit ‚Herzogs‘ ist der Charakter des von ihm gelieferten Materials. Es entsprach in keiner Weise seinen Möglichkeiten, obwohl ihm angeblich der Charakter und die Notwendigkeit seiner Tätigkeit, zumindest in der letzten Zeit, absolut klar war. So lieferte er an dokumentarischem Material im Wesentlichen einzelne Berichte der Ausschüsse, an denen er teilnahm, wobei als besonderes Glanzstück in letzter Zeit ein Bericht der französischen Delegation an ihre Regierung über die Pariser Konferenz zur Schaffung der Europaarmee angesehen wurde. Abgesehen von der ungeklärten Herkunft des Materials, war es bei Weitergabe an uns schon Monate alt. ‚Herzog‘ lieferte nichts über den Inhalt des Generalvertrages und der diesbezüglichen internen Besprechungen, außer den Aussprachen im Ausschuss, obwohl die Wehrdebatte im Bundestag eindeutig ergab, daß die SPD-Führung das Dokument in den Händen hatte und ‚Herzog‘ aufgrund seiner Beziehungen darüber wissen musste.“<sup>61</sup>

Die Annahme liegt nahe, dass Fritz Baade und Otto Graf sich politisch nahestanden, denn „Herzog“ war aufgetragen, insbesondere zum European Recovery Program (ERP; „Marshall-Plan“) Informationen aus jenem Bundestagsausschuss zu beschaffen, in dem Baade eine größere Rolle spielte. Überdies:

- 60 Georg Herbstritt, *Der Deutsche Bundestag 1949 bis 1989 in den Akten des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit (MfS) der DDR. Gutachten an den Deutschen Bundestag gemäß § 37 (3) des Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetzes*, Berlin 2013, S. 237. Die als vernichtet geltende Akte war unter der Registriernummer XV 18251/60 verzeichnet.
- 61 Vgl. [Markus Wolf], *Zusammenfassender Bericht über die Untersuchung des ehemaligen Nachrichtenapparates der Partei und über dessen Abwicklung vom 18. September 1952* (BArch, MfS, HA II/6 Nr. 1158).

Auf der Sitzung des Sekretariats des Zentralkomitees der SED am 13. Dezember 1956 bildete Baade einen eigenen Tagesordnungspunkt, als der „Bericht über die Entsendung eines Assistenten des Professors [Friedrich] Behrens [geb. 1909, gest. 1980] zu Professor [Fritz] Baade nach Kiel“ erörtert wurde.<sup>62</sup> Innerhalb der DDR hatte der „Friedensrat der DDR“ Baade bereits ab 1951 auf dem Schirm.<sup>63</sup> Ein Vortrag von ihm in Ost-Berlin im Oktober 1956 war dem „Neuen Deutschland“ eine Meldung auf der Titelseite wert.<sup>64</sup>

Relatives Wohlwollen scheint Fritz Baade auf sowjetischer Seite genossen zu haben. Seine Schrift zur Atomenergie kam 1960 in Moskau unter dem Titel „Mirovoe énergetičeskoe chozjajstvo. Atomnaja énergija – seǰčas ili v buduščem?“ [Weltenergiewirtschaft. Atomenergie – Sofortprogramm oder Zukunftsplanung?] auf Russisch heraus. Seine Ausarbeitung zum „Wettlauf bis ins Jahr 2000“ erschien 1966 nicht nur in der DDR, sondern zuvor auch unter dem Titel „Versenyfutás a 2000-ik évig. A jövő nagy kérdése: Földi paradicsom vagy az emberiség pusztulása“ [Der Wettlauf zum Jahre 2000. Unsere Zukunft: Ein Paradies oder die Selbstvernichtung der Menschheit] (1961) in Budapest auf Ungarisch und im Jahr darauf auch in einem Moskauer Verlag auf Russisch. Sie wurde im „Neuen Deutschland“ ganzseitig zustimmend rezensiert.<sup>65</sup> Angesichts dieser Umstände scheint Baade während der Zeit seiner Mitarbeit am SBZ-Projekt wenig Berührungsängste gegenüber DDR-Funktionären gehabt zu haben. Einige von ihnen dürfte er noch aus den Tagen der Novemberrevolution gekannt haben, wie etwa Wilhelm Zaisser (geb. 1893, gest. 1958), der bis 1953 Minister für Staatssicherheit der DDR war.

Über Insiderkenntnisse anderer Art verfügte der jüngste Bruder des Projektleiters, *Wolfgang G. Friedrich* (geb. 1905, gest. 1989).<sup>66</sup> Er wurde in Greifs-

62 Vgl. Protokoll Nr. 42/56 der Sitzung des Sekretariats des Zentralkomitees der SED vom 13.12.1956 (BArch, DY 30/56214, Bd. 1). Der umfängliche Nachlass von Fritz Baade im Bundesarchiv wurde lediglich insoweit herangezogen, als geprüft wurde, ob es Bezüge zu Carl J. Friedrich bzw. Henry Kissinger oder zu dem Projekt selbst gibt; diese waren mit Blick auf den gegenwärtigen Erschließungsstand nicht zu erkennen. Ein weiteres Gespräch in Kiel ist für den 19. Januar 1961 protokolliert (BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 8781/62, Bl. 16 f.).

63 Vgl. Presseauschnittsammlung des Friedensrates (BArch, DZ 9/44, Bd. 3).

64 Vgl. o. A., Prof. Baade sprach im demokratischen Berlin. In: Neues Deutschland vom 11.10.1956, S. 1.

65 Vgl. o. A., Ein Blick ins Jahr 2000. Zu den Prognosen des SPD-Bundestagsabgeordneten Prof. Dr. Fritz Baade für den friedlichen Wettbewerb. In: Neues Deutschland vom 26.10.1960.

66 Die weiteren Ausführungen stützen sich wesentlich auf eine Ausarbeitung von Detlef Brüsse, Heinrich Ludwig Hans Wolfgang Günther Friedrich, 18.6.2019 (Manuskript); Bernd Wildemann, Die Prägung des Gemeindelebens durch die Pfarrer der Matthäus-

wald geboren,<sup>67</sup> besuchte Gymnasien in Königsberg und Marburg, wurde vor seinem Abitur 1923 zum Bankkaufmann bei der Deutschen Bank ausgebildet. Er belegte ab 1923 in Heidelberg Jura, Philosophie und Nationalökonomie, wechselte das Studienfach und studierte ab Sommersemester 1926 evangelische Theologie in Marburg, ab dem Wintersemester 1929/30 in Greifswald. In der Zwischenzeit war er Erzieher in der „Stiftung Arbeitssanatorien für ehemalige kriegsgefangene Deutsche“ auf Schloss Neusorge. 1930 bestand er die 1. Theologische Prüfung in Stettin (1932 die 2. Prüfung ebenda) und war dann Vikar in Pasewalk, Prädikant in Stettin, wo er 1932 ordiniert wurde. Anschließend wirkte er bis 1938 als Hilfsprediger in Torgelow, als Landeshelferseelsorger im Kirchenkreis Pommern (bis 1945), zugleich als Dozent an der evangelisch-lutherischen Fakultät an der Universität Greifswald und ab 1938 als Pfarrer in Pasewalk, dort ab 1939 in der Funktion eines Superintendenten. Von April 1945 an war er – von der sowjetischen Besatzungsmacht eingesetzt – zunächst Landrat in Pasewalk, dann Beauftragter für die Jugend und das Schulwesen, ab 1947 Vorsitzender des Konferenz-Ausschusses der Kirchenprovinz Pommern. Im Februar 1949 ging er nach West-Berlin und wurde zunächst Referent des evangelischen Bischofs und Vorsitzenden der Evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland, Dr. Otto Dibelius (geb. 1880, gest. 1967), alsbald Pfarrer in diversen West-Berliner Gemeinden, 1949 Studentenpfarrer an der neu gegründeten Freien Universität Berlin. Wolfgang G. Friedrich hatte mithin NS-Regime und Sowjetische Besatzungszone erlebt.

Der jüdische Vater Hans Herz des gebürtigen Berliners *Hanns-Peter Herz* (geb. 1927, gest. 2012) war 1945/46 Sprecher des Ostberliner Oberbürgermeisters Arthur Werner (geb. 1877, gest. 1967) und Chefredakteur des RIAS. Sein Sohn durfte 1944 seine Schulausbildung aus rassischen Gründen nicht fortsetzen; stattdessen wurde er in ein Zwangsarbeitslager verpflichtet.<sup>68</sup> 1946 trat er der SPD bei und wirkte 1946/47 als Mitbegründer der „Sozialistischen Jugend Deutschlands – Die Falken“.<sup>69</sup> Nach dem Abitur 1947 war er für das Winter-

gemeinde. In: Gemeindegemeinderat der Matthäus-Gemeinde Berlin-Steglitz (Hg.), 125 Jahre Evangelische Matthäuskirche, Berlin 2005, S. 49–58, hier 50 f.

67 Vgl. Geburtsregister Standesamt Greifswald (Stadtarchiv Greifswald, Rep. 4, Nr. 1905/505: Wolfgang G. Friedrich).

68 Vgl. Hella Kemper, Eine deutsche Familie. Im Nachkriegs-Berlin genoss Hanns-Peter Herz die neue Freiheit im amerikanischen Sektor – und machte Radio für die ostdeutsche Jugend. In: *Zeit-Geschichte*, (2009) 1 (<https://www.zeit.de/zeit-geschichte/2009/01/Familie-Herz>; 12.2.2024).

69 Vgl. Falco Werkenthin (Hg.), *Selbstbehauptung, Widerstand und Verfolgung. „Die Sozialistische Jugend Deutschlands – Die Falken“ in Berlin 1945 bis 1961*, Berlin 2008; Siegfried Heimann, *Die Falken in Berlin. Erziehungsgemeinschaft oder Kampforganisation? Die Jahre 1945–1950*, Berlin 1990.

semester 1947/48 und das Sommersemester 1948 an der Berliner Universität für Rechtswissenschaften eingeschrieben,<sup>70</sup> setzte aber sein Studium an der FU Berlin fort – wenn auch nicht kontinuierlich: Er reiste auf Einladung des US-Außenministeriums 1949 für drei Monate in die USA. Dann folgte er seinem Vater zum RIAS, bei dem er bereits 1946 redaktioneller Mitarbeiter, 1948 bis 1950 als Volontär, ab 1950 dann regulär angestellt und ab 1951 Leiter des Jugendfunks war.<sup>71</sup> Seine erste Veröffentlichung befasste sich mit der Freien Deutschen Jugend (FDJ).<sup>72</sup> Dem MfS galt Herz als jemand, der an „verantwortlicher Stelle die ‚Frontstadt-Politik‘ des Kalten Krieges und der scharfmacherischen Hetze, der Propagierung und Organisierung von Diversion und Sabotage gegen die DDR“ betrieb.<sup>73</sup>

*Herbert W. Kundler* (geb. 1926, gest. 2004) wurde in Düsseldorf in eine protestantische Familie geboren; sein Vater Wilhelm (geb. 1889) war studierter Jurist, promoviert und Offizier, seine Mutter hieß Elly (geb. 1891, gest. 1941).<sup>74</sup> Kundler studierte zunächst vom Sommersemester 1946 bis zum Wintersemester 1947/48 Rechtswissenschaften an der Berliner Universität.<sup>75</sup> Er setzte das Studium an der Harvard University fort (Jura und Soziologie) und absolvierte ein Volontariat beim Time Magazine. Danach kehrte er nach West-Berlin zurück. Kundler wirkte 1951 zunächst als freischaffender, dann als festangestellter Redakteur in der „RIAS-Funkuniversität“.<sup>76</sup> 1954 wurde er RIAS-Hauptabteilungsleiter für „Kulturelles Wort“, das beim Programmdirektor angesiedelt war.<sup>77</sup> Diese Funktion übte er auch während seiner Beratertätigkeit für das Projekt aus.<sup>78</sup>

Der gleichnamige Vater (geb. 1889, gest. 1939) von *Erich Matthias* (geb. 1921, gest. 1983) war Leiter der Volksschule in Uetzingen (Lüneburger Hei-

70 Vgl. Immatrikulationskarte Hanns-Peter Herz (Universitätsarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin).

71 Vgl. Auskunftsbericht vom 27.10.1983 (BArch, MfS, AG XVII Nr. 1421, Bl. 91, 105).

72 Vgl. Hanns-Peter Herz, Freie Deutsche Jugend. Berichte und Dokumente zur Entwicklung und Tätigkeit der kommunistischen Jugendorganisation, München 1957.

73 Vgl. Auskunftsbericht vom 27.10.1983 (BArch, MfS, AG XVII Nr. 1421, Bl. 110f.).

74 Vgl. Meldekartei Düsseldorf 1926–59 (Stadtarchiv Düsseldorf, Film-Nr.: 7-4-3-176.0000, Karte 1239: Herbert W. Kundler).

75 Vgl. Immatrikulationskarte Herbert W. Kundler (Universitätsarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin).

76 Vgl. Ministerium für Staatssicherheit/Presseabteilung, „RIAS“, „Hundert 6“ und „Radio 100“. Instrumente der ideologischen Diversion gegen die DDR, Berlin 1989 (BArch, MfS, BdL/Dok. Nr. 006382, Bl. 16).

77 Vgl. Auskunftsbericht über den RIAS („Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor“) Berlin (West), 16.5.1980, BArch, MfS, Abt. X Nr. 31, Bl. 268-296, hier 275.

78 Vgl. Jutta Ursula Kroening/Herbert Kundler, RIAS Berlin. Eine Radio-Station in einer geteilten Stadt. Programme und Menschen – Texte, Bilder, Dokumente, Berlin 1994.

de); die Mutter hieß Luise (geb. 1885, gest. 1959). Der Protestant geriet 1915 in russische Kriegsgefangenschaft, wo er fünf Jahre in Sibirien inhaftiert war. Der Sohn besuchte Mittelschule und Gymnasium in Walsrode und machte 1939 das Abitur. Seine Absicht, Journalist zu werden, verwarf er.<sup>79</sup> Erich Matthias war zunächst im Deutschen Jungvolk, dann bei der Hitlerjugend aktiv, wo er Leitungs- und Schulungsaufgaben übernahm. Er studierte nach absolviertem Reichsarbeitsdienst (April bis November 1939) ab 1939 in Göttingen zwei Trimester Geschichte und Literatur, ab 1940 in München ein Trimester Philosophie.<sup>80</sup> 1940 bis 1945 diente er in der Wehrmacht, zuletzt als Leutnant, und wurde im Juli 1945 aus der Internierung entlassen.<sup>81</sup> Ab 1945 studierte er in Göttingen und promovierte dort – nach einem Forschungsaufenthalt in Schweden 1947/48 – 1951 über „Sozialdemokratie und Nation“.<sup>82</sup> Bis Januar 1953 war Matthias freiberuflich in Göttingen tätig und unterrichtete an der Volkshochschule. Danach wurde er Redakteur der Zeitschrift „Ost-Probleme“ in Bad Godesberg, die sich mit Fragen Osteuropas befasste. In den Jahren 1954 bis 1956 hatte er ein Stipendium der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), 1954/55 unterbrochen durch ein weiteres Forschungstipendium der (1952 gegründeten) Kommission für Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien.

*Carl Mayer* (geb. 1902, gest. 1974) kam in Pforzheim zur Welt. Er studierte an der Karl-Ruprechts-Universität in Heidelberg Sozial- und Staatswissenschaften u. a. bei Alfred Weber, dem Sozialökonom Eduard Heimann (geb. 1889, gest. 1967) und dem Philosophen Karl Jaspers (geb. 1883, gest. 1969).<sup>83</sup> 1929

79 Vgl. Erich Matthias, Frühe Liebe zur Geschichte und Literatur. In: Walsroder Zeitung vom 7.8.2021; Thorsten Neubert-Preine, Erich Matthias (Manuskript), 2021.

80 Vgl. Universitätsarchiv München, Studentenkartei II (1935–1945), Erich Matthias.

81 Der Nachlass von Erich Matthias befindet sich im Bundesarchiv (N 1326), ist jedoch noch unbearbeitet. Zur Person vgl. Lothar Albertin/Werner Link (Hg.), Politische Parteien auf dem Weg zur parlamentarischen Demokratie in Deutschland. Entwicklungslinien bis zur Gegenwart. Erich Matthias zum 60. Geburtstag, Düsseldorf 1981; Hermann Weber: Erich Matthias 60 Jahre. In: Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (IWK), 17 (1981) 3, S. 409–418; vgl. insbesondere Horst-Albert Kukuck, Erich Matthias. In: Fred Ludwig Sepaintner (Hg.), Baden-Württembergische Biographien, Stuttgart 2013, S. 260–264.

82 Vgl. Erich Matthias, Sozialdemokratie und Nation. Ein Beitrag zur Ideengeschichte der sozialdemokratischen Emigration in der Prager Zeit des Parteivorstandes 1933–1938, Stuttgart 1952. Zur Thematik publizierte er auch zwei Jahre später: ders., Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und der Osten. 1914–1945. Eine Übersicht, Tübingen 1954.

83 Zu Carl Mayer vgl. Arnold Brecht, Carl Mayer 1902/1974. Ein Überblick über sein Leben und Werk und die Arbeit des Sozialwissenschaftlichen Archivs Konstanz, Konstanz 1974; Helmut R. Wagner, Carl Mayer. In: Wilhelm Bernsdorf/Horst Knospe



promovierte er mit der 39-seitigen Analyse „Sekte und Kirche“ über die Religionssoziologie Max Webers.<sup>84</sup> Danach war er bis zum 1. April 1933 Dozent an der gewerkschaftlich orientierten Akademie der Arbeit an der Universität Frankfurt am Main, zuletzt als kommissarischer Leiter,<sup>85</sup> bis sie von den Nationalsozialisten geschlossen und ihm gekündigt wurde. Mayer emigrierte auf Vermittlung des New Yorker „Committee for Displaced Foreign Scholars“ und wurde Dozent an der „University in Exile“, dann an der University of Michigan und der University North Carolina. 1937 wurde er Associate Professor an der „University in Exile“, wo er 1944 als Professor für Soziologie berufen wurde. Er profilierte sich als Religionssoziologe und kehrte nicht wieder nach Deutschland zurück.<sup>86</sup>

*Ernst Richert* (geb. 1912, gest. 1976) kam in Wittenberge (Brandenburg) als ältestes von fünf Geschwistern zur Welt. Sein gleichnamiger, promovierter Vater (geb. 1882), ein Studienrat, kam wie seine Mutter Eva (geb. 1891) aus Berlin. Die Eltern lebten auch nach 1950 in Wittenberge, ab 1954 in Prerow.<sup>87</sup> Nach dem Abitur am Reformrealgymnasium in Wittenberge studierte er vom Sommersemester 1930 an bis November 1935 Philosophie, Soziologie und Kunstgeschichte an der Berliner Universität.<sup>88</sup> 1939 promovierte er an der Philosophischen Fakultät bei dem Philosophieprofessor Nicolai Hartmann (geb. 1882, gest. 1950) über „Die besonderen Naturgesetze bei Kant“, wobei die Doktorwürde nicht verliehen worden sein soll, da die Arbeit nicht verlegt wurde.<sup>89</sup> In den Jahren 1939 bis 1942 arbeitete er als Redakteur an der F. A. Brockhaus-Enzyklopädie in Leipzig mit, die in dieser Zeit nationalsozialistisch eingefärbt war. Welche politische Haltung Richert in jener Zeit hatte, ist unklar.<sup>90</sup> Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit ermittelte hinsichtlich seines Lebensweges:

(Hg.), Internationales Soziologenlexikon, Bd. 2, Stuttgart 1984, S. 537; Alfred Gugolz, Charisma und Rationalität in der Gesellschaft. Die Religionssoziologie Carl Mayers zwischen klassischen Theorien und moderner Wissenssoziologie, Berlin 1984.

- 84 Vgl. Carl Mayer, Sekte und Kirche. Ein religionssoziologischer Versuch, Heidelberg 1933.
- 85 Vgl. Carl Mayer, Zur Gestaltung des wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Unterrichts an der Akademie. In: Ernst Michel (Hg.), Die Akademie der Arbeit in der Universität Frankfurt am Main 1921–1931, Frankfurt a. M. 1931, S. 73–76.
- 86 Vgl. Klemens Wittebur, Die deutsche Soziologie im Exil 1933–1945. Eine biographische Kartographie, Münster 1989, S. 87 f.
- 87 Vgl. Meldekarten Ernst Richert (Archiv der Stadtverwaltung Wittenberge).
- 88 Vgl. Matrikeleintrag Ernst Richert (Universitätsarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin; Matrikel-Nr. 6527).
- 89 Die Dissertation kann publizistisch nicht nachgewiesen werden; gleichwohl führte Richert den Dokortitel.
- 90 Vgl. Rüdiger Hachtmann, Wissenschaftsmanagement im „Dritten Reich“. Geschichte der Generalverwaltung der Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft, Göttingen 2007, S. 607.

„Während der Nazizeit war R. vom September – Oktober 1940, später nochmals von März – September 1942 als Schütze zum Militär nach Zittau einberufen. Anschließend war er bis Anfang 1943 im Heimatkraftwagenpark Berlin tätig. Danach wurde er aus dem Militärdienst entlassen und war dann als Zivilist (Hauptsachbearbeiter) beim Überseefunk beschäftigt. In Gefangenschaft war er nicht. Nach Angaben in seinem Personalfragebogen will er seit Dezember 1944 Verbindungsmann des NKFD (Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland) am Überseefunk gewesen sein.“<sup>91</sup>

Mithin ein Hinweis auf widerständiges Verhalten. Genau genommen war er Redakteur beim „Deutschen Kurzwellensender“, der in mehreren Sprachen im Ausland die nationalsozialistische Politik propagierte.<sup>92</sup> „Nach Beendigung des Krieges“, so der Ermittlungsbericht des MfS, „war R. in Leipzig als wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter im Stadtgeschichtlichen Museum tätig, wurde dann Leiter der Abteilung Schriftsteller im Verband der Kulturschaffenden in Leipzig.“<sup>93</sup> Von 1946 bis 1948 war er außenpolitischer Redakteur und Mitglied des Redaktionsstabes der „Leipziger Zeitung“ – nicht bei dem zugleich erscheinenden Organ der SED „Leipziger Volkszeitung“ – und 2. Vorsitzender des „Kulturbundes zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands“ in Leipzig. Er gehörte der SPD, dann ab April 1946 der SED an und nahm am Ersten Deutschen Schriftstellerkongress 1947 teil.<sup>94</sup> Als Vertreter des Kulturbundes gehörte Richert „von Herbst 1946 bis Ende 1949 dem Stadtparlament“ an und war dort Mitglied mehrerer Ausschüsse. „Die Protokolle der Parlamentssitzungen weisen ihn aus als Verfechter einer von Toleranz geleiteten und am Gemeinwohl orientierten Blockpolitik, einer fairen und sachlichen Zusammenarbeit über Fraktionsgrenzen hinweg.“<sup>95</sup>

Seine geistige Unabhängigkeit von der Einheitspartei brachte ihn in politische Schwierigkeiten. „Der SED-Kreisvorstand beklagte seine schlechte Parteidisziplin im Parlament, und im Kollegenkreis galt er gar als parteilos.“<sup>96</sup> Ende 1949 floh er in die Bundesrepublik und arbeitete als Rundfunkredakteur. 1950 warb ihn der ihm aus Leipzig vertraute Otto Stammer für die Forschungsabteilung „Sowjetzone“ des Berliner Instituts für Politikwissenschaft an, wo er sich

91 Ermittlungsbericht der MfS-Bezirksverwaltung Leipzig, Abteilung V/1 vom 28.12.1954 (BArch, MfS, AOP Nr. 2890/62, Bd. 1, Bl. 42 f., hier 42).

92 Vgl. Heinz Sarkowicz, Radio unterm Hakenkreuz, Berlin 2004.

93 Ermittlungsbericht der MfS-Bezirksverwaltung Leipzig, Abteilung V/1 vom 28.12.1954 (BArch, MfS, AOP Nr. 2890/62, Bd. 1, Bl. 42 f., hier 42).

94 Vgl. Ursula Reinhold/Dieter Schlenstedt/Horst Tanneberger (Hg.), Erster Deutscher Schriftstellerkongress. 4.–8. Oktober 1947. Protokoll und Dokumente, Berlin 1997, S. 224; Hüttmann, DDR-Geschichte, S. 42.

95 Christiane Deuse, Die Leipziger Zeitung. Geschichte eines Lizenzblattes in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone (1946-1948), Münster 1997, S. 183.

96 Ebd.

zum „Begründer der sozialwissenschaftlichen DDR-Forschung“<sup>97</sup> entwickelte. Bis Dezember 1956 war Richert hauptamtlicher Leiter der Ostabteilung am Institut und arbeitete eng mit Carola Stern zusammen.<sup>98</sup> Unweigerlich weckte er das Interesse des MfS an seiner Person, das ihn so beschrieb:

„Richert ist stark interessiert an Informationen aus der DDR über den Partei- und Staatsapparat. Er versucht näheres zu Personen, die in leitenden Stellungen sind, zu erfahren. [...] Richert ist weiterhin bestrebt, Informationen über die Stimmung aus der Bevölkerung der DDR zu besonders wichtigen Anlässen zu erhalten. Weiterhin ist Richert an der Ausarbeitung von Hetzschriften und Hetzartikeln, die sich gegen den Partei- und Staatsapparat der DDR richten, führend beteiligt bzw. hat selbst solche Hetzschriften und Artikel erarbeitet.[<sup>99</sup>...] Bis zum Jahr 1960 hat Richert ständig Befragungen von Republikflüchtigen durchgeführt. Er orientierte sich hierbei besonders auf ehemalige Mitarbeiter aus dem Partei- und Staatsapparat. Das Ergebnis der Befragungen verwertete Richert in seinen Monatsanalysen.“<sup>100</sup>

Ernst Richert zählte gewiss zu den wenigen Beratern des Projekts, die unmittelbare Erfahrungen im Nationalsozialismus und der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone nicht nur hatten, sondern diese bereits seit Jahren wissenschaftlich aufbereiteten. In jener Zeit, erinnerte sich Carola Stern, „träumte [Richert] von einem dritten Weg zwischen Kapitalismus und Kommunismus“.<sup>101</sup> Einen Namen an der Columbia University hatte er sich bereits 1954 gemacht.<sup>102</sup>

Im Januar 1956 erfuhr das MfS durch ihren inoffiziellen Mitarbeiter „Lenz“, der Richert zunächst im Auftrag des KGB, dann des MfS regelmäßig

97 Vgl. Peter Christian Ludz, In memoriam Ernst Richert. In: Deutschland Archiv, 9 (1976), 3, S. 234f.

98 Zu Ernst Richert vgl. Hubertus Buchstein, Totalitarismustheorie und empirische Politikforschung. Die Wandlung der Totalitarismuskonzeption in der frühen Berliner Politikwissenschaft. In: Alfons Söllner/Ralf Walkenhaus/Karin Wieland (Hg.), Totalitarismus. Eine Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, Berlin 1997, S. 239–266, hier 247; Hüttmann, DDR-Geschichte, S. 140–142.

99 Exemplarisch hier angeführt: Institut für politische Wissenschaft (Hg.), Faktoren der Machtbildung, Wissenschaftliche Studien zur Politik, Berlin 1952; Ernst Richert, Der Fall Dertinger und die DDR-Außenpolitik. In: Ost-Probleme, 6 (1953) 3, S. 184; ders., Der Mensch in der Sowjetzone. In: Ost-Probleme, 7 (1954) 6, S. 82.

100 Dr. Ernst Richert, 24.11.1961 (BArch, MfS, HA XX Nr. 10183, Bl. 212f.); vgl. hierzu Hüttmann, DDR-Geschichte, S. 118.

101 Carola Stern, Doppelleben, Reinbek 2002, S. 110.

102 Vgl. Max Gustav Lange/Ernst Richert/Otto Stammer, Das Problem der „neuen Intelligenz“ in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone. Ein Beitrag zur politischen Soziologie der kommunistischen Herrschaftsordnung. In: Veritas – Justitia – Libertas. Festschrift zur 200-Jahrfeier der Columbia University New York. Überreicht von der Freien Universität Berlin und der Deutschen Hochschule für Politik Berlin, Berlin 1954, S. 191–246.

im Institut besuchte,<sup>103</sup> von dem Projekt an der Harvard-University: „Die Harvard University plant ein Kompendium über die Sowjetzone. Auch Richert und Carola Stern haben Beiträge geliefert, die gut honoriert wurden.“<sup>104</sup> Und im November 1956 lag das Ergebnis auf dem Tisch. „Lenz“ wusste an das MfS auffallend nüchtern zu berichten: „Richert zeigte mir eine größere Schrift in rotem Pappereinband, Maschinenschrift, durch ein Umdruckverfahren vervielfältigt, in englischer Sprache herausgegeben von HRAF [Human Relations Area Files, Inc] ‚The Soviet Zone of Germany‘, im Rahmen einer Sammlung von Monographien über alle möglichen und unmöglichen [Staaten] der Erde (z. B. über Litauen oder die Ostjaken in Sibirien). Der Hauptverfasser ist Herbert J. Spiro, der auch in Berlin war. Als ‚Consultants‘ sind u. a. angegeben: Ernst Richert, Carola Stern, Fritz Baade, Erich Matthias. Das Buch enthält neben anderen auch Charakteristiken der ‚Person of importance‘, z. B. [Fritz] Selbmann, Johannes R. Becher, [Franz] Dahlem usw. (je etwa 1–1/2 Schreibmaschinenseiten).“<sup>105</sup>

*Heinrich Rittershausen* (geb. 1898, gest. 1984) kam in Schleswig (ehemals Hauptstadt des Herzogtums Schleswig) als Sohn des protestantischen königlichen Geheimen Regierungs- und Gewerberates Richard Rittershausen (geb. 1854, gest. 1919), einem späteren Gymnasialdirektor in Erfurt, und dessen Frau Martha (geb. 1869, gest. 1931) zur Welt. Nach seinem im Juni 1917 erworbenen Abitur war er zunächst gut ein Jahr – Ritterhausen gibt in seinen vielfältig modellierten Lebensläufen zwei Jahre an – bei der Jugendwehr in Erfurt sowie ein Jahr bei der vormilitärischen Ausbildung im Vaterländischen Hilfsdienst<sup>106</sup> während seines Studiums auf einer landwirtschaftlichen Domäne und in der Motorenabteilung einer Flugzeugfabrik engagiert, bevor er „Kriegsteilnehmer“ wurde. Nach eigenen Angaben war er von Mai bis November 1918 Kraftfahrer bei der Garde-Kraftfahr-Ersatz-Abteilung in Köln-Deutz. Sein Abrücken ins Feld war für den 10. November 1918 festgesetzt, nur endete der Erste Weltkrieg einen Tag später; anschließend war er ausgemustert. Er hat die Front nie gesehen, gilt aber zeitgenössisch, da eingezogen, als Kriegsteilnehmer,<sup>107</sup> worauf hinzuweisen Rittershausen in kaum einem Lebenslauf verzichten mochte. Allerdings weist seine Darstellung einen Schönheitsfehler

103 Mündlicher Bericht des GM „Lenz“ vom Treff am 14.1.1958 (BArch, MfS, AOP Nr. 2890/62, Bd. 1, Bl. 167f., hier 167).

104 Institut für politische Wissenschaft, 21.2.1956 (BArch, MfS, AOP Nr. 2890/62, Bd. 1, Bl. 64–66, hier 66).

105 „Lenz“, Abschrift vom 6.11.1956 (BArch, MfS, AOP Nr. 2890/62, Bd. 1, Bl. 102–104, hier 102f.).

106 Vgl. hierzu Trude Maurer: „... und wir gehören auch dazu“. Universität und Volksgemeinschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg, Göttingen 2015.

107 Vgl. Personalakte Heinrich Rittershausen (BArch, R 9361/II, 1077728, S. 1).

auf: Den Hilfsdienst gab es allein während des Krieges und während seines Studiums – mithin für ihn kaum ein Jahr.<sup>108</sup> Politisch will er von 1917 bis 1919 Mitglied der Deutschen Vaterlandspartei gewesen sein, einer Partei, die sich im September 1917 gründete und im November 1918 wieder auflöste. Sie vertrat konservative, nationalistische, antisemitische und völkische Ideen.<sup>109</sup>

Im Sommersemester 1918 studierte er an der Ingenieurhochschule in Hannover Ingenieur- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften, wechselte an die Universität Jena, an der er sich für das Wintersemester 1918/19 immatrikulierte. Dort studierte er nach eigenen Angaben Philosophie, Botanik, Zoologie, Anatomie und Physiologie. In seinen Lebensläufen datierte er den Beginn des Studiums fälschlich auf das Jahr 1919. Zum Sommersemester 1919 ging er an die Universität Greifswald, um dort für ein Semester Zahnmedizin zu studieren. Er belegte Vorlesungen zur Zahnersatzkunde und Anatomie,<sup>110</sup> was er in seinen Lebensläufen unerwähnt ließ. Von Greifswald wandte er sich nach unterdessen drei Semestern mit jeweils unterschiedlichen Studienfächern der vierten Hochschule zu, der Johann-Wolfgang-von-Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt am Main, wo er vom Wintersemester 1919 an Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften studierte und sich als „rer. pol.“ einschrieb. Dieses Studium beendete er nach fünf (er schrieb sechs) Semestern im Wintersemester 1921/22 mit einer politikwissenschaftlichen Dissertation „Die Aufbringung der Reparation“.<sup>111</sup> In jener Zeit habe er den „Kampf gegen den Versailler Vertrag in Wort und Schrift“<sup>112</sup> geführt. Bereits nach dem dritten Semester – nachdem er sich mit Zahnmedizin befasst hatte – wollte er eine Offerte von Professor Adolf Weber (geb. 1876, gest. 1963) erhalten haben, 1921 als dessen Assistent zum Lehrstuhl für Volkswirtschaftslehre der Universität München zu wechseln. Dies habe er abgelehnt. Nach der Promotion scheint er sich in den USA aufgehalten zu haben, denn Rittershausen schrieb 1940: „Ab Herbst 1923 in Berlin zusammen mit dem jetzigen Professor C[harles] A. Friedrich in Harvard mit Hilfe eines amerikanischen Stiftungsfonds umfangreiche preisstatistische Arbeiten durchgeführt, insbesondere einen sonst nicht vorhandenen täglichen Gross- und Kleinhandelsindex in den letzten Wochen der Inflation aufgestellt.“<sup>113</sup> 1924 immatrikulierte er sich an der Berliner Universität.

108 Ebd.

109 Vgl. hierzu Heinz Hagenlücke, Deutsche Vaterlandspartei. Die nationale Rechte am Ende des Kaiserreiches, Düsseldorf 1997.

110 Vgl. Universitätsarchiv Greifswald; Heinrich Rittershausen, Matrikel Bd. 8, Sommersemester 1919, Nr. 1578 und Nr. 2280.

111 Vgl. Heinrich Rittershausen, Die Aufbringung der Reparation, Frankfurt a. M. 1922.

112 Vgl. Personalakte Rittershausen, S. 3.

113 Ebd., S. 4.

Anschließend arbeitete er bis 1927 als erster amtlicher Buchprüfer des neu geschaffenen Prüfungsdienstes beim Finanzamt Frankfurt am Main, als Prokurist bei der Thüringischen Staatsbank in Weimar und bei der Deutschen Boden-Kultur-Aktiengesellschaft in Berlin.<sup>114</sup> 1928/29 war er Austauschstudent an der London School of Economics. 1930 erhielt er einen Lehrauftrag für Hypothekenbankwesen an der Universität Frankfurt, der von der Frankfurter Pfandbriefbank und Hypothekenbank finanziert wurde.<sup>115</sup> Seine in jener Zeit verfasste Habilitation sei, wie er schreibt, „aus politischen Gründen 2 ½ Jahre verschleppt worden.“ Und an anderer Stelle vermerkte er, er sei „infolge politischer und jüdischer Vorgänge erst nach der Gründung des neuen Reiches am 6. Mai 1933 habilitiert“<sup>116</sup> worden. Diese Darstellung taucht nicht lediglich punktuell auf, sondern er wiederholte sie verschiedentlich, so auch 1939, als er gegenüber der NSDAP-Gauleitung Thüringen ausführte:

„Das Buch<sup>117</sup> zog die bittere Feindschaft der fast rein jüdischen Frankfurter Fakultät und der gesamten Theorie auf mich. Ich wurde sehr schlecht besprochen, als wilder Mann hingestellt (was heute noch nachwirkt). Der jüdische Stadtrat und Dozent [Ernst] Kahn [(geb. 1884, gest. 1959)] drohte, der Universität die städtischen Gelder zu entziehen, wenn sie mich nicht entlasse [...]. Zwei und ein Viertel Jahr Verschleppung meiner erst als gesichert bezeichneten Habilitation. [...] Inzwischen Kampf gegen die Verjudung der Grossbanken und die von den Juden herbeigeführte Bankenkrise [...], welche die Gegnerschaft verschärften.“<sup>118</sup>

1930/31 war er Mitglied der SPD, „in dem falschen Glauben“, schrieb Rittershausen, „dort für Arb[beits]-Beschaff[ung] kämpfen zu müssen. Seit 1931 schärfster Kampf gegen das alte Regime.“<sup>119</sup> Diese einjährige Mitgliedschaft in der SPD kam bei den Nationalsozialisten später nicht gut an. 1935 hieß es über ihn seitens der NSDAP: „Rittershausen, der ehemals Mitglied der S.P.D. war, hat nach der Revolution [1933] in sich den Nationalsozialisten entdeckt und sich seither 110%ig benommen. Es erscheint sehr zweifelhaft, dass er ein opferbereiter Nationalsozialist der Tat ist.“<sup>120</sup> Als Rockefeller-Fellow hielt er sich 1931/32 in Madrid und 1935 in Paris auf.<sup>121</sup>

114 Vgl. ebd., S. 3.

115 Vgl. ebd., S. 6.

116 Ebd., S. 4.

117 Gemeint ist Heinrich Rittershausen, Arbeitslosigkeit und Kapitalbildung. Zugleich ein bankpolitisches Programm zur Bekämpfung der Wirtschaftskrise, Jena 1930.

118 Schreiben von Heinrich von Rittershausen an die NSDAP-Gauleitung Thüringen, Amt NS-Dozentenbund, Gaudozentenbundführer, vom 17.6.1939 (Universitätsarchiv Jena, Abt. IV, Nr. 26, Bl. 184 f.).

119 Vgl. Personalakte Rittershausen, S. 2.

120 Ebd.; vgl. hierzu Peter Mantel, Betriebswirtschaftslehre und Nationalsozialismus. Eine institutionen- und personengeschichtliche Studie, Wiesbaden 2009, S. 806.

121 Vgl. Personalakte Rittershausen, S. 4.

Nach seinem Austritt aus der SPD will er sich politisch umorientiert haben. Er schrieb während des Nationalsozialismus rückblickend zu seinem Wirken ab 1932: „Wegen meiner fortgesetzten Mitarbeit am Wirtschaftspol[itischen] Stab der NSDAP im Berliner Braunen Hause wurde mir [im Sommer 1932] dort mein Eintritt in die Partei als überflüssig“<sup>122</sup> angesehen. Nach seinem Parisaufenthalt besuchte er die Dozenten-Akademie in Kiel. In seinen Beurteilungen finden sich Sätze wie, Rittershausen habe sich „scharf gegen die eingewurzelten liberalistischen Wirtschaftstheorien“ gewandt. Über ihn heißt es aber auch: „Egoist, disziplinlos, schwankende Haltung, charakterlich und politisch unerfreulich“.<sup>123</sup> Ab 1935 lehrte er westeuropäische Wirtschaftskunde.<sup>124</sup> 1939 wurde er zum beamteten Dozenten ernannt und hatte 1939/40 einen Lehrauftrag an der Wirtschafts-Hochschule in Berlin.<sup>125</sup> Er war durchaus mit Kriegsfragen befasst, wie auch seiner wissenschaftlichen Publizistik zu entnehmen ist. So war er Herausgeber der 1939 erschienenen Schrift „Barzahlung und Zahlungsmittelversorgung in militärisch besetzten Gebieten“.<sup>126</sup> Ab Oktober 1940 war er außerordentlicher Professor an der Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Breslau.<sup>127</sup>

Heinrich Rittershausen erklärte während des Nationalsozialismus: „Der NSDAP gehöre ich noch nicht an, wohl aber dem NSLB [Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund], dem NSRB [Nationalsozialistischer Rechtswahrerbund], der NSV [Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt], dem RLB [Reichsluftschutzbund].“ Als Referenzperson gab er Johann Wilhelm Ludowici (geb. 1896, gest. 1983) an, der seit 1923 der NSDAP angehörte und Stellvertreter des NS-Chefideologen Alfred Rosenberg (geb. 1892, gest. 1946) im Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur sowie Beauftragter der NSDAP für alle Siedlungsaufgaben und Siedlungsbeauftragter im Stab des Stellvertreters des Führers war.<sup>128</sup>

1944 endete seine außerordentliche Professur. Nach 1945 war er in Neustadt an der Weinstraße bei einer Firma für die Montage von Behelfsheimen und ab Oktober 1945 in Minden an der „Verwaltung für Wirtschaft“ beschäftigt, wo er zum Ministerialdirektor ernannt wurde. Er beteiligte sich an den

122 Vgl. ebd., S. 4.

123 Ebd., S. 4.

124 Vgl. ebd., S. 28.

125 Vgl. ebd., S. 65 und 69.

126 Georg Holzhauer, Barzahlung und Zahlungsmittelversorgung in militärisch besetzten Gebieten. Mit einer Einführung von H[einrich] Rittershausen, Jena 1939. Rezensiert von Alain M. Madlé. In: Zeitschrift für Nationalökonomie/Journal of Economics, 10 (1942) 2, S. 338 f.

127 Vgl. Personalakte Rittershausen, S. 93.

128 Vgl. Rüdiger Hachtmann, Das Wirtschaftsimperium der Deutschen Arbeitsfront 1933–1945, Göttingen 2012, S. 441, Anm. 51.

Debatten zur Währungsreform 1948 und zur Reform der Preisbildung. Von 1948 bis 1950 war er Journalist beim Berliner „Tagesspiegel“, der „Neuen Zürcher Zeitung“ und auch der „Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung“; zugleich hatte er einen Lehrauftrag an der Universität Frankfurt am Main. 1950 wechselte er an die Wirtschaftshochschule Mannheim, unterrichtete Volkswirtschaft und Wirtschaftspolitik, 1953 an die Universität Köln, wo er zu Bankbetrieben lehrte. Politisch erweckte er den Eindruck, Gegner des Nationalsozialismus gewesen zu sein, zumal er wegen seiner früheren Mitgliedschaft in der SPD von der „Dozentenschaft geschädigt“ worden sei. Als „früheres SPD-Mitglied“ sei er „ein bekannter Gegner des Nazismus“<sup>129</sup> gewesen.

Otto Stammer (geb. 1900, gest. 1978) war Sohn des Gastwirtes Albert Otto und dessen Frau Lisa in Leipzig.<sup>130</sup> Den Besuch der Leibniz-Oberrealschule unterbrach er, nachdem er von Juni bis Dezember 1918 zum Infanterie-Regiment 107 eingezogen worden war. 1919 trat er der SPD bei. Nach dem Abitur 1920 wurde er ab dem Sommersemester 1920 an der Universität Leipzig für „cam. et. jur.“ immatrikuliert; als Glaubensbekenntnis vermerkte die Urkunde: „ohne“. Er exponierte sich politisch an der Universität, wurde dort Vorsitzender der Sozialistischen Studentengruppe, war 1922 Mitbegründer und bis 1924 Vorsitzender der in Leipzig gegründeten Sozialistischen Studentengruppen Deutschlands und Österreichs, die der SPD nahe standen.<sup>131</sup> Gleichzeitig fungierte er als Leitungsmitglied des Reichskartells der Deutschen Republikanischen Studentenschaft (ein Zusammenschluss linker und liberaler Studentenorganisationen)<sup>132</sup> und Studentendelegierter der Fédération Universitaire Internationale pour la Société des Nations (FUI).<sup>133</sup> Stammer studierte bis zum Sommersemester 1924 Philosophie, Politik und Staatswissenschaften in Leipzig,<sup>134</sup> allerdings im Wintersemester 1922/23 an der Berliner Universität, wo

129 Vgl. Mantel, Betriebswirtschaftslehre, S. 807; Rieter, Anfänge, S. 43.

130 Vgl. Dirk Kaesler, Otto Stammer. In: Neue Deutsche Biographie, 25 (2013), S. 48 f. Das Bundesarchiv verzeichnet seinen Nachlass unter der Signatur N 1487.

131 Vgl. Franz Walter, Sozialistische Akademiker- und Intellektuellenorganisationen in der Weimarer Republik, Bonn 1990, S. 27–83.

132 Vgl. ebd., S. 69–76; Wilhelm Kreutz, Studenten im Kampf für die Weimarer Republik. Vom „Reichskartell der Republikanischen Studenten“ zum „Republikanischen Studentenbund“ (1922–1933). In: Rüdiger vom Bruch/Martin Kintzinger (Hg.), Jahrbuch für Universitätsgeschichte, Stuttgart 2014, S. 185–199.

133 Vgl. Jürgen Fijalkowski, Otto Stammer. In: ders. (Hg.), Politologie und Soziologie. Otto Stammer zum 65. Geburtstag, Köln 1965, S. 7–13, hier 7.

134 Vgl. Universitätsarchiv Leipzig, Rep. 1-16-07-C 85, Bd. 1, Otto Stammer; ebd., Rep. 1-16-07-C 83, Bd. 2, Otto Stammer; ebd., Quästur Otto Stammer.



er für Philosophie immatrikuliert war.<sup>135</sup> 1924 promovierte er zum Dr. rer. pol. mit der 282-seitigen Arbeit „Der Staat bei Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels. Gesehen als philosophisch-soziologischer, juristischer und politischer Staatsbegriff“. Die Dissertation erschien noch im gleichen Jahr als Verlagspublikation. Anschließend arbeitete er als innen- und wirtschaftspolitischer Redakteur bei der Tageszeitung „Arbeiterwille“ in Graz, war ab 1929 Dozent an der Heimvolkshochschule Harrisleefeld (Flensburg), ab 1930 Leiter der Arbeiterwirtschaftsschule in Peterswaldau (Schlesien) und Bildungsreferent des SPD-Bezirks Mittelschlesien (Breslau). 1933 inhaftierten ihn die Nationalsozialisten kurzzeitig. Danach war er bis 1937 arbeitslos, half teils als Kellner in der Gastwirtschaft seines Vaters aus. „1937 ‚flüchtete‘ Stammer in die Industrie und übernahm die Leitung eines pharmazeutischen Betriebes, eine Position, die ihn vor dem Kriegsdienst bewahrte. Ab 1943 baute er einen Ausweichbetrieb in Röcknitz bei Wurzen auf.“<sup>136</sup> Das Kriegsende erlebte er dort.

„Stammer wurde von der Roten Armee zum Bürgermeister des Ortes und später von der Landesverwaltung zum Treuhänder und Leiter des enteigneten Betriebs gemacht. In Röcknitz gründete er eine Ortsgruppe des NKFD und rief die SPD wieder ins Leben“. Er war „offenbar kein Gegner der Fusion von KPD und SPD: Er setzte auf eine Einheitspartei unter sozialdemokratischer Führung, vergleichbar mit der USPD, wobei er auf die fruchtbare Zusammenarbeit mit weniger indoktrinierten Kommunisten hoffte. Stammer sympathisierte mit verschiedenen Strömungen des ethischen, kulturellen, auch des religiösen Sozialismus, hielt aber schon früh eine Republik mit demokratischer Verfassung für die einzig akzeptable Staatsform.“ Die Leipziger SPD schlug ihn für die Chefredaktion des geplanten SED-Organs Leipziger Volkszeitung vor, aber daraus wurde nichts, weil er „schon längere Zeit die zentrale Figur der Redaktion in der Dresdner Straße“<sup>137</sup> war, also der Leipziger Zeitung, die 1946 eine Lizenz erhielt und Anfang 1948 verboten wurde, weil ihre politische Unabhängigkeit zu groß geblieben war.

1948/49 fungierte Stammer in Leipzig als sozialwissenschaftlicher Redakteur beim Bibliographischen Institut und wirkte als Dozent für Volkswirtschaftslehre und Staatstheorie an der Meisterschule für das graphische Gewerbe. 1949 habilitierte er sich für Soziologie an der FU Berlin, an der er seit 1951 als außerordentlicher, seit 1955 als ordentlicher Professor für Soziologie und Politische Wissenschaft wirkte. Er war ab 1951 zunächst kommissarisch,

135 Vgl. Matrikeleintrag vom 26.10.1922 und Abgangszeugnis Otto Stammer vom 28.4.1923 (Universitätsarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin).

136 Deuse, Die Leipziger Zeitung, S. 132.

137 Ebd., S. 133.

dann ab 1955 formell Leiter des Instituts für politische Wissenschaft an der FU Berlin. 1954 nahm er eine Gastprofessur an der Columbia University in New York wahr.

Mit Fragen des Totalitarismus hatte sich Stammer schon früh befasst, wie seinem Vorwort in einer 1955 in Stuttgart erschienenen Studie von Max Gustav Lange „Wissenschaft im totalitären Staat. Die Wissenschaft der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone auf dem Weg zum Stalinismus“<sup>138</sup> zu entnehmen ist. Später erst suchte er nach Alternativen zu diesem Modell,<sup>139</sup> weil er die These problematisch fand, wonach „die faschistische und kommunistische totalitäre Diktatur in ihren wesentlichen Zügen gleich sind“.<sup>140</sup> Bereits 1951 hatte er fein differenzierend zum Vergleich zwischen „totalitär-autokratischen“ – gemeint sind der NS-Staat und die DDR – „und demokratischen Systemen“ geschrieben: Totalitäre Systeme, gleich welcher Provenienz, zeichneten sich dadurch aus, dass die Eliten weniger Funktionseleiten, sondern eher Werteliten darstellen, sie im Prozess der politischen Willensbildung ausschließlich von oben nach unten agierten“ und nicht die „enge politische Verbindung zwischen den Volksmassen, den einzelnen Gruppen der Gesellschaft und der Führung des Staates“ dar- bzw. herstellten. Wenn politische Systeme überhaupt aufgrund ihres Aufbaus scheitern könnten, so Stammer, dann „an den Fehlern ihrer Elitenbildung“.<sup>141</sup>

*Carola Stern* (geb. 1925, gest. 2006) ist das Pseudonym von Erika Asmuß (später Assmus), der in Ahlbeck geborenen Tochter des Kreis Ausschuss-Obersekretärs Otto Asmuß und der dann alleinerziehenden Mutter Ella. Von 1932 bis 1936 besuchte sie die Volksschule, anschließend bis 1944 die Fontane-Oberschule für Mädchen in Swinemünde, die sie mit dem Abitur ab-

138 Vgl. hierzu Otto Stammer, Aspekte der Totalitarismusforschung. In: Soziale Welt, 12 (1961) 2, S. 97–111. Nachdruck bei: Bruno Seidel/Siegfried Jenkner (Hg.), Wege der Totalitarismus-Forschung, Darmstadt 1968, S. 414–437.

139 Vgl. Hubertus Buchstein, Totalitarismustheorie und empirische Politikforschung. Die Wandlung der Totalitarismuskonzeption in der frühen Berliner Politikforschung. In: Alfons Söllner/Ralf Walkenhaus/Karin Wieland (Hg.), Totalitarismus. Eine Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, Berlin 1997, S. 239–266.

140 Vgl. Stammer, Aspekte. In: Seidel/Jenkner (Hg.), Wege der Totalitarismus-Forschung, S. 422. Siehe auch Uwe Backes, in diesem Band, S. 64.

141 Otto Stammer, Das Elitenproblem in der Demokratie. In: Schmollers Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft, 71 (1951) 5, S. 1–28, hier 18. Schüler Otto Stammers in dieser Hinsicht waren Dietrich Herzog (geb. 1931, gest. 2001) und Hartmut Zimmermann (geb. 1927, gest. 1995), deren studentische Hilfskraft, dann wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter der Verfasser von 1988 bis 1992 am von Stammer gegründeten Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung der FU Berlin war.

schloss.<sup>142</sup> Sie gehörte dem Bund Deutscher Mädel (BDM) an, war dort Jungmädelführerin.<sup>143</sup> An diese Zeit erinnerte sie sich 1952 selbstkritisch: „Während meiner Schulzeit [war ich] begeisterte BDM-Führerin [...] und [verlor] erst in dem Jahr nach dem Zusammenbruch den Glauben an ‚Führer und Großdeutschland‘.“<sup>144</sup> Danach war sie bis 1945 Helferin in einem Kindergarten in Swinemünde, fortan Landarbeiterin in Rüdigershagen und als Haushaltsgehilfin in Wismar tätig. Anschließend übte sie eine Tätigkeit aus, die sie in ihrem Lebenslauf (1948) denkbar chiffriert erwähnt: „Vom 1. Oktober 1945 bis 15.12.1946 war ich wissenschaftliche Bibliothekarin im Institut Rabe [Raketenbau und -entwicklung] in Bleicherode. Durch die Verlagerung des Betriebes verlor ich meine Stellung.“<sup>145</sup> In dem Institut konzentrierte die sowjetische Besatzungsmacht deutsche Raketenspezialisten, die mit sowjetischen Ingenieuren am Raketenprogramm arbeiteten. Ende 1946 wurden sie gemeinsam mit ihren Familien in die Sowjetunion deportiert, um dort die sowjetische Raketentechnik weiterzuentwickeln. Diese Arbeit legte die Grundlage für das sowjetische Raumfahrtprogramm.<sup>146</sup>

Ab Mai 1947 besuchte Carola Stern den zweijährigen Lehrgang für Geschichtslehrer im Pädagogischen Institut in Wiesenburg.<sup>147</sup> Zwei Wochen später wurde sie in West-Berlin vom amerikanischen Nachrichtendienst CIC wegen ihres Wissens über das Rabe-Institut rekrutiert, aufgefordert, der SED beizutreten und zu berichten.<sup>148</sup> Noch im Institut erzählte sie davon einer Freundin:

- 142 BArch, MfS, BV Potsdam, AP Nr. 2065/54, Bl. 6. Hierzu Carola Stern, In den Netzen der Erinnerung. Lebensgeschichten zweier Menschen, Reinbek 1986, S. 123–136 und 158–174.
- 143 Vgl. Carola Stern, Uns wirft nichts mehr um. Eine Lebensreise. Aufgezeichnet von Thomas Schadt, Reinbek 2004, S. 28–52; dies., Doppelleben, S. 25–32.
- 144 Lebenslauf von Erika Asmuß, ca. 1952 (Universitätsarchiv der FU Berlin, StudA Nr. 8440, S. 2); vgl. Stern, In den Netzen, S. 106–114.
- 145 Lebenslauf von Erika Asmuß vom 18.11.1948 (BArch, MfS, BV Potsdam, AP Nr. 2065/54, Bl. 6). In dem vermutlich 1952 verfassten Lebenslauf äußert sie sich präzis: „[Ich arbeitete] im Herbst 1945 zuerst als technische Rechnerin [...] arbeite ich in dem Betrieb als Leiterin der technischen Bibliothek, in dem sowjetischen Forschungsbetrieb ‚Institut Rabe‘, der sich mit der Weiterentwicklung ferngesteuerter Waffen beschäftigte.“ Lebenslauf von Erika Assmus (Universitätsarchiv der FU Berlin, StudA Nr. 8440); dazu auch Stern, In den Netzen, S. 246–248.
- 146 Vgl. Bernd Henze/Gunther Hebestreit, Raketen aus Bleicherode. Raketenbau und Entwicklung in Bleicherode am Südharz 1943–1948, Berlin 2008; Stern, Doppelleben, S. 38–42; dies., Uns wirft nichts mehr um, S. 58–60.
- 147 Vgl. Lebenslauf von Erika Asmuß vom 18.11.1948 (BArch, MfS, BV Potsdam, AP Nr. 2065/54, Bl. 6).
- 148 Vgl. Stern, Uns wirft nichts mehr um, S. 61–67; dies., Doppelleben, S. 51–55.

„Im Laufe eines Gespräches erzählte sie [Carola Stern] mir, daß sie in schwerer finanzieller Not wäre und Geld brauchte, da sie eine schwerkranke Mutter zu Hause liegen hat. Um zu Geld zu kommen, hatte sie damals für einen Amerikaner in Berlin Aufträge erledigt. Was das für Aufträge waren, kann ich nicht sagen, da ich sie damals nicht danach gefragt habe. Ich hatte ihr lediglich gesagt, daß sie sehen soll, sich dieser Aufträge zu entledigen, was sie mir auch versprach zu tun. Einige Monate später frag[t]e ich wieder danach und sie erklärte mir, daß sie nicht mehr für den Amerikaner arbeitet.“<sup>149</sup>

Diese Information übermittelte die Genossin der SED-Landespartei-Kontrollkommission Brandenburg allerdings erst vier Jahre später, im Februar 1951 – was dann das Leben Carola Sterns einschneidend veränderte. Nach dem Eintritt in die SED 1947 war sie 1948/49 Lehrerin in Potsdam-Geltow geworden und arbeitete als Referentin in der Abteilung Parteischulung, Kultur und Erziehung im SED-Landesvorstand.<sup>150</sup> Sie besuchte 1949 den Viermonatslehrgang an der SED-Landespartei-schule „Ernst Thälmann“<sup>151</sup> und galt als „partei-ergeben“.<sup>152</sup> Sie wurde zum Lehrgang I an die Parteihochschule „Karl Marx“ in Hakeburg (Kleinmachnow) unter dem Pseudonym „Wiesenburg“ delegiert, nach einem halben Jahr aus dem Lehrgang herausgenommen und als Assistentin/Dozentin an der Hochschule eingesetzt.<sup>153</sup> Zu ihrer Mitgliedschaft in der SED notierte sie 1952: „Meine Tätigkeit in der SED wie auch mein Eintritt in die bolschewistische Partei erklären sich aus einer sehr starken antikommunistischen Einstellung, die mich veranlasste, in Zusammenarbeit mit einer westlichen Dienststelle aus bestimmten Gründen Funktionärin der SED zu werden.“<sup>154</sup>

Als die SED-Kontrollkommission sie im Juni 1951 mit dem Agenten-Vorhalt konfrontierte, floh sie, ohne zu zögern, nach West-Berlin.<sup>155</sup> Sie kannte Ernst Richert bereits aus Leipzig, ebenso Wolfgang Leonhardt (geb. 1921, gest. 2014), den sie an der Parteihochschule kennengelernt hatte. Als bald wur-

149 Abschrift vom 23.2.1951 (BArch, MfS, BV Potsdam, AP Nr. 2065/54, Bl. 2 f., hier 3).

150 Vgl. Stern, Doppelleben, S. 61–64.

151 Vgl. Landespartei-schule „Ernst Thälmann“, Assmus, Erika – Charakteristik vom 3.1.1950 (BArch, MfS, BV Potsdam, AP Nr. 2065/54, Bl. 15).

152 Vgl. BArch, MfS, BV Potsdam, AP Nr. 2065/54, Bl. 8 f.

153 Vgl. Parteihochschule „Karl Marx“, Charakteristik vom 3.10.1950 (BArch, MfS, BV Potsdam, AP Nr. 2065/54, Bl. 13) und Schreiben an Genossin Schimmack vom 13.4.1951 (ebd., Bl. 21); Stern, Uns wirft nichts mehr um, S. 76–81; dies., Doppelleben, S. 64–75.

154 Lebenslauf von Erika Assmus, ca. 1952 (Universitätsarchiv der FU Berlin, StudA Nr. 8440, S. 2 f.).

155 Vgl. Bericht vom 4.7.1951 (BArch, MfS, BV Potsdam, AP Nr. 2065/54, Bl. 26 und 35); Stern, Doppelleben, S. 80–87.

de sie als politischer Flüchtling anerkannt.<sup>156</sup> Zu ihrer politischen Disposition in jener Zeit äußerte sie: „Das hatte ich mitgenommen aus der DDR, dass der Sozialismus an und für sich eine gute Sache ist, aber mit Demokratie verbunden werden muss.“<sup>157</sup>

Stern wurde an der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der FU Berlin zum Sommersemester 1952 immatrikuliert; ihr Studienfach war Volkswirtschaft. Nach zehn Semestern – davon zwei Urlaubssemester – gab sie das Studium ohne Abschluss auf.<sup>158</sup> Bald nach der Immatrikulation war sie Assistentin bei Ernst Richert geworden, dem sie wesentlich zuarbeitete.<sup>159</sup> Allerdings legte sie – 29 Jahre alt – 1954 eine der ersten umfassenden Analysen zur SED vor: „Die SED. Ein Handbuch über Aufbau, Organisation und Funktion des Parteiapparates“, das 1954 in Köln in Kooperation der Verlage Rote Weissbücher und Kiepenheuer & Witsch erschien – neben anderen Dokumentationen aus sowjetisch besetzten Ländern. Zu dieser Zeit stand sie bereits beim MfS im Verdacht, „im Auftrag des amerikanischen Geheimdienstes sich mit der Aufweichungs- und Zersetzungstätigkeit gegen die SED zu beschäftigen.“<sup>160</sup>

*Karl Christian Thalheim* (geb. 1900, gest. 1993) wurde in eine evangelische Familie in Reval geboren.<sup>161</sup> Sein Vater Edmund war kaufmännischer Angestellter. Thalheim erwarb das Abitur 1917 am Gymnasium in Görlitz (zuvor war er im Evangelischen Internatsgymnasium der Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde in Niesky).<sup>162</sup> 1917/18 absolvierte er den Vaterländischen Hilfsdienst, dann die militärische Ausbildung, war zuletzt Musketier. Zunächst fungierte er als Hauslehrer. Im Oktober 1919 wurde er an der Universität Leipzig für Geschichte und Germanistik immatrikuliert, belegte am Historischen Institut im Wintersemester 1919/20 Seminare zur Verfassungsgeschichte im frühen Mittelalter, im Sommersemester 1920 dann zur „Geschichte der sozialistischen

156 Vgl. Zöger, geb. Assmus, Erika, o. D. (BArch, MfS, HA XX/AKG Nr. 2408, Bl. 1 f.); Stern, Doppelleben, S. 97.

157 Stern, Uns wirft nichts mehr um, S. 88.

158 Vgl. Carola Stern; Universitätsarchiv der FU Berlin, StudA Nr. 8440.

159 Vgl. Stern, Uns wirft nichts mehr um, S. 122; dies., Doppelleben, S. 99–105; Hüttmann, DDR-Geschichte, S. 42.

160 Vgl. Abschlussbericht zum Gruppen-Operativ-Vorgang vom 12.4.1971 (BArch, MfS, HA XX Nr. 18733, Bl. 10–18, hier 10).

161 Vgl. Ermittlungsbericht des MfS, BV Leipzig über Prof. Dr. Thalheim, Karl vom 9.8.1952 (BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 15003/56, Bl. 42).

162 Zu Karl C. Thalheim ferner vgl. Friedrich Haffner, Prof. Karl C. Thalheim zum 90. Geburtstag. In: Deutschland Archiv, 23 (1990) 5, S. 663–667; ders., Zum Tod von Karl C. Thalheim. In: Deutschland Archiv, 26 (1993) 6, S. 640; Hüttmann, DDR-Geschichte, S. 73–78.

Ideen im 19. Jahrhundert“, schließlich aber bis zum Sommersemester 1924 Seminare zur Staatswissenschaft und für Statistik und Buchführung. Ab dem Sommersemester 1921 ließ er sich für „*rer. pol. et jur.*“ umschreiben.<sup>163</sup> Bereits während des Studiums war er wissenschaftlicher Hilfsarbeiter am Institut für Auslandskunde, Grenz- und Auslandsdeutschum der Deutschen Kulturpolitischen Gesellschaft in Leipzig. 1925 promovierte er zum Dr. rer. pol. mit einer Arbeit, die 1926 unter dem Titel „Auswanderung und Auswanderungspolitik in Deutschland nach dem Kriege“ in Crimmitschau publiziert wurde.<sup>164</sup> Von 1925 bis 1929 war er Lehrbeauftragter an der Handels-Hochschule Leipzig, wo er auch mit der Arbeit „Sozialkritik und Sozialreform bei [Ernst] Abbe [geb. 1840, gest. 1905], [Walther] Rathenau [geb. 1867, gest. 1922] und [Henry] Ford [geb. 1863, gest. 1947]“ habilitierte; sie erschien 1930 in Berlin. In der Arbeit feierte er diese drei Autoren; Abbe exemplarisch als „zu früh gekommene[r] Tugendmensch“ und „Wegbereiter einer neuen Zeit“. Die Auswahl dieser Akteure grenzt an Paradoxie, denn Abbe und Ford wurden schon in dieser Zeit von den Nationalsozialisten als „Bahnbrecher des Nationalsozialismus“ verehrt; auf Abbe bezog sich Adolf Hitler wiederholt in seinen Reden.<sup>165</sup> Dagegen wurde Rathenau mit seinem jüdischen Hintergrund Opfer jener Geisteshaltung.<sup>166</sup> Zunächst war Thalheim als Privatdozent an der Hochschule tätig, ab 1931 als außerordentlicher, ab 1942 als ordentlicher Professor und ab 1936 als Direktor des Wirtschaftsinstitutes.<sup>167</sup>

Von 1930 bis 1933 exponierte sich Thalheim in der Volksnationalen Reichsvereinigung,<sup>168</sup> für die er 1930 (vergeblich) für den Sächsischen Landtag kandidiert hatte. Ferner engagierte er sich für die Deutsche Staatspartei und war im Herbst 1932 an der Gründung des Deutschen Nationalvereins aktiv beteiligt – einem Sammelbecken konservativer Kräfte.<sup>169</sup> Im März 1933 un-

163 Vgl. Quästur Karl Thalheim (Universitätsarchiv Leipzig); ferner auch Universitätsarchiv Leipzig, Rep. 1-16-07-C 85, Bd. 2, Karl Thalheim.

164 Vgl. hierzu Heinz Rieter, *Die Anfänge der Wirtschaftswissenschaft an der Freien Universität Berlin. Personen, Institutionen, Konflikte*. In: Christian Scheer (Hg.), *Die deutschsprachige Wirtschaftswissenschaft in den ersten Jahrzehnten nach 1945. Studien zur Entwicklung der ökonomischen Theorie*, Berlin 2010, S. 25–200, zu Thalheim insbesondere S. 133–151, hier 134.

165 Vgl. Sebastian Demel, *Auf dem Weg zur Verantwortungsgesellschaft. Ernst Abbe und die Carl Zeiss-Stiftung im deutschen Kaiserreich*, Göttingen 2014, S. 34.

166 Zu Rathenau vgl. Christian Schölzel, *Walther Rathenau. Eine Biographie*, Paderborn 2006.

167 Vgl. Rieter, *Anfänge*, S. 135.

168 Vgl. hierzu Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, *Vom Traum zum Alptraum. Sachsen in der Weimarer Republik*, Dresden 2000, S. 113.

169 Vgl. Rieter, *Anfänge*, S. 138.

terzeichnete Thalheim das „Bekenntnis der Professoren an den deutschen Universitäten und Hochschulen zu Adolf Hitler und dem nationalsozialistischen Staat“.<sup>170</sup> Ab November 1933 gehörte er bei der SA dem Sturm R 22/107 an (zuletzt als Scharführer, was einem Unteroffizier entspricht),<sup>171</sup> zudem der NS-Volkswohlfahrt, der NS-Reichsdozentschaft und dem NS-Lehrerbund (ab 1936 NS-Dozentenbund), jeweils ab 1934, der NSDAP ab Mai 1937 und dem NS-Altherrenbund ab 1939.<sup>172</sup> Seine NSDAP-Ortsgruppe Leipzig-Süden schätzte ihn im September 1937 so ein: „T. steht hinter Staat und Partei und ist in politischer und persönlicher Beziehung als völlig einwandfrei zu bezeichnen“ – obgleich er früher der Volksnationalen Reichsvereinigung angehört hatte.<sup>173</sup>

Während des Nationalsozialismus äußerte sich Thalheim wiederholt antisemitisch. Exemplarisch 1941:

„Wir wissen heute, dass die Rasse nicht nur eine äußere, physiologische Tatsache ist, sondern dass auch die innere Einstellung der einzelnen Menschen und der Völker entscheidend von ihrer rassischen Zusammensetzung bestimmt wird. Das gilt auch von der Einstellung zur Wirtschaft, wie sich im Beispiel der händlerisch-mammonistischen Wirtschaftsgesinnung des Judentums mit ganz besonderer Deutlichkeit zeigt. Die Wirtschaftsgesinnung ist also nicht, wie der Liberalismus annahm, gleichartig bei allen, ‚die Menschenantlitz tragen‘, sondern weist entsprechend der verschiedenen blutmäßigen Zusammensetzung der Völker die allergrößten Unterschiede auf. Die Einsicht in die Zusammenhänge von Rasse und Wirtschaft eröffnet der Volkswirtschaftslehre heute ein großes, neues Erkenntnisgebiet“.<sup>174</sup>

In den Jahren 1943 bis 1945 war Thalheim Verbindungsmann des Sicherheitsdienstes (SD) des Reichsführers SS, wozu er 1945 erklärte:

- 170 Vgl. Ernst Klee, *Das Personenlexikon zum Dritten Reich. Wer war was vor und nach 1945?*, Frankfurt a. M. 2005, S. 620.
- 171 Vgl. Bericht, o. D. (BArch, MfS, AU Nr. 402/54, Bd. 11, Bl. 1); Karl C. Thalheim: Personalbogen des NSDAP-Kreis Leipzig, 27.2.1944 (BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 2530/63, Bl. 2 f.). Hierzu ferner Dominic Detzen/Sebastian Hoffmann, *Accountability and ideology. The case of a German university under the Nazi regime*. In: *Accounting History*, 25 (2020) 2, S. 174–192.
- 172 Vgl. Rieter, *Anfänge*, S. 136.
- 173 Vgl. NSDAP-Ortsgruppe Leipzig-Süden: Thalheim, Dr. Karl, 10.9.1937 (BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 2530/63, Bl. 1); ähnlicher Tenor in Gauleitung Sachsen der NSDAP: Politische Beurteilung über Thalheimer, Dr. Karl, 1938 (ebd., Bl. 4); wie auch NSDAP-Ortsgruppe Süden-B: Schreiben an Kreisleitung – Organisationsamt – Stelle für politische Begutachtungen, o. D. (ebd., Bl. 7).
- 174 Zitiert nach Seeliger, *Braune Universität*, S. 30 f. Zu diesem Komplex ferner Rieter, *Anfänge*, S. 143; Carsten Klingemann, *Soziologie im Dritten Reich*, Baden-Baden 1996, S. 302; Götz Aly/Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung*, Hamburg 1990, S. 120 f.

„Es schien sich mir dadurch die Möglichkeit zu bieten, Wünsche und Sorgen der Hochschule und der Wissenschaft in wirkungsvollere Weise, als das auf anderen Wegen möglich war, der Staatsführung zur Kenntnis zu bringen. Das ist auch tatsächlich der Fall gewesen, da man dem Sicherheitsdienst gegenüber wesentlich offener sprechen konnte als gegenüber irgendeiner anderen Stelle.“<sup>175</sup>

1945 räumte er ein, auch „personelle Auskünfte“ an den SD gegeben zu haben.<sup>176</sup> Im Zuge der Entnazifizierung erklärte er 1945, die Mitgliedschaften seien „nur aufgrund meiner politischen Betätigung als Gegner des Nationalsozialismus vor 1933 richtig zu verstehen“.<sup>177</sup> Von ihm seien als SA-Mitglied niemals „irgendwelche Aktionen der Judenverfolgung“ gefordert worden, „es ist mir auch nicht bekannt gewesen, dass SA-Leute in Uniformen solche Aktionen durchgeführt haben“.<sup>178</sup> Mehr noch erklärte er:

„Der Dienst beschränkte sich hier auf eine in bescheidenen Grenzen bleibende paramilitärische Ausbildung – vor allem Ausmärsche und von Zeit zu Zeit Kleinkaliberschüssen – sowie auf die Pflege der Kameradschaft unter Betonung der Volksgemeinschaftsidee [...]. Über diesen normalen Dienst ging lediglich, dass ich von Zeit zu Zeit in meinem Sturm kleinere Vorträge gehalten habe.“<sup>179</sup>

Im September 1945 trug er vor, im Vorfeld des 20. Juli 1944 eingebunden gewesen zu sein, vermochte sogar eine Bescheinigung beizubringen, wonach er „sich aktiven antifaschistischen Gruppen angeschlossen [hatte], so etwa im Besonderen dem Kreis um Oberbürgermeister Dr. [Carl] Goerdeler [geb. 1884, gest. 1945] und ihm selbst.“<sup>180</sup> Belege gibt es dafür bislang nicht. Als Thalheim in den 1960er-Jahren seine Ausführungen während der NS-Zeit vorgehalten wurden, erklärte er:

„Das sind vor allem jene Zitate, in denen ich mich über das Judentum geäußert habe. Ich kann sie heute nur mit tiefer Trauer und schmerzlicher Scham wieder lesen [...] Ich habe an den schrecklichen (im vollen Sinne des Wortes schrecklichen) Unsinn, der in diesen Sätzen steht, nie geglaubt. Ich bin nie Antisemit gewesen und bin es auch in der Nazizeit nicht geworden. [...] Man wird mir sagen: ‚Umso schlimmer‘ – und mit Recht. Wer solches geschrieben und daran geglaubt hat, ist weniger schuldig als derjenige, der

175 Zitiert nach Rieter, Anfänge, S. 140.

176 Vgl. Rieter, Anfänge, S. 141.

177 Vgl. ebd., S. 137.

178 Ebd., S. 139 f.

179 Zitiert nach ebd., S. 140; zuerst veröffentlicht durch Siegfried Prokop, Ranger der Wissenschaft. Eine Dokumentation über den Bonner „Forschungsbeirat“. In: Neue Berliner Illustrierte, (1966), S. 14–19, hier 14; zitiert nach BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 13957/73, Bl. 54–58, hier 58.

180 Zitiert nach Rieter, Anfänge, S. 142.



es schrieb und nicht daran glaubte. Ich weiß heute – nicht erst heute –, dass dies der eigentliche Verrat im Geiste war.“<sup>181</sup>

Thalheim hat sich auf den Nationalsozialismus eingelassen und ihm zugearbeitet; er war der nationalsozialistischen Demagogie erlegen und propagierte sie.<sup>182</sup> Er wurde deshalb im November 1945 aus dem Hochschuldienst entlassen. 1945/46 lebte er wesentlich von Aufträgen der sächsischen Landesregierung.<sup>183</sup> Doch schon im August 1945 bewertete ihn Helen F. Conover (geb. 1898, gest. 1986) in einer Zusammenstellung, die sie im Auftrag des United States Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality vornahm, als einen der Akteure des Nazi-Staates unter dem Rubrum Geopolitik und Lebensraum, insbesondere wegen seiner zusammen mit Arnold Hillen Ziegfeld (geb. 1894, gest. 1964) herausgegebenen Publikation „Der deutsche Osten. Seine Geschichte, sein Wesen und seine Aufgabe“, die 1936 in Berlin erschien.<sup>184</sup>

Im Februar 1947 ging Thalheim nach West-Berlin, nachdem er, wie es heißt, von amerikanischer Seite dafür umworben worden sei. Zunächst habe er sich in den USA aufgehalten. Das MfS nahm an, Thalheim werde für einen amerikanischen Nachrichtendienst Informationen aus seinem früheren Umfeld beschaffen, wobei die Gesellschaft für Betriebswirtschaft eine größere Rolle spiele. Ein ehemaliger Kollege Thalheims, der unterdessen für das MfS als „Zahn“ arbeitete, äußerte:

„Nach seiner Flucht erhielt Th. von den Amerikanern sofort eine möblierte Villa und andere materielle Unterstützung. Er hatte oft persönliche Besprechungen mit dem amerik[anischen] Hochkommis[sar John] McCloy. Th. wurde mit der Leitung der Berliner Außenstelle des Bonner ‚Instituts für Raumforschung‘<sup>185</sup> betraut.

Von 1949 bis 1952 hatte überdies der sowjetische Nachrichtendienst Thalheim im Visier und vermutete, Thalheim arbeite

„als Resident für den amerikanischen Geheimdienst. Im Oktober 1948 wurde er Leiter des Büros für ökonomische Aufklärung des amerikanischen Geheimdienstes inner-

181 Zitiert nach Seeliger, Braune Universität, S. 36; vgl. hierzu Rieter, Anfänge, S. 144.

182 Vgl. Rieter, Anfänge, S. 147 und 151.

183 Vgl. MfS, BV Leipzig, Abteilung III: Bericht Prof. Dr. Thalheim, Karl vom 6.9.1953 (BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 15003/56, Bl. 112).

184 Vgl. Helen F. Conover, The Nazi state, war crimes and war criminals for the United States Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, Washington (August) 1945, S. 69.

185 Zwischenbericht über das uns vorliegende Material über die Agenten Thalheim und Lehmann vom 20.4.1954 (BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 15003/56, Bl. 145–150, hier 145). Zum Institut für Raumforschung vgl. Hansjörg Gutberger, Die sozialwissenschaftliche Flüchtlingsforschung des Instituts für Raumforschung. In: ders., Raumentwicklung, Bevölkerung und soziale Integration. Forschung für Raumplanung und Raumordnungspolitik 1930–1960, Heidelberg 2017, S. 181–222.

halb der Dienststelle S 2. Er flog regelmäßig nach Heidelberg, wo sich die Zentrale des Organs S 2 befand, und wo er seine Instruktionen erhielt. [...] Thalheim steuerte etwa 30 Agenten in Westberlin und im Gebiete der damaligen sowjetischen Besatzungszone. [...] Thalheim nutzte seine Verbindungen zu Wissenschaftlern und Mitarbeitern des Verwaltungsapparates in der SBZ für seine Feindtätigkeit aus. T. hat selbst Werbungen durchgeführt. Er sammelte ökonomische und militärische Informationen.“<sup>186</sup>

Einige seiner Kontaktpersonen wurden in der DDR inhaftiert.<sup>187</sup> Seit dem Wintersemester 1949/50 hatte er einen Lehrauftrag für Weltwirtschaftslehre an der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der FU Berlin, zugleich war er 1949/50 Leiter der volkswirtschaftlichen Abteilung der Berliner Zentralbank. 1950/51 leitete er eine solche Abteilung bei der Industrie- und Handelskammer in West-Berlin. Im Mai 1951 wurde er an der FU Berlin zum Professor für Weltwirtschaftslehre berufen. Seit 1951 war er Direktor der Abteilung für osteuropäische Wirtschaftswissenschaft am Osteuropa-Institut der FU Berlin.<sup>188</sup> Ab 1952 gehörte er dem Forschungsbeirat für Fragen der Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands beim Bundesminister für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen an.<sup>189</sup> Das MfS ging von einer späteren Mitgliedschaft bei der FDP aus.<sup>190</sup>

Der gebürtige Ulmer *Siegfried Unseld* (geb. 1924, gest. 2002) war Sohn des Angestellten Ludwig Unseld (geb. 1896, gest. 1951) und dessen Frau Maria Magdalena (geb. 1897, gest. 1985).<sup>191</sup> Er besuchte ab 1935 das Realgymnasium am Blauring, das er 1942 mit einem Notabitur abschloss. Während seiner Schulzeit war er Mitglied des Jungvolks, zuletzt als Fähnleinführer.<sup>192</sup> Von Dezember 1942 an leistete er seinen Wehrdienst als Funker bei der Marine, zuletzt im Range eines Obergefreiten, und ab Juni 1945 in britischen Diensten als Fahrer. 1946 holte er das Abitur nach. Im Oktober 1946 begann er eine Ausbildung zum Buchhandelsgehilfen im Ulmer Aegis-Verlag, die er 1947 abschloss, nachdem er sich zuvor erfolglos für ein Studium beworben hatte. Im Oktober 1947 nahm er eine Tätigkeit im J. C. B. Mohr-Verlag (Siebeck) in Tübingen auf, studierte zugleich Germanistik und in den Nebenfächern Philosophie und Bibliothekswissenschaft an der Eberhard-Karls-Universität. Dort

186 BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 13957/73, Bl. 4–7, hier 5 f. Vgl. hierzu: Bonner Ostforscher arbeiten für CIA. In: Neues Deutschland, 22.9.1967.

187 Vgl. MfS, Hauptabteilung II/7: Auskunft [über] Prof. Dr. Thalheim, Karl, 12.1.1968; BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 13957/73, Bl. 12.

188 Vgl. MfS, HV A, Abteilung VI: Schreiben an MfS, Abteilung X, 19.3.1969; BArch, MfS, AP Nr. 426/68, Bl. 34–38; Ministerium des Innern CSSR, Berliner Gruppe II: Osteuropainstitut, 1.4.1969, ebd., Bl. 42–48.

189 Vgl. Rieter, Anfänge, S. 135.

190 Vgl. Vernehmungsprotokoll des Beschuldigten Wolfgang Silgradt, vom 27.4.1954 (BArch, MfS, AU Nr. 402/54, Bd. 7, Bl. 232).

191 Vgl. Meldekarte Siegfried Unseld (Stadtarchiv Ulm).

192 Vgl. Zulassungsantrag Siegfried Unseld (Universitätsarchiv Tübingen, 364/28784).

promovierte er 1951 zum Dr. phil. mit einer Arbeit über „Hermann Hesses Anschauung vom Beruf des Dichters“.<sup>193</sup> 1952 begann seine Tätigkeit im Suhrkamp-Verlag, bei dem er 1955 Prokura erhielt. Vom 7. Juli bis zum 24. August 1955 nahm er als einer der ersten – wie auch Ingeborg Bachmann und weitere 38 Teilnehmer aus 17 verschiedenen Ländern – an der Harvard Summer School of Arts and Sciences teil, die von Henry Kissinger als internationales Seminar eingerichtet worden war.<sup>194</sup> Ein Empfehlungsschreiben von Hermann Hesse und Peter Suhrkamp ermöglichte ihm das. Er gehörte somit zu den „Kissinger-Boys“, denen „die Software des Kalten Krieges in die Köpfe“ eingeschrieben worden sei und die Kissinger in der Folgezeit „mit Informationen aus Europa versorgt“<sup>195</sup> hätten.

Nach welchen Kriterien wählten Carl J. Friedrich und Henry Kissinger ihre 15 Berater aus? Und welchen Erfahrungshintergrund hatten sie? Die Forschungslandschaft im Vorfeld des Projekts war in den Jahren 1954/55 überschaubar; der eigentliche „Boom“ der DDR-Forschung setzte erst ab 1956 ein, nachdem dies ab 1953 als politisch erwünscht signalisiert worden war. Bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt ragte vor allem das Osteuropa-Institut an der FU Berlin hervor, an dem eine Reihe von Abteilungen etabliert war. Dabei handelte es sich um die Abteilung des Direktors Prof. Dr. Werner Philipp (geb. 1908, gest. 1996)<sup>196</sup> für Geschichte, von Prof. Dr. Walter Meder (geb. 1904, gest. 1986) für Recht und von Prof. Dr. Karl C. Thalheim für Wirtschaft. Überdies gab es noch eine Sektion für Medizin unter Prof. Dr. Max Brandt (geb. 1890) und für Kunstgeschichte unter Dr. Walter Loeschke (geb. 1895, gest. 1965).<sup>197</sup> Wenn die Wahl auf Thalheim fiel, war dies leicht nachvollziehbar.

An der Universität Kiel gab es das Institut für Weltwirtschaft unter dem Direktor Prof. Dr. Fritz Baade, das ein Wirtschaftsarchiv unter Dr. Roman Muziol und eine Bibliothek unter Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Gülich (geb. 1895, gest.

193 Vgl. Promotionsbericht Siegfried Unsel (Universitätsarchiv Tübingen, 131/1798; Promotionsurkunde; Universitätsarchiv Tübingen, 132/61/1952/1).

194 Vgl. Niall Ferguson, Kissinger. 1923–1968. The Idealist, New York 2015, S. 275–277; Holger Klitzing, The Nemesis of Stability. Henry A. Kissinger’s Ambivalent Relationship with Germany, Trier 2007, S. 76–84.

195 Vgl. Jan Bürger, Die Kissinger Boys. Von der Harvard Summer School zur Suhrkamp Culture. In: Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte, 11 (2017) 4, S. 5–18; hierzu Willi Winkler, Kriegs-Software. In: Süddeutsche Zeitung vom 4.2.2018.

196 Zu Werner Philipp vgl. Hans-Christian Petersen, „Die Gefahr der Renazifizierung ist in unserer Branche ja besonders groß“. Werner Philipp und die deutsche Osteuropaforschung nach 1945. In: Hans-Christian Petersen/Jan Kusber (Hg.), Neuanfang im Westen. 60 Jahre Osteuropaforschung in Mainz, Stuttgart 2007, S. 31–52.

197 Vgl. Jens Hacker, Osteuropa-Forschung in der Bundesrepublik. In: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte. Beilage zur Wochenzeitung „Das Parlament“, (1960) 37, S. 591–622, hier 595.

1960)<sup>198</sup> unterhielt.<sup>199</sup> Aus diesem Institut kam Baade zum Zuge. In Berlin gab es ferner das Institut für Politische Wissenschaft an der FU Berlin unter dem Direktor Prof. Dr. Otto Stammer,<sup>200</sup> an dem in jener Zeit auch Dr. Ernst Richert und als Assistentin Carola Stern arbeiteten. Alle drei wurden in das Projekt integriert, wodurch dieses Institut wie kein anderes an der Entstehung der Studie beteiligt war. Schließlich wurde auf Dr. Gerhard Abeken zurückgegriffen, der die Abteilung „Mitteldeutschland-Forschung“ des Deutschen Instituts für Wirtschaftsforschung leitete.<sup>201</sup> Faktisch war auf die führenden Institute und ihr Personal zurückgegriffen worden. Das macht jedoch lediglich ein Drittel der Berater aus; Institute dürften nicht das ausschließliche Kriterium gewesen sein.

Friedrich rekurrierte insbesondere auf den Erfahrungsschatz des RIAS, von dem er Hanns-Peter Herz und Herbert W. Kandler einband; darüber hinaus auch auf Erich Matthias, den Redakteur des seinerzeitigen Leitmediums „Ost-Probleme“. Sonderbarerweise griff er jedoch nicht auf jene Crew zurück, auf deren Arbeit ein enormer Anteil an Belegstellen für die Studie ruhte: auf das „SBZ-Archiv“.<sup>202</sup> Weder der Chefredakteur Berend von Nottbeck (geb. 1913, gest. 1990) noch die gewichtigen Redakteure Jürgen Rühle (geb. 1924, gest. 1986)<sup>203</sup> und Ilse Spittmann (geb. 1930, gest. 2022) wurden beigezogen. Im Übrigen wären auch Prof. Dr. Ossip K. Flechtheim (geb. 1909, gest. 1998),<sup>204</sup> Wolfgang Leonhardt<sup>205</sup> – er machte 1955 Schlagzeilen mit seinem Buch „Die Revolution entläßt ihre Kinder“ –, Heinz Lippmann (geb. 1921, gest. 1974)<sup>206</sup> oder Robert Franz Paul Bialek (geb. 1915, gest. 1956) infrage

198 Zu Wilhelm Gülich vgl. Fritz Baade, Wilhelm Gülich in Memoriam (1895–1960). In: *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, 84 (1960) 2, S. 141–146.

199 Vgl. Hacker, *Osteuropa-Forschung*, S. 598.

200 Vgl. ebd.

201 Vgl. ebd., S. 621.

202 Zum SBZ-Archiv vgl. Karl Wilhelm Fricke, *Zur Geschichte des Deutschland Archivs*. In: *Zeitschrift des Forschungsverbundes SED-Staat*, (2005) 17, S. 140–151, hier 142–146.

203 Zu Jürgen Rühle vgl. Birgit Bernard, Jürgen Rühle. In: *Internetportal Rheinische Geschichte* (<https://rheinische-geschichte.lvr.de/Persoenlichkeiten/juergen-ruehle/DE-2086/lido/60c083743a0962.40940710; 6.6.2023>).

204 Zu Ossip K. Flechtheim vgl. Christian Fenner/Bernhard Blanke (Hg.), *Systemwandel und Demokratisierung. Festschrift für Ossip K. Flechtheim*, Frankfurt a. M. 1975.

205 Zu Wolfgang Leonhardt vgl. ders., *Die Revolution entläßt ihre Kinder*, Köln 2005; ders., *Spurensuche. 40 Jahre nach „Die Revolution entläßt ihre Kinder“*, Köln 2000.

206 Zu Heinz Lippmann vgl. Michael Herms, Heinz Lippmann. *Porträt eines Stellvertreters*, Berlin 1996.

gekommen.<sup>207</sup> Sie gehörten nicht dazu.<sup>208</sup> Darüber hinaus erscheint naheliegend, dass bei Wolfgang G. Friedrich die brüderliche Verbundenheit ebenso ausschlaggebend war wie bei Siegfried Unseld dessen Teilnahme an der Sommeruniversität in Harvard. Bei anderen, soweit ihr biografischer Hintergrund ermittelt worden ist, erscheint kein schlüssiger Bezug zur Thematik ableitbar wie etwa bei Heinrich Rittershausen, dessen frühe Kontakte zur Harvard University möglicherweise den Ausschlag gaben.

Bekanntlich wird wissenssoziologisch ein Zusammenhang zwischen sozialem Kontext, generationenspezifischen Erfahrungen und Erkenntnis angenommen.<sup>209</sup> Daraus lässt sich die Annahme ableiten, die Perzeption der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone bzw. der DDR korrespondiere damit. In der Tat kamen die Berater nahezu durchgehend aus bürgerlichen Familien mit protestantischem Hintergrund. Nur Hanns-Peter Herz weist einen jüdischen Hintergrund auf. Stammer war konfessionslos und entstammte einer Gastwirtsfamilie. Lediglich Thalheim wuchs vaterlos auf. Gleichwohl scheinen die Berater ihre Jugend – wenn von Thalheim vielleicht abgesehen wird – kaum in ökonomischer Not erlebt zu haben. Einen direkten Bezug zur Arbeiterklasse weist – durchaus nicht überraschend – keiner von ihnen auf.

Wesentlich geprägt durch Monarchie und Ersten Weltkrieg war altersbedingt kaum einer von ihnen. Allerdings erlebte über die Hälfte der Berater noch das Kaiserreich; sicherlich bewusst Baade (Jahrgang 1893) und Rittershausen (1898), aber auch Abeken, Stammer und Thalheim (jeweils 1900) und während ihrer Kindheit Mayer (1902) und Wolfgang G. Friedrich (1905). Unmittelbar an Kriegshandlungen des Ersten Weltkrieges beteiligt dürften nur Baade und Matthias gewesen sein, während Abeken, Rittershausen, Stammer und Thalheim allenfalls im letzten Kriegsjahr involviert waren; wobei Rittershausen selbst nicht zum Zuge kam. Unmittelbare Prägungen aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg und Kampfhandlungen sind Baade und Matthias zu unterstellen. In einzelnen Fällen zeigt sich der unmittelbare Verlust des Vaters: Die Väter Baades und Friedrichs waren „gefallen“; eine langjährige Kriegsgefangenschaft erlitt der Vater von Matthias.

207 Zu Robert Bialek vgl. Michael Herms/Gerd Noack, *Aufstieg und Fall des Robert Bialek*, Berlin 1998.

208 Das Staatssekretariat für Staatssicherheit fasste in einer Dienstanweisung Nr. 19/56 die wesentlichen Akteure DDR-kritischer Publizistik zusammen (BArch, MfS, BdL Nr. 002228, Bl. 3–111).

209 Vgl. Karl Mannheim, *Wissenssoziologie*, Berlin 1964; Norbert Elias, *Wissenssoziologie. Neue Perspektiven. Teil I und II*. In: ders., *Aufsätze und andere Schriften II. Gesammelte Schriften*, Frankfurt a. M. 2006, Bd. 15, S. 219–286.

Die Weimarer Republik haben alle Berater erlebt, teils lediglich als Kinder wie die jüngsten Berater des Projekts: Unseld (Jahrgang 1924), Stern (1925), Kundler (1926) und Herz (1927). Ansonsten haben alle in diesen Jahren studiert, oftmals mit sozialwissenschaftlicher Ausrichtung, teils promoviert und einzelne habilitiert. Ein Teil exponierte sich politisch in der Weimarer Zeit, soweit bekannt. Baade, Mayer und Stammer sind in unterschiedlichem Grade dem sozialdemokratischen Milieu zuzuordnen, Baade sogar in exponierter Form. Rittershausen vagabundierte politisch zwischen der konservativen Deutschen Vaterlandspartei (1917/18), der SPD (1930/31) und dann offenkundig dem NSDAP-Milieu (ab 1932). Thalheim engagierte sich ab 1930 bei der eher als konservativ ausgelegten Volksnationalen Reichsvereinigung. Mithin deutet sich – auch mit Blick auf politische Dispositionen nach 1945 – eine sozialdemokratische Dominanz unter den Beratern an.

Das zwölf Jahre währende Dritte Reich bedeutete für alle Berater einen tiefgreifenden Einschnitt, wird folglich ebenso als prägend anzusehen sein wie die Weimarer Demokratie. Das Gros der Berater fügte sich in die nationalsozialistische Welt ein, teils aus Überzeugung. Exponiert im nationalsozialistischen Kontext, soweit bislang ersichtlich, waren lediglich Rittershausen und Thalheim. Bei beiden sind antisemitische Äußerungen belegt. Rittershausen war nicht wie Thalheim Mitglied der NSDAP, doch schlossen sich beide diversen NS-Organisationen an, Thalheim auch als Scharführer der SA. Die jüngeren Berater gehörten altersbedingt BDM (Stern) oder Jungvolk/Hitlerjugend (Matthias, Unseld) an. Der überwiegende Teil der Berater überstand die NS-Zeit unbelastet. Baade und Mayer emigrierten, Stammer war aus politischen Gründen zeitweise arbeitslos und Richert in subalternen Funktionen tätig, möglicherweise in Aktivitäten des NKFD eingebunden.

Die Sowjetische Besatzungszone der Jahre 1945 bis 1949 erlebten nur wenige, interessanterweise überwiegend in Leipzig. Thalheim wechselte 1947 von Leipzig nach West-Berlin, Richert und Stammer 1949 und Stern im gleichen Jahr aus Potsdam nach West-Berlin. Dieses Quartett hatte unmittelbar in der „Sowjetzone“ gelebt, die meisten anderen nach 1945 in West-Berlin, also sehr nahe und somit faktisch in den politischen Prozess involviert. Abgesehen von Mayer, der sich in den USA aufhielt, waren alle Teil des Kalten Krieges. Bei einigen ist ein nachrichtendienstlicher Bezug offenkundig (Stern), aber bei nahezu allen ein amerikanischer, teils noch aus den Tagen der Weimarer Republik (Rittershausen). Mithin deutet die Auswahl der Berater auch deren Verhältnis zu den amerikanischen Interessen an, auf jeden Fall eine prowestliche Orientierung. Eine Mitgliedschaft in der SED (dann der SPD) wiesen lediglich Richert, Stammer und Stern auf, die vom Institut für Politische Wissenschaft an der FU Berlin kamen.

Nach gegenwärtigem Stand fanden sich bei den Recherchen zu den Beratern keine Hinweise auf eine Auseinandersetzung mit Carl J. Friedrichs Totalitarismusmodell. Es scheint: Sie gaben wesentlich ihre Expertise zu Fachfragen, die SBZ bzw. die DDR betreffend. Das wirft die Frage auf: Worum geht es in der Studie?

#### 4. Inhalt der Studie

Die Studie befasst sich in drei Kapiteln soziologisch, politisch und ökonomisch mit der DDR, die, zeitgenössisch üblich, durchgehend als Sowjetzone firmierte. Im Vorwort erfolgt eine in unserem Zusammenhang wichtige Charakterisierung der „Soviet Zone of Germany, organized in 1949 as the German Democratic Republik (Deutsche Demokratische Republik – DDR)“. „Von der DDR zu sprechen, war weithin verpönt; wer es dennoch tat, galt als Kommunist“,<sup>210</sup> erinnerte sich Carola Stern später.

Für die einzelnen Abschnitte zeichnen unterschiedliche Verfasser, wobei Carl J. Friedrich die allgemeinen Leitlinien vorgab. Er selbst schrieb die Hintergrundanalyse, den Abschnitt über Propaganda, zusammen mit dem damaligen Redakteur der Zeitschrift „Ostprobleme“ und späteren Politikwissenschaftler Erich Matthias das Kapitel über subversive Möglichkeiten und mit Henry Kissinger das über die Geschichte. Letzterer schrieb den größten Teil zum historischen Hintergrund. Horst Mendershausen berichtete über die Entwicklung des gesamten Wirtschaftssektors in der DDR. Herbert J. Spiro bereitete den größten Teil des Kapitels zur Politik auf, einschließlich des Abschnitts über das konstitutionelle System, die Regierungsstruktur, die politische Dynamik und die öffentliche Ordnung und schließlich einen Teil des Abschnitts über öffentliche Reaktionen. Vytautas M. Kavolis verfasste wesentlich die soziologische Untersuchung, insbesondere die Abschnitte über Bevölkerung, ethnische Gruppen, Sprachen, Bildung, Gesundheit und Wohlfahrt. Albert A. Mavrinac analysierte die Situation der Arbeitskräfte. Jürgen Herbst untersuchte die politischen Biografien wichtiger Akteure in der DDR und die Jugend, zu der Hanns-Peter Herz ein Memorandum (offenkundig zur Freien Deutschen Jugend) beitrug. Melvin Croan skizzierte wesentlich die Außenpolitik.

Die meisten Konsultanten reichten Ausarbeitungen ein: Gerhard Abeken, später beim Deutschen Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung verantwortlich tätig, verfasste ein Memorandum zu Handel, Planung, Bankwesen und Währung der DDR und Prof. Dr. Fritz Baade, von 1948 bis 1961 Direktor des Instituts für Weltwirtschaft in Kiel, lieferte Ausführungen zur Landwirtschaft. Der

210 Stern, Doppelleben, S. 99.

spätere Direktor des Instituts für Bankwirtschaft und Bankrecht, Prof. Dr. Heinrich Rittershausen, skizzierte gleichfalls das Bankenwesen. Der Nationalökonom Prof. Dr. Karl C. Thalheim, der das Osteuropa-Institut an der FU Berlin aufbaute, stellte seine Arbeit über Industriepotenzial, Binnenhandel und Planung zur Verfügung. Wolfgang G. Friedrich, der Bruder Carl J. Friedrichs, und der 1933 in die USA emigrierte Soziologe Carl Mayer verfassten Memoranden zur Religion.

Herbert W. Kundler, der an der Harvard University studierte und ab 1951 beim RIAS arbeitete, trug eine Studie zur öffentlichen Information bei. Ernst Richert brachte ein Memorandum über sein Spezialgebiet Propaganda ein. Carola Stern schrieb das Kapitel zur Familie. Sie war von 1947 bis 1951 Quelle des amerikanischen Nachrichtendienstes CIC, als sie Dozentin an der SED-Parteihochschule „Karl Marx“ in Kleinmachnow war, floh nach Berlin (West), studierte an der Deutschen Hochschule für Politik unter Ernst Richert, währenddessen sie das Harvard-Projekt unterstützte.<sup>211</sup> Der beim Suhrkamp-Verlag angestellte Dr. Siegfried Unseld schrieb das Kapitel zur Kunst offenkundig während seines Aufenthaltes von Juli bis August 1955 an der von Henry Kissinger ausgerichteten<sup>212</sup> Harvard Summer School of Arts and Sciences. Dort lernte Unseld auch Ingeborg Bachmann kennen, die ebenfalls am Seminar teilnahm.<sup>213</sup> Schließlich legte Prof. Dr. Otto Stammer eine Studie über die soziale Struktur in der SBZ vor. Nicht ausgewiesen sind Beiträge von Christamaria Selle und Ulrich Heinemann-Rufer, die zusammen mit dem angeführten Herbert W. Kundler zur öffentlichen Information publizierten.<sup>214</sup> Dass deren Nennung ausblieb, mag ein redaktioneller Fehler gewesen sein. Ungeachtet dessen stützte sich Carl J. Friedrich nicht unerheblich auf Zuarbeiten von Wissenschaftlern, die – wie Carola Stern und Ernst Richert – unmittelbare Kenntnis der „Soviet Zone“ hatten. Mithin stützte sich die Projektleitung auf Berater mit unterschiedlicher Expertise. Doch auf welche Literatur konnte zurückgegriffen werden?

211 Vgl. ebd. Dieses Projekt erwähnt sie in ihren Erinnerungen nicht.

212 Vgl. Bürger, Die Kissinger Boys.

213 Vgl. Felicitas von Lovenberg, Wir haben noch einen Koffer für Amerika. In: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung vom 7.5.2010; Ina Hartwig, Malina. Ingeborg Bachmann fragt nach der Utopie von Liebe und der Utopie von Politik. In: Die Zeit vom 2.8.2012.

214 Vgl. Herbert W. Kundler/Ulrich Heinemann-Rufer/Christamaria Selle, Das öffentliche Informationswesen der Sowjetzone Deutschlands. In: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, 6 (1956) 18, S. 281–294.



## 5. Literaturbasis der Studie

Neben der Expertise von – wie sie später hießen – DDR-Forschern berücksichtigte die Studie eine Reihe von Publikationen, wesentlich aus dem deutsch-deutschen wie amerikanischen Raum. Von großer Bedeutung waren die monatlichen Periodika „SBZ-Archiv“ und „Ost-Probleme“. Das „SBZ-Archiv“ war seit dem Jahre 1950 mit finanzieller Unterstützung des Bundesministeriums für gesamtdeutsche Fragen im Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch in Köln erschienen; die „Ost-Probleme“ wurden von der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde seit dem Jahre 1949 von der Deutschen Verlags-Anstalt herausgegeben. Darüber hinaus thematisierte das recht umfangreiche Schrifttum des Bundesministeriums für gesamtdeutsche Fragen zentrale Aspekte der Entwicklung in der DDR. Hinzu kam die DDR-Publizistik wie das „Neue Deutschland“, die „Junge Welt“ und diverse andere Zeitungen und Zeitschriften. Abgesehen von diesen Quellen handelte es sich weithin um Literatur der Jahre 1950 bis 1955, die wesentlich an ein breites Publikum zur Aufhellung über das Wesen der DDR gerichtet war. Beispielsweise stützten sich die Ausführungen zur DDR-Staatsicherheit nahezu ausschließlich auf eine Propagandabroschüre von Bernhard Sagolla, welche die Kampfgruppe gegen Unmenschlichkeit unter dem Titel „Die rote Gestapo“ im Jahre 1952 veröffentlichen ließ.<sup>215</sup> Insoweit weist die Quellenbasis arge Ungleichgewichte auf. Während das Kapitel „Public Order and Safety“, worunter auch die Staatsicherheit fiel, mit zehn Publikationen – zumeist vom Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen herausgegeben – nur dünn belegt wirkt, stellt sich das für das Unterkapitel „Subversive Potentialities“ schon anders dar. Es verweist zwar nur auf sieben Schriften, verarbeitet jedoch reichlich Quellenmaterial.<sup>216</sup>

Sicherlich war die Literaturbasis zum Zeitpunkt des Projekts überschaubar. Dennoch scheint deren Sichtweise und Wahrnehmung in der Studie deutlich vom Kalten Krieg geprägt. Sie stand wesentlich unter dem Eindruck der Stalin'schen Terrorjahre in der SBZ/DDR, deren Herrschaftspraxis mit dem Ableben des Diktators Anfang März 1953 jedoch Nachjustierungen erfuhr. Allerdings wurden das *vor* dem Aufstand vom 17. Juni 1953 eingeleitete und nach einem Monat wieder abgebrochene Tauwetter in der Studie ebenso übersehen wie die Vorboten der Tauwetter-Periode unter Nikita S. Chruschtschow (geb. 1894, gest. 1971), wo ansatzweise Bemühungen um eine Entspannung des

215 Vgl. S. 307–315 in diesem Band. Bernhard Sagolla, *Die rote Gestapo. Der Staatssicherheitsdienst in der Sowjetzone*, Berlin 1952. Zur Bewertung dieser Publikation vgl. Petra Weber, *Justiz und Diktatur. Justizverwaltung und politische Strafjustiz in Thüringen 1945–1961*, München 2000, S. 256.

216 Vgl. S. 322–327 in diesem Band.

Ost-West-Konflikts erkennbar wurden. Die zögerliche „Entstalinisierung“ fand erst im Anschluss an den XX. Parteitag der KPdSU im Februar 1956 statt – bekannt durch die Geheimrede über den Personenkult, die immerhin stalinistische Verbrechen der 1930er-Jahre thematisierte und im Kern die Spur zur „friedlichen Koexistenz“ in der sowjetischen Außenpolitik legte. Dem waren Signale vorangegangen wie etwa die ab Oktober 1955 erfolgte Rückkehr von über zehntausend Kriegsgefangenen nach dem Besuch des Bundeskanzlers Konrad Adenauer einen Monat zuvor.<sup>217</sup> Diese Entwicklungen blieben in der Studie unberücksichtigt, obwohl mit Blick auf einen (nicht angegebenen) Redaktionsschluss Literatur eingeflossen ist, die im Oktober 1955 erschienen war.<sup>218</sup>

217 Vgl. Karen Lass, *Vom Tauwetter zur Perestrojka. Kulturpolitik in der Sowjetunion 1953–1991*, Köln 2002. Zum Tauwetter vor dem 17.6.1953 vgl. Helmut Müller-Enbergs, *Der Fall Rudolf Herrnstadt. Tauwetterpolitik vor dem 17. Juni*, Berlin 1991.

218 So eine Ausgabe des theoretischen Organs der SED, *Einheit*, (1955) 10, und das SBZ-Archiv, 6 (1955) 10.

## II. Zum Totalitarismuskonzept

*Uwe Backes*

### 1. Friedrichs Totalitarismuskonzept

„The Soviet Zone of Germany“ entstand 1955/56 in engem Zusammenhang mit der analytischen Anwendung des Totalitarismusansatzes, wie ihn Carl J. Friedrich gemeinsam mit seinem damaligen Mitarbeiter Zbigniew K. Brzezinski in dem Buch „Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy“ entfaltete. Sowohl in dieser englischen Erstausgabe als auch in der später veröffentlichten deutschen Übersetzung ist der SBZ-Band unter den Vorarbeiten erwähnt,<sup>1</sup> auf die bei der Elaboration des größeren Werkes zurückgegriffen werden konnte. Die Konzeptbildung selbst reichte jedoch viele Jahre zurück – und erfolgte nicht in erster Linie in Auseinandersetzung mit der Entwicklung in der SBZ/DDR, sondern vor allem anhand der neuartigen Autokratien, wie sie sich nach 1917 in Russland/der Sowjetunion, nach 1922 in Italien und ab 1933 in Deutschland etabliert hatten.

Dies verdeutlicht schon der Blick auf das Programm der Konferenz, die Carl J. Friedrich gemeinsam mit Erwin D. Canham (geb. 1904, gest. 1982), Karl W. Deutsch (geb. 1912, gest. 1992), Merle Fainsod (geb 1907, gest. 1972), Alexander Gerschenkron (geb. 1904, gest. 1978) und Harold D. Lasswell (geb. 1902, gest. 1978) im März 1953 an der American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston organisierte. Bolschewismus und Faschismus/Nationalsozialismus standen im Zentrum der meisten Beiträge. Und hier bereits entwickelte Carl J. Friedrich das später mehrfach modifizierte Modell totalitärer Herrschaft, ausgehend von den beiden Grundthesen der fundamentalen Ähnlichkeit („basically alike“) und historischen Neuartigkeit und Partikularität der „fascist and Communist totalitarian society“.<sup>2</sup> Friedrich gewann weder diese Grundannahmen noch die fünf Elemente des Herrschaftsmodells systematisch aus einer allgemeinen Herrschaftslehre – was in guter Heidelberger Tradition etwa im weiterentwickelnden Rückgriff auf die Arbeiten Max Webers möglich gewesen wäre. Vielmehr erstellte er eine Synthese aus konzeptionellen Erträgen einer internationalen Forschungsdiskussion, die von den 1930er-Jahren an um to-

1 Carl J. Friedrich/Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1956, S. IX; Carl Joachim Friedrich, *Totalitäre Diktatur*, unter Mitarbeit von Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Stuttgart 1957, S. 8.

2 Carl J. Friedrich, *The Unique Character of Totalitarian Society*. In: ders. (Hg.), *Totalitarianism*, New York 1954, S. 47–60, hier 50.

totalitäre Bewegungen und Systeme geführt worden war. Bezeichnenderweise wies er die Empfehlung zurück, das Machtübergewicht der Geheimpolizei im Verhältnis zum Militär als weiteres Merkmal hinzuzufügen, denn dieses sei im Unterschied zu den fünf zuerst genannten kontrovers und keineswegs „quite generally admitted to be factually established features of these regimes“.<sup>3</sup>

Die Forschungssynthese stellte für sich genommen eine bedeutende intellektuelle Leistung dar, denn der Inhalt von „Totalitarismus“ wies von Autor zu Autor eine beachtliche Schwankungsbreite auf. Dies zeigten auch die Beiträge der Experten, die das Phänomen in Boston aus unterschiedlichen Perspektiven beleuchteten. Friedrich selbst arbeitete fundamentale Streitpunkte zwischen den Teilnehmern in seinem einleitenden Beitrag heraus: Während der aus Warschau stammende, dem sowjetischen Gulag entkommene Jurist Jerzy Gliksman (geb. 1902, gest. 1958), Verfasser früher Studien über das Lagersystem, Zwangsarbeit und die Arbeitsanreize in der Sowjetökonomie,<sup>4</sup> den Terror gegen Teile der Bevölkerung in erster Linie als Mittel zur Zurückdrängung von Regimeopponenten sah, betonte Hannah Arendt (geb. 1906, gest. 1975) die Rolle der – ideologisch definierten – „objektiven Feinde“, die unabhängig von ihrem tatsächlichen Verhalten im Verhältnis zum totalitären Regime zur Zielscheibe des Terrors würden.<sup>5</sup> Sie zählte auch zu jenen Teilnehmern, die der Ideologie als Triebkraft totalitärer Bewegungen eine zentrale Funktion beimäßen, wiewohl sie diese – anders als der Kommunismusexperte Waldemar Gurian (geb. 1902, gest. 1954)<sup>6</sup> – nicht in erster Linie als Surrogate für echte Religionen, sondern als gedankliche Gebilde mit spezifischer innerer Logik fasste. Das Problem der Heterogenität der Totalitarismusbegriffe thematisierte vor allem der aus Russland stammende (der Sohn des Handels- und Industriemi-

3 Ebd., S. 53.

4 Vgl. Jerzy G. Gliksman, *Tell the West*, New York 1948; ders., *Recent Trends in Soviet labor policy*, Santa Monica, Cal. 1956. Vgl. Congress for Jewish Culture, *Leksikon fun der Nayer Yidisher Literatur* ([https://congressforjewishculture.org/people/5835/Gliksman,%20Jerzy%20\(June%2023,%201902%E2%80%93September%2014,%201958;13.3.2024\)](https://congressforjewishculture.org/people/5835/Gliksman,%20Jerzy%20(June%2023,%201902%E2%80%93September%2014,%201958;13.3.2024))).

5 Vgl. Hannah Arendt, *Discussion*. In: Friedrich (Hg.), *Totalitarianism*, S. 75–80, hier 79.

6 Vgl. Heinz Hürten, *Waldemar Gurian. Ein Zeuge der Krise unserer Welt in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Mainz 1972; ders., *Waldemar Gurian und die Entfaltung des Totalitarismusbegriffs*. In: Hans Maier (Hg.), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, Bd. 1, Paderborn u. a. 1996, S. 59–73; Ellen Thümmler, *Katholischer Publizist und amerikanischer Politikwissenschaftler. Eine intellektuelle Biografie Waldemar Gurians*, Baden-Baden 2011; dies., *Totalitarian Ideology and Power Conflicts – Waldemar Gurian as International Relations Analyst after the Second World War*. In: Felix Rösch (Hg.), *Emigré Scholars and the Genesis of International Relations. A European Discipline in America?*, London 2014, S. 132–153.

nisters der letzten Regierung Zar Nikolaus II. musste sein Heimatland infolge der bolschewistischen Machtübernahme 1921 verlassen<sup>7)</sup> Soziologe Nicholas S. Timasheff (geb. 1886, gest. 1970), der die konzeptionell-methodologischen Konsequenzen zweier unterschiedlicher Definitionen einer „totalitarian society“ skizzierte, je nachdem ob man diese durch ein einziges Merkmal (wie „the unlimited extension of state functions“) oder durch Merkmalkombinationen gekennzeichnet sah. Diesen zweiten Weg waren bereits Autoren gegangen, die nicht als Referenten in Erscheinung traten. Friedrich erwähnte in einem kurzen Forschungsüberblick etwa die Studie „Permanent Revolution“ (1942) Sigmund Neumanns (geb. 1904, gest. 1962), die das bolschewistische Russland, das faschistische Italien und NS-Deutschland als „basically alike“<sup>8</sup> einordne. Die fünf Grundelemente dieser „modernen Diktaturen“ waren laut Neumann „das Versprechen von Stabilität und Sicherheit, die Betonung der Aktion anstelle eines Programms, ein quasidemokratisches Fundament, die Psychologie des Krieges und das Führerprinzip“.<sup>9</sup>

Bereits in den 1930er-Jahren hatten Historiker wie Hans Kohn (geb. 1891, gest. 1971), Alfred Cobban (geb. 1901, gest. 1968) und Carlton J. H. Hayes (geb. 1882, gest. 1964) die „Neuartigkeit“ totalitärer Systeme im Vergleich zu älteren Formen der Autokratie herauszuarbeiten versucht.<sup>10</sup> Die wohl früheste Systematik der Herrschaftselemente des Totalitarismus stammt von dem ab 1924 im Exil lebenden katholischen Priester, italienischen Politiker und Soziologen Luigi Sturzo (geb. 1871, gest. 1959). Ausgehend von persönlicher Erfahrung und seiner wissenschaftlich geschulten intellektuellen Auseinandersetzung mit der Machtetablierung der italienischen Faschisten entwickelte er einen Merkmalkatalog totalitärer Systeme, der Gemeinsamkeiten (extreme Zentralisierung des Staates, Militarisierung und Mobilisierung der Gesellschaft zwecks kultureller Uniformierung, Lenkung der Wirtschaft) vor allem mit dem bolschewistischen Russland herausarbeitete.<sup>11</sup>

7 Vgl. den Nachruf in: New York Times vom 10.3.1970.

8 Friedrich, Unique Character, S. 48.

9 Sigmund Neumann, Permanente Revolution. Totalitarismus im Zeitalter des internationalen Bürgerkriegs, hg. von Gerhard Besier und Ronald Lambrecht, Münster 2013, S. 71 f.

10 Vgl. Hans Kohn, Communist and Fascist Dictatorship: A Comparative Study. In: Guy Stanton Ford (Hg.), Dictatorship in the Modern World, Minneapolis 1935, S. 141–160; Alfred Cobban, Dictatorship. Its History and Theory, New York 1971 (1939); Carlton J. H. Hayes, The Novelty of Totalitarianism in the History of Western Civilization. In: Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 82 (1940) 1 (Symposium on the Totalitarian State), S. 91–102.

11 Luigi Sturzo, El Estado totalitario, Cruz y Raya, Madrid 1935; ders., The Totalitarian State. In: Social Research, 34 (1936) 2, S. 222–235. Vgl. Uwe Backes/Günther Heydemann, Einleitung der Herausgeber. In: Luigi Sturzo, Über italienischen Faschismus

Diese frühen Bemühungen, die auf ältere Vorarbeiten SturzOs rekurrerten,<sup>12</sup> scheinen Friedrich (wie Hannah Arendt) unbekannt gewesen zu sein. Die internationale Totalitarismuskussion hatte von Mitte der 1930er-Jahre an einen kräftigen Aufschwung erlebt, auch wenn günstige wie ungünstige politische Konjunkturen phasenweise Forschung und Rezeption förderten (Hitler-Stalin-Pakt, aufziehender Kalter Krieg) oder bremsten (Anti-Hitler-Allianz).<sup>13</sup> Die Folge war eine an Umfang gewinnende, weit verzweigte Literatur zum Thema – mit einer großen Schnittmenge zum verwandten Konzept der „politischen Religionen“.<sup>14</sup> Friedrich hatte zu dieser Forschung bis zum Erscheinen des Konferenzbandes 1954 keine umfangreicheren Beiträge geleistet. In den USA war er vor allem als Kenner des Konstitutionalismus und seiner Demokratisierung in Erscheinung getreten,<sup>15</sup> Ideengeschichte und Systemanalyse in imponierender Weise miteinander verbindend.<sup>16</sup> Seine Ausein-

und Totalitarismus, hg. von Uwe Backes und Günther Heydemann, in Zusammenarbeit mit Giovanni de Ghantuz Cubbe und Annett Zingler, Göttingen 2018, S. 7–48, hier 36–40; Emilio Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, Princeton 2006, S. 147–154; Mario D’Addio, *Problemi sociologici, politici e istituzionali in Luigi Sturzo e nella tradizione del popolarismo*. In: *Sociologica*, 20 (1986) 2–3, S. 67–102; Jean-Luc Poutier, *Luigi Sturzo et la critique de l’État totalitaire*. In: *Vingtième Siècle*, 89 (1989), S. 83–90; Giorgio Scichilone, *Totalitarismo*. In: Antonio Parisi/Massimo Cappellano (Hg.), *Lessico Sturziano*, Soveria Mannelli 2013, S. 1022–1032.

- 12 Vgl. Luigi Sturzo, *Italy and Fascismo*, translated by Barbara Barkley Carter, New York 1927; ders., *Italien und der Faschismus*, übersetzt von L. und A. Dempf, Köln 1926.
- 13 Vgl. im Überblick: Eckhard Jesse, *Die Totalitarismuskforschung im Streit der Meinungen*. In: ders. (Hg.), *Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert. Eine Bilanz der internationalen Forschung*, 2. Auflage, Baden-Baden 1999, S. 9–40, hier 13–15.
- 14 Vgl. Jean Baudouin/Bernard Bruneteau (Hg.), *Le Totalitarisme. Un concept et ses usages*, Rennes 2014; Bernard Bruneteau, *Le Totalitarisme. Origines d’un concept, genèse d’un débat, 1930–1942*, Paris 2010; Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism. The Inner History of the Cold War*, New York/Oxford 1995; Martin Jänicke, *Totalitäre Herrschaft. Anatomie eines politischen Begriffs*, Berlin 1971; William David Jones, *The Lost Debate. German Socialist Intellectuals and Totalitarianism*, Urbana 1999; Hans Maier, *Politische Religionen*, München 2007; Marc-Pierre Möll, *Gesellschaft und totalitäre Ordnung. Eine theoriegeschichtliche Auseinandersetzung mit dem Totalitarismus*, Baden-Baden 1998; Walter Schlangen, *Die Totalitarismus-Theorie. Entwicklung und Probleme*, Stuttgart 1976; Simon Tormey, *Making sense of tyranny. Interpretations of totalitarianism*, Manchester/New York 1995.
- 15 Vgl. zur Einordnung nur: Herman Belz, *Changing Conceptions of Constitutionalism in the Era of World War II and the Cold War*. In: *The Journal of American History*, 59 (1972) 3, S. 340–669; Paul Petzschmann, „Foreign Policy in the Making“ – Carl J. Friedrich’s Realism in the Shadow of Weimar Politics. In: Rösch (Hg.), *Émigré Scholars*, S. 154–175.
- 16 Vgl. zur Würdigung den Beitrag seines bekanntesten Schülers: Klaus von Beyme, Carl J. Friedrich. In: Eckhard Jesse/Sebastian Liebold (Hg.), *Deutsche Politikwissenschaft-*

andersetzung mit der „konstitutionellen Diktatur“ und der Diktaturtheorie Carl Schmitts steht vor allem in diesem Kontext,<sup>17</sup> sollte also nicht in einem Kausalzusammenhang mit den späteren Bemühungen um Definition und Analyse totalitärer Systemen gesehen werden.<sup>18</sup> Friedrich selbst erwähnte ein Buchmanuskript aus den späten 1930er-Jahren: „but the knowledge and understanding of both the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships was then very limited and it was decided not to publish it, when the war broke out“.<sup>19</sup> Der von ihm 1939 veröffentlichte Aufsatz „The Deification of the State“<sup>20</sup> besitzt ideengeschichtliche Berührungspunkte mit der Forschungsdebatte um „politische Religionen“, ist aber nicht in sie eingebettet. Friedrich beteiligte sich an den lebhaft geführten Kontroversen um die ideengeschichtlichen Ursprünge des modernen Totalitarismus,<sup>21</sup> verfasste indes keine umfangreicheren Beiträge zur systematischen Analyse autokratischer Herrschaft.

Konzeptionelle Vorarbeiten Friedrichs betrafen vor allem die Einordnung historischer Formen (wie des Absolutismus) und den Vergleich zu militärischen Besatzungsregimen. Dabei leistete er einen Beitrag zur Diskussion um die Legitimität und Spezifik solcher Transitionsordnungen, wie sie bereits während des Weltkriegs im Rahmen der Nachkriegsplanungen entworfen worden waren.<sup>22</sup> In diesem Zusammenhang entwickelte Friedrich eine erste Definition totalitärer Herrschaft, die wesentliche Elemente des in Boston präzentierten „Syndroms“ vorwegnahm:

„Its characteristic features are (a) that it is dominated by a mass party animated by an elaborate ideology with some qualities of religious dogmatism and the resultant

ler – Werk und Wirkung. Von Abendroth bis Zellentin, Baden-Baden 2014, S. 275–301.

- 17 Vgl. Carl J. Friedrich, *Constitutional Dictatorship and Military Government*. In: ders., *Constitutional Government and Democracy. Theory and Practice in Europe and America*, revised edition, Boston u. a. 1950, S. 572–596.
- 18 Einen solchen Zusammenhang legt die materialreiche Studie von Hans J. Lietzmann (ders., *Politikwissenschaft*) nahe, die dazu neigt, eine „unheimliche Affinität zu Carl Schmitt“ (so kritisch Klaus von Beyme im Vorwort, S. 12) zu konstruieren. Sie wäre weniger plausibel erschienen, hätte man Friedrichs Arbeiten zum Föderalismus und zum Common Man in die Waagschale gelegt. Zu Lietzmann vgl. auch kritisch Achim Siegel, Carl Joachim Friedrichs Konzeption der totalitären Diktatur – eine Neuinterpretation. In: ders. (Hg.), *Totalitarismustheorien nach dem Ende des Kommunismus*, Köln/Weimar 1998, S. 273–307.
- 19 Friedrich/Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship*, S. VIII.
- 20 Carl J. Friedrich, *The Deification of the State*. In: *The Review of Politics*, 1 (1939), S. 18–30.
- 21 Vgl. etwa Carl J. Friedrich, *Greek Political Heritage and Totalitarianism*. In: *The Review of Politics*, 2 (1940) 2, S. 218–225.
- 22 Vgl. Lietzmann, *Politikwissenschaft*, S. 267–284.

fanaticism; (b) that this party is personified, symbolized, and to some extent led by an individual, the dictator who is in a sense ‚deified‘; (c) that every aspect of human life, including strictly personal details, is potentially subject to governmental regulation, and that more specifically all aspects of the economic life are subject to governmental planning and consequent direction; (d) that the degree of coercion required for this total control is reinforced by an unprecedented amount of terroristic activities, including secret police supervision, torture, protracted slavery (concentration camps, forced labor, and so forth), and arbitrary death penalties.“<sup>23</sup>

Diese Merkmale führte Friedrich nicht weiter aus, sondern nutzte sie als analytische Kategorien zur vergleichenden Einordnung der von den Alliierten etablierten Besatzungsregime in Deutschland – mit dem Ergebnis, dass nur das von der Sowjetunion errichtete als „an extension of the totalitarian dictatorship of the Soviet Union into the part of Germany it controlled“<sup>24</sup> gelten konnte. Mit seinem Beitrag zur Bostoner Konferenz knüpfte Friedrich an diese Vorarbeit an, entwickelte sie, die Ergebnisse neuerer Studien verarbeitend, weiter, um eine in hohem Maße konsensfähige Basis für die Bestimmung der Hauptcharakteristika totalitärer Herrschaft zu erlangen.

## 2. „Totalitarismus“ in der SBZ/DDR-Studie

Das Problem des Totalitarismus bildet eine der Leitfragen des Bandes. Aber dessen Gliederung entsprach der einer allgemeinen Länderkunde, folgte also nicht den analytischen Kategorien einer vom Totalitarismusansatz ausgehenden Systematik. Das von Friedrich entwickelte Modell nahm insofern eine prominente Stellung ein, als es gleich zu Anfang programmatisch entfaltet wurde. Die SBZ/DDR definierte Friedrich als „a totalitarian society of the Soviet type“, auch wenn diese sich, anders als die Sowjetunion, noch in einem frühen Stadium ihrer Entwicklung befinde. Der folgende Merkmalkatalog enthielt alle zentralen Punkte, die Friedrich bereits 1953 auf der Totalitarismuskonferenz benannt hatte („official ideology“, „single mass party“, „system of terroristic police control“, „complete monopoly of effective mass communication“, „near-complete monopoly of weapons control“), fügte aber ein weiteres (sechstes) Merkmal hinzu: „a centrally planned and directed economy“,<sup>25</sup> das er bereits in seinem frühen Definitionsversuch aus dem Jahr 1950 aufgeführt hatte. Ein System zentraler Planung und Lenkung der Wirtschaft könne

23 Carl J. Friedrich, *Military Government and Dictatorship*. In: *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 267 (1950), Januar, S. 1–7, hier 1 f.

24 Ebd., S. 2.

25 In diesem Band, S. 89.



es auch in einer Demokratie geben; es sei jedoch notwendiges Merkmal jeder totalitären Diktatur.

Betrachtet man die von Gerhard Abeken, Fritz Baade, Karl C. Thalheim und Heinrich Rittershausen verfassten Beiträge zur Ökonomie der SBZ/DDR, so wird der „Faden“ Friedrichs aufgenommen („The economy of the Soviet Zone is an instrument of the Communist state. It is run according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism“<sup>26</sup>). Er leitet indes nicht zu einer breit angelegten vergleichenden Betrachtung über. Im Wesentlichen handelt es sich um eine mit den Möglichkeiten der Zeit empirisch unterfütterte Lageanalyse der Wirtschaftsorganisation und -leistung. Immerhin sind die vom Modell Sowjetunion abweichenden Muster ebenso erfasst wie die Entwicklung in Relation zur NS-Wirtschaft und zu der des westlichen Deutschland nach 1945. Eine herrschaftssoziologische Einordnung fehlt. So endet der Band abrupt mit der Bilanz der Reparations- und Besatzungskosten.

Andere zentrale Merkmale des Friedrich'schen Modells sind im Band stärker herrschaftsanalytisch untermauert. Allerdings verteilen sich die entsprechenden Ausführungen über den Band hinweg. So enthalten die Abschnitte über „Education and Youth“ (Vytautas M. Kavolis), „Public Information“ (Herbert Kundler) und „Political Dynamics“ (Herbert J. Spiro) umfangreiche Ausführungen über die Rolle des Marxismus-Leninismus als Staatsideologie sowie die damit verbundenen Mechanismen zu dessen Verankerung im Wertesystem der Bevölkerung. Spiro erkannte eine Besonderheit des „dialektischen Materialismus“ in der Befähigung seiner Anhänger, die gleiche Sache heute richtig und morgen falsch zu finden – ganz wie von Orwell in „1984“ beschrieben.<sup>27</sup> Seine Ausführungen zur Rolle der SED als Staatspartei der DDR behandelten das sich verfestigende Herrschaftsmonopol mit der Prädominanz der Partei über den Staatsapparat, dem Abbau föderaler Strukturen, der administrativen Zentralisierung und der Vorherrschaft des Politbüros über die Volkskammer, die über keine eigenständigen legislativen Kompetenzen verfüge. Carola Sterns SED-Buch wird lediglich an späterer Stelle – bei den (von Jürgen Herbst bearbeiteten) Biografien der zentralen Akteure des DDR-Machapparats – in einer Fußnote erwähnt. Spiros kurzer Abriss zu den Blockparteien und Massenorganisationen mündet in eine prägnante Funktionsbeschreibung. Sie dienen in erster Linie folgendem Ziel: „to permeate every last nook and cranny of society, to get at and to embrace organizationally every last individual human being“.<sup>28</sup> Der Beitrag informiert ausführlich

26 Ebd., S. 369.

27 Vgl. ebd., S. 288.

28 Ebd., S. 305.

über die Volksabstimmungen und Wahlen von September 1946 bis zur Volkskammerwahl vom Oktober 1954 und zeigt die Abnahme des (von Anfang an sehr geringen) Wettbewerbsgrades bis hin zu einem Anteil der Ja-Stimmen von 99,46 Prozent für die starre Einheitsliste. Spiros Kapitel schließt mit dem Abschnitt „Public Order and Safety“, der insbesondere die Übernahme der Organisationsprinzipien der Sowjetunion durch die DDR belegt: von der Volkspolizei über den Staatssicherheitsdienst mit seinen politischen Funktionen bis zur Kasernierten Volkspolizei, dem „nucleus of East German armed forces“.<sup>29</sup> Die Ausführungen sind detailliert in der Beschreibung der Rechtslage, hingegen arm an Fallmaterial. Zur Funktionsweise des SED-Sicherheitsapparates lagen noch keine quellennahen Studien vor.

Friedrich sah in der SBZ/DDR alle Merkmale seines Modells „fairly fully developed“. Dabei sei aber zu berücksichtigen, dass das Regime sein Waffenmonopol nur mit Unterstützung der Sowjetunion auszuüben vermöge. Wie in anderen sowjetischen Satellitenstaaten sei „the road to totalitarian dictatorship of the Soviet type“ durch militärische Macht, nicht durch eine interne Revolution geebnet worden. Wirtschaftsorganisation und -politik stellten eine „close imitation of the USSR“<sup>30</sup> dar, auch wenn deren Umsetzung in Regionen mit einem weitaus höheren Niveau der Industrialisierung erfolgt sei. Nichts habe die Unzufriedenheit der Bevölkerung in höherem Maße genährt als die anfänglichen Probleme der Lebensmittelversorgung, zumal in einer Gesellschaft mit totalitärer Wirtschaft alle ökonomischen Unzulänglichkeiten dem Regime angelastet würden. Nicht zufällig habe die SBZ/DDR daher am 17. Juni 1953 die einzige genuine Massenerhebung erlebt, „which has so far occurred in the course of the history of totalitarian dictatorship“. Die Unzufriedenheit weiter Teile der Bevölkerung mit dem Regime rühre auch aus einer verbreiteten Abneigung gegenüber diktatorischen Formen, die aus dem „disastrous debacle of the National Socialist regime“<sup>31</sup> resultiere. Wenn das politische System dennoch als einigermaßen stabil gelten könne, so liege das vor allem an der sowjetischen Militärpräsenz und der auf Desillusionierung basierenden Anpassung an die obwaltenden Bedingungen. Eine gewisse Labilität und Störanfälligkeit resultiere aus dem Mangel an breiter sozialer Unterstützung.

An diese Überlegungen knüpfte Friedrich im gemeinsam mit Erich Matthias verfassten Abschnitt zu den „Subversive Potentialities“ (2.6) an. Die Volkserhebung vom 17. Juni 1953 diene als Fallbeispiel für die Grenzen und

29 Ebd., S. 307.

30 Ebd., S. 90.

31 Ebd., S. 92.

Chancen der Subversion. Deren Erörterung stützte sich wesentlich auf die imponierende Reportage des Journalisten Klaus Harpprecht (in Zusammenarbeit mit Klaus Bölling), dessen Interpretation einer „classless revolution“<sup>32</sup> von Friedrich und Matthias kritisiert, von der späteren historiografischen Forschung aber weitgehend bestätigt worden ist. Zwar lösten über Normerhöhungen empörte Bauarbeiter den Aufstand aus, aber von den Großbaustellen auf der Ostberliner Stalinallee griff diese „open rebellion against totalitarian oppression“ in rasender Geschwindigkeit auf weite Teile der DDR über. Sie dauerte zwar „only 30 hours“, weil „Soviet tanks and troops“ ihr mit roher Gewalt ein Ende bereiteten. Die Säuberungen danach bewiesen jedoch, wie wenig das Regime selbst seinen Kadern vertrauen konnte: „A surprisingly large number of SED members were purged, including some who had been members of the German Communist Party (KPD) as far back as 1933.“ Jedoch gelang es dem Regime nach der sowjetischen Militärintervention, die „most effective enemies and potential opposition leaders“<sup>33</sup> auszuschalten und den Kontrollapparat kräftig auszubauen.

Der folgende, von Friedrich verfasste Propaganda-Abschnitt benannte gleich zu Beginn das Kommunikationsmonopol als Kernmerkmal totalitärer Regime – und seine weitgehende Realisierung als Merkmal der SBZ-Herrschaftsrealität. An mehreren Stellen verwies Friedrich auf Herbert Kundlers Beitrag über „Public Information“, wo Organisation und Funktionsweise des von der SED gesteuerten Systems von „Agitation“ und „Propaganda“ von der entsprechenden Abteilung des Zentralkomitees hinab zur gelenkten Presse, der Rolle von Rundfunk und Fernsehen und des Films eingehend beschrieben war. Kundlers Abschnitt gelangte – im Einklang mit Friedrichs Diagnose – zu dem Schluss: „As in other totalitarian dictatorships, there has come into being that complete monopoly of all means of mass communications which such a regime requires for the effective exercise of its total control over the minds of men.“<sup>34</sup> Dabei musste Kundler – wie Friedrich in seinem Abschnitt – keineswegs darüber belehrt werden, dass das innerhalb des Machtapparats der SED erreichte Kommunikationsmonopol durch das Einströmen freier Informationen aus Westdeutschland herausgefordert war. Er arbeitete von 1951 an für den 1946 gegründeten Nachrichtensender RIAS, dessen Wirken auf die Unterminierung des SED-Kommunikationsmonopols zielte – und dabei keineswegs erfolglos war.

32 Ebd., S. 327.

33 Ebd., S. 328.

34 Ebd., S. 212.

Stärker als Kundler betonte Otto Stammer in seinem Beitrag zur „Social Structure“ die Kluft zwischen totalitärem Herrschaftsanspruch und -realität. Eine Langfassung in deutscher Sprache erschien 1956 in Schmollers Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft (mit einem Hinweis auf den SBZ-Band Carl J. Friedrichs, für den sie „als Denkschrift und Unterlage“<sup>35</sup> gedient habe) und fand später Aufnahme in eine Anthologie, die Mitarbeiter und Schüler anlässlich des 65. Geburtstags Stammers edierten.<sup>36</sup> Stammer zeigte darin auf, welche sozialstrukturellen Veränderungen (wie Zu- und Abwanderung) in den idealisierenden Betrachtungen der SED-Ideologen wie Fred Oelßner von den Erfolgen des sozialistischen Aufbaus keine Beachtung fanden. Das Funktionieren des „totalitären Systems“ behandelte Stammer vor allem im Zusammenhang mit dem System der Heranbildung loyaler Kader zur Besetzung der Leitungspositionen in Partei und Staat – auf allen Ebenen der Pyramide von der Betriebszelle bis zur Topelite: „The operation of a totalitarian system requires a large reserve of professionally and ideologically trained cadres.“<sup>37</sup> Damit stelle sich das Problem der sozialen Distanz zwischen den Kadern und der übrigen Bevölkerung. Da die Bildung autonomer sozialer, kultureller und berufsständischer Vereinigungen verboten sei und die Staatspartei alle zu Beginn vorhandenen aufgelöst habe, komme den von der SED kontrollierten Massenorganisationen eine Schlüsselrolle zu. Deren Aufgabe: „to afford the regime an opportunity to coordinate all segments of society“. Zudem trügen sie dazu bei, all jene eher traditionellen Muster sozialer Beziehungen zu unterminieren, „which if left undisturbed might isolate the individual from the full shock of totalitarian rule. In effect every inhabitant of the DDR is required to join one or more mass organizations, according to his specific interests.“ Partizipation bedeute Unterwerfung unter die soziale Kontrolle der Organisation: „Mass organizations are instruments of inculcating Communist ideology and value systems.“ Die vielleicht erfolgreichste Massenorganisation, die FDJ, diene dem Ziel „to raise a new generation devoted to Communist militancy“.<sup>38</sup>

35 Otto Stammer, Sozialstruktur und System der Werthaltungen der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands. In: Schmollers Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung und Volkswirtschaft, 76 (1956) 1, S. 55–105, hier 55.

36 Otto Stammer, Sozialstruktur und System der Werthaltungen der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands. In: Ders., Politische Soziologie und Demokratieforschung. Ausgewählte Reden und Aufsätze zur Soziologie und Politik. Aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages herausgegeben von Mitarbeitern und Schülern, Berlin 1965, S. 208–258.

37 In diesem Band, S. 133.

38 Ebd., S. 134.

Die Kluft zwischen den propagierten totalitären Werten und ihrer sozialen Anerkennung steht im Zentrum von Stammers Ausführungen „Structure of Values and the Manipulation of Prestige“. Die SED-Theoretiker propagierten die Herausbildung eines „new man who will possess a ‚new social consciousness‘“. Dabei handele es sich nicht einfach nur um einen sozialistisch-kollektivistischen Imperativ: „Rather it is the more subtle subjugation of individual will and preferences to any given demand for political or social action which the party may enjoy, even if this action seemingly contravenes values proclaimed by the party itself.“<sup>39</sup> Das zentrale Ziel bestehe in der Stärkung des Regimes, und nur wenn das Individuum sich mit diesem identifiziere, sei soziales Bewusstsein in hohem Maße erreicht. Spezifische Anforderungen bezogen sich auf die Arbeitsdisziplin (mit dem Ziel der Übererfüllung der Normen der Wirtschaftspläne), die Parteidisziplin (gehorsame Unterordnung unter die Parteiziele), eine daraus erwachsende soziale Disziplin („self-criticism, mutual surveillance and control“; „indoctrination“) sowie Patriotismus mit den Kerninhalten „Errungenschaften der DDR“, „Freundschaft mit der Sowjetunion“, Solidarität mit den „sozialistischen Bruderländern“. Die damit verbundenen „pressures of totalitarian control and the instruments of totalitarian communications“<sup>40</sup> zwängen das Individuum, sich in seinem Verhalten anzupassen. Zugleich blieben die alten Wertorientierungen für viele Menschen, insbesondere der älteren Generation, weiterhin gültig, insbesondere auf den Gebieten der Religion und der intimen sozialen Beziehungen. Dies erkläre, warum die Partei einen ständigen Kampf gegen eine Vielzahl von „Ismen“ wie „Sozialdemokratismus“ oder „Objektivismus“ führe und auf ein Arsenal von Sanktionsmaßnahmen zurückgreife – von innerparteilichen Strafmaßnahmen über Einschränkungen beruflicher Tätigkeit bis zu Festnahmen und Inhaftierungen für politisch abweichendes Verhalten. Die Kehrseite bilde ein Gratifikationssystem zwecks „manipulation of prestige“,<sup>41</sup> mit dem loyales Verhalten und Übererfüllung der Normen teilweise mit beträchtlichen Summen belohnt würden.

Auch der folgende Abschnitt über die Rolle der Familie in der DDR-Gesellschaft war bemüht, die Kluft zwischen totalitärem Anspruch und Realität herauszuarbeiten. Dabei räumte die Verfasserin, Carola Stern, gleich zu Beginn den unbefriedigenden Forschungsstand zur Situation der Familie ein. Umso ausführlicher beschrieb sie die „efforts of the present totalitarian regime“, die das Ziel verfolgten, „to alter the family and transform it into a tool of the totalitarian government“. Dabei folge das offizielle Konzept der Familie dem sow-

39 Ebd., S. 136.

40 Ebd., S. 137.

41 Ebd., S. 138.

jetischen Muster. Die Familie fungiere demnach an erster Stelle als „smallest collective unit in the new society“ und im Einklang mit deren „basic norms of thinking and conduct“. Wo dies nicht der Fall sei, müssten die in SED-Kursen ausgebildeten „jungen Pioniere“ und fortgeschrittenen FDJ-Mitglieder als Lehrer ihrer Eltern wirken. Denn: „The essential basis of a ‚healthy‘ family life is an agreement among all family members on Communist convictions and their common willingness to do all in their power on behalf of the political objectives of the Soviet Zone“.<sup>42</sup> Dies beinhalte vor allem den Gleichklang der Familieninteressen mit den Erfordernissen des Fünfjahresplans, also die Ausrichtung des Familienlebens auf die Erfordernisse der Zentralverwaltungswirtschaft. Dabei würden Frauen wie Männer gleichermaßen als Arbeitskräfte gesehen, sodass die „Gleichheit der Frau“ in erster Linie ihre Stellung in der Produktion betreffe. Die Autorin betrachtete diese Art der Emanzipation vor allem als eine Hypothek, die auf den Kindern laste: „They are frequently forced at a very early age into the kindergartens or *Kinderwochenheime* (children’s week homes), where they can be left from Monday morning to Friday night so that the mother may be free to devote herself completely to production and public activities; at the same time, the children can be subjected to Communist indoctrination“. Das Familienleben werde so den Direktiven der Planwirtschaft unterworfen: „As under the Nazis, they must go where the plan directs them.“ Die größte Ähnlichkeit „in Nazi and Communist attitudes regarding the family“ bestehe im Übrigen in dem Ziel „to provide adequate manpower for the state’s many activities“.<sup>43</sup>

### 3. „Totalitarismus“ bei den Berliner DDR-Forschern und Friedrichs Konzept

Carola Stern hatte 1954 als 29-Jährige die erste umfassende Untersuchung zur SED vorgelegt.<sup>44</sup> Sie arbeitete als Wissenschaftliche Assistentin bei Ernst Richert, den Otto Stammer 1950 ans Westberliner „Institut für Politische Wissenschaft“ geholt hatte.<sup>45</sup> Richert machte sich 1958 einen Namen mit der Studie „Macht ohne Mandat“ über den Staatsapparat der DDR.<sup>46</sup> Weder Stern noch Richert entwickelte in den grundlegenden Untersuchungen eine komparative herrschaftssoziologische Systematik. Ansätze dazu enthielt immerhin

42 Ebd., S. 140.

43 Ebd., S. 142.

44 Vgl. Carola Stern, *Die SED. Ein Handbuch über Aufbau, Organisation und Funktion des Parteiapparates*, Köln 1954.

45 Vgl. Carola Stern, *Doppelleben. Eine Autobiographie*, Köln 2001, S. 100 f.

46 Ernst Richert, *Macht ohne Mandat. Der Staatsapparat in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands*, Köln/Opladen 1958.

ein Aufsatz Richerts „Aus der Praxis totalitärer Lenkung“, der 1952 in Band 2 der Schriftenreihe des Instituts erschienen war. Als eine „Art Grundgesetz“ totalitärer Systeme galt Richert zufolge, „dass die Regierungsgewalt ihre Orientierung an einer mit geistigen Attributen ausgestatteten politischen ‚Linie‘ hat“.<sup>47</sup> Damit eng verbunden sei folgendes Bestreben:

„viele Menschengruppen dahin zu bringen, ihre Willensenergien auf das vom Gewaltenträger ins Auge gefasste Ziel – oder Zwischenziel – hinzulenken. Der dazu dienstbaren Praktiken gibt es viele: Anreize und Drohungen; Förderung und Hinderung erwünschter bzw. unerwünschter Gruppenbildungen, Gruppenbildungen verschiedensten Typs, Manipulierung bzw. Förderung von Parteigruppierungen, von Gruppierungen des Typs der ‚Massenorganisationen‘ und des vagen vorwiegend emotional verankerten Typs gelenkter ‚Bewegungen‘; Vereinzelung solcher Gruppenfaktoren, die nicht zu Konformität zu bringen sind; Absperrung von unerwünschten Informationen; Lähmung und Diffamierung unerwünschten Wollens; Hineinpressung der dem Überdruck der Zivilisation ausgesetzten Menschen in ein als opportun empfundenes simplifiziertes Gehäuse von Vorstellungen und relativ leicht zu bewältigenden Aufgaben.“<sup>48</sup>

Dieser frühe Versuch der Konzeptbildung schöpfte noch aus der Beobachtung von Vorgängen, die Richert als außenpolitischer Redakteur der Leipziger Zeitung in Zusammenarbeit mit dem zwölf Jahre älteren Otto Stammer in den Jahren 1946 bis 1948 gemacht hatte. Sozialisten, die sich um Unabhängigkeit von der SED-Linie bemühten, gerieten im beginnenden Kalten Krieg zunehmend unter Druck. Die Freiräume innerhalb der SED wurden kleiner, und eine „härtere Gangart“ mündete 1948/49 in die „Umwandlung zur ‚Partei neuen Typus‘ nach stalinistischem Vorbild“.<sup>49</sup> Kurz nach Gründung der DDR floh Richert in den „Westen“.<sup>50</sup> Wenn die Bemühungen zur Konzeptbildung

47 Ernst Richert, Aus der Praxis totalitärer Lenkung. Die politische Entwicklung im Kreis Schmalkalden 1945–1949. In: Arkadius R. L. Gurland (Red.), Faktoren der Machtbildung. Wissenschaftliche Studien zur Politik, Berlin 1952, S. 162–187, hier 163.

48 Ebd., S. 164. Der im gleichen Band enthaltene Beitrag Karl Dietrich Brachers setzt den Begriff der totalitären Herrschaft voraus, expliziert ihn jedoch nicht: Ders., Auflösung einer Demokratie. Das Ende der Weimarer Republik als Forschungsproblem. In: Gurland (Red.), Faktoren der Machtbildung, S. 39–98. Vgl. auch Hubertus Buchstein, Totalitarismustheorie und empirische Politikforschung – die Wandlung der Totalitarismuskonzeption in der frühen Berliner Politikforschung. In: Alfons Söllner/Ralf Walkenhaus/Karin Wieland (Hg.), Totalitarismus. Eine Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, Berlin 1997, S. 241–245.

49 Christiane Deuse, Die Leipziger Zeitung. Geschichte eines Lizenzblattes in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone (1946–1948), Münster 1997, S. 404.

50 Vgl. Buchstein, Totalitarismustheorie, S. 247. Buchstein hat den Beitrag Richerts aus dem Jahr 1952 offenbar übersehen.

später nicht weiterverfolgt wurden, könnte dies – im Sinne der Devise Empirie vor Theorie – das Ergebnis einer „bewusste[n] Entscheidung“<sup>51</sup> gewesen sein.

Ob dies auch für den antistalinistischen Sozialisten Max Gustav Lange (geb. 1899, gest. 1963) galt, lässt sich wohl nicht mehr mit Sicherheit beantworten. Auf die Studie „Totalitäre Erziehung“, die Lange noch als Professor der theoretischen Pädagogik an der Landeshochschule Potsdam zu Papier gebracht hatte,<sup>52</sup> rekurrierte Vytautas Kavolis in seinem Abschnitt über „Education and Youth“. Zwar hatte das Berliner Institut für Politische Wissenschaft mit diesem Werk eine Serie von „Studien über die Herrschaftsstruktur totalitärer Systeme“<sup>53</sup> eröffnet, aber Arkadius R. L. Gurland (geb. 1904, gest. 1979) räumte in der Einleitung zu Langes umfangreichem, aus den SED-Quellen schöpfendem Werk ein, nach einer Definition dessen, was „totalitär“ sei, suche man darin „vergeblich“.<sup>54</sup> Gurland trug skizzenhaft einige „Bausteine“ für eine „Theorie der totalitären Herrschaft“ zusammen, erwähnte etwa die „scheindemokratischen Formen“ und die „Prozesse der totalitären Massengewinnung und Massenlenkung“. Dabei verwies er auf Arbeiten wie Czesław Miłosz's „Verführtes Denken“ (1953), Raymond A. Bauers „The New Man in Soviet Psychology“ (1952) und Merle Fainsods „How Russia is Ruled“ (1953).<sup>55</sup> Fainsod zählte zu den Inspiratoren der von Carl J. Friedrich organisierten Bostoner Konferenz, deren Beiträge aber erst 1954 veröffentlicht wurden – und Gurland offenbar unbekannt waren. Auch in Langes Nachfolgestudie „Wissenschaft im totalitären Staat“ in der gleichen Schriftenreihe waren die Erträge dieser Konferenz noch nicht eingeflossen. Otto Stammer ließ in seinem Vorwort vom August 1955 keine Kenntnis dieser wichtigen Beiträge erkennen.<sup>56</sup> Offenbar spielte Friedrichs Modellbildung bei der Berliner Zuarbeit zur SBZ-Studie keine Rolle. Die These, der „wichtigste Bezugspunkt für die Berliner Forscher“ sei Friedrichs (1954 veröffentlichter) „Text über den ‚einzigartigen Charakter der totalitären Gesellschaft‘“<sup>57</sup> gewesen, lässt sich für die am SBZ-Band beteiligten

51 So jedenfalls die Deutung von Buchstein, Totalitarismustheorie, S. 254.

52 Vgl. ebd., S. 250.

53 Arkadius R. L. Gurland, Einleitung. In: Max Gustav Lange, Totalitäre Erziehung. Das Erziehungssystem der Sowjetzone Deutschlands, Frankfurt a.M. 1954, S. VIII–XXXIV, hier VIII.

54 Ebd., S. IX.

55 Vgl. Czesław Miłosz, The captive mind, New York 1953 (danach zahlreiche Ausgaben); Raymond A. Bauer, The new man in Soviet psychology, Cambridge 1952; Merle Fainsod, How Russia is ruled, Cambridge 1953.

56 Vgl. Otto Stammer, Vorwort. In: Max Gustav Lange, Wissenschaft im totalitären Staat. Die Wissenschaft der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone auf dem Weg zum „Stalinismus“, Stuttgart/Düsseldorf 1955, S. IX–XIV.

57 So Hüttmann, DDR-Geschichte, S. 135.



Forscher jedenfalls für den Zeitraum ihrer Kooperation mit Harvard bibliografisch nicht belegen.

Dies gilt auch für den 1953 abgeschlossenen Beitrag, den Max Gustav Lange, Ernst Richert und Otto Stammer gemeinsam für die Festschrift zur 200-Jahrfeier der New Yorker Columbia-Universität verfassten.<sup>58</sup> Ohne Zweifel betonen die Autoren darin den dynamischen Charakter totalitärer Herrschaft: „Die Studie behandelt einen Ausschnitt der gesellschaftlichen Wirklichkeit eines kommunistischen Herrschaftssystems, der für die einer derartigen sozialen Ordnung eigene Dynamik wie für den politischen Mechanismus dieser Form der totalitären Herrschaft von entscheidender Wichtigkeit ist“.<sup>59</sup> Aber eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem Konzept Friedrichs sucht man vergebens. Dies gilt im Übrigen auch für die frühen Arbeiten Karl Dietrich Brachers, der Jahre später zum prominentesten Verfechter des Totalitarismuskonzepts in Deutschland avancierte. In der ersten Auflage seines grundlegenden Werkes zur „Auflösung der Weimarer Republik“ („Der Aufstieg der totalitären Parteien“<sup>60</sup>) wird der Totalitarismusansatz zugrunde gelegt, aber es finden sich darin „keine theoretischen Überlegungen zum Totalitarismuskonzept“<sup>61</sup> – geschweige denn Ausführungen zum (erst 1954 veröffentlichten) Modell Friedrichs.

58 Dies., Das Problem der „Neuen Intelligenz“ in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone. Ein Beitrag zur politischen Soziologie der kommunistischen Herrschaftsordnung. In: Veritas – Iustitia – Libertas. Festschrift zur 200-Jahrfeier der Columbia University New York, überreicht von der Freien Universität Berlin und der Deutschen Hochschule für Politik Berlin, Berlin 1953, S. 191–246. Zur Zusammenarbeit mit der Columbia University vgl. Tilman Fichter/Siegward Lönnendonker, Die Remigration der Politischen Wissenschaft. Historisch-empirische Politikforschung in Berlin. In: Zeitschrift des Forschungsverbundes SED-Staat, (2008) 23, S. 136–155. Jens Hüttmann (DDR-Geschichte und ihre Forscher. Akteure und Konjunkturen der bundesdeutschen DDR-Forschung, Berlin 2008, S. 134, Anm. 268) erwähnt eine Arbeitsskizze zur Rollenverteilung und inhaltlichen Ausgestaltung des gemeinschaftlich verfassten Beitrags. Hinweise auf eine Rezeption des Friedrich'schen Totalitarismuskonzepts finden sich darin jedoch nicht: Arbeitsgruppe Lange/Richert/Stammer, 1. Sitzung, 13. Mai 1953, Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Nachlass Otto Stammer, alte Signatur 035/30.

59 Dies., Das Problem der „Neuen Intelligenz“, S. 191.

60 Karl Dietrich Bracher, Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik. Eine Studie zum Problem des Machtverfalls in der Demokratie, Stuttgart/Düsseldorf 1955, hier besonders S. 96–100.

61 So treffend Buchstein, Totalitarismustheorie, S. 241. In den bibliografischen Angaben zu seinem 1957 erschienenen Lexikon-Beitrag zum „Totalitarismus“ wies Bracher auf den Bostoner Konferenzband Friedrichs hin: Ders., Totalitarismus. In: Ernst Fraenkel/Karl Dietrich Bracher (Hg.), Fischer Lexikon Staat und Politik, Frankfurt a.M. 1957, S. 294–297. Dessen Lektüre dürfte die Totalitarismus-Systematik des Beitrags stark beeinflusst haben. Die bibliografischen Einträge (S. 349f.) verzeichnen neben Friedrichs Band Hannah Arendts „Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft“ (deut-

Stammer selbst hatte in einer frühen Arbeit zur Sozialstruktur der SBZ/DDR deren Abhängigkeit von der Sowjetunion und die Entwicklung in Richtung auf deren „autokratische Diktatur totalitärer Führungseliten“<sup>62</sup> hervorgehoben. Den Versuch einer Definition totalitärer Herrschaft enthielt wohl erstmals sein Beitrag „Die Gewerkschaften in der Struktur der totalitären Herrschaftssysteme“ (1952). Totalitäre Herrschaftssysteme seien – ungeachtet der Verschiedenheit ihrer Ziele – mehr als „autoritäre Herrschaft“ insofern, als sie auf die „Politisierung der Gesellschaft in allen ihren Verästelungen“ zielten. Auf diese Weise werde die „Autonomie aller gesellschaftlichen Willensverbände [...] radikal vernichtet“. Kennzeichnend sei darüber hinaus die Existenz einer „Monopolpartei“, die mit dem Staat verschmelze und ihren totalitären Herrschaftsanspruch realisiere, indem sie „Massenorganisationen“ als „Transmissionsriemen“ „zwischen der Herrschaftsspitze und den breiten Massen“<sup>63</sup> schaffe. Zu ihnen zählten „Pseudo-Gewerkschaften“ als „politisch manipulierte Anhangsgebilde der totalitären Parteien“.<sup>64</sup> An diese konzeptuelle Skizze knüpfte Stammer in späteren Beiträgen an: in einem Vortrag anlässlich der Hessischen Hochschulwochen für staatswissenschaftliche Fortbildung im Frühjahr 1955 („Demokratie und Diktatur“<sup>65</sup>), vor allem aber in einem 1955 publizierten Lexikonartikel: „Von totalitärer Herrschaft kann nur dann die Rede sein, wenn eine zentralistisch orientierte, auf einem Macht- und Herrschaftsmonopol beruhende, von einer politischen Minderheit autoritär geführte Massenbewegung mit Hilfe eines diktatorisch regierten Staates eine bürokratisch gesicherte Herrschaftsapparatur entwickelt, welche in allen Bereichen der Gesellschaft zur Geltung kommt.“

Sie besitze eine „Tendenz der Machtkumulation“, entwickle eine „Dynamik der Machtübersteigerung“, ziele auf eine „völlige Politisierung der Gesellschaft“ und deren „Umstrukturierung“.<sup>66</sup> Im Machtzentrum befinde sich

sche Version 1955), Ernst Forsthoffs „Der totale Staat“ (als „pronationalsoz.“ kenntlich gemacht), einen Festschrift-Beitrag des Verfassungsrechtlers Gerhard Leibholz (1954) und Jakob L. Talmons „Origins of Totalitarian Democracy“ (1952).

62 Otto Stammer, Gesellschaftsstruktur und politische Dynamik der Sowjetzone. In: Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte, 3 (1952) 6, S. 330–335, hier 330.

63 Otto Stammer, Die Gewerkschaften in der Struktur der totalitären Herrschaftssysteme. In: Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte, 3 (1952) 8, S. 458–464, hier 458.

64 Ebd., S. 459.

65 Der Beitrag ist in der erwähnten Festschrift (Stammer, Politische Soziologie und Demokratieforschung, S. 185–207) abgedruckt, erschien aber bereits 1955 in: Hessische Hochschulwochen für staatsbürgerliche Fortbildung, Bd. 8, Bad Homburg/Berlin 1955, S. 182–202.

66 Otto Stammer, Totalitarismus. In: Wilhelm Bernsdorf/Friedrich Bülow (Hg.), Wörterbuch der Soziologie, Stuttgart 1955, S. 551 f.

eine „totalitäre Partei“ mit charismatischer Führung, die ein „Monopol der politischen Meinungs- und Willensbildung“ beanspruche und sich zu dessen Durchsetzung u. a. auf „Organisationen der Geheimpolizei“<sup>67</sup> stütze.

Interessanterweise verwies Stammer in den Literaturhinweisen u. a. auf Franz Neumanns „Behemoth“ und Hannah Arendts „Origins“ (mit fehlerhaftem Titel und falschem Erscheinungsdatum), nicht aber auf Friedrichs Bostoner Konferenzband.<sup>68</sup> Stammer hatte wohl unabhängig von Friedrich eine eigene Forschungssynthese entwickelt. Seine kritische Friedrich-Rezeption begann allem Anschein nach erst nach Fertigstellung der Zuarbeit zum SBZ-Band. Stammers Publikationen zur Kritik des Friedrich'schen Totalitarismuskonzepts stammen aus späterer Zeit.<sup>69</sup> Wichtige Impulse gingen von einem Seminar Stammers zur „Soziologie totalitärer Herrschaft“ aus – im Sommersemester 1960, vier Jahre nach Erscheinen der SBZ/DDR-Studie.<sup>70</sup>

67 Ebd., S. 552.

68 Unter dem Beitrag „Totalitarismus“ wird auf die Literaturangaben unter „Herrschaft und Herrschaftssysteme“ verwiesen: Otto Stammer, Herrschaft und Herrschaftssysteme. In: Bernsdorf/Bülow (Hg.), Wörterbuch, S. 219. Verwiesen wird auf Friedrichs Konstitutionalismusbuch, dessen Diktaturkapitel für den Lexikonartikel eher nebensächlich war.

69 Vgl. vor allem Otto Stammer, Aspekte der Totalitarismusforschung. In: ders., Politische Soziologie und Demokratieforschung, Berlin 1965, S. 259–278. Wiederabgedruckt bei: Bruno Seidel/Siegfried Jenkner (Hg.), Wege der Totalitarismus-Forschung, 3. Auflage Darmstadt 1974 (1968), S. 414–437.

70 Vgl. Buchstein, Totalitarismustheorie, S. 259.

### III. Eine sowjetische Zone: Zur Aktualität des frühen Wissens über die DDR

*Thomas Lindenberger*

Es gibt Gegenstände der Geschichts- wie der Sozialwissenschaften, deren politisch korrekte Bezeichnung Schwierigkeiten bereitet. Dazu gehört auch derjenige Teil Deutschlands, in dem von 1949 bis 1989 von der sowjetischen Führungsmacht beauftragte deutsche Kommunisten herrschten. Dem am 7. Oktober 1949 gegründeten Staat „Deutsche Demokratische Republik“ fehlte in westlicher Perspektive von Beginn an völkerrechtliche und demokratische Legitimität. Um dies unmissverständlich zum Ausdruck zu bringen, behielten westliche Zeitgenossen die nach der Einteilung in Besatzungszonen durch die Siegermächte für diesen Teil Deutschlands gebräuchliche Bezeichnung „Sowjetische Besatzungszone“ bei, auch nachdem daraus ein neuer Staat hervorgegangen war. Diesen als „DDR“ zu bezeichnen, blieb im Westen auch deshalb lange Zeit verpönt, weil seine Selbstbezeichnung das Fehlen wesentlicher Attribute „demokratischer“ oder „republikanischer“ Systeme (vor allem freie Wahlen mit wechselnden Mehrheiten, Verantwortlichkeit der Regierung, Unabhängigkeit der Justiz, Meinungs- und Versammlungsfreiheit) zu kaschieren suchte. Stattdessen prägten die Kurzformen „Sowjetzone“, „Ostzone“, „die Zone“ oder einfach nur „der Osten“ vor allem in der Bundesrepublik das alltägliche Reden über die DDR.

An diese Konvention hielten sich auch ganz selbstverständlich die Autoren (und die eine Autorin) der unter Leitung des Politikwissenschaftlers Carl J. Friedrich in Zusammenarbeit mit seinem damaligen Assistenten Henry Kissinger 1955/56 edierten Länderstudie „The Soviet Zone of Germany“. Die Mauer war noch nicht gebaut, das Regime der SED schien angesichts der kontinuierlichen Wanderungsbewegungen Richtung Bundesrepublik alles andere als stabilisiert und hatte nur dank der sprichwörtlichen „russischen Bajonette“ den Volksaufstand vom 17. Juni 1953 überlebt. Die hitzigen bundesdeutschen Debatten über den Sinn und Unsinn der Nicht-Anerkennung des „Gebildes“ jenseits der Elbe lagen in ferner Zukunft.<sup>1</sup> Dennoch war die DDR bereits Gegenstand wissenschaftlicher, journalistischer und natürlich auch nachrichtendienstlicher Beobachtungen. Professionell gesammelt und

1 Bundeskanzler a. D. Kurt-Georg Kiesinger am 29.10.1969: „Man mag darüber streiten, ob man einen Tatbestand, ein Phänomen, ein ‚Gebilde‘ [...], bei dem [...] Machthaber über Leute herrschen, ohne dazu legitimiert zu sein, wirklich einen Staat nennen kann.“ Stenographischer Bericht Deutscher Bundestag, 6. Wahlperiode, 6. Sitzung, 29.10.1969, S. 77 (<https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/06/06006.pdf>; 22.2.2024).

analysiert trugen sie zum systematischen und auch theoretisch fundierten Verständnis der Zustände und Entwicklungen im kommunistisch beherrschten Teil Deutschlands bei.

Wie sollten wir heute, knapp siebzig Jahre später, die Früchte dieser ersten wissenschaftlichen Behandlung der DDR lesen? Wir können mittlerweile auf über drei Jahrzehnte einer im Vergleich zu den restriktiven Bedingungen der Hochzeit des Kalten Kriegs weitestgehend unbehinderten Forschung über die DDR zurückblicken. Die auch in anderen ehemals kommunistischen Ländern zu Beginn der 1990er-Jahre einsetzende „Archivrevolution“ war in Deutschland eins mit dem Verschwinden der DDR als Staat und wurde hier besonders rasch und konsequent umgesetzt.<sup>2</sup> Daher haben wir seitdem vielfältige Möglichkeiten, mehr und vor allem detaillierter über die DDR zu wissen als das damaligen Beobachtern und Beobachterinnen von außen möglich war. Das trifft auch auf die SBZ und die frühe DDR zu. Sie standen nach 1990 eine Zeitlang im Vordergrund der Historisierung der DDR, bevor dann auch die Honecker-Zeit in größerem Umfang einbezogen wurde. Angesichts des schieren Umfangs der schriftlichen Quellenüberlieferungen auf allen institutionellen Ebenen und in allen gesellschaftlichen Teilbereichen stellt die SBZ/DDR daher eine der am dichtesten erforschten historischen Epochen der modernen Geschichte dar.<sup>3</sup>

Vor diesem Hintergrund gilt es im Folgenden zu fragen, was uns dieses außergewöhnliche frühe Dokument einer SBZ- bzw. DDR-Forschung heute noch zu sagen hat, worin sein bleibender Wert jenseits rein wissenschafts- und intellektuellengeschichtlicher Gesichtspunkte liegt und wie wir es in unseren heutigen Stand des Wissens über die DDR einordnen sollten. Ich stütze mich dabei auch auf meine Erfahrungen als Historiker aus Westberlin, der sich diesem Untersuchungsgebiet erst nach 1990 zugewandt hat.

- 2 Vgl. anhand der Überlieferung des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit der DDR Klaus-Dietmar Henke (Hg.), *Wann bricht schon mal ein Staat zusammen! Die Debatte über die Stasi-Akten auf dem 39. Historikertag 1992*, München 1993; ferner Stéphane Courtois, *Archives du communisme: mort d'une mémoire, naissance d'une histoire*. In: *Le Débat*, (1993) 77, S. 145–156; Sonia Combe (Hg.), *Archives et histoire dans les sociétés post-communistes*, Paris 2009, S. 269–330: III. *Ouvertures des archives et instrumentalisation des archives*.
- 3 Thomas Lindenberger, *Ist die DDR ausgeforscht? Phasen, Trends und ein optimistischer Ausblick*. In: *Apuz*, (2014) 24–26, vom 3.6.2014 (<https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/185600/ist-die-ddr-ausgeforscht-phasen-trends-und-ein-optimistischer-ausblick/>; 11.03.2024); Stefanie Eisenhuth/Hanno Hochmuth/Konrad H. Jarausch, *Alles andere als ausgeforscht. Aktuelle Erweiterungen der DDR-Forschung*. In: *Deutschland Archiv*, 11.1.2016 ([www.bpb.de/218370](http://www.bpb.de/218370); 13.3.2024).

## 1. Der späte Nutzen der frühen DDR-Expertise während der Archivrevolution

Die mit dem Sturz der SED-Herrschaft einsetzende umfassende Aufarbeitung der DDR-Vergangenheit konzentrierte sich nicht nur auf das „was war?“, sie wandte sich zugleich auch Fragen nach dem „was bleibt?“ zu. Die DDR war bekanntlich umfassend gescheitert: Als Herrschaftsverband, als Staatsbürger-Nation, als Volkswirtschaft, als Gesellschaft – wenig davon schien bleibenden Wert zu haben. Lediglich um den Wert und Unwert der in der DDR entstandenen kulturellen Hervorbringungen begann in den frühen 1990er-Jahren eine ernsthafte Debatte, die bis heute anhält.<sup>4</sup> Alles andere schien ein für alle Mal abgeschrieben. Diese pauschale Außerwertsetzung war natürlich nicht nur „objektiv“ gegeben und auch in weiten Teilen sinnvoll, ihr wurde auch aus handfesten Interessen heraus nachgeholfen, etwa wenn westliche Investoren alles daran setzten, bei der Privatisierung des ehemals „volkseigenen“ Produktivvermögens Konkurrenten auszuschalten. Das war Teil der rasanten Transformationspolitik, die Eliten in Ost und West und zunächst auch große Teile der ostdeutschen Bevölkerung 1989 bis 1990 anstrebten und der zufolge die Auswirkungen der SED-Diktatur möglichst schnell überwunden werden sollten.<sup>5</sup>

Der Drang zur umfassenden, ja geradezu revolutionären Außerwertsetzung schlug, heute kaum beachtet, auch auf Einrichtungen in der alten Bundesrepublik durch und stellte eine Spezialität der westlichen Wissenschaftslandschaft der Bundesrepublik in Frage: die „DDR-Forschung“, bis 1990 meist in speziellen Abteilungen an Universitäten und in außeruniversitären Forschungsinstituten<sup>6</sup> angesiedelt. Diese Einrichtungen erteilte nun das sonst

4 Zum Literaturstreit um Christa Wolf, *Was bleibt*, Berlin 1990 vgl. Lennart Koch, *Ästhetik der Moral bei Christa Wolf und Monika Maron. Der Literaturstreit von der Wende bis zum Ende der neunziger Jahre*, Frankfurt a. M. 2001.

5 Vgl. Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk, *Die Übernahme. Wie Ostdeutschland Teil der Bundesrepublik wurde*, München 2019; Dierk Hoffmann (Hg.), *Die umkämpfte Einheit. Die Treuhandanstalt und die deutsche Gesellschaft*, Berlin 2022.

6 Darunter 1991 das Zentralinstitut für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung (ZI 6) der FU Berlin, dessen Arbeitsbereich DDR-Forschung aus jenem Institut für politische Wissenschaft hervorgegangen war, in dem ein Teil der im Beitrag von Helmut Müller-Enbergs porträtierten deutschen Ko-Autoren von „The Soviet Zone of Germany“ in den 1950er- und 1960er-Jahren gearbeitet hatte, vgl. Hüttmann, *DDR-Geschichte*, S. 328; ferner die von Bundesministerien finanzierten Einrichtungen Gesamtdeutsches Institut – Institut für gesamtdeutsche Aufgaben in Bonn und Westberlin, ebenfalls 1991, vgl. ebd.; die Ost-Akademie – Institut für gesamtdeutsche Studien an der Universität Lüneburg (Auflösung 2005, <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ost-Akademie>, 3.4.2024), Institut für Gesellschaft und Wissenschaft (IGW) an der Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (Schließung 1993, vgl. Hinweis bei Michael Jungert/Max-Emanuel Geis, *Wissenschaftsreflexion: Bedarf, Konzept und das „Erlanger Modell“*. In: *Ordnung der Wis-*

typisch ostdeutsche Wende- und Vereinigungsschicksal: Sie wurden ganz unzeremoniell abgewickelt, da sich der Forschungsgegenstand ja erledigt hatte. Über die DDR zu forschen, das war vor allem Sache von Politikwissenschaftlern, Soziologen und Germanisten<sup>7</sup> gewesen und hatte sich einer steten Förderung durch die öffentliche Hand erfreut.<sup>8</sup> Die Geschichtswissenschaft war auf diesem Gebiet, von seltenen Ausnahmen wie Hermann Weber, Christoph Kleßmann, Alexander Fischer und Günther Heydemann abgesehen,<sup>9</sup> weitaus weniger aktiv gewesen. Parallel dazu gab es in einigen westlichen Ländern Deutschland-Experten, deren Interesse vor allem dem als das „andere“ apostrophierten Deutschland galt und die in Teilen dazu tendierten, die antikapitalistische, mutmaßlich nicht- oder weniger nazibelastete DDR als das „bessere“ Deutschland zu lesen.<sup>10</sup> Dass es mit der Sowjetmacht im Allgemeinen und der DDR im Speziellen so schnell zu Ende gehen würde, hatte buchstäblich keiner dieser DDR-Kundigen in ihren notgedrungen ausschließlich auf veröffentlichtes offizielles Schrifttum und beschränkten persönlichen Austausch gestützten Abhandlungen vorhergesehen oder auch nur geahnt – und viele, wenn nicht die meisten unter ihnen, werden es auch nicht gewünscht haben, jedenfalls nicht um jeden Preis.

In der Bundesrepublik der späten 1980er-Jahre war eine – erkenntnistheoretisch reflektierte und in Teilen auch politisch motivierte – Betrachtungsweise vorherrschend, die die DDR gemäß ihren eigenen Voraussetzungen und Wertmaßstäben begreifen und sie nicht lediglich anhand ihres Abstands zum Standard der Bundesrepublik oder anderer westlicher Staaten beurteilen wollte. Gemäß dieser „immanenztheoretischen“ Sicht bescheinigte man der DDR – auf gezwungenermaßen dünner Materialbasis – auf bestimmten Gebieten eigenständige Leistungen und die Eigenschaften einer modernen Industrie-

senschaft, 1 (2024), S. 51–56, hier 53 (<https://ordnungderwissenschaft.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Druckfahne-Geis.pdf>; 11.3.2024).

- 7 Die Verwendung des Maskulinums ist hier und im Folgenden nicht nur generisch, sondern entspricht zugleich den sozialen Tatsachen; einige der sehr wenigen Ausnahmen von DDR-Expertinnen werden im Text benannt.
- 8 Vgl. Hüttmann, *DDR-Geschichte*.
- 9 Vgl. Hermann Weber, *Geschichte der DDR*, 3. Auflage, München 1989; Alexander Fischer/Günther Heydemann (Hg.), *Geschichtswissenschaft in der DDR*, 2 Bände, Berlin 1988/1990; Christoph Kleßmann, *Die doppelte Staatsgründung: Deutsche Geschichte 1945–1955*, 4. Auflage, Bonn 1986; ders., *Zwei Staaten, eine Nation. Deutsche Geschichte 1955–1970*, Bonn 1988.
- 10 Vgl. Jean-Philippe Mathieu/Jean Mortier/Gilbert Badia, *Quelle Allemagne?*, Paris 1990; für die seit 1975 jährlich durchgeführten New Hampshire Symposia for the Study of the GDR vgl. Richard A. Zipser, *Von Oberlin nach Ostberlin. Als Amerikaner unterwegs in der DDR-Literaturszene*, Berlin 2013, S. 182–184.

gesellschaft.<sup>11</sup> In den Jahren der Ostpolitik und der innerdeutschen Annäherung wähten etliche die DDR sogar auf einem Entwicklungspfad, der mit dem westlicher Gesellschaften konvergierte.<sup>12</sup> Aber auch damals minoritäre Sichtweisen, die in der Tradition der klassischen Totalitarismusforschung am Primat der Parteidiktatur und der sowjetischen Hegemonie gegenüber solchen „optimistischen“ Deutungen festhielten, hatten den schleichenden Zusammenbruch des östlichen Systems bis zum manifesten Eintreten der Finalitätskrise von 1989 verpasst. Kein Wunder, dass spätestens mit dem Mauerfall eine heftige und teilweise äußerst polemische Debatte darum entbrannte, wer nun warum so ganz und gar danebengelegt, wer recht behalten hatte, wer durch den Lauf der Geschichte – auch politisch-moralisch! – ins Unrecht gesetzt worden war, wessen wissenschaftliche Leistungen der DDR-Forschenden mit dem Forschungsobjekt ebenfalls abzuschreiben seien und welche nun wieder zu Ehren kommen sollten.<sup>13</sup>

Wer wie ich in den frühen 1990er-Jahren als Historiker, der bis dahin zu einer älteren Epoche (in meinem Fall das Wilhelminische Kaiserreich) gearbeitet hatte, das neue, nun plötzlich aufblühende Feld der DDR-Geschichte betrat, fand also keineswegs das vor, was man einen auf nüchterner wissenschaftlicher Kommunikation basierenden und empirisch fundierten Forschungsstand, schon gar nicht im eigenen Fach, nennen konnte. Als Westberliner mit einigen freundschaftlichen Kontakten in Ostberlin kannte ich die DDR – zwar nicht sehr gut, aber im Vergleich zu etlichen westdeutschen Kollegen, die sich nun ebenfalls daran machten, dieses Neuland zu erkunden, doch so einigermaßen. Es war mir als Historiker zu Mauerzeiten allerdings nie in den Sinn gekommen, über die DDR zu forschen. Ohne Quellenzugang keine historische Wissenschaft, schon gar nicht, wenn man wie ich und etliche meiner Mitstreiter vor allem an Geschichte von unten und vor Ort – und nicht lediglich aus der Vogelperspektive von großen Mächten, Institutionen und

11 Vgl. vor allem Peter Christian Ludz/Johannes Kuppe (Hg.), *DDR-Handbuch*, 2. überarb. und erw. Auflage, Bonn 1979.

12 Vgl. Wilfried von Bredow, *Vom Antagonismus zur Konvergenz? Studien zum Ost-West-Problem*, Frankfurt a. M. 1972; Rüdiger Thomas, *Modell DDR. Die kalkulierte Emanzipation*, München 1972.

13 Pointiert: Jens Hacker, *Deutsche Irrtümer: Schönfärber und Helfershelfer der SED-Diktatur im Westen*, 3. Auflage, Frankfurt a. M. 1994; kritisch dazu Rüdiger Thomas, *Leistungen und Defizite der DDR- und vergleichenden Deutschland-Forschung*. In: Heiner Timmermann (Hg.), *DDR-Forschung. Bilanz und Perspektiven*, Berlin 1995, S. 13–27, hier 16–25. Für eine differenzierte Einordnung vgl. u. a. Eckhard Jesse, *War die DDR totalitär?* In: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (1994) 40, S. 12–23, sowie Hüttmann, *DDR-Geschichte*, S. 295–322.



führenden Persönlichkeiten – interessiert war. Unabhängig von solchen konzeptionellen Vorlieben und dem disziplinären Hintergrund stellte sich jedem und jeder historisch zur DDR Forschenden nun eine ganz andere Herausforderung: Mit dem innerhalb kürzester Zeit für die Quellenarbeit zugänglichen unveröffentlichten Schriftgut von Partei, Staat und Massenorganisationen hatte auch in der DDR noch kaum jemand geforscht. Außer den durchaus sorgfältig erstellten Behördengeschichten auf den ersten Seiten der Findbücher, die einem im Bundesarchiv vorgelegt wurden, gab es keine quellenkundlichen Handreichungen und kein über die Sekundärliteratur zu erschließendes Erfahrungswissen. Gedruckten Editionen war auf Grund der manipulativen Geschichtspolitik der SED nicht zu trauen.

Zugleich war die nun beginnende quellengestützte Erforschung dieser Vergangenheit von in Publizistik und Politik geführten Debatten umgeben, in denen – verständlich genug – die umfassende Delegitimierung der DDR in Bausch und Bogen vorherrschte. Das war politisch durchaus legitim im Sinne der Neu-Begründung des demokratischen Gemeinwesens im Osten Deutschlands, mit den eigentümlichen Erkenntnisinteressen historischen Forschens hingegen schwer vereinbar. Dabei geht es ja vom Grundsatz her um die Offenheit von Entwicklungen und Situationen in der Vergangenheit. Ein Geschehen zu erforschen, von dem nicht nur der Ausgang, sondern auch die sachliche und moralische Notwendigkeit genau dieses Ausgangs von vornherein feststeht, ist geschichtswissenschaftlich uninteressant. Der triumphalistische Tonfall, wie er nun vor allem in westdeutschen Deutungen mitschwang, für die im Nachhinein das Scheitern der DDR vor allem als ein Sieg des Westens im Kalten Krieg zu lesen war, vertrug sich schlecht mit dem Ranke'schen „wie es eigentlich gewesen“, das über die verschiedenen, durchaus gegensätzlichen methodologischen Zugänge hinweg geschichtswissenschaftliches Forschen antreibt.

Auf der einen Seite lockten also kilometerweise Original-Akten, in die noch kaum jemand hineingeschaut hatte. Auf der anderen Seite war es um die Möglichkeiten, sich wie etwa beim Einstieg in ein Frühe-Neuzeit- oder Kaiserreich-Thema anhand von einigermaßen verlässlichen Forschungsliteraturen Orientierung über Basistatsachen und Kontexte zu verschaffen, um den ersten Archivaufenthalt vorzubereiten, gar nicht gut bestellt. Dass dem offiziellen Schrifttum aus der DDR nicht zu trauen war, es sich dabei um Wissenschaftlichkeit beanspruchende, aber hochgradig ideologisierte Überlieferungen handelte, die nur als solche Quellenwert hatten, war offenkundig. Es waren ja in erster Linie diese Veröffentlichungen, auf die sich die DDR-Forschung der späten Bundesrepublik notgedrungen hatte stützen müssen, um zwischen den Zeilen „Tatsachen“ über die DDR in Erfahrung bringen zu können. Sie unterschied sich daher von diesen ideologischen Exerzitien primär durch deren kritische, ihren Gehalt hinterfragende Lektüre – die aber nichts an der

schmalen Ausbeute an Tatsachenwissen änderte. Theoriefreudige Spekulation überdeckte dabei mitunter die fehlende konkrete Anschauung – und machten sie in den Augen des ratsuchenden Historikers zusätzlich ungeeignet, um den „ersten Angriff“ auf das archivalische Arcanum des bis dahin Geheimgehaltenen und Zensurierten vorzubereiten.

Mein Interesse galt damals einer Institution, deren Bedeutung für das Funktionieren einer modernen Herrschaftsordnung, ob demokratischer oder autokratischer Ausrichtung, wohl niemand ernsthaft in Frage stellt, die aber trotzdem in Standarddarstellungen zur DDR-Geschichte wenig Raum einnahm: der öffentlichen, im gesellschaftlichen Alltag uniformiert auftretenden Polizei. In der SBZ und dann der DDR hieß sie „Deutsche Volkspolizei“, DVP oder im Alltag „VP“, im Westen hingegen sprach man mit herabsetzendem Beiklang von den „Vopos“. Da sie für die politische Repression und Überwachung der DDR-Bürger weitaus weniger relevant erschien als die in einem eigenen Ministerium geführte Geheimpolizei, die „Staatssicherheit“ oder „Stasi“, gab es über sie, von einer rechtsgeschichtlichen Abhandlung abgesehen,<sup>14</sup> in der damals jüngeren Forschungsliteratur so gut wie nichts zu lesen.

Wohl aber in der älteren, namentlich der aus den 1950er-Jahren. In dieser Zeit bildeten die Einheiten der Volkspolizei, die der Deutschen Verwaltung des Innern der SBZ und dann dem Ministerium des Innern der DDR unterstellt waren und als Exekutivapparat der Staatsgewalt fungierten, zugleich die Keimzelle aller weiteren von der öffentlichen Polizei unterschiedenen „bewaffneten Organe“. Sowohl die Staatssicherheit wie auch die Nationale Volksarmee gingen aus Abteilungen der VP und Hauptabteilungen des Innenministeriums hervor. Dort angesiedelte Einheiten wie die „K5“ (die für politische und Wirtschaftsverbrechen zuständige Abteilung innerhalb der Kriminalpolizei der SBZ, die 1949 zunächst in der „Hauptverwaltung zum Schutz der Volkswirtschaft“ und mit dieser 1950 im neugebildeten MfS aufging) oder die als „HA Ausbildung“ legendierten Militärverbände im MdI, die ab 1952 offiziell als „Kasernierte Volkspolizei“ (KVP) geführt wurden – diese allesamt mit der Volkspolizei bzw. dem MdI der DDR in engster Verbindung stehenden dynamischen Gebilde erfreuten sich großer Aufmerksamkeit in westlichen Publikationen. Die Beiträge im SBZ-Archiv, dem Vorläufer des lange Zeit einflussreichen Deutschland-Archivs,<sup>15</sup> oder auch der mehrbändigen Dokumentation „Unrecht als System“ erwiesen sich daher mit ihrer Dichte

14 Hartwig Lüers, *Das Polizeirecht in der DDR: Aufgaben, Befugnisse und Organisation der Deutschen Volkspolizei*, Berlin 1974.

15 Vgl. Karl Wilhelm Fricke, 40 Jahre „Deutschland-Archiv“. Eine Zeitschrift im Dienst von DDR-Forschung und Wiedervereinigung. In: *Deutschland-Archiv*, 41 (2008) 2, S. 217–225.

an Details und Einzelbeschreibungen als äußerst hilfreich, um sich zu einem konkreten Gegenstand wie „Volkspolizei“ einen ersten Überblick zu verschaffen.<sup>16</sup> Hier fand man keine voluminösen Qualifikationsarbeiten oder Monografien, auch keine theoretisch überambitionierten Beiträge zum Fachdiskurs. Zu finden waren nüchterne Zusammenstellungen von Beobachtungen vor Ort, basierend auf direkter Zuträgerschaft der Menschen „von drüben“ und intimen Kenntnissen darüber, was dort den politischen und sozialen Alltag ausmachte. Gerade, dass es bei diesen Veröffentlichungen unverkennbar engagiert um Aufklärung durch positivistisches Faktensammeln und Bezeugen ging, machte sie im Rückblick brauchbarer als spätere Versuche der Einordnung derartiger Tatsachen in soziologische oder herrschaftstypologische Weltklärungen. Dass diese Texte Teil eines parteilichen Engagements und des politischen Widerstands gegen das SED-Regime und dementsprechend einseitig waren, das konnte eine textkritische Lektüre ohne Weiteres erkennen und bei einer vorläufigen Bewertung ihres Gehalts durchaus in Rechnung stellen. Wenn man in den frühen 1990er-Jahren auf diese Weise die DDR umfassend historisieren wollte, führte kein Weg an jener ersten Generation ihrer wissenschaftlichen Beobachter (und den wenigen Beobachterinnen wie Carola Stern und Ilse Spittmann) vorbei. Auf deren Expertise gründet der informatorische Gehalt der von Carl J. Friedrich und seinem Team in Harvard 1956 vorgelegten Überblicksdarstellung.

Einen Eindruck von genau diesem Realismus-Effekt bei der Lektüre der frühen, den Sound des innerdeutschen Antikommunismus übermittelnden DDR-Forschungen der 1950er-Jahre zu gewinnen ermöglicht „The Soviet Zone of Germany“. Als länderkundliche Handreichung für den Unterricht in Highschools und Colleges oder auch zur Vorbereitung von Diplomaten, Offizieren und anderen US-Repräsentanten für ihre Deutschland-Einsätze verfasst, stellte es zum Zeitpunkt seiner Drucklegung Anfang 1956 eine in ihrer Art einzigartige, breitgelegte Momentaufnahme der DDR dar. Dabei ging es nicht nur um die Beschreibung zahlreicher Fakten und Details: Daten zu Bevölkerung, Wirtschaftsleistung, sozialen Milieus, Beschäftigungssystem, Verwaltungsaufbau, Steuereinnahmen, Bildungswesen, Sozial- und Familienpolitik, sondern natürlich auch und zuvörderst um die Funktionen und Wirkungsweisen der

16 Zur Genese der bewaffneten Organe der SBZ/DDR vgl. Torsten Diedrich/Hans Ehler/Rüdiger Wenzke (Hg.), *Im Dienste der Partei. Handbuch der bewaffneten Organe der DDR*. Hg. im Auftrag des Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamtes (Forschungen zur DDR-Gesellschaft), Berlin 1998; darin Thomas Lindenberger, *Die Deutsche Volkspolizei*, S. 97–152; ferner allgemein zur VP der frühen DDR ders., *Volkspolizei. Herrschaftspraxis und öffentliche Ordnung im SED-Staat, 1952–1968* (Zeithistorische Studien, Bd. 27), Köln 2003.

spezifisch kommunistischen Herrschaftsapparate und Massenorganisationen. Geboten wurde auch eine politikwissenschaftliche Einordnung im Rahmen der damals aktuellen Lehre der Herrschaftstypen. Die DDR ist in „The Soviet Zone of Germany“ eine totalitäre Herrschaftsordnung *in the making*. Friedrich sieht in ihr die wesentlichen Merkmale des sowjetischen Systems bereits angelegt, wenn auch noch nicht vollständig ausgestaltet. Dass sich die „Zone“ aber genau in Richtung und gemäß der Logik des sowjetischen Systems weiterentwickeln würde, stand für ihn außer Frage.

Friedrichs Totalitarismusmodell ging von einer auf Dauer gestellten Abwesenheit politisch-sozialer Dynamik aus, sobald sich der Totalitarismus in diesem Sinne voll entfalten konnte. Allerdings erwartete er realistischerweise ein „Auf und Ab in der Intensität totalitärer Herrschaftsverwirklichung“. <sup>17</sup> Anfang 1956 beschrieben die Autoren der Studie eine DDR, die sich nachholend zum Totalitarismus entwickelte und diesen keineswegs in allen Bereichen voll ausgebildet hatte. Die damalige DDR wurde gelesen als Teil des Herrschaftsbereichs jener Sowjetunion, die bereits eine Generation zuvor diese Stufe eines der dynamischen Entwicklung enthobenen totalitären Systems erreicht hatte, und die sie nun in jedem der von ihr kontrollierten Satellitenstaaten zu etablieren suchte. Während Friedrich das Tauwetter nach dem Tod Stalins wohl eher als eine vorübergehende Nachfolgekrise im Inneren der kommunistischen Parteien deutete, sah Hannah Arendt darin zehn Jahre später ein Indiz für einen „echten, wenn auch nie unzweideutigen, Abbau totaler Herrschaft“. <sup>18</sup> Allerdings erfolgte diese Interpretation aus größerer historische Distanz und auf der Grundlage eines stärker auf ideologische Dynamik abstellenden Totalitarismuskonzepts, während Friedrich und seine Koautoren die Folgen der „Entstalinisierung“ 1955/56 noch kaum ermessen konnten.

„Everything was forever – until it was no more“ – dieses auf die so jäh zerbrochene Ewigkeit des Realsozialismus der Breschnew-Ära gemünzte Diktum von Alexei Yurchak <sup>19</sup> galt in nuce offensichtlich schon für den Hochstalinismus kurz vor seinem abrupten Ende. Die Zeitgenossen lasen ihn nicht als Spätstalinismus, und konnten ihn wohl auch noch nicht als solchen lesen.

17 Vgl. Carl J. Friedrich, *Totalitäre Diktatur*, unter Mitarbeit von Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Stuttgart 1957, S. 264. Vgl. auch Uwe Backes, *Volksaufstände in kommunistischen Diktaturen – Reflexionen im Anschluß an die kontroversen Ansichten Hannah Arendts und Carl J. Friedrichs*. In: *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte/Contemporary Church History*, 17 (2004) 17, S. 222–231, hier 224 f.

18 Hannah Arendt, *Vorwort* (1966). In: dies., *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*, ungekürzte Ausgabe, München 1986, S. 473–494, hier 475.

19 Vgl. Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More. The Last Soviet Generation*, Princeton 2005.

Was folgt, wenn der Diktator mitten im Frieden eines natürlichen Todes sterben würde, darüber gab das vor allem auf den zwei Fällen Nazidiktatur und Stalinismus beruhende Totalitarismuskonzept keine schlüssige Auskunft. Wie wir mittlerweile wissen, die Autoren aber damals, Anfang 1956, schlechterdings nicht einmal ahnen konnten, begann aber erst nach dem Jahr 1956, in Konsequenz sowohl des XX. Parteitags (der zwar einmal erwähnt wird, interessanterweise aber ohne Hinweis auf Chruschtschows Abrechnung mit Stalin) wie auch der Aufstandsbewegung in Polen und der niedergeschlagenen Revolution in Ungarn ein Veränderungsprozess: Es kam zu einer Diversifizierung und relativen Verselbständigung von Herrschaftspraktiken im sowjetischen Hegemonialbereich. Allenthalben zeigten sich Abweichungen vom totalitären Design: Die Volksrepublik Polen verzichtete auf die Kollektivierung der Landwirtschaft, die ungarischen Genossen setzten auf eine innenpolitische Pazifizierung mittels über den Weltmarkt finanziertem Konsumismus („Gulaschkommunismus“), und in den 1960er-Jahren beschränkten die CSSR vorübergehend und die Volksrepublik Rumänien bis 1989 je ganz eigene, nationale Wege einer gegenüber Moskau relativ eigenständigen Entwicklung zum Sozialismus.<sup>20</sup> Ebenso blieb die DDR ein dynamisches Gebilde – auch nach der mit dem Mauerbau 1961 erzwungenen räumlichen Immobilität „ihrer“ Menschen. Selbst in der Sowjetunion wurde ab den 1960er-Jahren das Lösungswort „Reform“ heimisch. Nachdem sie in einem Interview mit einer Schweizer Zeitschrift die verschiedenen wirtschaftspolitischen Reformansätze der 1960er-Jahre in den Satellitenstaaten hatte Revue passieren lassen, kam Hannah Arendt im Jahr 1970 zu dem Schluss: „Keines dieser Systeme, auch das der Sowjetunion, ist noch wirklich totalitär“.<sup>21</sup> Die fortan als Generationenprojekt der kommunistischen Führer angestrebte Reform der Parteiherrschaft folgte der Logik des „Paradox[es] von Stabilität und Revolution“, die das Schicksal des kommunistischen Totalitarismus besiegeln sollte.<sup>22</sup> Diesem Paradox war die in den 1990er-Jahren gerade unter den sich der DDR zuwen-

20 Die unterschiedlichen Modi des Abweichens vom totalitären Modell wurden später als „Posttotalitarismus“ konzeptionell gefasst, in elaborierter Form bei: Juan J. Linz/Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*. Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe, Baltimore 1996, S. 38–54.

21 Albert Reif, „Der Sozialismus ist kein Allheilmittel“. Ein Gespräch mit Hannah Arendt. In: *Schweizerisches Kaufmännisches Zentralblatt – Journal suisse des employés de commerce* vom 27.11.1970, S. 9. Ich danke Annette Vowinckel für den Hinweis auf diese Publikation.

22 Siehe zur utopischen Dimension der Reform- und Gesellschaftspolitiken in den Satellitenstaaten nach Stalin Pavel Kolář, *Der Poststalinismus. Ideologie und Utopie einer Epoche* (Zeithistorische Studien, Bd. 57), Köln 2016.

denden Historikerinnen und Historikern überaus einflussreiche Pionierstudie Sigrid Meuschels über „Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft in der DDR“ gewidmet, eine der wenigen innovativen Studien zum Totalitarismuskonzept nach dem Ende der DDR.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Die unheimliche Wiederkehr der Zone

Es kann hier natürlich nicht darum gehen, dem Totalitarismuskonzept von damals Vorhaltungen zu machen – und schon gar nicht dem ambitionierten Versuch, diese Theorie mit dem damals verfügbaren Wissen über die noch ganz dem Stalinismus verpflichtete Politik der deutschen Kommunisten zu verknüpfen. Aus guten Gründen hatten die an „The Soviet Zone of Germany“ Beteiligten die poststalinistische Wende und ihre weitreichenden Konsequenzen nicht kommen sehen. Die klassischen Totalitarismuskonzepte stellten aus der Vogelperspektive anhand zweier Fälle extremer autokratischer Herrschaft – NS-Diktatur und Sowjetunion unter Stalin – gewonnene Erklärungsmodelle dar, die nicht auf distanzierendes historisches Erklären, bei „einbrechender Dämmerung“ gewissermaßen, sondern auf gegenwartsbezogenes Fremdverstehen zielten. In diesem Fremdverstehen war das Ringen um das Selbstverständnis der Demokratien so selbstevident anwesend, dass es in einem Text wie „The Soviet Zone of Germany“ kaum thematisiert wird – nur gelegentlich finden sich zu heuristischen Zwecken Hinweise auf Zustände in Westdeutschland oder der „freien Welt“. Die starke Seite dieses Gegenwartsbezugs liegt in den detaillierten Kenntnissen genau jener deutschen „consultants“, die in ihren Doppelrollen als Wissenschaftler und Beteiligte eine zweifache Totalitarismuserfahrung „aus erster Hand“ einbringen konnten.<sup>24</sup> Sie stehen in dieser Schrift stellvertretend für die vielfältige und diversifizierte Spezialliteratur der damaligen Community der SBZ/DDR-Experten und -Expertinnen, die in einem breiten Übergangsfeld von Wissenschaft, Regierungsstellen, Journalismus und politischem Engagement unermüdlich Beobachtungen, Zeugnisse und Analysen zusammentrugen und öffentlich zugänglich machten. Als Referenzen sind etwa die mehrbändige Dokumentation „Unrecht als System“, zusammengestellt vom Untersuchungsausschuss Freiheitlicher Juristen und herausgegeben vom Gesamtdeutschen Ministerium der BRD, die Jahrgänge des SBZ-Archivs, „Macht ohne Mandat“ von Ernst Richert, Carola Sterns

23 Sigrid Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft. Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR, 1945–1989*, Frankfurt a. M. 1992.

24 Siehe die biografischen Schilderungen im Beitrag von Helmut Müller-Enbergs.

SED-Handbuch und die unter Pseudonym erschienene Studie zum Juniaufstand des damaligen „Christ und Welt“-Korrespondenten Klaus Harpprecht,<sup>25</sup> und darüber hinaus die zu eher abgelegenen Teilgebieten erstellten Spezialstudien in dieser Momentaufnahme allgegenwärtig – genau dadurch ist „The Soviet Zone of Germany“ ein wissenshistorisches Monument seiner Zeit.

Dennoch ist es für eine heutige, mit der Diktion und den Sichtweisen der Periode des frühen Kalten Kriegs nicht vertrauten Leserschaft sinnvoll, auf zeitgenössisch typische Abwesenheiten in diesem Text hinzuweisen. Sie stehen für bestimmte Befangenheiten und Selbstverständlichkeiten, die an- und auszusprechen uns heute in Fleisch und Blut übergegangen ist. So ist es mittlerweile in der Zeitgeschichte Usus, die drei Nachfolgegesellschaften des Dritten Reichs – Bundesrepublik, DDR und Österreich – als postfaschistisch oder postnazistisch zu lesen und zu vergleichen. Davon findet sich kaum etwas in „The Soviet Zone of Germany“ – aus Rücksicht auf den NATO-Partner Bundesrepublik, in dessen Regierungsstäben noch Tausende ehemaliger Amtsträger der NS-Zeit arbeiteten? Dem entspricht eine nachrangige Darstellung des antifaschistischen Selbstverständnisses des SED-Regimes und der daraus resultierenden, für die SED-Propaganda der frühen 1950er-Jahre essentiellen Brandmarkung des „Bonner“ Regimes als faschistoid oder „klerikalfaschistisch“.<sup>26</sup> Die auf Wiederherstellung der Einheit zielende Deutschlandpolitik der SED wird dagegen ihrerseits als nationalistisch (und damit in der Kontinuität des NS stehend) gelesen. Eine weitere, damit zusammenhängende und ganz wortwörtliche Abwesenheit ist in dem Beitrag zur demografischen Entwicklung der „Zone“ evident: Die wenigen Überreste jüdischen Lebens in der DDR werden nicht erwähnt, und auch nicht dessen weitere Dezimierung durch die Emigrationswelle ab 1950, als sich die SED-Führung unter dem Eindruck der antisemitischen Schauprozesse in Ungarn und der CSSR anschickte, auch die Juden und Jüdinnen in ihren eigenen Reihen mit Repressalien zu überziehen.<sup>27</sup>

25 Unrecht als System. Dokumente über planmäßige Rechtsverletzungen in der Sowjetzone Deutschlands, 2 Bde., hg. vom Bundesministerium für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn/Berlin 1952, 1955; Richert, Macht ohne Mandat; Stern, Die SED; Stefan Brant (Klaus Harpprecht), Der Aufstand. Vorgeschichte, Geschichte und Deutung des 17. Juni 1953, Stuttgart 1954.

26 Vgl. etwa „Der 17. Juni 1953“. Eine Dokumentation über die faschistische Provokation, in: Dokumentation der Zeit, Nr. 51, Berlin (Ost) 1953, Sp. 2772 ff.

27 Vgl. Olaf Groehler/Mario Keßler, Die SED-Politik, der Antifaschismus und die Juden in der SBZ und der frühen DDR, Berlin 1995; sowie zuletzt Tamar Lewinsky/Martina Lüdicke/Theresia Ziehe (Hg.), Ein anderes Land. Jüdisch in der DDR. Ausstellungskatalog, Berlin 2023.

In seiner zwei Jahrzehnte später veröffentlichten und kanonisch gewordenen Herrschaftstypologie diskutiert Juan Linz auch die DDR zusammen mit anderen post-stalinistischen Fällen als „posttotalitär“ und „autokratisch“.<sup>28</sup> Die von ihm in diesem Zusammenhang referierten Denkansätze und Interpretationen eint bei aller Widersprüchlichkeit und Unabgeschlossenheit eines: Lediglich mit „totalitär“ sind die in Nachfolge der Stalinherrschaft stehenden Regime nicht mehr hinreichend zu charakterisieren. Zugleich ist aber daran zu erinnern, dass zur selben Zeit die Zuschreibung „totalitär“ in der politischen Alltagssprache einen hohen symbolischen Wert behielt, und das nicht nur als zunehmend umstrittener Begriff in den westlichen Demokratien. Für einen bedeutsamen Teil der dissidentischen Untergrundöffentlichkeit im Osten war klar: Die politische, ja die Seins-Ordnung, in der sie lebten, war die des Totalitarismus. Diese erfahrungsgesättigten Sichtweisen brachten die Frauen und Männer der Oppositions- und Bürgerrechtsbewegungen in der CSSR, Polen, Ungarn, Rumänien und natürlich auch der DDR in die mit den Revolutionen ab 1989 einsetzenden Debatten um die kommunistische Vergangenheit ein. Daraus resultierte eine Spannung zwischen wissenschaftlichem Sprachgebrauch und geschichtspolitischer Semantik, die bis heute virulent ist.

Zuletzt sei auf eine weitere Bedeutungsschicht des heute so unzeitgemäß anmutenden Titels dieser frühen Länderstudie über die DDR verwiesen, über die die Autoren damals keine großen Worte verloren haben, so selbstverständlich war sie ihnen. Ihre Brisanz und Aktualität wird uns Heutigen seit dem 24. Februar 2024 Tag für Tag vor Augen geführt. Die DDR war nicht lediglich de jure aus der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone hervorgegangen und an deren Stelle getreten. Sie war Teil der von der Sowjetunion beanspruchten Einflusszone in Europa, wie sie ihr durch die in Jalta Anfang 1945 mit den westlichen Alliierten getroffenen Vereinbarungen angeblich zustand. Diese Einflusszone gestaltete sie durch die Installierung von nationalen Quislingregimen zu jenem totalitär beherrschten „Satelliten-System“, dem Hannah Arendt in ihrem berühmten Essay über „Totalitarian Imperialism: Reflection on the Hungarian Revolution“ einen eigenen Abschnitt gewidmet hat.<sup>29</sup> Gemessen an Tempo und Eindringtiefe der gewaltsamen Transformation rangierte die SBZ/DDR der frühen 1950er-Jahre bei dieser Einpassung in das sowjetische System eher auf den hinteren Rängen, da die sowjetische Führung sich deutschlandpolitische Optionen, etwa die eines durch Vereinigung mit den ehemaligen West-

28 Vgl. den Abschnitt „Post-totalitarian Authoritarian Regimes“ in: Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, Boulder/London 2000, S. 245–261.

29 Hannah Arendt, *Totalitarian Imperialism: Reflections on the Hungarian Revolution*. In: *The Journal of Politics*, 20 (1958) 1, S. 5–43, hier 33–43.



zonen neutralisierten Deutschlands, offenhalten wollte.<sup>30</sup> Die zu Beginn der 1950er-Jahre einsetzende Welle stalinistischer Säuberungen und Repressionen erreichte die DDR daher später und mit weniger zerstörerischer Vehemenz als andere Länder des Ostblocks. Folglich konnte der an Stalinhörigkeit und Moskautreue kaum zu übertreffende Walter Ulbricht in der zweiten Hälfte der 1950er-Jahre auf eine großangelegte, explizite Entstalinisierung verzichten – und sich dennoch für einige Jahre einen politischen Flirt mit den unstreitigen Lordsiegelbewahrern des Stalin'schen Vermächtnisses, den chinesischen Kommunisten unter Mao Zedong, leisten.<sup>31</sup> Dabei stand allen Mitstreitern der legendären „Gruppe Ulbricht“ und ihren Nachfolgern stets vor Augen: Ihr „erster Arbeiter-und-Bauernstaat auf deutschem Boden“ war nicht souverän. Gerade weil die Sowjetunion als totalitär-utopisches Projekt zugleich in der ungebrochenen Kontinuität desjenigen kontinentalen Imperiums stand, das als einziges die beiden Weltkriege überlebt hatte, blieb die DDR – Hallstein-Doktrin hin, Zwei-Staaten-Theorie her – „Zone“, bis zu ihrem friedlichen Ende. Diese andauernde Stellung eines potentiellen Bauernopfers in den internationalen Beziehungen des Kalten Kriegs trübte das Selbstwertgefühl der SED-Führung und stachelte bekanntlich ihren Kampf um die Anerkennung der DDR als Industrienation von Weltrang umso mehr an.

Es ist diese, im modernen Imperialismus als einem ihrer „Elemente und Ursprünge“ gegründete Dimension totaler Herrschaft, die deren ursprünglich zukunftsorientiertes utopisches Programm überlebt hat, und das bis heute. Von Beginn an war die „Russländische Föderation Sozialistischer Sowjetrepubliken“ und die von ihr dominierte „Union der Sozialistischen Sowjetrepubliken“ ein imperiales Projekt mit Zügen eines expansiven Siedlerkolonialismus.<sup>32</sup> Das Ideologem des „russki mir“, der „Russischen Welt“, mit der die russländische Außenpolitik in der Gegenwart den Anspruch auf Einflusszonen auch Richtung Westen legitimiert, knüpft unmittelbar an diese Kontinuität an. Dass der Slogan „na berlin“, „auf nach Berlin“, sich in der russischen Bevölkerung, aber auch bei kremlnahen Fernsehkommentatoren und Influencern schon seit mehreren Jahren großer Beliebtheit erfreut, lässt sich daher nicht als harmlose Folklore und Nostalgie abtun. Der Verlust eben jener

30 Vgl. Jürgen Zarusky (Hg.), Die Stalin-Note vom 10. März 1952. Neue Quellen und Analysen. Mit Beiträgen von Wilfried Loth, Hermann Graml und Gerhard Wettig, Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, München 2002.

31 Vgl. Axel Berkofsky, The China-GDR Relations from 1949 to 1989. The (Bad) Company You Keep, Cham 2022, S. 43–45.

32 Vgl. Botakoz Kassymbekova, Imperiale Unschuld als Identität und Methode: Opferkult und Kolonialismus der Russländischen Föderation. In: Totalitarismus und Demokratie, 21 (2024), preprint <https://doi.org/10.13109/tode.2024.21.oa1>.

„Zone“, in der Wladimir Putin prägende Jahre als KGB-Major zugebracht hatte, gehörte bekanntlich zu dem, was für ihn die Katastrophe des 20. Jahrhunderts ausmacht: der Zerfall der Sowjetunion als Weltreich. Auch deswegen ist der auf den ersten Blick altmodisch erscheinende Titel von „The Soviet Zone of Germany“ hochaktuell.

#### IV. Editorische Anmerkungen

Die Studie „The Soviet Zone of Germany“ erschien 1956 als fotografisch vielfältigstes maschinenschriftliches Typoskript unter der Signatur „HRAF-34 Harvard-1“ in den Human Relations Area Files, New Haven, Connecticut. Für die Edition wurde der Text weitestgehend originalgetreu reproduziert. Offensichtliche orthografische Fehler sind stillschweigend korrigiert – unter Beibehaltung der Diktion. Die Gliederung des Textes wurde den Gepflogenheiten der Reihe „Wege der Totalitarismusforschung“ angepasst. Die Namen der Autoren sind den Textabschnitten hinzugefügt, sofern diese Zuordnung aufgrund der Angaben des Projektleiters in der Einleitung eindeutig möglich war. Ergänzungen und Berichtigungen bibliografischer Angaben sowie zusätzliche Informationen zu Angaben im Haupttext bzw. Literatur und Quellen sind in den Fußnoten als „Editors note“ markiert. Angaben in den Tabellen ließen sich nur teilweise anhand alternativer Quellen überprüfen. In wenigen Fällen wurde die Wiedergabe von Namen und Bezeichnungen vereinheitlicht. Die Karten im Anhang wurden auf Grundlage der Originalausgabe neu erstellt. Die Karte auf S. 488 wurde neu konzipiert, da das Original offensichtliche Fehler aufwies. Das Quellen- und Literaturverzeichnis ist abweichend vom Original – im Interesse leichterer Auffindbarkeit – ohne thematische Gliederung alphabetisch geordnet. Die bibliografischen Angaben wurden überprüft und ggf. korrigiert/ergänzt. Die Literatur- und Quellenkommentierung des Originals ist, wo immer möglich, beibehalten worden, um Informationsverluste zu vermeiden. Dies führt zu gewissen formalen Inkonsistenzen, die in Kauf zu nehmen sind.

Annett Zingler trug durch umfangreiche, teils mit detektivischem Spürsinn verfolgte Quellenrecherchen wesentlich zur Erhöhung des Informationsgehalts der Edition bei. Elias Kreuzinger, Thomas Marvin Michaelis und Elisabeth Oertel begleiteten die Entstehung des Bandes durch eine so effektive wie kompetente Unterstützung bei der Textbearbeitung und detaillierte biografische Recherchen in zahlreichen Archiven. In den bewährten Händen von Ute Terletzki (in Zusammenarbeit mit Annkatrin Schütz) lagen die mühevollen Lektorierung und Layout-Erstellung. Ihnen allen sei herzlich gedankt.

Die Herausgeber danken dem im November 2023 verstorbenen Autor Henry Kissinger, der im Dezember 2022 als einziger noch lebender Rechteinhaber das Copyright für die von ihm verfassten Textteile gewährte. Weitere Rechteinhaber konnten trotz mühevoller Recherchen nicht eruiert werden.



# The Soviet Zone of Germany

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## Preface

The following study on the Soviet Zone of Germany has been prepared in accordance with the Human Relations Area Files research outline. However, certain peculiarities of the society of the Soviet Zone of Germany necessitated a few deviations. It was necessary to include a special section on refugees and expellees (1.5). Section 1.9 on education is substantially enlarged by a section on youth, and section 2.6 on subversive potentialities, rather than only attempting an estimate in general terms, centers specifically on the uprising of June 17, 1953. In order to set the proper framework for an understanding of the economy, a section on the overall plan (3.1) has been added.

To avoid needless repetition, the reader is often referred to other sections of this study wherever relevant. These references are given in brackets thus (1.1). Additional reference material is suggested in the bibliography.

A study based on the contributions of many scholars and the memoranda of a number of experts is unavoidably subject to stylistic variations; among other differences, it will be noted that some sections contain footnotes, while others do not.

Professor Carl J. Friedrich, the Director of Research and General Editor has provided overall guidance as well as detailed information on many points. He wrote the general background section, the section on propaganda, that on subversive potentialities (together with Dr. Erich Matthias) and that on history (together with Dr. Henry Kissinger).

Dr. Kissinger, besides extensive editorial work, wrote much of the section of the historical background. Mr. Horst Mendershausen undertook the development of the whole economic section. Dr. Herbert J. Spiro prepared the major part of the political section including the section on the constitutional system, the structure of government, political dynamics and public order and part of the section on public reactions. Mr. Vytautas Kavolis prepared the groundwork of the sociological section, especially those on sections on population, ethnic groups, languages, education, health and welfare. Dr. Albert Mavrinac wrote the sections concerned with labor. Mr. Jürgen Herbst compiled the political biographies and developed the section on youth, to which Mr. Hanns-Peter Herz contributed a memorandum. Mr. Melvin Croan wrote the section on foreign policy, finalized certain of the sociological sections and assisted greatly with the final editing. He has been in charge of the entire bibliography.

Contributory memoranda were received from the following consultants: Dr. Gerhard Abeken, on domestic trade, planning, banking and currency, Professor Fritz Baade on agriculture, Professor Heinrich Rittershausen on

banking and currency and Professor Karl C. Thalheim on industrial potential, domestic trade and planning. Wolfgang G. Friedrich and Dr. Carl Mayer contributed memoranda which were developed into the section on religion. Dr. Herbert Kundler contributed a study of public information. Dr. Ernst Richert prepared a memorandum on propaganda. Dr. Carola Stern wrote the section on family, Siegfried Unseld the section on artistic expression. Professor Otto Stammer submitted a study of the social structure and values.

Miss Roberta G. Hill, as administrative assistant to the Director, contributed to all phases of the work, including some of the original writing. Mrs. Jane E. Miller's help in the final preparation of the manuscript has also been most valuable.

Informal help and advice received from numerous scholars and government offices here and abroad is, wherever appropriate, acknowledged through footnotes and in the bibliography.



# 1. Sociological Background

## 1.1 General Character of the Society [Carl J. Friedrich]

The Soviet Zone of Germany, organized in 1949 as the German Democratic Republic (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik – DDR*), is a totalitarian society of the Soviet type, though even today in a somewhat earlier stage of development than the Soviet Union itself. What are the outstanding characteristics of Communist totalitarian society? Its distinctive features have been variously defined, but there seems to be a growing consensus of opinion on the following six: (1) an official ideology of Marxist origin, covering all vital aspects of man's existence, to which everyone living in that society is supposed to adhere at least passively; as a total ideology it radically rejects the pre-existing society and calls for total reconstruction in terms of chiliastic claims as to the "perfect" state of mankind; (2) a single mass party consisting of a relatively small part of the total population, of men and women passionately and unquestioningly dedicated to the ideology and prepared to assist in promoting its general acceptance, such party being organized oligarchically, hierarchically and usually under a single leader; (3) a system of terroristic secret police control; (4) a near-complete monopoly of effective mass communication, more especially the press, the radio and motion pictures; (5) a near-complete monopoly of weapons control, giving the party and its subservient cadres (including the armed forces) all means of effective armed combat; (6) a centrally planned and directed economy.<sup>1</sup> There may be other characteristic features, but these six seem to be fairly generally recognized as decisive; monopolistic weapons control is also found in other contemporary societies. Whether a centrally directed economy is compatible with a democratic system is at the present time hotly debated; whatever the answer, such an economy is certainly characteristic of a totalitarian dictatorship.

As the following study abundantly shows, all six of these characteristics are found in the Soviet Zone as fairly fully developed features of the DDR. However, the rulers of the Soviet Zone share their weapons' monopoly with the USSR which actually controls the armed forces of the DDR. This makes the Soviet Zone a dependent, rather than an independent totalitarian society,

1 See Carl J. Friedrich (ed.), *Totalitarianism*. Proceedings of a Conference held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, March 1953, part II: The Nature of Totalitarianism, Cambridge, Mass. 1954, pp. 52 f.

but the Soviet military position does of course in fact reinforce the totalitarian character of the regime. Indeed, this military force is the hard core of the conquering Red Army which in 1945 took control of the eastern part of Germany, liquidated the upper classes in typical Soviet style, and initiated the establishment of a regime which was at first disguised as "democratic" but within a year started on the road toward totalitarian dictatorship. The decisive move was the forcible merging in 1946, of the Communist (KPD) and Social Democratic (SPD) parties, contrary to the expressed wishes of the SPD membership (where they could be expressed, namely in Berlin). Once the Communists had thus assured themselves of a seeming majority through the new Socialist Unity (SED) party, they could proceed to seize the various key control positions in government and society. Thus, in East Germany, as in other satellites, the road to totalitarian dictatorship of the Soviet type was cleared by foreign bayonets, rather than by internal revolution. The fact that the regime was imposed from the outside has colored its relations with the population of the SZ, since it has never dared to test its strength in free elections but has depended for such "consultations" as it has allowed upon the well-known process of "plebiscites" in which the electorate has no real alternative.

In its economic organization and policy, the Soviet Zone is of course a close imitation of the USSR, though less far advanced. When one says "less far advanced" this must not be misunderstood to refer to the degree of industrialization, but rather to the totality of the governmental control of the economy. For unlike the Soviet Union, Germany, and even the part of Eastern Germany which constitutes the Soviet Zone, were highly industrialized. It is a common error to believe that the Soviet Zone is an agricultural region and that its addition to the German Federal Republic would materially alter the food balance. This is not correct; for the part of Eastern Germany which was a surplus food producer consisted of the provinces farther to the East which were placed under Polish "administration" or annexed outright by the Soviets, viz. East Prussia, West Prussia, Eastern Pomerania, the Eastern part of Brandenburg and most of Silesia. In the remainder which constitutes the Soviet Zone, agricultural production just about suffices, when effectively run, to supply the necessary food for that area. Actually, the Soviet insistence upon a precipitate and (it is alleged deliberately) unsound land reform by which the more efficient large farms were divided up into very small parcels produced a very serious food shortage for many years which was in the beginning much aggravated by the Soviets feeding their occupation army from the produce of the Soviet Zone. Probably no single other factor contributed so much to the Soviet Zone population's discontent with the regime as this failure to provide adequate food. It is therefore not surprising that the regime has made

great efforts and considerable strides in remedying the situation. Today, food is reasonably adequate, but certainly neither abundant nor of exceptional quality. As a whole, the Soviet Zone economy can be described as a mixed agricultural-industrial economy, but with marked trends toward further industrialization, even at the expense of great hardships for the population. In this respect, as in so many other, the Soviet Zone does not differ from other satellites or the USSR itself. In a totalitarian society, every shortcoming in the economy is necessarily charged to the regime, since its central planning and directing of the economy places it in direct line of responsibility for any faults. This is well illustrated by the fact that the relatively small remnants of a private enterprise economy are continually being held responsible by the regime in the most extravagant fashion for its own failures and breakdowns. Under the impact of this planning which has sought to expand the producers' goods industries rapidly, the industrial system of the Soviet Zone of Germany is changing rapidly. Agriculture and the consumers goods industries have been the victims of this program.

As a result, the workers of the Soviet Zone have been driven to produce, produce, produce. The system of work norms and industrial speed-up that we find in the Soviet Zone reminds one of the methods of early industrialism; indeed, its organization and implementation through propaganda and terror exceeds what was done then. Workers have been called upon to work more even where the planning was defective, and materials and equipment were lacking. Food rationing has been maintained, and great wage differentials have enabled the rulers of the system to reward their more devoted party adherents. The tax system has been changed to penalize all but the high-income groups which consist of the top layer of political, economic and cultural functionaries, as well as the "activists" who are willing to work overtime, and to labor with fanatical zeal on their particular tasks. A system of this kind is bound to be rife with dissatisfaction which from time to time reaches heated indignation. As a result, the Soviet Zone has witnessed the one genuine mass uprising which has so far occurred in the course of the history of totalitarian dictatorship (June 17, 1953).

In the light of these and other related conditions it is clear that the Soviet Zone is an unstable and disunited society in which only the totalitarian rulers have a sense of mission and a conception of the tasks which they want to accomplish. Perhaps the intensity of their zeal makes up for the apathy, not to say hostility, of the rest of the population. At the present moment, due to somewhat improved economic conditions, there is a relaxation of the tensions which rend this particular society. Indicative of the relative calm of recent months (summer, fall and winter 1955/56) is the drop in the number of persons fleeing from the Soviet Zone into West Germany. For this stream

of refugees, recently around 15,000 a month, provides a fairly reliable indicator of the state of mind of people in the Soviet Zone, although conditions in West Germany, prosperous as it is at the moment, must also be borne in mind. Certainly, in no other society is there a comparable large-scale exodus of men, women and children, and more particularly of the able-bodied youth. To be sure, there is a certain percentage who return, disgruntled at the conditions they found in West Germany.<sup>2</sup> But the exodus continues month in, month out.

It is difficult to be explicit on the general outlook of the Soviet Zone population. On the whole, the Eastern part of Germany, whether Prussian, Saxon or other, tended to be less individualistic, more collectivistic in outlook and point of view. Berlin and the great cities of Saxony used to be among the main centers of radical movements, and more especially the Communist party. The one *bona fide* German government with Communist participation between the two world wars was set up in Saxony in 1923, and only the intervention of the Reich government disbanded it. Throughout the entire period of the Weimar Republic (1919–1932), Prussia had a Socialist-led government which though anti-Communist was decidedly collectivist in outlook and practice. It must therefore be recognized that the Soviet Zone part of Germany (in contrast to the lost agrarian provinces farther to the East) provides a more favorable basic climate for what the SED regime is trying to do than would be the case in the Federal Republic. A more moderate and democratic policy on the part of the Soviet Union might well have succeeded in establishing a real collectivist rival to the liberal economy of the Federal Republic. But the totalitarian methods adopted by the Soviets and the SED have aroused deep antagonism and may even have uprooted some of the earlier collectivist tendencies. For the disastrous debacle of the National Socialist regime has prejudiced most Germans against dictatorial forms of government. They may not be very keenly in favor of democracy, and not very skillful in running it, but they certainly are anti-dictatorial, and the experience under the whip of the Soviet-derived DDR has heightened their dislike. It is variously estimated that free elections if held now, would produce between 5 and 15 percent in favor of the SED and the regime; certainly, no competent authority has claimed that the regime commands anywhere near majority support.

2 Anyone concerned with the overall impact of Western propaganda ought to be seriously concerned over the fact that this percentage has been rising recently. A much greater effort than is being made at present to satisfy these refugees would seem to be necessary.

In spite of this deep dissatisfaction of the majority of the population with the regime, – a dissatisfaction which is intensified by the regime's willing acceptance of the loss of the Eastern German provinces, – the Soviet Zone regime must be considered relatively stable. This stability depends, in the first place, upon the presence of the Soviet military forces. But as the DDR develops its own armed forces, it may be in a position to substitute them as effective means of repression, though this is somewhat doubtful in view of the constant defections from these forces to the West. The relative stability also results from the same kind of accommodation of the subjects of such regimes which we find elsewhere. The very apathy which is engendered by the regime's repressive policies contributes to its stability. From this point of view, the uprising of June 17, 1953, was a distinct misfortune; not only did it ruin a substantial democratic underground, but it brought on a profound disillusionment among the population.

The longing for reunification has provided the regime with some of its most potent propaganda appeals. The paradox of the situation is that the regime derives assistance from the very fact that it is intensely disliked by the people. For this dislike heightens their desire for reunification which would presumably bring a more democratic kind of government, and hence the regime is in a position to build ever new nationalistic, – in its own terminology "patriotic", – appeals for a united Germany by presenting the West and more especially the Federal Republic as the opponents of such a move. Of course, many of the persons to whom this appeal is directed may be of the opinion that it is rather the Soviet Zone regime itself and the Soviet Union which stand in the way, but there are all kinds of signs to suggest that with a substantial part of the population the regime's propaganda does have its effect. In any case, the ardently hoped-for prospect of reunification gives the regime a certain provisional quality which contributes to its intrinsic weakness and a constant potential instability.

Generally speaking, populations long exposed to totalitarian rule are difficult to reach with propaganda. The constant and excessive use of propaganda by the regime under which they live makes them hard-boiled and skeptical, especially with regard to communications which are clearly and admittedly of a propaganda nature. The population of the Soviet Zone is no exception, but rather especially difficult from this standpoint, because they have by now been victims of large-scale propaganda from both left and right. For of course the Nazi experience has left its own legacy of disillusionment, if not disgust. There has been so much irresponsible writing on the subject of German national character, under the influence of war-time agitation and indignation over the Nazi crimes, that perhaps the student of any German problem ought to beware of a variety of prejudices which he may be harboring on this score.

Certainly, the idea of Germans being all alike is one of these prejudices. There are pronounced differences of a regional sort, and these differences must be taken into careful consideration. But one of these notions deserves perhaps some special mention. The much-discussed German characteristics of docility, industriousness and capacity to endure suffering (epitomized in the East Prussian philosopher Kant's doctrine of duty) are certainly more nearly characteristic of the Soviet Zone population than of other regions of Germany.<sup>3</sup>

One peculiar feature of the Soviet Zone to which there exists no parallel in the past is the existence of Berlin. Not only the old capital of Germany but clearly the center of the Soviet Zone, it is nonetheless not part of the DDR. To be sure, its Eastern, Soviet-occupied sector, containing about one and one half million of its four million population, has been made the capital of the country. But it continues in form a part of the quadripartite city. Anyhow, the other two-thirds are governed by a free and democratic government in which the Social Democrats, arch foes of the SED, play the decisive role. It is to this free island in a totalitarian sea that those who wish to escape usually flee. For it is easy to pass from the Soviet Zone proper into the Eastern sector, and in turn not too difficult to walk from the Eastern into the Western sectors (for the fiction of the undivided city still persists). And even those who do not intend to escape, may see and hear in West Berlin what the regime of the Soviet Zone would desperately like to keep away from them, namely uncontaminated news about what is going on in the world and in West Germany. It is no wonder that the Soviet Zone rulers have time and again tried to change the status of Berlin, and there can be little doubt that without the occupying forces of the Western Allies, the regime would probably use force in order to precipitate a "solution" which would eliminate this "window of freedom". As it is, Berlin stands as a constant source of irritation to the regime itself and as a reminder to the discontented population that the regime is merely a makeshift, and the day will come when the SED will be sent packing.

In conclusion, it must be repeated that the Soviet Zone is a totalitarian society but an unstable one. In it, a relatively thin layer of totalitarian cadres is super-imposed upon a fragmented and distorted older German society. But this society lacks the inner coherence to fight back against the usurpers, because it has been deprived of its former elite by the Nazi regime and the Russian conquerors and has been unable to develop a new one apart from

3 See for the most interesting discussion of German regional and group differentiations Eugen Diesel, *Germany and the Germans*, translated by William Douglas Robson-Scott, London 1931. Editors' note: This is the translation of: Eugen Diesel, *Die deutsche Wandlung. Das Bild eines Volkes*, Stuttgart 1929.

those who are actually running the DDR. There is no way of knowing how difficult it would be to assimilate the Soviet Zone society to West German society, if unification were achieved tomorrow. But many keen observers are of the opinion that most of the institutions built by the present regime would fall like the walls of Jericho before the trumpet calls of the freer and more German democracy that has been building up West of the Elbe river. Within three years, it has been claimed, there would be no more difference between the Soviet Zone and Western Germany than there was before the Nazis took over the government and unloosed the train of events which led to the establishment of a Soviet Communist regime under the label of German Democratic Republic, – neither German, nor democratic, nor a republic.

And yet, it would be a grave error to expect the Soviet Zone regime to disintegrate from within. Actually, all signs point toward a slow consolidation of its system of controls. Uprisings such as that of June 1953 may temporarily shake its structure; they are not likely to tumble it. Unless the “great” powers agree some day on a mode of reunification which would give the people a chance to express themselves in a free vote after a free campaign of electioneering, the Soviet Zone regime is almost certain to continue to extend its impact upon the Soviet Zone population and eventually to mold it into an effective partner of the Soviet bloc.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 Historical Setting [*Carl J. Friedrich/Henry Kissinger*]

The boundaries of the present East German Republic were determined by the victorious powers of World War II. They are in no sense the product of a natural historical evolution, and for this reason the areas now controlled by the East German government do not have a common history as a single state. But they all have been ethnically German territory since the Middle Ages; all were included in the loose structure of the Holy Roman Empire (until 1806) and the German Confederation created by the Congress of Vienna (1815) and destroyed by Bismarck in 1866; and they were members of the Prussian-dominated German Empire thereafter. The German Empire was federal in structure, with considerable powers being vested in the constituent states, called

4 No attempt has been made here to place the Soviet Zone into a more abstract framework of socio-political analysis, such as might be suggested by a systematic evaluation in, say, the terms of Max Weber. Not only are the data too fluid for this, but more specifically the terms of Max Weber's system, namely traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal, do not apply to the Soviet Zone society. Generally, totalitarian society does not fit this systematization, but presents a discreet model.

*Länder*, and in consequence much of its internal history took place in the individual states rather than on the national plane. The states included in the East German Republic are central Prussia, Mecklenburg, Saxony, and Thuringia. These states differed sharply in internal structure (1.3 and 1.4).

Mecklenburg was well-known as the most conservative part of Germany, an agrarian area dominated by large landed proprietors, who showed their power by preventing the creation of a representative assembly to replace the old feudal Diet. Saxony was, next to the Ruhr Valley and Berlin, the most industrial section of Germany, and in consequence one of the strongholds of socialism. Thuringia was a center of liberalism. Prussia had been the predominant German state under the empire, both because of its area, which comprised 60 percent of the German Empire and its population which constituted fully two thirds. Characteristically, the Prussian King was also the German Emperor. Prussia was then on the whole a stronghold of conservatism, although much of its population was disaffected and supported socialist and liberal parties. Today, the population of the Soviet Zone is about evenly divided between the Prussian and other states. It is therefore important to consider not only the Prussian, but the Saxon and Thuringian components. It has been said that "a Saxon dictator would be an impossibility in Germany, for his aspect and manner would prevent anyone from taking him seriously".<sup>5</sup> As a matter of fact, the Soviet Zone's actual dictator, Ulbricht, is a Saxon! But let us first consider Prussia.

The Prussian state was the creation of the Hohenzollern dynasty, which ruled from 1415 to 1918. It was built on the agriculturally inferior areas of central and eastern Germany, where only hard, disciplined labor could eke out a tolerable living from the soil. The famous qualities of the Prussian landed aristocracy (*Junker*): energy, efficiency, narrowness, rigidity, are to be explained by the economic milieu. The absence of generous natural resources prevented substantial urban development until well into the nineteenth century. Thus, the exclusive political and social power of the Junkers was never adequately restrained by a self-confident and prosperous bourgeoisie, as happened in England in the 18th century. The economic backwardness of Prussia was long a major problem; the absence of secure strategic frontiers was another. The North German plain lay open to invaders from every direction, it was the "cockpit of Europe" in the course of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48). To prevent the repetition of such horrors Prussia urgently needed to build up

5 Editors' note: Diesel, Germany, p. 128. German edition: „Ein sächsischer Diktator würde im Reiche wegen seiner Mundart nicht ernst genommen werden können.“ Diesel, Die deutsche Wandlung, p. 148.



a great military establishment, and several Hohenzollern rulers beginning with the Great Elector (1640–88) proved fully equal to the task. The Prussian Army was soon the largest in Europe proportionate to the population, and resources of the state. The monarchy emphasized its military character, with kings invariably wearing uniforms as regular dress. The main function of the Junker class was to provide suitable officer material for the king's army. The fiscal resources of the state were devoted primarily to the maintenance of the army. The administrative system was developed with a view to mobilizing the state resources for the army. The army was recognized as the mainstay of the state. In short, Prussia was a military monarchy, such estates assemblies as existed, remained local in character and limited in functions. The monarchy was supported by an officer corps, a class structure, a bureaucracy and a fiscal system, whose purpose was the maintenance of the army. Nowhere else in Europe did military considerations play such a decisive role in determining the physiognomy of a state.

The system here described reached its zenith in the reign of Frederick the Great (1740–86), but most of its ingredients remained influential until 1918 and even thereafter. Its greatest weakness lay in its dependence upon an effective ruler to keep the state machine galvanized from the top. With the atrophy of representative institutions there was no adequate check upon a weak or a bad monarch. The system performed brilliantly under Frederick; it ran into serious difficulties under his weak successors. Napoleon defeated the Prussian army at Jena in 1806 and imposed humiliating peace terms at Tilsit (1807). Prussia was shorn of more than half her territory, most of the rest was occupied by French troops, her economy was crippled by heavy fiscal exactions, and the size of her army was limited to preclude her from fighting a war of revenge. But the Prussian state showed its vitality by refusing to accept the status of a French satellite. A remarkable internal regeneration took place under a group of idealistic soldiers and statesmen. Scharnhorst (1755–1813) reformed the Army by improving its intellectual caliber and opening the officer corps to non-Junker talent; Stein (1757–1831) abolished serfdom, reformed the administration and introduced local self-government; while Humboldt (1767–1835) reformed the educational system and founded the University of Berlin. In the Wars of Liberation (1813–15) Prussia played a very creditable part, with victory over Napoleon being made possible by an alliance with Russia first initiated by General Yorck (1759–1830) in the Convention of Tauroggen (1812) – a name that has long become a symbol of Russo-German cooperation.

The overthrow of Napoleon (1815) did not lead to a German national state, to the grievous disappointment of many Germans who had been won for the national ideal under the impetus of the French Revolution. Germany

remained divided into 38 different states, loosely united by the thin bonds of the German Confederation. It was paralyzed by a natural (though long latent) antagonism between Prussia and Austria, both strong states in their own right yet both members of the German Confederation, which was quite incapable of subordinating one to the other. It was further paralyzed by the tenacious particularism of many of the other states. Most of these were, like Prussia and Austria, monarchies that feared the democratic and liberal aspects of the national program. They proved strong enough to defeat the liberal nationalism of 1848 which attempted to unify Germany through the Frankfurt Parliament – a failure that has stamped upon German Liberalism the mark of futile ineffectiveness.

The unification of Germany was achieved by the Prussian statesman Bismarck (1815–98) in 1866 to 1871 by methods that were sharply opposed to those of the liberals of 1848. He began by defeating the liberals of Prussia at home, when they attempted to transform the traditional Prussia into a liberal parliamentary monarchy in the so-called “constitutional conflict” of 1860–66. Bismarck successfully defended the traditional Prussia of absolutism, militarism, bureaucracy and Junker ascendancy which we have described above. He thus perpetuated a political and social structure that was rapidly becoming an anachronism and gave it a new lease on life by the prestige of his military victories. He defeated Denmark in 1864 by a skillful exploitation of the Schleswig-Holstein question, leading to eventual Prussian annexation; in 1866 he defeated Austria in a war that smashed the German Confederation and replaced it by a smaller North German Confederation completely dominated by Prussia. Finally, in 1870 he defeated France in a war that brought about the unification of North and South Germany under Prussian auspices and made the Prussianized Germany the paramount power in Europe. Bismarck, in a manner rare among conquerors, eschewed further wars during the twenty years that he remained in office (1870–90), restricting his policies to the consolidation of his earlier triumphs.

The internal structure of the German Empire (1871–1918) was characterized by a unique combination of Prussian conservative hegemony, federalist decentralization, and nominal concessions to the liberal democratic, industrial age. Prussia remained a rather autocratic state, governed by an authoritarian though efficient bureaucracy, impregnated with a militarist spirit, and headed by a strong Crown whose powers were curtailed only to a small extent by an elected Prussian *Landtag* (Parliament). The electoral system, the so-called “three-class voting system” assured the ascendancy of the upper classes, the landed aristocracy (Junker-Squires), the army officers and the high bureaucracy. The federal decentralization of the Empire made the Prussian franchise question a purely Prussian matter with which the national *Reichstag*

(Parliament) was not allowed to meddle, despite the fact that the conservative control of Prussia, based upon the three-class voting system, had decisive influence upon the rest of Germany because Prussia controlled the *Bundesrat*, second chamber, which represented the states. Thus, the essence of the German constitutional problem before 1918 was that the conservatives controlled Prussia, and Prussia by controlling the *Bundesrat* controlled Germany, and that the rule of an agrarian aristocracy became increasingly incompatible with the needs of an industrial and democratic Germany.

The internal evolution of Saxony and Thuringia was sufficiently different to warrant further comment. In both states, more liberal and democratic forces came to the fore in the course of the nineteenth century. Before that time, Thuringia had become divided into a number of petty principalities which while strongly patriarchal in politics, had fostered much artistic and intellectual development. Thuringia is one of the two most creative regions of Germany, as the names of Luther and Bach illustrate; the little courts had fostered a spirit which blossomed into the celebrated Weimar of Goethe and Schiller at the end of the eighteenth century. Jena, the Thuringian, and Leipzig, the Saxon university were among the most liberal and progressive in nineteenth century Germany and exerted a profound influence throughout the country.

This Saxon influence extended into Prussia which had annexed the Northern half of Saxony after the Napoleonic wars and incorporated it as the Prussian province of Saxony which developed into a major center of industrial activity along with the homeland to the South, maintaining some of its more liberal outlook. Saxony and Thuringia themselves got an early start in the direction of industrial development, due to the ore deposits in their mountain regions (*Thüringer Wald* and *Erzgebirge*: "ore mountains"!); they were destined to become industrial centers of the first magnitude. Here the German labor movement struck root early, and at times during the Empire the Social Democrats swept the elections. While the kings adopted a liberal and bourgeois outlook, the middle classes came to the fore and transformed Dresden and Leipzig into intellectual and cultural centers.

Bismarck had seen the need of at least nominal concessions to the industrial age in Germany. He had established a Reichstag based upon universal franchise but had carefully neglected to give it the powers possessed by parliamentary bodies in Western democracies. It did not have effective control over the Executive, except in legislation, and its fiscal powers were rather limited. It gradually strengthened its position, however, and the growing strength of the Socialists foreshadowed the coming parliamentary ascendancy when the First World War broke out. In the course of it, the *Reichstag's* control of the purse proved the mainstay of its aspirations. The revolution of 1918 which

swept away the monarchy established the parliament as the controlling organ of the Weimar Republic. In it the key parties that had developed under the Empire continued to operate and are still important on the German scene: The Center, Liberals, and Socialists.

The Center Party, an organization of mostly Catholic voters, is the forerunner of the present-day Christian Democratic Union. It developed out of Bismarck's misguided struggle with the Catholic Church (the *Kulturkampf*), but soon made its peace with the Bismarckian Reich, becoming a moderate party with a conservative and a progressive wing. The Liberals, the forerunners of the present-day Free Democratic Party, were rent by the conflict between their admiration for Bismarck as the creator of the national state, and their liberal principles. The Liberal left wing was increasingly hostile to the Government of Bismarck's successors, and at times even joined the Socialists in intransigent opposition. The present-day Socialists and Communists are both descended from the Socialists who had been in permanent opposition under the Empire. They became divided in 1917-18 during World War I and as a sequel to the Russian Revolution (1917). The Socialist wing favored a gradual achievement of socialism by democratic and parliamentary means, and in foreign policy opposed the imperialist program of the government. After the outbreak of the war in 1914, they supported the government for two years in what it believed to be a defensive war but returned to opposing it in 1917. The Communists, on the other hand, favored the achievement of socialism by revolutionary seizure of power, and expressed the utmost indifference on how Germany would fare in the war.

The defeat of Germany in World War I (1918) shook the Empire to its foundations. The armistice had been preceded by the flight of the Kaiser to Holland and by a naval mutiny that was transformed into a proletarian revolution. But the proletariat was not united. The right-wing Socialists under Friedrich Ebert (1871-1925) were opposed to the Communist aim of setting up a dictatorship on the Russian model, and they insisted upon the election of a democratic parliament to give Germany a new constitution. When the Communists, knowing that such an assembly would have an anti-revolutionary majority, rose in arms to prevent its election, they were smashed in bloody Berlin street fighting. The Assembly met at Weimar and was dominated by a coalition of Centrists, Liberals and Socialists; it created a Western-style democratic parliamentary constitution in the spring of 1919. Germany was henceforth a fully self-governing state with a constitution that had at long last superseded the autocratic structure of the Empire. At the same time, the Communist party, after joining the Communist (Moscow) International in 1921, became completely totalitarian in its internal party structure and the willing stooge of the Soviet Union and its policy.

The course of the Weimar Republic (1919–33) was tragic and turbulent, and disappointed the hopeful expectations of its founders. The causes of its collapse and supersession by the Nazi dictatorship are still subject to much controversy. This much seems clear however, that in the first place, the Weimar Republic confronted problems of extraordinary difficulty. The Versailles Treaty (July 1919) was condemned by all sections of German public opinion. In particular the demand for reparations exceeded Germany's capacity to pay. The reparations clauses were in part responsible for the German inflation of 1922–23 in which the German currency became totally worthless, with 1 billion marks being finally necessary to purchase a *single* dollar (November 1923). The inflation, by destroying all savings and life insurance policies, greatly weakened the middle class. Its psychological consequences were still more disastrous. A stable universe based upon calculable rational relationships was destroyed for many. A sense of bitterness towards a democratic republic, where such a disaster was allowed to happen, was to be one of the factors promoting the rise of Nazism.

It is, however, not justified to forget the middle twenties of the Weimar Republic, because of what happened afterwards. For about ten years (1920–1930) liberal and democratic elements dominated the political, as well as the social and cultural scene.<sup>6</sup> In Prussia, the old stronghold of the reactionary forces, a coalition of Social Democrats and smaller bourgeois parties ruled uninterruptedly until 1932 under the able and moderate leadership of Otto Braun, while in Saxony and Thuringia even more radical elements at times achieved ascendancy. The strength of the organized labor movement appeared very impressive, and even though no large-scale socialization measures were put through, Germany under its moderately socialistic constitution seemed destined to develop into a social democratic commonwealth. In foreign affairs, the conciliatory policy of Walter Rathenau was followed by the Franco-German cooperation worked out by Gustav Stresemann and Aristide Briand and hailed throughout the world as the "Locarno spirit". Culturally, Germany seemed once more to return to its older tradition of the "nation of thinkers and poets", seeking and finding lively contact with the West through the work of such men as Thomas Mann, in literature, Georg Grosz and Paul Klee in painting, Walter Gropius in architecture, and Lehmbruck, Kolbe and Sintenis in sculpture, Hindemith in music. But all this promising growth was nipped in the bud by the great economic depression, beginning with catastrophic

6 See Erich Eyck, *Geschichte der Weimarer Republik*, Vol. 1: *Vom Zusammenbruch des Kaisertums bis zur Wahl Hindenburgs*, Erlenbach-Zürich 1954.

failures in Austria and Germany in 1928 and soon spreading to the United States and Britain (1929). The mass unemployment which engulfed Germany fanned into flames the smoldering resentments which the Versailles Treaty had originally aroused. The rapid spread of Communism which inevitably followed led to a violent reaction among the middle classes and the peasantry.

Political movements added to the intrinsic economic difficulties of the depression. The Conservative Party (*Deutschnationale*) was the main vehicle of reactionary opposition prior to the rise of Nazism. It was composed of heterogeneous elements: Imperial romanticists, yearning for a restoration of the Kaiser and a return to the "good old days" before 1914; Junkers resenting their loss of a privileged position in the Prussian state; industrialists fearing the strength of socialist influence in the Republic; anti-Semites excoriating what they believed to be a "Republic of Jews"; intellectual elitists protesting against the "revolt of the masses"; agrarians fearing the loss of high agricultural tariffs; and nationalists and militarists resenting the Republican acceptance of the "shackles of Versailles". The Conservatives were especially infuriated by the democratic franchise giving Prussia a Socialist government, although it proved very moderate in its concrete policies. It irritated the upper classes without frightening them. The Weimar constitution had also given far-reaching rights to trade unions and had given the working class a small share in the running of factories through the so-called factory councils. These reforms did not greatly alter the existing social structure, but they appeared revolutionary to those who were devoted to the structure of German society of before 1914. More powerful than the appeal to traditionalism or class resentment was the strident patriotic nationalism of the reactionary opponents of Weimar. They attacked the Republicans for their foreign policy, which they claimed to be cowardly. The Weimar Constituent Assembly acting under the threat of an Allied occupation of Germany, had accepted the Treaty of Versailles; successive governments had loyally attempted to "fulfill" the terms of the treaty, both to honor Germany's pledged word and in order to prevent "sanctions" continuously threatened by the Allies. Their hope was to persuade the Allies to moderate their terms as Germany's loyal "attempt at fulfillment" proved that the original terms were, in fact, impracticable. Such a policy was probably preferable to the nationalist alternative of bravado and defiance, leading to further Allied occupation of German territory: but it was a policy based upon reason rather than emotion, and it provided a perfect target for facile patriotic indignation.

The composition and effectiveness of the Nationalist Conservative opposition to the Republic has been analyzed in some detail, for it is frequently cited by the present East German Government as a justification for its ruthless program of socialization and suppression of criticism. The strength

of the Nationalist opposition, added to the objective difficulties confronted by the Weimar Republic, were the chief reasons for its collapse. Both these causes were magnified by the economic crisis just mentioned that hit Germany in full force in 1928 and was to result in 6 million unemployed by 1932. The extent of the social suffering might well have shaken a more established government. The Nationalist opposition gave, of course, no constructive cooperation to the government. It was at first supplemented, and soon in part superseded, by the rise of the Nazi party under Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), that took over some of its themes and added to them a demagogic skill and a verbal adherence to anti-capitalism that had been lacking previously. The National Socialist (Nazi) party had been founded in Munich in 1919 and appealed primarily to the discontented of all classes. The avowed aim was to reconcile the socialist with the national ideal. Hitler played up to “the anti-capitalist yearnings” of the frustrated middle class and peasantry, while vigorously denouncing Liberals and Socialists as well as Communists as enemies of the German nation. He was remarkably successful in winning over the support both of many capitalists, by his promise of smashing Socialists, and of many opponents of capitalism, by vague reform proposals. His style of demagogic tirade and ferocious anti-Semitism was unique in Germany, and many sober people refused to take him seriously until he actually seized power. His abortive “Beer Hall Putsch” in 1923 had added to his comic opera standing and had terminated the first phase of the Nazi movement. The years 1923–29 were lean but a powerful revival took place as the depression threw millions of Germans into bitterness and despair.

A further factor contributing to the collapse of the Weimar Republic was the policy of the Communist Party. We have seen how its attempt to extend the revolution was crushed by Ebert in the winter of 1918–19. They henceforth looked upon the Socialists as their main enemies and rivals, and denounced the democratic republic as the “dictatorship of the bourgeoisie”. The Communists refused to be perturbed by the serious prospect of a collapse of the Republic and its replacement by a Right wing or Fascist dictatorship. Their slogan was “After Fascism – We”, and for this reason they almost welcomed the Fascist accession to power. They refused all cooperation in a common Republican front against fascism in the critical years 1930–33, and never ceased to denounce the Socialists as “social Fascists”, and the main enemy of the working class. Their prediction that they would seize power after the collapse of Fascist rule proved correct for the Eastern zone; but it did so only after the agonies of 12 years of Nazi rule, and only because of the active support of the Russian army of occupation.

The republican parliament (*Reichstag*) proved inept at steering Germany through the economic crisis. Its parties could not agree upon a common eco-

conomic program, with the result that a more authoritarian government was set up by the Centrist leader Heinrich Brüning (1885–1970<sup>7</sup>). He based his power upon the confidence of the President, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg (1847–1934), with the passive consent of the Reichstag, and claimed that the emergency powers granted to the President by the Weimar Constitution could be used for the purpose of ordinary legislation if the Reichstag, incapable of doing its job, was willing to assent afterwards. The Brüning Government proved ineffective in combatting the depression and succeeded in defeating Hitler's bid for the presidency (March 1932) only by engineering the reelection of Hindenburg. Brüning's hope of eventually returning to a democratic and parliamentary form of government proved illusory when his desire to crack down on Nationalist and Junker activities led to his fall (May 1932) through an intrigue of the entourage of the increasingly senile President Hindenburg. The intriguers, headed by General Kurt von Schleicher (1882–1934), were, like Brüning, impressed by the Nazi peril, but they thought that the Nationalists offered a viable alternative; some, like von Papen, also thought that the Nazis might be "sobered up" if they were given a share in the government. Schleicher, von Papen and the Conservative groups behind them completely misjudged the true nature of the Nazi movement. Their misjudgment was due in part, to the fact that the enemies of the Nazis – especially the Socialists and Communists – were *their* enemies also, and that they hoped to be able to use the Nazis for their own purposes against the common enemy. During a period of great confusion and two elections (June 1932 and January 1933) the Nazis gained and lost again, but finally assumed power as part of a coalition government. They were soon strong enough to rid themselves of their conservative allies. The Nazis, once securely in power, abolished all rival organizations (parties, free trade unions, youth groups, etc.) and established a totalitarian dictatorship that was – at least during the pre-war years – supported enthusiastically by their movement and passively accepted by the rest of the Germans. The weakness of organized opposition in the years 1933–44 is a tribute partly to the effectiveness of Himmler's secret police, but it also reveals the demoralization of the republican parties of the Weimar period.

The Nazi record is too well known to require detailed description.<sup>8</sup> The German people were impressed by the successful assault upon unemployment, forgetting that the economic slack was taken up almost completely by

7 Editors' note: Added year of death.

8 See Alan Bullock, *Hitler. A Study in Tyranny*, London 1954, for the best account of the regime to date.



an ambitious program of rearmament. They were impressed by the executive vigor and continuity of Hitler's leadership, which contrasted so sharply with democratic vacillation and frequent cabinet crises – forgetting that the curtailment of freedom and self-government was too great a price to pay for mere executive vigor. But what impressed the Germans most was the Nazi record in foreign policy. In this field they could build upon the solid achievements of the later Weimar years, when Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann (1878–1929) had brought about a rapprochement with the Western Powers (the so-called “Locarno Policy”) while at the same time maintaining cordial relations with the Soviet Union (the so-called “Rapallo Policy”, inaugurated by Stresemann's predecessor Rathenau in 1922). He also succeeded in making Germany a respected member of the League of Nations (since 1927). Brüning completed this program; reparations had been cancelled (1932), the Rhineland (occupied by the Allies since 1918) had been evacuated (1930), and Germany was on the verge of being given a qualified right of rearmament. In short, the Versailles treaty had been largely superseded by the time the Nazis took over. The Nazis soon eschewed the liberal and conciliatory spirit of Stresemann and Brüning in favor of a policy of bullying and blackmail, and they won very great successes at first. The Western democracies protested only feebly against the reintroduction of conscription (1935), which had been prohibited at Versailles. They acquiesced in the German remilitarization of the Rhineland in violation of the Treaty of Locarno, thereby giving the Germans a basis for offensive operations against France (1936). Hitler seized Austria in March 1938, bullied the Czechs into surrender of the Sudeten territories in the prolonged Munich crisis (September 1938), forced the cession of Memel from Lithuania, and finally seized the remainder of the truncated Czecho-Slovak state (March 1939). It is scarcely surprising that these diplomatic victories, which restored Germany to her pre-1914 position as the paramount power of Europe, should have given Hitler an arrogant confidence in his own judgment, and the German people the belief that they were being governed by an inspired superman.

The nemesis came in the course of World War II (1939–45), provoked by the German attack upon Poland, which in turn had been prepared by the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 23, 1939. The Nazis won great successes in Poland (1939), France and Scandinavia (1940) and the Balkans (1941), but they at the same time accumulated enemies that made their ultimate defeat inevitable. England stood out alone at first against the German sweep (1940). The attack upon Russia bogged down in the vastness of the Russian spaces despite tremendous initial victories (1941). The entry of the United States into the war (1941) completed the Grand Alliance of England, Russia and the United States.

The Nazi government retained control of the German masses until the end of the war through a combination of propaganda and terror, but it was harassed by the courageous opposition of small but well entrenched resistance groups in the army, civil service and churches. Of these only the army had the organization and power to overthrow the Nazi government, and such an attempt was made on July 20, 1944, under the leadership of the retired general Ludwig Beck. The conspiracy collapsed when the assassination of Hitler was prevented by an accident, and the conspirators and their families were brutally exterminated by Himmler's Gestapo. The Junkers, long the main reservoir of the officer corps, provided the largest number of conspirators, thereby to a considerable extent redeeming the baneful influence which their class had long exercised upon German developments. July 20, 1944, was the last historic manifestation of the traditional Prussian spirit – a spirit often characterized by narrowness, rigidity and ruthlessness, but also by exalted conceptions of courage, honor and devotion to duty.

The European War ended with Germany's complete defeat and unconditional surrender in May 1945. The country was in complete chaos, its governmental institutions had collapsed, its cities were demolished by aerial bombardment, and famine was soon to stalk the land. The American and Russian armies met not far from the Elbe river; zones of occupation had already been staked out. The present East German state is the creation of the Soviet military occupation. The original plan of the Grand Alliance, of governing Germany through the Inter-Allied Control Council set up by the Potsdam Conference (August 1945), soon broke down because of the incompatibility of occupation practices between Russia and the Western democracies. Since 1945 the Soviet Zone has been governed more or less directly from Moscow; the history of East Germany has therefore become part of the history of Soviet foreign policy.

### 1.3 Size and Geographical Distribution of Population [*Vytautas Kavolis*]

The area of the Soviet Zone contained, in June 1954, an estimated population of 16,582,000.

The fluctuations of this population since 1940 reflect the upheavals and transformations undergone by Germany as a whole. Thus, the fact that this population represents an increase of 9.4 percent over 1939 is mainly due to the fact that the former German territories East of the Oder-Neisse line were annexed by Poland and their inhabitants expelled. Thus by 1949–50, the population of the Soviet Zone reached 17.6 million, an all-time high. Since then, the unpopularity of the Communist controlled satellite regime has led to a

continuing exodus, of moderate size, so that the population has decreased by 4.2 percent since 1950. To these numbers the population of East Berlin (approximately 1.2 million in 1952) should be added. The density of settlement in 1954 was estimated to be 154.7 per square kilometer.

The best way to understand the nature and distribution of the population is by means of a number of statistical tables.

Until 1952, the Soviet Zone was administratively subdivided into five provinces (*Länder*) (Table I).

Table I: The Former Provinces of the Soviet Zone

Province	Area in square km	Number of inhabitants in 1,000 (in 1946)	Number of inhabitants in 1,000 (in 1950)	Inhabitants in 1950 as percentage of 1946	Density in 1946
Brandenburg	26,976	2,527	2,630	104.1	93.7
Mecklenburg	22,938	2,140	2,120	99.1	93.3
Saxony-Anhalt	24,669	4,161	4,200	100.9	168.7
Thuringia	15,598	2,927	2,930	100.1	187.7
Saxony	16,992	5,559	5,720	102.9	327.1

Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *Die Bevölkerungsbilanz der sowjetischen Besatzungszone 1939 bis 1954*, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, Bonn 1954, p. 32; Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission für die Sowjetische Besatzungszone/Statistisches Zentralamt (ed.), *Volks- und Berufszählung vom 29. Oktober 1946 in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands*, vol. 1: Amtliches Gemeindeverzeichnis, Berlin (East) 1948, p. 6.<sup>9</sup>

In 1952, the provinces were abolished, and the zone redivided into fourteen districts (*Bezirke*).

Before World War II the population of the present-day Soviet Zone showed the following proportion of agrarian to industrial population:

9 Editors' note: The population and occupation census of October 29, 1946 in the Soviet occupation zone in Germany was published in two volumes. Volume one consists of the official index of municipalities. Volume two is divided into five numbers, devoted to the states of Brandenburg (Number 1), Mecklenburg (Number 2), Saxony-Anhalt (Number 3), Thuringia (Number 4), Saxony (Number 5).

Table II: Population Living in Agrarian and Industrial Areas

Province	Percentage of Agrarian Areas	Population Living in Predominantly Industrial Areas
Brandenburg	45.1	54.9
Mecklenburg	89.9	10.1
Saxony-Anhalt	20.9	79.1
Thuringia	13.9	86.1
Saxony	2.9	97.1
Zonal average	23.7	76.2

Source: Statistische Praxis. Monatszeitschrift des Statistischen Zentralamts, 1 (1946) 2, Karteiblatt „Die regionale Struktur der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland“.<sup>10</sup>

Of the provinces, Mecklenburg is predominantly an agricultural area with deep-sea fishing an important additional source of income, while Saxony and Thuringia are the region of the greatest industrial concentration. These differences are reflected in the following table (Table III).

World War II caused an increase of the rural population from 30.8 percent of the total in 1939 to 34.8 percent in 1946, and also changed the distribution of the population between the various regions. In spite of the heavy influx of expellees and refugees, in 1946 the population of Brandenburg and Saxony, both of which had suffered particularly heavy destruction during the war, increased but slightly. At the same time, the population of Mecklenburg

10 Editors' note: "Statistische Praxis" was, from October 1946 until its discontinuation in March 1979 (last issue 2/1979), the monthly organ of the Statistical Office, alternatively of the Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik (National Central Administration for Statistics, SZS), for publishing methodological, conceptual and organizational problems in statistics. The discontinuation of "Statistische Praxis" was based on an order of the SED leadership in connection with the release of unwelcome monthly figures. Additionally, "Statistische Praxis" was an opportunity for scientists who worked at universities in the field of statistics to publish their findings. Regarding the informing activities of SZS, "Statistische Praxis" was of interest because each of its issues for the main economic branches (e.g. industry or commerce) periodically contained statistical monthly figures. These were the only statistical figures the SZS published during a given year outside of the Statistical Yearbook ("Statistisches Jahrbuch"), with exception of press reports. Cf. Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), Sonderreihe mit Beiträgen für das Gebiet der ehemaligen DDR, Heft 34: DDR-Statistik. Grundlagen, Methoden und Organisation der amtlichen Statistik der DDR 1949 bis 1990, Wiesbaden 1999, pp. 63 f.

Table III: Rural and Urban Population of the Soviet Zone

Inhabitants living in places of								
	less than 2,000 inhabitants		of 2,000 to 20,000 inhabitants		20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants		over 100,000 inhabitants	
	in 1,000	%	in 1,000	%	in 1,000	%	in 1,000	%
Brandenburg	1,034	40.9	924	36.6	444	17.6	114	4.5
Mecklenburg	1,077	50.3	615	28.7	302	14.1	115	5.4
Saxony-Anhalt	1,383	33.3	1,447	34.8	847	20.4	459	11.0
Thuringia	1,158	39.6	852	28.6	726	24.8	175	5.9
Saxony	1,288	23.2	1,962	35.3	813	14.6	1,449	26.1
Zonal total	5,940	34.5	5,800	33.7	3,132	18.2	2,312	13.4

Source: Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission für die Sowjetische Besatzungszone/Statistisches Zentralamt (ed.), *Volks- und Berufszählung vom 29. Oktober 1946*, vol. 1, pp. 6 f.

increased by 52.3 percent, and both Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, which escaped heavy destruction, by approximately 20 percent each. In the course of industrial reconstruction, however, and the building of new industrial centers (such as the uranium mining district around Aue in Saxony), the surplus population from Mecklenburg and elsewhere was channeled into Brandenburg and Saxony.

The population of the Soviet Zone, particularly in its southern part, tends to concentrate in urban settlements. In Saxony, a constellation of several large cities, and a number of middle-sized cities, together constitutes a series of interlocking metropolitan areas. Saxony-Anhalt is second among the provinces with respect to the degree of urbanization. Both Saxonies are also rich in small towns (2,000 to 20,000 inhabitants), while Thuringia is characterized by a large share of middle-sized cities (20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants). In 1946, the following cities of the Soviet Zone had more than 50,000 inhabitants. (Due to reconstruction, these cities may have larger populations now.)

Table IV: The Larger Cities of the Soviet Zone

	City	Province	Number of Inhabitants in 1946	Number of Inhabitants in 1955 <sup>1</sup>
1.	Leipzig	Saxony	607,655	620,000
2.	Dresden	Saxony	467,966	500,000
3.	Chemnitz (now Karl-Marx-Stadt)	Saxony	250,188	290,000
4.	Magdeburg	Saxony-Anhalt	236,326	270,000
5.	Halle (Saale)	Saxony-Anhalt	222,505	290,000
6.	Erfurt	Thuringia	174,633	190,000
7.	Zwickau	Saxony	122,862	130,000
8.	Rostock	Mecklenburg	114,869	140,000
9.	Potsdam	Brandenburg	113,568	110,000
10.	Gera	Thuringia	89,212	–
11.	Schwerin	Mecklenburg	88,164	–
12.	Dessau	Saxony-Anhalt	88,139	–
13.	Görlitz	Saxony	85,686	100,000
14.	Plauen	Saxony	84,778	–
15.	Jena	Thuringia	82,722	–
16.	Brandenburg (Havel)	Brandenburg	70,632	–
17.	Weimar	Thuringia	66,659	–
18.	Gotha	Thuringia	57,639	–
19.	Bernburg	Saxony-Anhalt	53,367	–
20.	Eisenach	Thuringia	51,834	–
21.	Altenburg	Thuringia	51,805	–
22.	Frankfurt (Oder)	Brandenburg	51,577	–
23.	Weißenfels	Saxony-Anhalt	50,995	–
24.	Stralsund	Mecklenburg	50,389	–

Sources: Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission für die Sowjetische Besatzungszone/Statistisches Zentralamt (ed.), *Volks- und Berufszählung vom 29. Oktober 1946*, Vol. 1, p. 14.

<sup>1</sup> Statistische Praxis. Monatszeitschrift für theoretische und angewandte Forschungs-, Verwaltungs- und Betriebsstatistik, 10 (1955) 12, Karteiblatt „DDR: Gemeinden mit mehr als 10.000 Einwohnern“. Editors' note: Different from what is stated in the chart, the numbers quoted from „Statistische Praxis“ reflect the situation in January 1953.

Among internal population movements, three distinct trends can be distinguished. First, migration from the countryside to the city, occasioned by the attraction of urban life and employment for former city-dwellers who were evacuated to the countryside during the war, for dispossessed landholders and for a large proportion of the refugees. Lack of housing in urban areas resulted in increased density of settlement around the urban fringe. Secondly, due to the arbitrary imposition of the Oder-Neisse line as the eastern boundary of the Soviet Zone, and except for a few industrial concentrations such as Frankfurt and Görlitz, industrial activity declined drastically along the boundary line (industrial activity may have been improving recently, however, as a result of closer economic ties with Poland). As a consequence, there occurred substantial population movements from a zone 70 to 80 km. in depth along the Oder-Neisse line to the central areas of the DDR. Thirdly, the efforts of the government to close the western boundary of the Soviet Zone in 1952 caused a certain amount of migration towards the interior of the Soviet Zone on the one hand and into the Federal Republic on the other.

The main areas of origin for internal migrations can thus be said to have been Mecklenburg, the areas close to the eastern and western frontiers, and the countryside in general. The main areas of destination have been the cities (particularly the industrial concentrations of Saxony, Berlin and the developing industries in Brandenburg), and the more central as well as the southern parts of the zone. Thus, the very areas already having the greatest density of population and still recuperating from particularly extensive war-time destruction (Saxony, Berlin) had to absorb the heaviest influx.

According to origin, the Soviet Zone contained in October 1946 the following numbers of non-native inhabitants (see Table V).

In 1946, the population of the Soviet Zone presented the following structural characteristics and trends:

- (1) A very low sex ratio of 74.3. In the age category 20 to 40, this ratio was even lower – 48.3 (i.e. 207.2 females to 100 males). Consequently, a sharply decreased percentage of males in the age-group 20 to 50. Since 1939, when the percentage was close to 45, it had decreased by the end of the war to 34 percent.
- (2) A lower birth rate and a higher death rate than in the western zones of occupation, resulting in a natural population decline. From the start the sex ratio and the age pyramid were even more unfavorable than in the western zone.
- (3) Population changes determined primarily by migrations rather than by natural causes.
- (4) A higher percentage of expellees and refugees (21 percent in 1946) than in the western zones of occupation (see section on expellees and refugees).

Table V: Inhabitants of the Soviet Zone in 1946 who in 1939 had been living outside the Zone

Area of Residence in 1939	Number of Inhabitants from the Area	Percent of Non-natives
Soviet Zone	13,097,205	--
Western Zones	267,699	6.3
Berlin	306,823	7.3
East Prussia	490,710	11.6
East Pomerania	504,471	12.0
East Brandenburg	229,611	5.4
Silesia-Saxony	1,048,678	24.9
Czechoslovakia	840,843	19.9
Poland	245,817	5.8
Danzig	72,121	1.7
Romania	57,070	1.4
Baltic States (including Memel)	46,246	1.1
Soviet Union	11,163	0.3
Other States	53,981	1.3
Not Known	41,296	1.0
Non-natives	4,216,524	100.0
Total	17,313,734	

Source: Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik (ed.), *Statistische Praxis. Monatszeitschrift für theoretische und angewandte Forschungs-, Verwaltungs- und Betriebsstatistik*, 3 (1948) 7, Beilage „Endgültige Ergebnisse der Volks- und Berufszählung vom 29. Oktober 1946, 3. Folge“. Editors' note: Cf. also Peter-Heinz Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, *Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland*, ed. by Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1955, p. 35.

Since 1946, the return of an estimated 550,000 prisoners of war and the influx of a further 800,000 expellees resulted in ameliorative changes in the sex ratio, reaching 77.9 by 1950, and in the age structure. However, although the middle levels of the age pyramid were filling up, the proportion of the aged (above 65) was also increasing. The birth rate has been on the upgrade, while the mortality rate has declined. After 1950 a certain amount of natural population growth can be assumed (the estimate for 1951 is 2.8 per 1,000).

The decline, since 1949–50, of the population of the Soviet Zone has been caused, as was said, by flight to the Federal Republic. While refugees from



the Soviet Zone prior to 1949 were partly political opponents of the regime, they nevertheless were, as a whole, mostly old, disabled, or unemployable. Since then, due to the increased pace of sovietization, the refugee stream has increased in volume and changed its character, becoming nearly representative of a cross-section of the population. However, since the intensification of pressure to join the Garrisoned People's Police (KVP), the number of young people fleeing the Soviet Zone has far exceeded their proportion of the population. Between January 1953 and December 1954, almost one-half of the 457,000 refugees was under 25 years of age. Because of this flight of youth, the age and sex structure once more developed unfavorably: By 1954, the sex ratio was estimated at 76.6. Among the refugees, certain professions, such as teachers, doctors and skilled workers, have been overrepresented in comparison to the total population.

The stream of emigration from the Soviet Zone into the Federal Republic from 1946 to 1954 has been estimated to have involved from 1,850,000 to 1,950,000 people. The average rate of entrance from the Soviet Zone into West Germany during the first half of 1955 was approximately 15,000 a month. The total number for the period 1945-1955 according to the best estimates approximates 2,500,000. It is estimated that at least 700,000 of these had originally been expellees from beyond the Oder-Neisse line who had been resettled in the Soviet Zone. Thus, on the basis of the population of the Soviet Zone in 1946, at least 11.3 percent of the population migrated into West Germany.

There has occurred also a movement from West Germany into the Soviet Zone, but it has been much smaller than the movement out of the Soviet Zone, the ratio, since 1950, being around 1:8. Moreover, many of the immigrants into the Soviet Zone have been former inhabitants of the Soviet Zone who were evacuated to the West during the war, or who fled after the war (Table VI).

The number of refugees and expellees from beyond the Oder-Neisse line, which in 1949 amounted to 4.2 million was estimated in 1953 to have declined to 3.8 million, due primarily to migration to West Germany. The population displacement in the Soviet Zone is summed up in Table VII.

Table VI: Population Movements between West Germany and the Soviet Zone

Period	Source	Number of Mi- grants from Soviet Zone into West Germany	Number of Mi- grants from West Germany into the Soviet Zone	Ratio
1950	a	249,243	32,206	7.7:1
1951	b	196,325	23,513	8.3:1
1952	c	112,585	14,461	7.8:1
1953	c	348,157	...	...
Oct. 1953– Sept. 30, 1954	d	...	40,020	...
Jan.–Sept., 1954	e	161,000	23,000	7:1
Jan. 1950– Sept. 30, 1954	e	924,849	105,088	8.8:1
1950 end of 1954	f	1,200,000	165,000	7.3:1
1950–Sept. 1955	g	1,350,000	165,000	8.2:1

Sources: (a) Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* 1952, Stuttgart/Köln 1953, p. 48; (b) Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* 1953, Stuttgart/Köln 1954, p. 70; (c) Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* 1954, Stuttgart/Köln 1955, pp. 68 f., 73; (d) Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (ed.), *News from Germany*, 8 (1954) 12 (December 1954), p. 3; (e) KgU-Archiv, No. 46 (8 February 1955), p. 13; (f) *Ost-Probleme*, 7 (1955) 38 (23 September 1955), pp. 1457–1465; (g) Press and Information Office of the German Federal Government (ed.), *The Bulletin. A weekly survey of German Affairs*, 3 (1955) 39 (29 September 1955). Note: All statistics are West German, except those given under (d), which are East German official statistics. Editors' note: Source (e) could not be reviewed.

Table VII: The Influx of Population into the Soviet Zone in terms of the Percentage of Population of 1954

A. Immigrants: Expellees from beyond the Oder-Neisse line	22.9%
Remnants of the 267,699 former West Germans and 306,823 former Berliners who in 1946 were living in the Soviet Zone	0-3.4%
B. Returnees: Returned prisoners of war (some of whom may have since fled to the Federal Republic)	0-3.3%
C. Immigrants or returnees: Immigration from West Germany since 1949	1.1%
Total (of immigrants and returnees in terms of the percentage of the population of 1954)	24-30.7%

Editors' note: In the original manuscript, the reference for this chart is missing. Despite extensive research no suitable source could be found. The numbers are probably personal calculations of the chapter's author.

## Summary and Conclusions

The future population trends in the Soviet Zone depend on:

- (1) The natural rate of increase, which is not known (one estimate for 1951 is 2.8 per 1,000).
- (2) The balance of westward vs. eastward migration to and from the Federal Republic, which in turn depends on:
  - (a) pressures to join the new East German army and other para-military formations which seem to have been a basic reason for the flight of numerous youths from the Soviet Zone, (b) other unpopular and repressive measures of sovietization, such as the 1955 campaign to replace religious confirmation with the ceremony of The Dedication of Youth (*Jugendweihe*) (1.10), (c) the success of the government of the Soviet Zone in closing its frontiers, and (d) the success of the regime's propaganda promising better conditions, both in the Soviet Zone generally and in West Germany among the refugees from the Soviet Zone, some of whom still live in refugee camps. Judging from the decreasing ratio of Soviet Zone refugees to immigrants, the population decline of the zone will continue at a decreasing rate. This tendency is encouraged by (e) the unwillingness of the Federal Republic to accept refugees without documentation. The Federal Republic has been motivated by possible economic difficulties in absorbing a larger

influx of refugees and by the consideration that the emigration from the Soviet Zone may create a vacuum in an area of Germany where resistance against Slavic ethnic invasion may become difficult.

It has been suggested that the regime may be trying to utilize this process of emigration as a means of pushing out the unproductive elements. Up to the present, this has not been proved true to a significant extent. On the contrary, it has been estimated that, mainly as a consequence of migrations since 1946, the manpower potential of the Soviet Zone by the end of 1954 amounted to only 93 percent of what it had been in 1939 while the Federal Republic had 123 percent of its 1939 manpower potential.

While in numbers the zonal population will probably be decreasing at a much slower rate than in the period 1950–54, the sex ratio and the age structure may still be unfavorably affected by the large percentage of males in the military age among the zonal refugees. Continued aging of the population is expected, balanced to some extent by increased reproduction rates which will also have a normalizing effect on the sex ratio at the younger levels. As of 1952, the age group 10–20 was underrepresented in comparison to that of 20–40, although it had a normal sex ratio.

#### 1.4 Ethnic Groups and Languages [*Vytautas Kavolis*]

The population of the Soviet Zone is the result of the gradual fusion, since the eighth century, of West and North German migrants with Western Slavs who had invaded Central Germany around the fifth century A. D. As a consequence, characteristic regional types have been formed by the fusion of particular strains of German migrants (mainly Franks in Thuringia, Lower Saxons in Mecklenburg and Brandenburg) with different Slavic populations, resulting in certain differences in the ethnic structure. Thus, among the Mecklenburgers, the blonde, long-headed, tall Nordic and the globular-headed, broad-cheek-boned Neo-Danubian types predominate, with admixtures of the brunette, round-headed Alpines. The proportion of the Alpines increases toward the South (Thuringia and Saxony). The degree of Slavic admixture varies, but is greatest in the peasant stratum (e. g. Mecklenburg) and in the east. With it, the blonde, stocky, coarse-boned East Baltic strain is partially associated. In Brandenburg, the seventeenth century influx of French Protestants (as well as Flemings) contributed a distinctive, small boned, brown-eyed Mediterranean strain. The degree of racial variety has been increased by post-medieval immigration from Western Germany and, since 1945, by the influx of refugees

from the East, who in racial structure combined the East Baltic and Neo-Danubian characteristics.

The only survival of the Slavic population in East Germany are the Sorbs (their own name is *Serbja*, *Serbjo*, *Serbovja*). They live in a zone extending for about 60 miles along the upper and middle Spree in Brandenburg (home of the Lower Sorb dialect) and around Bautzen in Saxony (upper Sorb dialect). Although the Sorbs are none too distinct, anthropologically, from the surrounding Germans, they preserve their own language and a rich Slavic folklore, in the form of songs, tales and proverbs. Folk dress and folk music have degenerated, however, and their general culture is German. In 1939, the Sorbs, who in 1858 still numbered 159,684, had declined to 60,000. (A German estimate; an admittedly biased Polish source claims that their number was 111,271 in 1936.)

The Sorb population is largely Protestant, with 13 percent Catholics. By occupation they are farmers, fishermen and craftsmen, particularly carpenters, masons, and weavers. The names of the Sorbs are frequently Germanized. On the other hand, some East and Central Germans have names of a Slavic origin. Hence, the name does not necessarily indicate origin.

In 1933, the main Sorb settlements were in the following counties and cities.

County or City	Approximate Number of Sorbs
County of Cottbus	21,187
County of Bautzen	18,690
County of Hoyerswerda	12,714
County of Rothenburg	7,686
County of Kamenz	6,170
City of Bautzen	1,792
County of Löbau	1,542
County of Calau	559
County of Spremberg	521

Source: Ernst Tschernik, *Die Entwicklung der sorbischen Bevölkerung von 1832 bis 1945*, Berlin (East) 1954, p. 25.

In order to gain the support of this segment of the population, the Soviet Military Administration and later the SED regime have given a considerable degree of cultural autonomy to the Sorbs, and have sought to strengthen, both culturally and socially, this Slavic isle in Central Germany. This campaign resulted in some “conversions” to the Sorb nationality particularly in the period of food shortages immediately after the war. For the Sorbs (as well as for

people of Sorb origin who had become absorbed into German civilization to the extent of forgetting their own language), grammars, and dictionaries of both the Upper and Lower Sorbic languages were published (particularly by the Domovina publishing house in Bautzen – the most important cultural center of the Sorbs). This campaign was intensified in the 1950s. A few Sorb writers (Jurij Brězan, Mitsche Noack) have been granted “National Prizes” by the East German government. In addition to other schools, Sorb high schools have been established in Bautzen and Cottbus. In Sorb-inhabited areas, between one-third and one-half of the public officials must be of Sorb origin; public announcements are published and place names shown in both languages. In the primary schools of the bilingual areas, Sorb has been taught since 1952 as the primary language. Even German children have been taught the language; and various programs and courses aimed at Germans in general have sought to familiarize them with Sorb culture, particularly folk art. (Sorb cultural attainments are not insignificant.) In 1952, a plan was conceived by the SED to evacuate approximately 200,000 Germans from the mixed area and to create an autonomous state for the Sorbs. The project was badly received by both Germans and Sorbs. Thus, Soviet policy towards the Sorbs has not been fully successful. Although initially more favorable to the regime than the main body of the Germans, the majority of the Sorbs are said to reject the regime today, since their German loyalties are deeper than their sense of Slavic identity.

The German population of the Soviet Zone varies to a certain extent culturally and linguistically. Because of their general poverty and depressed conditions of life, the Mecklenburgers do not enjoy too highly developed a folk culture. Large landed estates were worked by a dependent, subservient, and conservative peasantry; unthinking obedience used to be considered characteristic of the Mecklenburg Germans. Their folk art is of a poor and somewhat crude character. The peasantry of Brandenburg is stubborn and clings obstinately to its historical status, although they may disguise this attitude by a certain pretense of subservience; they enjoy a higher standard of living than the Mecklenburgers. The folk art of the Brandenburg peasants is developed to a higher level. Thuringia is inhabited largely by small peasants and artisans. It is a state of home industries (wood carving) and legend. Its folk art is colorful and varied, it is one of the regions of greatest cultural creativity, as witnessed by the names of Luther and Bach, and symbolized by the city of Weimar, but it is also a region of rigid Protestant and Catholic orthodoxy, the latter concentrated in the county of Worbis, previously Eichsfeld. Many of the small Thuringian states, however, were historically centers of liberalism. Saxony, an industrial and densely populated area, is characterized by secularization, liberalism and political radicalism (left-wing Social Democ-

racy), rationalism and a refinement of manners. As Goethe once remarked, "Leipzig is a small Paris and refines its people". Leipzig was until recently the center of book-publishing in Germany. The Saxon peasant is alert, talkative, courteous and cordial to strangers. In the more remote rural areas alone do old-fashioned ways survive. These traditional regional characteristics may have changed considerably in the course of the last two decades.

The majority of the east, central German population, included in the Soviet Zone, speak either one of the several varieties of the East Middle German dialect (Thuringia, Upper Saxon or Lusatian), or the Mecklenburgian - West Pomeranian and Markish varieties of the Lower Saxon branch of Low German. The boundary between the Mecklenburgian and Markish dialects, is the line between Pritzwalk, Neustrelitz and Stettin. Very generally, the line separating the Low and Middle High German dialects can be drawn from Küstrin in the east to just north of Berlin and Dessau, and south of Magdeburg in the center. Within this zone, the idiom spoken in Berlin constitutes a pronounced type of its own. The several varieties of the East Middle High German are not too different, and the Thuringian and Upper Saxon, in particular, are so close as to constitute almost a single dialect. The musical qualities of the lilting and rhythmical Saxon dialect have given rise to the designation "the singing Saxon". The Silesian dialect of the refugees is a somewhat more distinct variant of the same group. In a narrow zone along the south-western Thuringia edge of the zone, the East Franconian variety of High German is spoken (in the Vogtland and the western Erzgebirge). However, this dialect is being gradually displaced by the influences emanating from the Upper Saxon of Leipzig and Dresden, except among the peasants.

The distribution of dialect has of course been modified by the influx of expellees. However, the local distribution of the expellees was such that dialects typical of the same group were brought together: East Low German (but also the High East Prussian, which is a variety of the East Middle High German) to Mecklenburg, the Markish to Brandenburg, the Silesian to Saxony. It is probable, however, that in so far as the dialect structure is preserved at all, the Mecklenburgian, the Markish and the Thuringian-Upper Saxon will come to dominate, since expellees have not been allowed to settle as compact groups and their children tend to adopt the local idiom, unless they learn literary German. There are indications that as a result of post-war displacement, the role of the dialect is becoming less important, particularly among the young. The standardized language of the omnipresent propaganda certainly is a strong influence toward the formation of an east standard German distinct in several important respects from what is considered standard German in West Germany. The distinction lies, in this case, not in pronunciation, but in the categories of meaning and the usage of certain words and their sequences.

The administrative and propaganda uses of the language by the SED ("the party jargon" used by everyone in public life) has brought about an extensive development in vocabulary and structure. The following changes have occurred: (1) a change in the meaning of words ("peace", "progression", "democracy", "socialism"), (2) the creation of new words and expressions (*Sollerfüllung, Pionierfreundschaft, Brigadier*), (3) the borrowing of terms, particularly from Russian (*Kombinat, der Sowjet, der Stachanowarbeiter*), (4) the creation of a mass of generally derogatory "-isms", (*Sozialdemokratismus, Objektivismus, Schematismus*), (5) the creation of a large number of official abbreviations of names or organizations (VEB, HO, VDGB, FDGB), (6) the creation of a bombastic artificial phraseology which is monotonously intoned at all occasions (e. g. *Verdiente Wissenschaftler sind angetreten zum Sturm auf die Feste Wissenschaft durch unverbrüchliche Freundschaft mit der glorreichen Sowjetunion, dem festen und unüberwindlichen Bollwerk des Weltfriedens*). Certain ordinary words have been appropriated and are repeated as shibboleths (*schöpferisch* "creative", *systematisch, konkret, qualifiziert, entscheidend* "decisive" etc.). Exaggeration is rampant, superlatives omnipresent. The subjunctive mood, on the other hand, is avoided; speech is to be direct and decisive. This lifeless and compulsively rigid language is being employed in every official promulgation and must therefore influence the language and thought habits of the population at least to some extent. One result is a tendency towards increasing artificiality, monotony and stereotyping of linguistic expression, as well as mechanical reproduction of certain thought patterns congenial to the system.

Because of the regime's educational policies, the knowledge of Slavic languages, particularly Russian, is more common, while that of English and of other Western European languages is decreasing. Some knowledge of English is likely to be found only among the middle class and educated members of the older generation and particularly among individuals who attended the *Oberschule* before 1945.

### 1.5 Refugees and Expellees [*Vytautas Kavolis*]

Two groups stand out among the non-native inhabitants of the Soviet Zone, i.e., those who in 1939 lived outside the present confines of the Soviet Zone: the refugees and expellees. The refugees entered the Soviet Zone in the last months of World War II, trying to make their escape from the approaching Soviet Army; the expellees arrived after the armistice, in the course of mass expulsions prior or subsequent to the Potsdam conference.



The two groups differ in that refugees consisted to a larger extent of people of the upper and middle classes, professional men, anti-Communists, or otherwise politically compromised persons, while expellees were principally farmers or artisans, as in the case of the Sudeten Germans. Among them were Communists and Communist sympathizers. Moreover, refugees more frequently had been able to save some of their personal belongings, or even tools of trade, and found the conditions of resettlement easier than the expellees, particularly those from areas under Polish administration. There is no way of gauging the relative sizes of the two groups, except to say that the expellees are much more numerous.

The total number of refugees and expellees (hereafter the term "refugees" will be used to denote the whole group) in 1946 was 3,598,400. Because of the great variety in their origin, the refugee population showed a considerable cultural and social heterogeneity. Farmers from East Prussia, East Pomerania and East Brandenburg, artisans, industrial workers and farmers from Czechoslovakia and Silesia; Protestants from East Pomerania, East Brandenburg, East Prussia and Lower Silesia and Catholics from Upper Silesia and Czechoslovakia: These differences, together with other ethnic and regional traditions, survived in spite of the common experience of the breakdown of the traditional system and expulsion, to form the basis of continued *landsmannschaftliche* identifications. (The term *landsmannschaftlich* refers to cultural patterns of a particular region to which a population owes loyalty, the term is used, particularly in West Germany, for referring to the organizational activities of expellees from beyond the Oder-Neisse line).

Because little precise statistical data on the refugees has been released since the 1946 census, the subsequent movements of the refugee population can only be estimated. When the influx of expellees after 1946, principally in the years 1947 to 1949, and some of the conditions among the refugees, such as the lower reproduction rates due to a larger percentage of unmarried and the misery of living conditions, are taken into account, and balanced against the flight of refugees into West Germany, estimated at 455,000 for the period 1947 to 1951 alone, one arrives at an estimated zonal refugee population for 1951 of 3,853,000. This estimate was made by Professor Seraphim and the West German *Statistisches Bundesamt* – it is at variance with the official Soviet statistics indicating the presence of 4,442,000 refugees in the Soviet Zone in 1950 (Table I).

Table I: Estimates of the Refugee Population in the Soviet Zone

Year	Seraphim's Estimate	Official Soviet Zone Reports	Deutschland-Jahrbuch
1946	3,598,000	3,598,000	
1947	3,726,000		
1948	3,823,000	4,330,000 4,500,000	
1949	3,853,000		
Jan. 1949		4,300,000	4,200,000
Mar. 1949		4,442,000 4,312,000	
Oct. 1949			
1950	3,840,000	4,442,000	4,100,000
1951	3,853,000		3,950,000
1952			3,850,000
1953			3,800,000

Sources: Peter-Heinz Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der Sowjetzone*, Berlin (West) 1954, pp. 45, 65; Klaus Mehnert/Heinrich Schulte (eds.), *Deutschland-Jahrbuch 1953*, Essen 1953, p. 379.

Professor Seraphim's estimate appears to be closer to the truth. It may be noted that at the start the percentage of refugees and expellees among the escapees into West Germany, estimated at 35 percent, surpassed their proportion of the general population (approx. 25 percent), it fell below this proportion however, to 15.9 percent 1952, – a decline which may be indicative of a modicum of stability attained by refugees within the Soviet Zone framework.

In terms of age and sex characteristics, the refugee group is in some respects even more abnormal than the rest of the population of the Soviet Zone. The sex ratio at 70.4, i.e., 142 women per 100 men, is even lower than among the natives at 75.2. So is the sex ratio in the age category 20 to 25: among the natives, the proportion of men to women is approximately 1:3, among the refugees 1:4. This disastrous decline in the number of men of the middle age groups, more extreme among the refugees than in the general population, suggests highly instable conditions for some time to come.

This trend was reinforced by the tendency among the refugee men to flee to the Federal Republic in greater numbers than women. Altogether, the sex ratio among the refugees is not conducive to natural reproduction. However, in the younger age groups there are no differences which are noticeable between

Table II: Comparative Age Distribution of Native and Refugee Populations, 1946

Age	Percent			
	Among Refugees		Among Natives	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Up to 14	32.5	22.2	25.4	19.8
14 to 20	11.3	9.1	9.6	8.1
20 to 50	31.2	44.0	30.5	37.9
50 to 65	16.0	16.5	19.7	18.5
Over 65	8.5	8.2	14.8	15.9
Total	99.5	100.00	100.0	100.2

Source: Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der Sowjetzone*, p. 57.

refugees and the general population of the Soviet Zone. Since the proportion of youth, particularly up to 14 years of age, was higher among the refugees, they supplied a disproportionately large pool of young people who by 1950 were entering their reproductive life span. In view of the higher fertility rates of the populations to which the refugees belong, this large pool of prospective parents represents an important additional source of potential manpower supply for the Soviet Zone.

The original pattern of settlement of the refugee population in the Soviet Zone was uneven (Table III).

The northern part of the Soviet Zone, and the non-urban areas were, relatively, much more densely populated. Since these were the areas that offered the least opportunities for permanent settlement, a removal of surplus refugees into the potentially expansive industrial areas took place after 1946 (1.3). As a result, the percentage of refugees in the cities of the Soviet Zone uniformly increased since 1946, and in direct ratio to the growth of the industrial centers.

These movements may also have changed the pattern of regional distribution of the refugee population by areas of origin. In 1946, almost 70 percent of the East Pomeranian refugees had been living in Mecklenburg, 65 percent of the former inhabitants of East Brandenburg were living in the province of Brandenburg. These groups had simply, and in almost compact mass, settled in the areas most closely adjoining the provinces from which they had been expelled. Similarly, almost 40 percent of the Silesians had concentrated in Saxony and 26 percent in Saxony-Anhalt, 38 percent of the Sudeten Germans were living in Saxony-Anhalt and 24 percent in Thuringia, and 50 percent of

Table III: Distribution of the Refugee Population by Provinces, 1946 and 1949

Province	1946		1949		Percentage Increase
	Number of Refugees	Percent of Population	Number of Refugees	Percent of Population	
Brandenburg	540,700	21.4	723,157	27.4	128.0
Mecklenburg	903,200	42.2	987,119	46.5	110.2
Saxony-Anhalt	899,600	21.6	1,062,285	24.8	114.8
Thuringia	571,000	19.5	681,014	23.0	112.8
Saxony	683,900	12.3	988,743	17.1	139.0
Soviet Zone	3,598,400	20.8	4,442,318	25.0	120.2

Sources: Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der Sowjetzone*, p. 45; Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *Die Bevölkerungsbilanz der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, p. 47. Editors' note: The percentage for Brandenburg for the year 1946 was corrected according to the source (Seraphim) and the increase (last column) recalculated.

the former Danzigers had resettled in Mecklenburg. As a result, in certain counties the compactly settled refugee groups acquired a preponderant influence. In spite of subsequent internal migrations and the desire of the regime to integrate the refugees from beyond the Oder-Neisse line into the general population of the Soviet Zone, the general outline of this settlement pattern must still be evident. No definite information is available, however. The influx of almost four million non-natives could not help having fundamental effects upon the population structure and the political and social life of the Soviet Zone. Without this migration, the population of the Soviet Zone would have declined so far below its 1939 level that industrial expansion would have been scarcely possible for lack of manpower. As it is, the refugee influx resulted in population increases and, in spite of its unfavorable structure, it helped to create the manpower reservoir soon to be urgently required. It may be noted that manpower as of 1946 was so little needed that only 41 percent of the refugees in Brandenburg and 30 percent in Saxony-Anhalt could find employment. When the manpower needs became more urgent, and particularly the need for mobile labor for new industrial centers developed, the refugee youth became an important industrial resource.

In addition to their manpower, refugees contributed their resource of special skills to the economic life of the Soviet Zone. Agricultural skill was possessed by a larger percentage of the refugees than of the native population; besides the census of 1946 showed a large percentage of refugees working in

Table IV: The Percentage of the Natives and the Expellees in Various Occupational Groupings in 1946

Occupational Category	Expellees		Natives	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishery	621,091	41.2	1,744,444	26.3
Industry and the crafts	432,435	28.7	2,430,265	36.6
Technical and engineering personnel	18,442	1.2	130,914	2.0
Service professions (commercial, communications, domestic and sanitary)	232,562	15.4	1,340,294	20.2
Administration and public safety	81,234	5.4	444,462	6.7
Educational, cultural and religious personnel	39,266	2.6	139,165	2.1
Others (mainly unstable occupations)	81,952	5.4	503,270	6.1
Total	1,506,981	99.9	6,632,593	100.0

Sources: Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, p. 39. Note: 351,719 expellees had been integrated, up to July 1, 1948, into the agriculture of the Soviet Zone by means of the land reform (Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der Sowjetzone*, p. 67). This would amount to 56.6 percent of refugee peasants as of 1946. This additional influx after 1946, however, raised the share of expellee manpower available for industry. Editors' note: Cf. also id., *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der Sowjetzone*, p. 195.

the mining, ceramical and textile industries, in which the qualified workers from Silesia and the Sudeten are employed (see Table IV).

Refugees even created *Umsiedlergenossenschaften* (cooperatives of resettlers) to enable them to continue working in familiar groups in pursuit of their traditional crafts. These groups, however, were never economically significant; they declined rapidly after 1949 when the Soviet Zone government withdrew its recognition of refugee cooperatives, and many of the skilled refugees continued their journey into West Germany. Thus for example most of the refugees from the Sudeten city of Gablonz, who were specialists in glasswork, migrated after 1949 into West Germany where others from the same city had built up a center for the production of Gablonzer glassware in Kaufbeuren. In view of the expansion of such industries as mining in the Soviet Zone, skilled refugees constitut-

ed an urgently needed asset. Yet a good part of it was lost through their flight to the West (1.12). In spite of these losses, it may be concluded that a significant part of the industrial expansion of the Soviet Zone has been made possible by the influx of the refugees – both skilled and unskilled.

Politically, the refugees might have been expected to have strengthened the opposition within the Soviet Zone to the Soviet system. The reasons for this are in the main the following: (1) the refugees' tendency to hold the Soviets responsible for their expulsion, (2) the personal experiences of the refugees at the hands of the Soviet Army, (3) the proscription of their traditions and of their identification with their homelands, (4) their resistance to Soviet attempts to impose the Oder-Neisse as the permanent boundary, and (5) the refugees' attachment to religion. On the other hand, their being uprooted and their difficult material situation rendered the refugees susceptible to certain kinds of indirect appeals which the Soviets skillfully utilized. Because of material advantages and security ensured by party membership, a not insignificant percentage of the refugees joined the Socialist Unity Party (SED) (2.3) and some rose to high positions.

In Saxony and Thuringia, there were complaints of an outright invasion of administrative positions by refugees, partly because of their knowledge of Slavic languages which enabled them at first largely to monopolize the positions of interpreters. In the teaching profession, which was to become a key instrument of the regime, refugees were overrepresented by holding 30 percent of the teaching positions. *Tägliche Rundschau* reported on October 21, 1950, that 140,360 refugees were employed in the administration of the Soviet Zone.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, even when occupying high positions in the SED, refugees are reported not to accept the Oder-Neisse line. Exceptions may be found among the youth who have grown up under the disorganized conditions in the Soviet Zone. These youths frequently found employment in new industrial centers far from the supervision of their families. Under the influences of Communist indoctrination, as well as of the special treatment provided for youth and of the demoralization often observed in the unsettled social life of such fast-growing centers ("little Texas") these young men came to care less and less about their traditions. With the passing of time, this tendency may be expected to become more pronounced among the younger generation, especially since their new environment is still German. In short, youth not infrequently lose their refugee identifications altogether.

11 Editors' note: Can be found in Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, p. 21.

The policy aims of the Soviet Zone regime, with regard to refugees, were twofold: first, to break all surviving attachments to their former homelands, and second, to integrate the refugees into the socialist sector of the economy. Former ties had to be broken in order to prevent the crystallization of foci of resistance. Since the Soviets support the permanence of the Communist regime and its acceptance of the Oder-Neisse line, they desire permanent settlement of the refugees and complete fusion with the rest of the population. As the maintenance of former regional loyalties would have greatly hampered, if not altogether prevented this, even folk-songs reminiscent of the former homelands of the refugees have been forbidden since 1949, not to mention social and business organizations as well as gatherings. At about the same time, official bodies created for the purpose of assisting the refugees were dissolved, and the very terms referring to refugees as a separate group (*Vertriebener, Flüchtling, Umsiedler, Neubürger*) were proscribed. It is now rare that "former resettlers" are even mentioned.

Complete destruction of all former loyalties helped to attain the second aim of the Soviet policy, namely to make the refugees part of the Socialist sector of the economy. The refugees were already uprooted having few material or psychological ties with their present environment. They were more defenseless in their present state and less involved than the natives in surviving structures which might resist the kind of change desired by the regime. But they were involved in their past loyalties, which, as a factor tending to cause resistance to applied pressures, had to be destroyed. The refugees thus became a mass of isolated individuals, rootless psychologically as well as materially, and separated from supporting structures. They could be directed toward employment in precisely those sectors of the Soviet Zone life where the "socialist" system was under construction. Refugees were channeled into the newly developing socialized industries, such as the Aue uranium mines, into agricultural settlements created by the land reform (Table V), into factory schools and, by way of priorities, into socialized housing developments.

Because the Soviets attempted to break up the sense of separate loyalty and identity of the refugees, material assistance assumed a secondary role and ceased altogether as a special category of public assistance after 1949. In spite of several laws of somewhat general wording, passed largely with a propagandistic intent, little was actually done to assist the refugees, except by churches and private social welfare organizations. There was no legislation comparable to the law to equalize the burdens of the war, adopted in the Federal Republic. The refugee problem was supposed to have been solved by giving legal equality to refugees, and by offering some initial help in inadequate amounts prior to 1949. Today, they are treated as if they were part of the native population.

Table V: Percentage of Refugees Among Receivers of Farmland Course of Land Reform

Province	Investigation Reported by Seraphim, 1952					Percent of all land distributed in the course of the Land Reform received by refugees, 1948
	Number of Villages Investigated	New Settlements			Percent of Refugees	
		Total	Natives	Refugees		
Mecklenburg	18	786	202	584	75	42.5
Brandenburg	29	1,262	475	787	62	36.0
Saxony	14	376	169	207	55	22.6
Saxony-Anhalt	-	-	-	-	-	22.3
Thuringia	-	-	-	-	-	15.9
Total	61	2,424	846	1,578	64	27.8

Source: Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der Sowjetzone*, pp. 67f. The discrepancies between the 1948 and the 1952 figures can be explained by the fact that not all distributed land was given out in new settlements but a large part of it in the form of additions to small parcels already owned by agricultural laborers or “small farmers”.

The effects of these policies are difficult to assess. On the one hand, such measures as the prohibition of *landsmannschaftliche* activities no doubt cause resentment among the older generation. On the other hand, it is effective in undermining the social attachment and loyalty of the younger generation to these regional traditions. Considering the initial helplessness of the refugees and the needs of the regime, the channeling of a large proportion of refugees into the growing socialist sector may turn out to be a successful move on the part of the regime, conducive to integrating the refugees, while solving its manpower problems. Without refugees, the “socialist society in the making” would be harder to construct. However, refugees remain, in spite of socio-economic adaptation and their practical usefulness to the regime, a potential source of opposition because of their sufferings and their disinclination to accept the Oder-Neisse line. This opposition may under certain conditions be activated, although it appears to be largely dormant at this time.

There is little in the life situation of the general run of the refugee population to be satisfied about. In spite of the universal lowering of living standards in the Soviet Zone, which as we noted had the effect of putting the refugees



more generally on an equal footing with the natives than in the Federal Republic, the average living standard of the refugees is lower than that of the rest of the population, principally because the latter were able to preserve some of their possessions, such as furniture, which are at present too expensive for the average family to acquire. However, there are sectors in the refugee mass which have made their peace with the regime and enjoy a satisfactory living standard. These are the members of the SED, higher officials, activist workers (particularly in the well-paid occupations, such as uranium mining in which the refugees are disproportionately numerous), upper-level cultural workers, and, according to Professor Seraphim, approximately 15 percent of the refugees who were resettled as farmers. The situation seems to have improved considerably over that of 1946, when refugees were occupying the lower-paid positions, especially in agriculture, domestic work, grade as compared to high school teaching, and less profitable industrial occupations in all of which they participated in larger proportion than the rest of the population.

All in all, besides the continuing material disadvantages of being a refugee, the main dissatisfactions of the refugees we have described are now of a psychological and cultural nature. A considerable proportion of the refugees do not accept their present situation as final. Accordingly, there is still some underlying resistance to growing into the life pattern of the Soviet Zone.

### 1.6 Social Structure [*Otto Stammer*]

Until 1945 German society traditionally had comprised five major divisions: the hereditary nobility, the upper middle class, the lower middle class, peasants and workers. Drastic alterations in the established class structure, dating from the first days of the Soviet occupation have taken place in the Soviet Zone. Denazification, land reform and the nationalization of heavy industry effectively liquidated the land-owning aristocracy as well as the financial and industrial entrepreneur. The decapitation of the existing social structure has not however been followed by its immediate reduction to two non-antagonistic classes, workers and peasants (and perhaps one stratum: the intelligentsia), to use the current Soviet description of the supposed class constellation of the USSR.

Fred Oelßner, a leading SED theoretician, recently undertook an official appraisal of the East German social structure.<sup>12</sup> In the official view, as formulated by Oelßner, the working class is the "chief power in society". No longer an oppressed class, its social consciousness is said to have changed according-

12 See Fred Oelßner, *Die Übergangsperiode vom Kapitalismus zum Sozialismus in der DDR*, Berlin (East) 1956. Editors' note: Cf. especially pp. 8f., 38f.

ly. In close alliance with the working class stands the “toiling peasantry” (werk-tätige Bauern) of whom the collective farmers represent the core of a new socialist class in agriculture. It is these two classes which form the substructure and, in effect, legitimize the political rule of the “workers’ and peasants’ state”. At the same time “former classes of bourgeois society” continue in existence and will continue for many years. Included in this category are those entrepreneurs who are left in light industry, trade and commerce as well as the independent peasants, artisans and certain professional people. These groups have been politically emasculated but are to participate in the “development of the economy”. In the process of the transition from capitalism to socialism, however, the “former classes” divide along new lines: into “progressive” and “reactionary” sectors. The latter blindly struggle to retain their former economic position, while the progressives cooperate with the regime, presumably even in their own social transformation. To what extent does the official SED view correspond with reality?

An examination of the level of income, political importance, and social prestige of different groups within the working class leads inexorably to the conclusion that there is not a single, unified working class in the DDR. The number of those counted by the regime in the category of “workers and employed persons” (*Arbeiter und Angestellte*) had risen from 5,476,000 in 1946 to 6,317,000 in 1951, in spite of a decline in the total population of the Soviet Zone.<sup>13</sup> Of the latter figure, 4,180,000 are employed in the “socialist sector” of the economy, while 2,136,000 earn their livelihood in the “capitalist sector”. The figure for the “socialist sector” includes people who perform essentially bureaucratic functions as well as workers at the bench. Economic and social differentiation among members of the working class is apparent from a glance at the structure of wages. To be sure wage and salary differentiation within the whole economy is not as great as it was in 1939.<sup>14</sup> However since the introduction in 1950 of incentive payments and special cash premiums a marked differentiation in wages and salaries had developed. There are great gaps between the wages of skilled and unskilled workers, between activists, industrial managers and ordinary workers.

13 Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1954*, p. 540.

14 See Dorothea Faber, *Einkommensstruktur und Lebenshaltung in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, *Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland*, ed. by Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1953, pp. 49–52. Editors’ note: Two editions: Dorothea Faber, *Einkommensstruktur und Lebenshaltung in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, *Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland*, ed. by Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 1. edition, Bonn 1952 (80 pages) and Dorothea Faber, *Einkommensstruktur und Lebenshaltung in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, 2. edition, Bonn 1953 (96 pages). The present study relies on the 1953 edition.

The bourgeois classes, to which Oelßner refers, include small entrepreneurs, artisans and retail traders as well as professional men. There are in addition pensioned persons and even a number of unemployed people (currently estimated at around 100,000). In agriculture there are both middle-sized and small holding peasants. Indeed, the collective farms account for only 18 percent of all the land under agricultural production. All of these groups, to varying degrees and in the face of changing challenges, have managed to maintain their traditional manner of living and social habits. At the same time the number of people who are self-employed shrank from 1,263,000 to 1,028,000 between 1946 and 1950. However, it is doubtful that collective farmers and "cooperative artisans", to take two examples, really form unique and separate social groups, even though their standard of living is considerably lower than that which they formerly enjoyed.

The social structure of the Soviet Zone has also been influenced by two other factors which are not treated officially: the absorption of expellees from the regions east of the Oder-Neisse (ca. 3,600,000 by 1946, most of whom were settled on the land) (1.5) and the continuing flight of persons from all segments of society to West Germany (estimated at ca. 2,200,000 between 1945 and 1953) (1.12).

For a number of reasons there has been rapid social mobility in East Germany. Causes which have contributed to this social mobility include (1) denazification, (2) expropriation of certain classes, (3) elimination of a number of positions which formerly carried social prestige and the creation, as a result of total economic planning, of new professional positions and functions, (4) the special effort of the regime to train the children of workers and peasants to assume professional positions and to fill assignments in the administrative hierarchy, (5) the more general policy of creating politically reliable cadres to fill positions in the SED, the mass organizations, and the state apparatus.

The most striking result of these calculated policies has been the emergence of a new upper class which currently staffs all of the most important positions in the elaborate machinery of political control and economic direction of the Soviet Zone. The managers of the new society are of course not officially recognized for what they are, but are conveniently designated as "the new intelligentsia". It is this group, as we shall have occasion to see, which is truly the "chief power in society".

Communist leadership has made a concentrated effort to create all the ideological, political and organizational conditions that will facilitate the "transformation of society" and the "transformation of man" according to the Soviet image. The problems of the exercise of political power can in fact be permanently solved only by such a transformation of society. The proclamation by the Second Party Congress in 1952 that the DDR was "on the way to socialism" has

recently given way to a more sober consideration of the real situation by SED leaders. Party theorist Oelßner speaks cautiously of a “prolonged transitional period” for the Soviet Zone, a period of “coexistence of capitalism and socialism”, during which different patterns of economic organization – capitalist, cooperative, and socialist – would exist side by side, competing with one another. Only in the long run will the “workers’ and peasants’ state” by “strengthening the Socialist sector” eventually wipe out the “disproportions” in the economy.<sup>15</sup>

It is characteristic of the Bolshevik frame of mind of the Soviet Zone leaders that they believe that they can create, despite all obstacles, a Soviet-style planned society. However, numerous recent pronouncements in connection with Oelßner’s theory of the period of transition show that the official view of the East German social structure does not accord with reality. Not only is the political system admittedly inefficient, but even more significantly, as party spokesman Oelßner himself admits, “social development is lagging behind political development”.<sup>16</sup> Although the transformation of Soviet Zone society is hindered by a number of factors, not the least of which is the present division of Germany, the SED seeks to drive forward. The objective of the following investigation is to analyze the present situation by considering the class structure, the role of mass organizations and the structure of values and social prestige in the Soviet Zone.

### 1.6.1 Structural Changes in Soviet Zone Society

It has already been remarked that to a surprising extent the traditional middle and lower classes in East German society have maintained their peculiar existence. The major change in social structure has been the rise of a new upper class. Communist theory, if not Soviet practice, has insisted that popular ownership of the means of production prevents the emergence of a new privileged class. In the Soviet Zone, as in the Soviet Union, there has emerged a managerial elite, possessing many of the characteristics of a new aristocracy. In East Germany this elite is variously referred to as “the cadres”, the “new, technical or working intelligentsia”.

The term “cadres” applies to most persons who fill positions at the various levels of the organizational hierarchy, in the party, mass organizations, government, and the economy. SED terminology accordingly distinguishes among political, economic, cultural, scientific and administrative cadres. To be a mem-

15 Oelßner, *Die Übergangsperiode*, pp. 20f. Editors’ note: Cf. also pp. 8f.

16 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 88.

ber of the “cadres” is to occupy a position of political trust and to enjoy such benefits as the totalitarian system affords according to the importance of the position. The operation of a totalitarian system requires a large reserve of professionally and ideologically trained cadres.

Since the simplest functionary of the primary party cell is a member of the “cadres” as much as a plant manager, a university professor or a cabinet minister, the cadres as such cannot properly be described as a social class. Filling a cadre position in many cases however does entail the expectation of social advancement through the acquisition of social privileges. The upper brackets of the cadres structure certainly do form an upper class, since their social and economic status, and their entire style of living, mark them off clearly from other social strata. This group is specifically designated as a part of the “new intelligentsia”. The dividing line between ordinary members of the “cadres” and the “new intelligentsia” is not a sharp and definable one.

The proper filling of cadre positions is crucial to the functioning of the whole elaborate administrative machinery in the East Zone. Throughout this machinery there are functionaries who are responsible for “cadres planning”. It is their responsibility both to select on the basis of “cadres needs” and “reserve cadres needs” eligible candidates and to supervise and further indoctrinate all members of the “cadres”. New members of the cadres are selected by means of “development interviews” which examine the candidate’s attitudes as well as his class origin. The regime is especially anxious to strengthen the proletarian element within the cadre’s structure.

The “new intelligentsia” caps the pyramid of cadres. It is composed of the professional intelligentsia as well as the political and economic managers of the country. In order to ensure that the ideologically unconvinced members of this crucially vital stratum continue to serve the regime, they have been bought off. Individual contracts containing pension benefits and provision for salary advances have been negotiated. “Highly qualified scientists and engineers” may receive up to DM-O 4,000 a month, while “particularly outstanding specialists” may be paid as much as DM-O 15,000 a month. The “new intelligentsia” should contain, ideally, loyal supporters of the regime of proletarian background whose political and technical education has been furnished by the regime. In fact, this is not yet the case. Elements of the so-called “former intelligentsia” have been integrated into the ruling apparatus by granting them economic and social benefits and by according them social prestige. The heterogeneous composition of the intelligentsia as a whole suggests that, although a new upper class does exist, that class has so far developed no clear-cut social profile. The regime has enabled a certain number of workers to move up into this elite, often accepting ideological devotion in place of professional competence. In addition, there is almost no social boundary between the labor aristocracy composed of highly

skilled workers and labor activists who successfully surpass production norms and that segment of the “new intelligentsia” which is of working-class origin.

### 1.6.2 Organizations in Society

In the Soviet Zone, as in the Soviet Union, there is an inevitable gap between the ruling party and the rest of society. With party membership goes not only political advancement but often social position. Precisely for this reason there has developed a distinct social distance between party and society which complicates the problem of political leadership and control. To fill this gap, to provide “transmission belts” from the SED to East German society in order to develop “social consciousness and activity”, the party relies on a number of mass organizations (2.3).

Social organizations in the Soviet Zone are not voluntary associations. The founding of autonomous social, cultural and professional associations is forbidden. All former such groups have long since been dissolved. They have been replaced by mass organizations which are tightly controlled by the SED. The leadership of these mass organizations at each organizational level is invariably provided by the party leadership at that level.

The ultimate purpose of the mass organizations is to afford the regime an opportunity to coordinate all segments of society. They serve to extend the arm of political control into the leisure activities of the population. Similarly, they contribute to the undermining of the more traditional patterns of social relations, which if left undisturbed might insulate the individual from the full shock of totalitarian rule. In effect every inhabitant of the DDR is required to join one or more mass organizations, according to his specific interests. Membership in a number of organizations by a single individual is common. By participating in the “social activities” of any one of the organizations, the individual demonstrates his accommodation to the regime and thus makes his total political and social situation that much the more secure from his own point of view as well as that of the regime.

Participation in whatever form, passive as well as active, entails subjugation to the social controls of the organization. Mass organizations are instruments for inculcating Communist ideology and value systems. Perhaps the most successful of the mass organizations in this respect has been the Free German Youth (FDJ) (1.7) which seeks to raise a new generation devoted to Communist militancy.

A survey of the role of the mass organizations in East German society gives rise to the question of the order of significance of these organizations. Obviously the SED stands out apart from the mass organizations, both in the sense that

an especially high standard of political and personal “excellence” is expected of its members and that complying with these standards brings significant social rewards. At the other end of the spectrum is the Society of German Soviet Friendship (GDSF) the majority of whose members have enrolled simply because they didn’t ‘belong’ anywhere else. It is difficult to differentiate among the other mass organizations since the majority of the membership of all of them, with the significant exception of the FDJ, seem motivated less by a devotion to the goals of the organization than by the apparent protection that the mere fact of membership provides. Indeed, self-criticism which regularly appears in the East German press indicates that the organizational structure of the mass organizations is inefficient and their membership apathetic. Typical is the following recent demand for militancy among trade unionists: “The strength of the trade unions is not alone in the numbers but rather in the activity of its members. The draft of the (FDGB’s) charter gives no trade unionist the right to conduct himself in a passive manner as far as the work of the organization is concerned. [...] He must apply his strength and capabilities, his experience and talents in the interest of the organization of the whole working class.”<sup>17</sup>

### 1.6.3 Structure of Values and the Manipulation of Prestige

SED theoreticians do not tire of proclaiming that they are seeking to create a new man who will possess a “new social consciousness”. “Social consciousness” is the ultimate value in East German society, incorporating specific values applicable to different segments of the population. It cannot simply be described

17 Kurt Meier, Zum Entwurf der neuen Satzung des FDGB. In: Bundesvorstand des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (ed.), *Die Arbeit*. Monatsschrift für Theorie und Praxis der Deutschen Gewerkschaften, 9 (1955) 5, p. 293.  
 Editors’ note: Alongside „Tribüne“, „Die Arbeit“ was the most important journal of the federal executive board of FDGB. Drawing on the tradition of the eponymous monthly journal before 1933, it, too, was published monthly, beginning in 1956. Its primary purpose was the ideological alignment of its members as well as guidance for their union work. Besides decisions of the federal executive board, topics included, among others, fundamental political questions, theoretical problems, West German union policy, socialist economy, occupational safety, and culture. In 1972 the subheading was changed to „Gewerkschaftszeitung für Theorie und Praxis“ (Union Journal for Theory and Practice), the target audience was narrowed down to union officials. In 1980, the journal merged into the new publication „Gewerkschaftsleben“ (Union Life), which was discontinued in November 1989. Cf. Dieter Dowe/Karlheinz Kuba/Manfred Wilke (eds.), *FDGB-Lexikon: Funktion, Struktur, Kader und Entwicklung einer Massenorganisation der SED (1945–1990)*, Berlin 2009 (<http://library.fes.de/FDGB-Lexikon/>; 14.5.2022 [search term: „Die Arbeit“]).

as a socialist-collectivist imperative according to which the individual is to subordinate his own interests to those of society. Rather it is the more subtle subjugation of individual will and preferences to any given demand for political or social action which the party may enjoy, even if this action seemingly contravenes values proclaimed by the party itself. The only clear imperative is the political strengthening of the regime. Only when the individual has completely identified himself with the political system, may he be said to have attained full "social consciousness". Specific manifestations of the new "social consciousness" are the values of labor, party and social discipline as well as "democratic patriotism", each of which will now be discussed.

*Labor Discipline:* In view of the supreme importance which is attached to the fulfillment of the economic plan, Soviet Zone propaganda makes much of labor discipline both inside and outside of the plant. Management seeks to maintain unflinching the prescribed work schedules and over the longer run to increase productivity. The labor elite of a plant, designated as the "best workers", "activists", "brigadiers" set the example of individual overfulfillment of the plan. The trade unions (FDGB) (1.14) stimulate "socialist competition". The industrial plant is charged with an atmosphere of struggle for meeting and surpassing the goals of the plan. The new labor discipline is an expression of the "highest social consciousness", in the same sense that the worker strives to realize his greatest productive ability not for himself (although if he is successful he will be materially rewarded) but for the greater glory of the "workers' and peasants' state".

*Party Discipline:* The SED claims to be "the leading force in Government and society", the motor of the whole socio-political apparatus. As members of the elite, party workers are expected to have a standard of political and personal conduct that is in every possible way above reproach. The discipline which he must accept is therefore considerably more severe than that to which ordinary citizens of the DDR are subject. The party worker is meant to be a paragon for all others, for it is his conduct that demonstrates the system's values in action.<sup>18</sup> The party worker is a "soldier of the struggle" under strict discipline, he is to subordinate all personal desires to the will of a party which claims infallibility.<sup>19</sup> He is required to accept "party commissions" and to carry out even such actions as may come in conflict with ethical norms which are held by members of the society at large in the Soviet Zone.

18 See Helmut Schlemm, Über die Darstellung des Parteiarbeiters in unserer neuen deutschen Literatur. In: Neuer Weg, 10 (1955) 12, pp. 746–752, here 747.

19 See Walter Buchheim, Jeden Genossen zu einer hohen Parteimoral erziehen. In: Neuer Weg, 10 (1955) 1, pp. 42f. Editors' note: This reference is incorrect. Despite extensive research no text with this title could be found.



*Social Discipline:* The struggle to “strengthen the Socialist sector of the economy” extends into the realm of social values. A new social discipline, combining elements of party and labor discipline, is widely propagated. The objective of this offensive is the liquidation of the remaining morals of the old society. In their place is to be established the pattern familiar from Soviet experience: severe discipline, self-criticism, mutual surveillance and control. This pattern has already been applied to the indoctrination of cadres. Equally the indoctrination of youth indicates how the regime is inculcating the new social discipline (1.9).

*Patriotism:* On to the pattern of values which we have subsumed under the title of social discipline, i. e. social integration along Communist lines, there has recently been grafted what is called “democratic patriotism”. “Democratic patriotism” is composed of a series of attitudes; readiness to defend the “achievements of the DDR”, “friendship for the USSR”, “solidarity with the peoples of the Eastern bloc” etc. This concept shows how originally non-Communist standards of value implicit in the idea of patriotism are blended with and made secondary to more standard Communist values. For each of these values, there is a specific “false attitude or value” which must be combatted. In the case of “democratic patriotism”, it is “cosmopolitan pacifism”. Similarly, “humanism of the new type” has been introduced to counter devotion to the classical values of humanism.

How far has the regime succeeded in inculcating the broad masses in East Germany with the whole pattern of Communist values that is embraced in the term “social consciousness”? The pressures of totalitarian control and the instruments of totalitarian communications do apparently force the individual to come at least to partial terms with the new social values which are being foisted upon him. At the same time, a large part of the social life of the Soviet Zone, especially in the realm of religion (1.10) and intimate social relations (1.7), is still partly oriented toward the old values. This is especially true among the older generations.

The prevalence of these older values even within the industrial proletariat and the party itself is abundantly documented by the constant attacks by the SED against a variety of “isms” from “social democratism” to “objectivism”, which indicate that traditional values and attitudes are far from eradication. Rudolf Herrstadt, former editor of *Neues Deutschland*, made a highly illuminating remark on this issue: “We all come from the world of imperialism, and the average, unschooled, unawakened citizen of this world considers this familiar world as the “normal” one, no matter how much he suffers from it.”<sup>20</sup>

20 Rudolf Herrstadt, *Kollege Zschau und Kollege Brumme*, Berlin (East) 1951, p. 13.

How then does the regime deal with forms of social behavior that deviate from the new norms? Depending on the seriousness of the deviation and the circumstances surrounding it, one of the following sanctions might be applied:

- a) Within the party – warnings, punitive transfer, exclusion.
- b) Public disgrace.
- c) Restriction of professional activity.
- d) Withdrawal of educational or promotional opportunities from the individual or from his children.
- e) Damage to family members or friends.
- f) Legal penalties, by a broad interpretation of the laws governing sabotage and crimes against the economy.
- g) Arrest, imprisonment or capital punishment.

*The Manipulation of Prestige:* In East Germany, a man's social prestige is not, as is the case in a free society, a mark of the social position which he has obtained for himself. In the Soviet Zone social prestige is rather the mark of his position or the utility of his achievements to the regime. Social prestige is not conferred permanently; it is rather awarded conditionally. If the recipient fails to measure up to the standards of his own prior achievements, or more significantly, if he falls from political grace, the regime will at the very least strip him of all symbols of his social prestige. In this sense, then, one can talk only of the manipulation of social prestige.

The regime has created a whole series of distinctions coupled with various material rewards which it distributes in recognition of achievement. In ascending order of importance, the following designations of distinction are employed: best worker, activist, meritorious activist, meritorious inventor, hero of labor, national prize winner. In specific occupations and professions, more specific designations are regularly assigned. Among these are: meritorious miner, meritorious employee of the railroads, outstanding collective farmer, distinguished peoples' doctor (teacher, engineer, scientist). Not only individuals, but also productive units are honored.

Designations of distinction bring with them medals, ribbons, and certificates if not cash premiums. Several of these designations entail considerable material rewards. The hero of labor receives DM-O 10,000; the meritorious peoples' doctor, DM-O 8,000. National prize winners receive from DM-O 25,000 to DM-O 100,000. People who have received honors from the regime receive preference regarding positions in the VEB. Housing offices must make available to them the most desirable living quarters. Finally, they are eligible for inexpensive vacations at a number of resorts.

In the award of designations of social prestige with all the material advantages which they entail, the political devotion of the recipient is of the essence. Thus, the politically reliable man whose achievements are modest; is a more likely candidate than a man whose achievements are outstanding but who may be regarded as politically hostile or apathetic. On the other hand, the award of tangible symbols of social status presumably induces loyalty to the regime. The regime clearly manipulates social prestige to encourage both professional achievement and political loyalty, virtues that at present are far from being necessarily combined in the Soviet Zone.

### 1.7 The Family in the Soviet Zone [*Carola Stern*]

The family in the Soviet Zone, at the outset roughly similar to the family in the rest of Germany, though authoritarian elements were somewhat more pronounced, is at present being subjected to strong influences which seek to transform it into something resembling the family in the Soviet Union. There has been a good deal of argument about the German family, much of it rather one-sided and affected by certain slogans of war-time propaganda.<sup>21</sup> There is little evidence that the German family was markedly different from other West European family types, as far as the authority of the parents was concerned, nor for that matter different from the American family of a generation or so ago. The family conflicts portrayed in the novels of England and America are very akin to those portrayed in German novels.<sup>22</sup> Recent research has disclosed that the Nazi period, relatively short in duration, did not materially alter this situation. Its influence was quite limited, in spite of strenuous efforts of the regime, through exhortation, prizes and pressures, to transform the family into something subservient to its overall totalitarian pattern. Only in the group of ardent party followers, including more especially the functionaries of the party, was there a noticeable shift of emphasis.<sup>23</sup>

The efforts of the present totalitarian regime of the Soviet Zone ought to be seen in this perspective. We cannot, at the present time, assess realistically what is actually happening. The testimony of refugees and casual observers as well as the limited statistics are rather inconclusive. That the unusual sex ratio (1.3)

21 See for this Bertram Schaffner, *Father Land. A Study of Authoritarianism in the German Family*, New York 1948.

22 For a balanced statement of the situation, based on fact, see Helmut Schelsky, *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart. Darstellung und Deutung einer empirisch-soziologischen Tatbestandsaufnahme*, 2nd edition, Stuttgart 1954.

23 See Schelsky, *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie*.

and the general misery are affecting the family somewhat, seems probable. But all such conclusions are highly tentative. The following pages will, therefore, primarily be devoted to a description of the regime's measures *designed* to alter the family and transform it into a tool of the totalitarian government.

A clear-cut political program for the family – a program with precise objectives and perceptible results can be said to exist in the Soviet Zone only since 1949.

The introduction of state economic planning and the developing socialist reconstruction called for systemic changes in all forms of social existence. It was only logical that this new scheme should lead to a new program for the family.

The official concept of the family, as formulated in 1949–50, was modeled after the Soviet pattern. It assigned to the family a distinct function in the socialist structure. First of all, the family is to conceive of itself as being nothing but the smallest collective unit in the new society. It possesses no intrinsic value. What this means is that the interests of the family as the smallest collective unit, are to be subordinated to the interests of the overall collective, the workers' and peasants' state. All the relevant laws, directives and administrative measures result from this basic principle. Like all other organizations, the family must fit into the basic norms of thinking and conduct. A withdrawal from the planned society into autonomous human relationships must be rendered impossible.

The SED and government agencies have been making an increased effort, since 1949, to develop the relation between school and home, between the plant or office where members of a family work and their home, and between political organizations and the family (1.9). The head of a household participating in a SED course of instruction must apply what he has learned to his family life. In his political activity at school the Young Pioneer from a family of functionaries is to be encouraged and supported at home. Parental authority is thus not challenged in principle, but it has to be derived from a person's commitment to the objectives of party and state.

The progressive FDJ member is transformed into the teacher in case if the political attitude of his parents does not conform to the interests of the government, for these are supposed to be more important than parental love or family solidarity. The essential basis of a "healthy" family life is an agreement among all family members on Communist convictions and their common willingness to do all in their power on behalf of the political objectives of the Soviet Zone state.

This principle leads to the second function of the SBZ family: The family is to think of itself as a collective of workers engaged in the fulfillment of the five-year plan.

This principle rests on two assumptions: (1) Congruence of the interests of the family and the five-year plan, and (2) the reorganization of family life in accordance with the requirements of the planned economy.

Soviet Zone propaganda keeps insisting that the attainment and the surpassing of the planned goals is the most important premise for the happiness and welfare of the society. The logical consequence as regards the family is: active participation in carrying out state plans is a service to the family.

The fulfillment of these requirements for the Soviet Zone family is closely bound up with the carrying into practice of the principle of “women’s equality”. This principle, in the Soviet Zone, as in all Communist-controlled countries, is based on the conviction that men and women are both essentially workers. Party and governmental declarations continually insist that “every human being, including the woman, must place his working capacity at the disposal of reconstruction and the attainment of planned goals”.<sup>24</sup> Prime Minister Grotewohl has stated unequivocally: “In order that equal rights for women may be won, their participation in production is vital.”<sup>25</sup>

Regular labor outside the home on the part of *all* able-bodied family members and the compulsory recruitment of the housewife and mother into production must necessarily lead to new forms of family life. The family is able to serve its intended function as a workers’ collective only if the government relieves it of other functions that have up to now been essential features of German family life. The woman who works is obliged to relinquish a large part of her household duties. The close solidarity of the family tends to disappear, particularly with regard to children. They are frequently forced at a very early age into the kindergartens or *Kinderwochenheime* (children’s week homes), where they can be left from Monday morning to Friday night so that the mother may be free to devote herself completely to production and public activities; at the same time, the children can be subjected to Communist indoctrination (1.9). The family is permitted to live together only as long as it is congruent with the interests of the planned economy. As under the Nazis, they must go where the plan directs them.

24 Editors’ note: Cf., for instance, the following grounds for judgement: II. Entscheidungen des Obersten Gerichts, Zivilrecht und Familienrecht, zu §58 EheG. In: Neue Justiz, 7 (1953) 11, p. 370.

25 Editors’ note: Cf. the speech „Für das Glück unserer Mütter und Kinder“ by Otto Grotewohl on 27 September 1950, printed in: Otto Grotewohl, *Gesunde Familie – Glückliche Zukunft*, Berlin (East) 1950. Also in: Provisorische Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 21. session, Wednesday, 27. September 1950. In: Provisorische Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Sitzungs-Protokolle, pp. 523–531, here 531. For excerpts, see online at [https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=4511](https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=4511); 14.5.2022.

Forced participation of the working population after working hours in “voluntary” work teams, meetings, evening training courses, parades and demonstrations etc. reduce even the leisure time for family life, thereby loosening much of what formerly maintained family ties.

The resulting vacuum is to be filled by the consciousness of being a member of a great collective effort striving for the attainment of “peace, democracy and socialism”. The model “new-type family” is to develop a sense of solidarity by means of such things as its common pride in the “activist prize” won by the father, the vocational progress of the mother, its unanimous hatred of “economic criminals” and “reconstruction saboteurs” and its concern over the successful training of the daughter to drive a tractor.

The parallel in Nazi and Communist attitudes regarding the family is most strikingly apparent in the family’s third function: It is the duty of the “progressive Soviet Zone family” to provide for enough offspring to provide adequate manpower for the state’s many activities.

On the occasion of the promulgation of the “Law for the protection of mothers and children and for women’s rights”, (9/27/50)<sup>26</sup> Prime Minister Grotewohl declared in a speech before the Volkskammer (2.2): “Our future demands a growing population ..., because every additional human being living in our republic represents an additional unit in our welfare ... The two-children habit is the practice of a dying population ... For this reason, in a population that ... fulfills and lives its plan, mothers have the satisfaction and joy of bringing more than two children into the world.”<sup>27</sup>

This leads us into a consideration of the new family legislation. Article 7 of the DDR Constitution adopted in October 1949, guarantees equal rights to women. The interpretation of this paragraph is given in the law just mentioned. This statute has been implemented by a statute put forward on June 30, 1954.<sup>28</sup>

Both these laws embody the threefold objective already discussed: (1) the inclusion of the wife and mother into the labor force and into political life, (2) the transfer of a child’s education to the government, (3) the encouragement of large families.

26 Editors’ note: Gesetz über den Mutter- und Kinderschutz und die Rechte der Frau (Law for the protection of mothers and children and the rights of women), passed on 27 September 1950, entered into force on 1 October 1950. May be found in *Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* 1950, Nr. 111 (October 1, 1950), pp. 1037–1041 (<http://www.verfassungen.de/ddr/mutterkindgesetz50.htm>; 14.5.2022).

27 Editors’ note: Grotewohl, *Gesunde Familie*, pp. 8, 11. Can also be found in: *Provisorische Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, 21. session, wednesday, 27. September 1950. In: *Provisorische Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, *Sitzungs-Protokolle*, pp. 524 f.

28 Editors’ note: Cf. Hilde Benjamin, *Einige Bemerkungen zum Entwurf eines Familiengesetzbuches*. In: *Neue Justiz*, 8 (1954) 12 (June 13, 1954), pp. 349–353.

The first objective rests on two premises. First, full equality can be attained for a woman only if she works and engages in party and other types of public activity. Paragraph 3 of the draft law states accordingly: "Full equality of the sexes can be realized only through the woman's participation in the public economy and in all areas of public life ..."<sup>29</sup> Second, vocational work on the part of the woman is an essential condition for the strengthening of the family. An important commentary on the bill states: "Every additional step in the direction of including women in the pattern of public activities is a step toward the development and consolidation of the family."<sup>30</sup>

What are the reasons behind this insistence on using all possible means to force the wife and mother into work after the model of the Soviet Union and the people's democracies? It seems that economic pressures, such as a possible labor shortage, are far less significant than the notion of winning the women, whose political "consciousness" lags behind that of the men, over to the objectives of Communism. The party and the government in no way underestimate the continuing strong influence of women in education, and women's organizations are encouraged, in the hope of influencing women politically. These two pieces of legislation grant women, before and after marriage, the right to decide what vocational training they wish to undergo, what work they wish to do etc. She is not to be hindered by her husband, even if her activity "necessitates a temporary separation of the couple".<sup>31</sup>

The Law of September 1950 states succinctly that women's work in production is not to be restricted to the traditional vocations of women, but is to be extended to *all* branches of industry and that a working woman should have the assurance that her children are well taken care of while she is at work.

The practical consequences of this are clear: as early as 1954 one-tenth of all the workers in the Soviet Zone mining industries were women. Even in branches of industry requiring heavy labor, such as metallurgical and machine industry, one-fifth of the workers in 1954 were women. As a result, the Soviet Zone woman works as a steam shovel operator, tractor driver, machine operator, forewoman and in many other previously male vocations. By September 1954,

29 Editors' note: Cf. Maria Hagemeyer, *Der Entwurf des Familiengesetzbuches der 'Deutschen Demokratischen Republik'*, ed. by Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1955, p. 29.

30 Editors' note: Heinz Such, *Die Unterhaltsverpflichtungen*. In: *Neue Justiz*, 8 (1954) 12 (June 30, 1954), p. 368.

31 Editors' note: Cf. § 15 of the *Gesetz über den Mutter- und Kinderschutz und die Rechte der Frau*. In: *Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1950*, Nr. 111 (October 1, 1950), pp. 1037-1041 (<http://www.verfassungen.de/ddr/mutterkindgesetz50.htm>; 12.10.2022).

50,701 women had received the “honorary title” of activist, and 11 women were designated as “Meritorious Railroad Workers of the DDR”. This exploitative approach has caused a decline in women’s health and increased infant mortality rates to which the insufficient food made available to expectant mothers has further contributed.

The proposed bill also contains provisions concerning the right of the government to influence parental education. The parents are charged with the duty of “educating the child to be an independent and responsible citizen of the democratic state, who loves his country and fights for peace” (paragraph 38).<sup>32</sup> It is made clear that parents can discharge “their responsibility toward the education of their children” only “by close collaboration with school and youth organizations” (paragraph 4) (1.9).<sup>33</sup>

If the parents are incapable or unwilling to fulfill this duty, they jeopardize “the welfare or the economic interests of the child”, and the County Council as the competent authority has the right to “take the necessary steps to see that this duty is fulfilled” (paragraph 44).<sup>34</sup> In other words, in case the education of the child appears to be from a Communist viewpoint seriously endangered by the parents’ refusal to collaborate with youth organizations or by attempts to inculcate into their children a philosophy opposed to Soviet Communism. Such parents may be deprived of the right to educate their children altogether.

For the time being, the main effect of these principles has been noticeable in divorce cases. The parent, who appears politically reliable, stands a much greater chance of having the care of the children entrusted to him. The situation becomes drastic, when one parent is arrested for serious political reasons or flees to the Federal Republic. In such cases, children have on the suggestion of the County Council been forcibly transferred to public children’s homes. Usually, however, the machinery for minimizing the influence of the home upon children when this influence is not considered congruent with SED interests is the FDJ/JP organizations and the school (1.9).

Special encouragement of large families is underscored by a number of measures of the 1950 law. Abortions are permitted only when the mother’s life or health is seriously endangered or if one of the parents has a serious hereditary disease. Any other interruption of pregnancy is heavily punished.

If the Soviet Zone family is thus integrated as the smallest unit in a collective society, an effect must be made to strengthen the family permanently, but only insofar as it functions as desired. The regulations in the law must be interpreted in this light. A divorce is to be granted only “if there are sufficient grounds for

32 Editors’ note: Hagemeyer, *Der Entwurf des Familiengesetzbuches*, p. 37.

33 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 29.

34 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 38.



it, and if the court has established as a result of a thoroughgoing investigation that the marriage has lost its meaning for the marriage partners, for the children, and for society".<sup>35</sup> This formulation can be interpreted in various ways, depending on political exigencies. In 1952, individuals with marital partners in West Germany and West Berlin were pressed to divorce the latter; serious social and occupational disadvantages were threatened in case of non-compliance. In particular, this policy was applied to families of members of the People's Police, of schoolteachers, of public officials, and families having children of university age. Marital partners of political prisoners were expected to present a valid certificate of divorce before being hired. In the courts of the Soviet Zone, such families were dissolved without evidence, the absent or imprisoned party being considered the guilty one. Apart from such cases, however, the most recent practice of Soviet Zone law courts points to a tendency to make it more difficult to obtain a divorce.

What have been the effects of the family policy in the Soviet Zone? The typical structure of the German family provides both attachment points for the Communist policies and obstacles to their aims. The system has made conscious appeals to the "authoritarianism" of German fathers and attempted to utilize it in enforcing disciplined home study and general standards of behavior of the school-age children. At the same time, it has fostered a rebellious spirit among the youth against parents whose "authoritarianism" is "reactionary" rather than "progressive", particularly among the peasant and lower-middle class, the latter being the most vulnerable in this respect, because of the traditional strained pattern of father-son relationships. The family ideology of the intellectual groups has been utilized up to the full extent, but with a perversion of meaning. The regime has tried to assume the role of liberator of the female and thus attract the women to its fold, however, this campaign was connected with others of little appeal to the women – the struggle against religion, which alienated the middle classes and the peasantry (particularly the conservative countryside populations of Mecklenburg and Thuringia), the increased exploitation which antagonized the working-class women, and so on. In part, German women may not value the "freedoms" granted to them by the regime and to that extent they cannot be ensnared by the propaganda. But even more important is the fact that, coupled with "freedoms" which are not valued, the woman is burdened with duties positively distasteful, such as labor in heavy industry, ideological indoctrination, forced participation in mass demonstrations and various campaigns, and that, as a consequence, the sphere of activity most dear to her – the family – tends to be "left out".

35 Editors' note: *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Undoubtedly, in view of the ten-year rule of the SED, there already exist in the Soviet Zone families which in their composition and inner structure approach the official objective, particularly families whose members are enthusiastic SED members and who carry out political assignments. To describe such a "model family": the father may work in the top organization of the party, the mother may be a cadres leader of another organization, while the children are enthusiastic Young Pioneers and FDJ members. In such a model, family life as such is reduced very greatly, due to the "public activity" of all its members. The solidarity of this kind of family cannot be explained in terms of affection; it rests upon the political convictions of its members as well.

The family of the functionary constantly comes into contact with persons who for political reasons regard it with suspicion, reserve and hidden hostility. This happens particularly in their immediate environment – among their neighbors, while shopping, among the playmates of their children. Of course, frequently this strengthens their awareness of being part of the ruling elite, whose thoughts and actions are as yet not understood by many people. At the same time this sense of isolation reinforces family ties, because the need for family solidarity is brought home to the members of such a family.

The situation is altogether different when only a part of the family – father and son, for example – are devoted to the party. The opposition of the "politically retarded" wife and mother to extensive political activity at the expense of family life and to the husband's participation in, e. g. protracted training in party schools very often results in serious tensions and in the husband's feeling that his wife is obstructing his professional career and harming his position in the party. In the first years immediately after the foundation of the DDR, divorces arising from such causes were quite frequent in the Soviet Zone.

Among the rest of the working population the physically and mentally excessive demands upon the individual have had their inevitable effects upon family life. The political indoctrination in the school and the obligatory participation in "leisure hours" in numerous public activities, frequently alienate persons from their families. Another factor affecting the average family is the atmosphere of terror generated by the regime. Mutual reproaches over excessive political concessions or over dangerous opposition of this or that family member cause discussions in the family, which are intensified by the harrowing daily cares and fears that are caused by good crises, increased work quotas, general insecurity, housing shortages, and the rest. The result is an atmosphere of irritability, resignation, even despair in many families.

On the other hand, the family may and often does represent an integrating force, especially where there exists a firm spiritual basis, be it derived from Christianity, from traditional cultural values, or from a Social Democratic or trade union past. The family can then become an integrating factor of much

greater strength than it usually possesses in free countries. Thus, the family becomes a defensive community, a bastion of resistance, only to a limited extent affected by legislative measures of the government.

### 1.8 The Artist and Intellectual Expression [*Siegfried Unseld*]

In an essay (“A Defense of poetry”),<sup>36</sup> the Soviet Zone writer, Johannes R. Becher wrote in 1952, “art and poetry have never been so closely allied with power as they are here”; and Otto Grotewohl added, “literature and the plastic arts are subordinate to politics, but it is clear that their influence upon politics is great. The idea of art is bound to march in the same direction as the political struggle.”<sup>37</sup> In the Eastern half of Germany, the “cultural worker” purchases his financial advantages and financial security at the price of restricting his artistic freedom. His art is the handmaiden of political ideas. It is art in the service of politics.

In early January 1956, the Fourth Congress of Writers met in East Berlin. On the wall above the chairman’s podium, high over the heads of the large assembly, was the symbol of the Congress: a raised arm, the muscular arm of one of the tractor-drivers or blast-furnace workers so often praised in the works of those present. It reached across the wall of flags and slogans, and the powerful hand held a book on which was written the watchword of East German literature: “The books of today are the deeds of tomorrow.”<sup>38</sup> No one could object to this quotation from Heinrich Mann. However, if the slogan is read against the background of the view of art put forward by Becher and Grotewohl, its meaning changes. It points to the close connection between reading and doing, between art and life. Literature, the plastic arts, amateur theatre, arts-and-crafts, libraries, films, music, architecture have all been drawn into the service of politics, they have all become a mere means to an end. Literature, which in West Germany plays only a modest role in public life, has become a significant, much-sought-after, blatantly public concern in the East. Books are expected to do more than reflect life, which after all is what they also do elsewhere; they are intended to rouse the reader immediately to action, and to a specific attitude of

36 Editors’ note: Johannes R. Becher, *Verteidigung der Poesie. Vom Neuen in der Literatur*, Berlin (East) 1952, p. 142.

37 Editors’ note: Otto Grotewohl, *Deutsche Kulturpolitik. Reden von Otto Grotewohl*, Dresden 1952, p. 156.

38 Editors’ note: This stage rear wall for the IV. Deutscher Schriftstellerkongress from 9 to 14 January 1956 was a montage photo by artist John Heartfield (19 June 1891 – 26 April 1968, by real name Helmut Herzfeld). For a depiction of the image, see online at: <https://heartfield.adk.de/node/7578>; 14.5.2022.

mind. This art has to make an impact, it has to simplify and convince. Its immediate effect in action is not a by-product, but its true purpose and *raison d'être*.

In keeping with these general views, the government of the DDR spends large sums for the advancement of literature and the arts. Besides the aid to the universities (1.9), the following expenditures might be mentioned. In Berlin, the Ministry of People's Education has set up a conservatory for 250 students to train a future generation of musicians. DM-O 450,000 were available for the building alone. 15 million DM-O were at hand to turn the old Berlin arsenal (*Das Zeughaus*) into a cultural and historical museum. 25 million DM-O apiece were allotted for the reconstruction of the Leipzig Opera House, and for the extension of the *Deutsche Volksbühne* in Berlin. The Academy of Arts (*Deutsche Akademie der Künste*) in East Berlin was also highly endowed. 19 million DM-O per annum has been placed at the Academy's disposal for expenditure on equipment and personnel, while members receive an annual honorarium of DM-O 10,000 tax-free. Measures have also been taken to improve the material situation of the intelligentsia: vacation and recreation benefits are given, as well as housing credits. Honorary titles have been created, such as "Meritorious physician of the people", and "Meritorious teacher of the people". The Ministry of People's Education also had to see to it that in 1950, at least 10 volumes of a collective "library of works of progressive German writers" were issued in a mass edition. Finally, it was decided to encourage a lively cultural exchange between the DDR and the Soviet Union; no less than 32 million DM-O were allocated to finance this cultural project. Even though by no means all of these projects were completely realized, and even though they were not financed to the extent that had been promised, one thing is clear: the systematic encouragement and support of culture is pursued as official policy.

There is a passage in the Soviet Encyclopedia<sup>39</sup> which says, "art belongs to the people; its deepest roots must reach down into the midst of the broad working masses ... it must unite the feeling, though, and will of the masses, and lift them up".<sup>40</sup> This has been attempted by the encouragement of amateur art and

39 Editors' note: The Great Soviet Encyclopedia (*Bol'shaja sovetskaja ènciklopedija*) is considered the most comprehensive encyclopedia in the Russian language. Altogether, it was published in three editions between 1926 and 1981. For a contemporary classification of the first eight volumes of the first edition, cf. Richard Salomon, *Die Große Sowjet-Enzyklopädie*. In: *Osteuropa*, 3 (1928) 9, pp. 609–617.

40 Editors' note: Russian verification is not possible. The study's authors have taken the quote from Lothar von Balluseck, *Volks- und Laienkunst in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, *Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland*, ed. by Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1953, p. 17, which contains the following explanation: „Diese Sätze aus der ‚Enzyklopädie der Sowjetunion‘ (Band II, S. 1539) sind auch für die sowjetzonalen Volkskunstbeflissenen verpflichtend.“ („These sentenc-

dramatics. The journal *Volkskunst*, published by the Leipzig Clearing-House for Popular Art, put forward the following slogan in 1952: "We must reach the objective of uniting amateur artistic efforts with the struggle for peace, unity, democracy and socialism, so that the connection between the personal life of the individual and the decisive problems of our age and society becomes clear and concrete."<sup>41</sup> And they set about it with a will. Grotewohl spoke of the profoundly democratic and patriotic content of folk art; Walter Ulbricht stressed the same thing: "We regard the encouragement of the traditions of folk art as especially important."<sup>42</sup> And so, all kinds of societies were founded, at first voluntarily, for amateur dramatics, choral singing, dancing and music. Later these single groups were organized into larger unions, which were directly subordinate to the (Communist) trade unions, or the SED. This was the first step towards "socializing" man, in Lenin's phrase, even in his leisure time. Then came the second phase. Public discussion of the content of the plays was opened. They were criticized and slated according to their value to the community. Here is a typical discussion:

After two years, the development of the amateur dramatic group in The Elbe dockyards shows both the advantages and the disadvantages of amateur playing. Two years ago, they put on some kind of cabaret trash which they had written themselves, called "Film in the South Seas". Today they are already performing the Soviet one-act play "The Fateful Inheritance". The change has its weak points. It is true, before rehearsals began, the group discussed the roles and the casting, but no attention was paid to broaching and clarifying the social problems in the piece. But as long as the group avoids this task, they will not be able to conceive their parts rightly, nor grasp the social content of the play.<sup>43</sup>

It is clear from this kind of criticism that in the DDR, amateur dramatics are not encouraged for the sake of the traditions of popular art but are directed towards a definite goal. This criticism of nothing but content is an attempt to encourage realism, "socialist realism". Of course, this realism, which labors to reproduce a reality that is true to nature, is not to be confused with unreserved naturalism. In a criticism of an amateur play, the question is raised whether enemies should be allowed to appear good-looking on the state.

es from the ,Encyclopedia of the Soviet Union' (Volume II, p. 1539) are also mandatory for those keen on folk art in the soviet zone.") The quote originally dates back to Lenin and can also be found in Clara Zetkin, *Erinnerungen an Lenin*, Wien 1929, p. 14.

41 Editors' note: Balluseck, *Volks- und Laienkunst*, p. 5.

42 Editors' note: *Ibid.*

43 *Schweriner Landeszeitung*, 10 January 1952. Editors' note: The quote is taken from Balluseck, *Volks- und Laienkunst*, p. 27.

“Are there handsome American soldiers? Of course, there are good-looking people even in the American army. But what is the content of the struggle the American soldier is engaged in? Death and destruction for the sake of his employer’s profits. The American soldier, who fights as a hireling of reactionary oppression, is nothing but a dead man on leave. So can the American soldier be presented as a handsome man when the death’s head is grinning in his face? No! And because naturalism is only concerned with the reproduction of outward appearances, it is dishonest and reactionary.”<sup>44</sup>

What should one say to such a black-and-white approach? The passage speaks for itself, and certainly does little credit to any conception of amateur playing. But this is still not the end of it, for it is part of the logic of this “friendly” criticism, that at the end it should raise the question of whether such plays are really worth the energy that has been put into them and whether it would not be better to expend these energies on a propaganda play for the party, or on a party song. And their advice is usually taken.

Popular and amateur art in the DDR is really nothing but a part of the entire political purpose, which uses the methods of modern mass psychology to train and transform human beings into willing tools of the party and state.

The situation of the plastic arts is very much the same. In his speech of October 31st, 1951, inaugurating the five-year plan, Walter Ulbricht, the Deputy Prime Minister, observed that “the plastic arts in the DDR, painting, drawing and sculpture, have shown the least progress. There is not a single great work that could be regarded as the model and exemplar for the development of these arts.”<sup>45</sup> Consequently, tremendous energy was put into work in this field. In 1945, the allegedly non-party organization, the “Cultural Association for the Democratic Revival of Germany” was founded, and many artists were enlisted among its members. At first, it began with a purely theoretical discussion about what new trails should be blazed in the plastic arts. What the Third Reich had labelled “degenerate art” now fell victim to a new slogan. “Formalism” was now the pillory to which all art inimical to the state was condemned. After he

44 Hans Peschke, Keine falsche Nachsicht gegenüber der Laienkunst. In: *Der Volksbetrieb*, 4 (1951) 16 (2. Augustheft 1951), pp. 521 f. Editors’ note: The source reference was incomplete and has been complemented by the editors. “*Der Volksbetrieb*” was a journal of the federal executive board of the FDGB for guiding union officials in the VEB. It was published between 1948 and 1952 by the publishing house “*Tribüne*” and later continued under the title “*Das Gewerkschaftsaktiv*”. Cf. Dowe/Kuba/Wilke (eds.), *FDGB-Lexikon*.

45 Editors’ note: *Der Fünfjahrplan des friedlichen Aufbaus. Die Begründung des Gesetzes über den Fünfjahrplan durch den Stellvertretenden Ministerpräsidenten Walter Ulbricht. Stellungnahme der Fraktionen der Volkskammer und Annahme des Gesetzes durch die Volkskammer*. In: *Dokumente der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Band 13, Berlin (East) 1951, p. 43.

returned from Russia, André Gide defined the concept of formalism: "It regards form as more important than content."<sup>46</sup> And of course, Gide observed, the only correct content is the sort that praises the Soviet Union. Hence, Soviet painting is not formalistic. Formalism, on the other hand is the expression of capitalist art. This thrust German artists into a difficult situation. During the twenties, modern art, the *Bauhaus*-style for example, had been practiced mainly by the leftist avant-garde. But there was no going back to this. Abstract art, expressionism, surrealism, the great movements that had once been represented by the artists of the left were now proscribed. Where could the German artist turn for a tradition? Hardly contemporary Russian genre-painting, which German art had left behind at the beginning of the century. And so here too, the cry was raised for a new style in art, a style that was to imitate reality. There is a passage in the Soviet drama *Success*, which is a telling illustration of this tendency. One of the characters, the artist Nechayev, makes some comments upon his own artistic aims. "My painting is to help in building locomotives, draining swamps, and planting orchards."<sup>47</sup> How this intention has been realized in paintings that come out of the DDR can be seen from the mere titles of the new pictures: Rudolf Bergander, *Soviet tractors for German agriculture*; Professor Arno Mohr, *Land reform*, 1945; Erhard Meinke, *Ready to die for peace*; Erwin Görlach, *Youth of the world fights for peace*; Cooperative Gericke/Zank, *At the end of the contest*; H. A. Spieß, *International Children's Day in Druxberge*; Hellmuth Chemnitz, *Conversation between peasant and girl driving a tractor*; Georg Kretschmar, *On Guard*. The more ground socialist realism gained, the more sharply the earlier artists and styles were criticized. Professor Magritz, a critic, objected to the expressionist movement in art, which during the 'twenties was largely made up of artists who were Communists, as "an increasing perversion of dying bourgeois society".<sup>48</sup> A painter of the stature of Carl Hofer was placed in a very difficult situation. At first, he was feted with high honors; he was decorated and encouraged to take part in exhibitions and ceremonial occasions. But then the change came. On December 29, 1950, *Tägliche Rundschau* wrote: "Carl Hofer is not taking the vital interests of the German people, but the political interests of the American occupation as his point of orientation. He is cutting himself off from the life of his people, and in this isolation he is coarsely caricaturing the decadent, mask-like nature of his early work and endowing it with the fitting content of horror, rage and death that belongs to a philosophy

46 Editors' note: André Gide, *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.*, Paris 1936, p. 84.

47 Editors' note: Lothar von Balluseck, *Zur Lage der bildenden Kunst in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, ed. by Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1953, p. 7.

48 Editors' note: Balluseck, *Zur Lage der bildenden Kunst*, p. 14.

isolated from the world and hostile to humanity.”<sup>49</sup> An equally famous painter met the same fate. In 1933, Otto Dix was dismissed from his professorship in Dresden on the accusation of “decadence”. After 1945, he was one of the leaders in the new realist movement. But when he held an exhibition in Leipzig in 1951, *Tägliche Rundschau* pronounced the following judgement on him: “The works on exhibition, with their almost exclusively religious themes, reveal him to be a mere technician, caught in the morass of the decay of form.”<sup>50</sup> The familiar “friendly” criticism was the lot of other painters as well. On November 11, 1951, *Neues Deutschland* observed of Wolfgang Frankenstein’s picture, *The First Guests*, which had enjoyed the approval of the Communist World Festival: “This artist, who used to exhibit abstract painting in the Galerie Rosen on the Kurfürstendamm, has now begun to turn to reality and realism, and gives his support to the struggle of the German people for peace.”<sup>51</sup>

Such criticism reveals much. There is not the slightest artistic value in these paintings. They are the merest photographic reproductions of “socialized” men. What Gottfried Benn had to say of the Soviet theory of art as early as 1931 applies to the plastic arts in the DDR today. “In the Soviet view, the entire inner life that we men of the West live, our inner crises, our tragedies, our dualism, our senses and our pleasures, these are nothing but the symptoms of capitalist decline, a capitalist trick ...”<sup>52</sup> But the moment mankind opens his eyes to the Russian revolution, all this falls away from him; it vanishes like dew in the sunshine, and there he is, impoverished it is true, but hygienic, smoothed-out, serene, the collective existence, the average man, without urge or demiurge, happy that he may at last help in the building of the Socialist world, in the factories, or in the Red Army. Joy in his heart, into the dust with all his enemies – not of Brandenburg now, but of Moscow.

What is the literary situation in East Germany? In 1942, Johannes R. Becher wrote from his Russian exile, “Literature will reveal the whole truth: it will be accuser, witness and judge in one.”<sup>53</sup> A survey of East German literature since 1945 leaves one with the impression that this “whole truth” was hardly more than a half-truth after all. However, one thing is certain: literature and the discussion of literature play a very great role indeed in the domestic economy of DDR public opinion. They are encouraged because they are entrusted with the greatest share in the task of “re-educating” mankind. There is a very revealing

49 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, pp. 14f.

50 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 15.

51 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 38.

52 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 39.

53 Editors’ note: See Lothar von Balluseck, *Dichter im Dienst. Der sozialistische Realismus in der deutschen Literatur*, Wiesbaden 1956, p. 5.



sentence in Volume III of the *Documents of the German Socialist Unity Party*, “Literature must be transformed into a mighty weapon of the German people in their struggle to solve their vital problems”.<sup>54</sup>

Let us glance into the arsenals where these weapons are forged – the publishing houses of the DDR. Although the traditional Exchange Association of German Booksellers (*Börsenverein der Deutschen Buchhändler*) still exists in Leipzig, in name at least, in reality it is only an organ of the Berlin Office for Literature and Publishing, the state planning office that lays down the work and approach for East German publishing, in line with the SED.<sup>55</sup> It is typical that East German publishing, still restricted by licenses and permits, should be almost entirely state-owned, and concentrated in a few monopolistic concerns. The old private publishing-houses, above all in Leipzig, which played so great a role in the history of the German book trade and in German cultural life in general, were all compelled to discontinue their work, or else were confiscated. Many owners of these private firms fled to West Germany and founded new houses there. Yet, in spite of it all, there were in all 142 publishing houses in 1954 in the DDR, and 5,410 titles were issued (Federal Republic: 1,785 houses, with 12,264 titles). This was 17 more firms than in 1953, while the number of titles had increased by 25 percent. The biggest share of this increase was taken by the largest firms, which publish more than 50 titles a year. These big firms, which are all nationalized, make up only 20.3 percent of the total number of publishing houses, but the proportion of their production of titles is 75.1 percent. This is sufficient indication of how determined the DDR is to concentrate publishing into a few monopolies. It is difficult to make sure of who owns the publishing firms in the DDR. 10.5 percent of the firms were still in private hands; in the case of 28 percent, the question of ownership is doubtful. And the number of titles produced by both groups is certainly very small. We

54 Editors' note: *Der Kampf gegen den Formalismus in Kunst und Literatur, für eine fortschrittliche deutsche Kultur*. In: Zentralkomitee der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands (ed.), *Dokumente der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands. Beschlüsse und Erklärungen des Parteivorstandes des Zentralkomitees sowie seines Politbüros und seines Sekretariats*, Vol. 3, Berlin (East) 1952, p. 446.

55 Editors' note: The “Amt für Literatur und Verlagswesen” (Office for Literature and Publishing) emerged from the “Rat für ideologische Fragen des Verlagswesens” (Council for ideological questions in publishing) (also: „Kultureller Beirat für das Verlagswesen“) (SMAD-Befehl Nr. 25 of 25 January 1947) in 1951 and existed until 1 June 1956. Until 1954, it was led by Fritz Appelt, who had previously been editor in chief of the FDGB newspaper “Tribüne”. His successor was Karl Wloch. Cf. Bundesarchiv, DR 1 (Ministerium für Kultur), Teil 6: HV Verlage und Buchhandel: Sachakten und Korrespondenzen, Einleitung, online at <http://www.argus.bstu.bundesarchiv.de/DR1-35302/index.htm?kid=ccdf3cf5-edf0-44a2-9c12-9fd443a80e94>; 15.5.2022.

may say with certainty that 6.3 percent of the titles published were issued by private firms, another 6.1 percent are doubtful. This means that at best, only 12.4 percent of the entire book production comes from private firms, and that 87.6 percent of the total were published by government houses. It should be observed, of course, that the private firms likewise are subject to the directives and supervision of the Office of Literature and Publishing. The method of controlling book production is simple: the required permit for the necessary paper is not granted for any books deemed undesirable. This means that they just cannot be printed. It is interesting to note the change that has occurred in the subject-matter of specialized books between 1927 and 1954. Specialized books on housekeeping have declined by 81 percent; on philosophy by 60 percent and on religion by 40 percent. On the other hand, in the same period, specialized books on technology have increased by 180 percent; on the natural sciences by 130 percent; on agriculture and forestry by 65 percent. Clearly the natural sciences, technology and economics have benefited most from this officially directed change, disciplines that will help to bring about a new picture of the world and help mankind to conquer nature and the earth. The direction from which this new, transforming wind is blowing is clear. In 1954, 71.9 percent of all books translated from foreign languages were from the Russian. In general, the proportion of translated works in the DDR – 22.2 percent of all titles in 1954 – is particularly high. (In the Federal Republic, 8 percent of all titles published were translations.) As well as the 71.9 percent translated from the Russian, there is an additional 8.6 percent translated from other languages in the Eastern bloc. In contrast to this, only 8 percent of the books are translations from English and American works and 6.6 percent from the French.

What is the position of literature itself in East Germany, which in 1954 contributed some 991 titles to the entire German book production, as against the Federal Republic's 2,135 titles? Literature has lost its independence in the service of its "philosophically determined objectives", and has not come anywhere near the stature of recent literature in Western Germany. This reshaping of literature in the service of politics has been brought about in the DDR from above and below. From above, by directives from the Government; from below by the sharp watch kept by a well-trained proportion of the readers to see whether a book is equal to its political and social objectives or not. The DDR is very proud of these "new" readers, whose literary criticism reads something like this letter from workers in the Potash-Cooperative Ernst Thälmann: "There are still not enough books about our potash industry."<sup>56</sup> There is a letter from the rail-

56 Editors' note: Deutscher Schriftstellerverband/Bundesvorstand des Freien Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbundes (ed.), *Der Nachterstedter Brief. Diskussionsbeiträge von Arbeitern und Schriftstellern zur Vorbereitung des IV. Deutschen Schriftstellerkongresses*,

way repair shops at Delitzsch, which runs, “the Soviet novel about railway workers, *The Dynasty of the Kasazevs*, has been read with particular interest for the development of the pneumatic railway brake”.<sup>57</sup> It is obvious that a literature stimulated by this kind of encouragement will hardly produce a work of art. On July 26, 1955, Paul Wandel, the former Minister of Education, and present Secretary of the Central Committee of the SED, wrote in *Neues Deutschland*: “If we draw up a general balance-sheet, we are compelled to express a sense of dissatisfaction and revolutionary impatience. The new words that have appeared in the field of literature are in no way equal to the demands of the day, the demands of the age. Our literature is backward, and there is no justification for it.”<sup>58</sup>

Of course, a judgement of this kind from a party functionary tells us nothing at all about the artistic value of literature. But it is a fact that literature in the DDR is in a profound state of crisis. The official view is that literature is nothing but one of the many ideological forms in which humanity becomes conscious of the social conflict and fights it out. The crisis arises because the conflicts, the socialization of mankind in Communism, have always existed, but the means of portraying them have radically changed. Expressionism in literature, which arose around 1910, and attacked the comfortable complacency of the bourgeoisie, was mainly practiced by the writers of the left. Their keen minds strove towards a transformation of reality. They expressed their search for a new life which was to be more worthy of the dignity of man, with the utmost intensity of language. The movement was encouraged by the outbreak of the First World War. Later, during the Weimar Republic (1919–1933) Becher’s dithyrambic and ecstatic lyricism expressed the hope for the immediate realization of socialism. With Bertolt<sup>59</sup> Brecht, the expressionist theatre reached its highest peak. These leftist intellectuals were internationalist in attitude. They wanted to be cosmopolitan citizens of the world. “We know no fatherland,” wrote Becher. While the conservative-minded emphasized folk

“Nicht Ingenieure, sondern Ingenieure der menschlichen Seele”, contribution by Karl Bujak, Stahl- und Walzwerk Riesa, published on 23 April 1955 in “Tribüne”, p. 57. This is the potash works “Ernst Thälmann” in Merkers, Thuringia, closed down in 1993. In the original, the quote reads: „Es gibt noch zuwenig Bücher über unsere Kaliindustrie.“ (There are still too few books about our potash industry.)

57 Editors’ note: Ibid., Reichsbahnausbesserungswerk Delitzsch, An den Deutschen Schriftstellerverband, 28 February 1955, p. 22.

58 Editors’ note: Paul Wandel, Für Festigkeit und ideologische Klarheit in der Literatur und der bildenden Kunst. In: Neues Deutschland, 26 July 1955, p. 4.

59 Editors’ note: In the original: Berthold. Berthold Eugen Friedrich Brecht changed his name to Bertold in 1921 over the course of his acquaintance with Arnolt Bronnen in Berlin. Cf. Jan Knopf, Bertolt Brecht. Lebenskunst in finsternen Zeiten, München 2012, pp. 104f.

music as against “Jewish” jazz, the music of the Expressionist avant-garde was markedly cosmopolitan in character. Eisler, whose *Red Wedding*<sup>60</sup> became genuinely popular, was a pupil of Schönberg. Kurt Weill, who wrote the music for Brecht’s *Threepenny Opera*, made skilled use of drums and saxophone. But all this changed when the cosmopolitan rebels of old became the possessors of power. Even the most prominent amongst them had to put up with the kind of criticism that disparaged those very aspects of their work that an objective literary evaluation has established as their true literary achievement. The organ of the FDJ, *Junge Welt*, wrote on October 1st, 1955: “Even writers as significant and as close to the proletariat as Bertolt Brecht and Johannes R. Becher [...] were read in the twenties with pleasurable shudder by jaded snobs in search of novelty, but not by the people they were writing for. The vast majority of ordinary people did not understand their work.”<sup>61</sup>

What could the creators of East German literature do? They could not go back to the poetry of expressionist struggle. In a letter of May 15, 1885, Engels had already written that “poetry of past revolutions very rarely has any revolutionary effect upon the later ages, because in order to work upon the masses, it had to reproduce the mass prejudices of the age.”<sup>62</sup> These “mass prejudices” had certainly changed tremendously. And since impact, simplifying and convincing impact was the goal, no attempt was made to rouse a sophisticated interest in atonal music, abstract painting or modern poetry. The interest of the masses had to be aroused. But the masses had to be committed; they had to be addressed as culture-consumers; they had to be “organized” into a process. And so, the party proclaimed the workers as the “inheritors of classical art”. And what happened then was exactly what authors like Brecht had wanted to avoid at all costs. While Brecht, in the entire conception of his work and personality, supported the new against the old, “take joy in the new and shame in the old”,<sup>63</sup> he says in a poem about the aims of the actor, while his great concern was to treat of new content instead of old, it became official cultural policy to pour the old stuff into new channels. They called upon the old ideal of personality and human beauty in classical art, and this was now to be portrayed

60 Editors’ note: „Roter Wedding“, melody: Hanns Eisler, text: Erich Weinert.

61 Editors’ note: Balluseck, Dichter im Dienst, p. 9.

62 Editors’ note: Engels an Hermann Schlüter in Hottingen-Zürich, 15 May 1885. In: Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED (ed.), Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels Werke, Vol. 36, Berlin (East) 1979, p. 315.

63 Editors’ note: Cf. the poem „Suche nach dem Neuen und Alten“ by Brecht (Quote: „Erfreut euch des Neuen, schämt euch des Alten!“), printed in: Bertolt Brecht, Schriften zum Theater, Vol. 5: 1937–1951. Der Messingkauf. Übungsstücke für Schauspieler. Gedichte, Berlin (East) 1963, p. 284.

with means of realism and standardization (*Typisierung*). These concepts, which have since played a great role in literary discussion, derive from a passage in one of Engels' letters in which he requires the "faithful presentation of typical characters in typical circumstances".<sup>64</sup> Since then, the demand for realism and standardization had not rested. There was an essay by the Russian writer V. S. Kemenov, which appeared in German in 1955, in which he states: "The problem of the typical is the central problem of socialist realism; for this is the point that decides the question of artistic generalization and the bias of art, and its ability to reflect in living figures the essentials of the phenomena of life, and thus reveal in art the objective processes of the development of reality."<sup>65</sup>

This is the ideological starting point for the East German writer. It is true, the books that were published in the first years were those that had been written in exile, mostly in America: Brecht's plays, Anna Seghers' important novel *Das Siebte Kreuz* (*The Seventh Cross*), Arnold Zweig's novel *Erziehung vor Verdun* (*Education before Verdun*), Ludwig Renn's novel *Adel im Untergang* (*The Nobility in Decline*), Becher's poem *Die hohe Warte* (*The High Watchtower*).<sup>66</sup> It is characteristic of the intellectual climate in East Germany that the most important authors have not produced a single major work written in the DDR. Is this an indication of how impossible it is to work freely and creatively under an unfree system?

It is very difficult to judge the new publications favoring Socialist realism that are being written by East German writers. But we may at least mention a few names that deserve some attention outside the confines of the DDR.

Peter Huchel (born 1903) is outstanding in the field of lyric poetry; he has remained true to his own lyrical style: his collection *Gedichte* in 1948, showed his intention to present a valid portrayal of his landscape and homeland in lyrical terms. Franz Fühmann (born 1922) belongs to the younger generation; he is concerned to find a place for the German fairy-tale tradition in his poetry. Günter Kunert (born 1929 in Berlin) is the greatest lyrical hope of East German literature; in his book of poems *Wegschilder und Mauerinschriften* (*Street signs and wall inscriptions*), there are lyrics throbbing with the life of our age.

The novel is in a state of "absolute doldrums", to use the words of the writer Edward Claudius, who became famous with his book about the Federal Repub-

64 Editors' note: Balluseck, *Dichter im Dienst*, p. 14.

65 Editors' note: *Ibid.*, p. 22. The author's full name is Wladimir Semjonowitsch Kemenov (Vladimir Semenovich Kemenov).

66 Editors' note: Anna Seghers, *Das siebte Kreuz*, Mexiko 1942; Arnold Zweig, *Erziehung vor Verdun*, Amsterdam 1935 (constitutes volume 2 of the Grischa cycle and at the same time volume 4 of the incomplete work „Der große Krieg der weißen Männer“); Ludwig Renn, *Adel im Untergang*, Mexiko 1944; Johannes R. Becher, *Die Hohe Warte*. Deutschland-Dichtung 1933–1945, Berlin (East) 1946.

lic *Paradies ohne Seligkeit (Paradise without Bliss)*.<sup>67</sup> The best-known novelists of the DDR, Anna Seghers, Ludwig Renn and Arnold Zweig have not achieved a major work. Anna Seghers' novel *Die Toten bleiben jung (The Dead Do not Grow Old)* is inadequate in its attempt to interpret an entire epoch in Socialist terms. Hans Marchwitza's novel *Roheisen (Crude Iron)* has been praised by the critics, but to be of any interest this tendentious novel needs to be read through Eastern spectacles.

In the theatre, apart from the figure of Bertolt Brecht, there are only two other names: the late Friedrich Wolf, and the young Erwin Strittmatter. Wolf is in the same position as Anna Seghers. He wrote his best pieces in the twenties, and in exile (*Zyankali, and Professor Mamlock*). His recent pieces and his new poems were hardly successful. Strittmatter embodies all the hopes of the DDR in the field of drama. He wrote a number of short stories and two novels, and then in 1951 he wrote the comedy *Katzgraben* for an amateur group. Encouraged by Bertolt Brecht, he rewrote it for the theatre proper, and it was performed by the Berliner Ensemble under Brecht's direction with great success.

In this account, we have constantly come upon the name of Bertolt Brecht. Both as dramatist and poet, Brecht is without doubt the most outstanding personality in the cultural life of the DDR today. Politically his figure is ambiguous. He possesses Austrian nationality; he is a Marxist, but he is not a member of the SED. For thirty-five years now, his plays have been performed on the stages of the world, and his lyrics in the *Hauspostille* have become proverbial. The German theatre today, in the West as well as in the East, cannot do without him. However unpleasant it may be for the theatre-directors to produce Brecht nowadays, he is still their greatest drawing-card. The West takes offense at his Marxist views. The East objects that his conception of humanity does not follow the required pattern in all respects, and indeed, frequently contradicts it. In our time, his works have met with both enthusiasm, and censorship. When the music to his play *Das Verhör von Lukullus (The Trial of Lucullus)* was condemned as "formalistic" in the East, and when after its first performance the piece was cut out of the Eastern repertory because it would confuse the masses fighting for peace and encourage the imperialist warmongers, Brecht's plays became all the rage in West German theatres. And when Brecht's acknowledgement of the DDR government brought an end to West German productions of his work, his *Der Kaukasische Kreidekreis (The Caucasian Chalk Circle)* was performed in the East. Performances of his most recent piece, *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan (The good man of Sechwan)*, written in American exile, were from the start forbidden in the DDR. The view that Brecht expresses in this play, that human life and

67 Editors' note: Cf. Balluseck, *Dichter im Dienst*, p. 74.

goodness are irreconcilable, does not fit into the East German idea of a progressive Socialism advancing towards the good. On the other hand, this piece has been frequently performed and discussed in the West. We have still a great deal more to hear from Bertolt Brecht. Not for nothing did he write the closing sentences of his play *Life of Galileo* (*Das Leben des Galilei*), first performed in Cologne in 1955: "We do not know nearly enough yet. We are really only at the beginning."<sup>68</sup>

The DDR is certainly not unaware of the morbid state of its literature. Ambitious public discussions prepared in advance have been inaugurated. Above all, the battle was joined against "formalism", which was the scapegoat for the weakness of East German literature. "The backwardness of our literature is a result of the dominance of formalism", the Office for Literature pontificated, formalism means "the decline and decay of the national consciousness; it encourages cosmopolitanism, and *thus* implies direct support for the aggressive policy of American imperialism" (May 2, 1951).<sup>69</sup> The struggle against formalism lasted five years. And then, when the DDR still had no significant body of literature to show for itself, a new battle-slogan was invented. The discovery was made that the new, hygienic socialist-realist literature was unutterably dull and boring, and found no response among the ordinary people it was supposedly written for. The battle against formalism was abandoned, and in its stead, a new hydra-headed monster was attacked: schematism. This was described by Georg Lukács, the most scholarly of the Marxist critics, thus: "The great mistake in the schematism of our literature has been that we have all too often moved away from a true optimism into a banal and pretty-pretty cult of the happy end."<sup>70</sup> It is typical of the hopeless situation of East German literature that the only way out of the dilemma of schematism has been the one put forward by Anna Seghers and Hans Marchwitza at the Fourth Congress of German Writers. Anna Seghers confessed, "the artist needs the party's help. [...] In a whirl of isolated phenomena, it is the party that gives me a conception of the typical, of what is permanent and growing, though it may seem small as yet, and overshadowed by spurious and pretentious attractions. Even in the most confusing and contradictory times, it helps me not to lose sight of the right direction."<sup>71</sup> And

68 Editors' note: „Wir wissen bei weitem nicht genug [...]. Wir stehen wirklich erst am Beginn.“ Bertolt Brecht, *Leben des Galilei*, Berlin 2016, p. 131.

69 Editors' note: Der Kampf gegen den Formalismus in Kunst und Literatur. In: Zentralkomitee der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands (ed.), *Dokumente der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, Vol. 3, Berlin (East) 1952, pp. 434 f.

70 Editors' note: „Der große Fehler des Schematismus in unserer Literatur [...] ist eben, dass wir unsere Literatur aus dem richtigen Optimismus sehr oft in einen banalen, verniedlichenden Happy-end-Optimismus hinüberführen.“ IV. Deutscher Schriftstellerkongress Januar 1956, Protokoll, Teil 1, Berlin (East) 1956, p. 80.

Hans Marchwitza, author of *Roheisen*, the novel about Stalingrad, affirmed: "My best, my dearest, my only nurse has been our Communist party."<sup>72</sup>

We have seen that art in the DDR is the mere handmaiden of politics. It is kept in the service of the party, and the party gives it its unified image of humanity, in which the individual is given hardly any play. Marx conquered the banality of traditional materialism with his dialectic, which certainly did not overlook man's individuality – the intellect and the inner self – but made allowances for it. But the philosophy that goes by his name throws every individual attitude and peculiarity into the garbage-bin of its own prejudice. In the DDR the individual attitude and point of view has been castrated, and a truly free and creative existence has become an impossibility. Art in the service of the state becomes the merest political textbook. We might express it in a parable of Bertolt Brecht's: a laurel-tree was to be clipped for a great occasion into the ceremonial form of a globe. So, the irregular branches were cut away. But however much they tried, they couldn't get it into the right shape. First they clipped too much away from one side, and then from the other. When they finally managed the shape of a globe, it was a very small globe indeed. "Fine," said the onlooker. "Now you have the globe, but where is the laurel-tree?"<sup>73</sup> Fine, now they have the ideology, but where is their art?

- 71 Editors' note: „Der Künstler braucht ständig die Hilfe der Partei. [...] In einem Wirbel von einzelnen Erscheinungen, [...], prägt mir die Partei immer das Typische ein: das, was Bestand hat und wächst, obwohl es noch klein scheint und von dem Grellen und Aufgeblähten überspült wird. In den wirrsten und widerspruchsvollsten Zeiten hilft sie mir, nie die Richtung aus dem Auge zu verlieren.“ Anna Seghers, *Der Künstler braucht die Hilfe der Partei*. Diskussionsbeitrag zur Vorbereitung des IV. Deutschen Schriftstellerkongresses (9.–16.1.1956). In: id. (ed.), *Über Kunstwerk und Wirklichkeit*, Vol. 1: *Die Tendenz in der reinen Kunst*, Berlin (East) 1970, pp. 249 f.
- 72 Editors' note: Hans Marchwitza at the IV. Deutschen Schriftstellerkongress. In the original: „Meine einzige, beste und mütterliche Betreuerin war unsere Kommunistische Partei.“ Cf. IV. Deutscher Schriftstellerkongress Januar 1956, Protokoll, Teil 1, Berlin (East) 1956, p. 127.
- 73 Editors' note: Bertolt Brecht, *Geschichten vom Herrn Keuner*. In: id., *Kalendergeschichten*, Halle (Saale) [1948], pp.160–184, here 161. Brecht wrote his parables over a span of 30 years, between 1926 and his death in 1956.



### 1.9 Education and Youth [*Vytautas Kavolis/Jürgen Herbst/ Hanns-Peter Herz*]

Education and youth are among the central concerns of any Communist regime and the Soviet Zone is no exception. On the whole, the evolution of the educational system has followed the pattern of the Soviet Union and the satellites. The system has become increasingly totalitarian, that is to say permeated by propagandistic efforts of the regime calculated to instil into all youth its ideology and its general outlook and point of view of the contemporary world, and more particularly the West.

In the discussion which follows, we shall first discuss the general structure of the educational system, second the universities, third political training, fourth the teaching profession and fifth youth and its organizations. The situation is difficult to describe because it is still in full evolution, an evolution which follows the general pattern delineated at the outset (1.1). Presumably it will continue to change as the process of assimilating German educational traditions to the Soviet model and the requirements of totalitarian party control and propaganda goes forward. One striking difference between the USSR and the DDR is the considerable role which religion and the churches play in the East German educational scheme (1.10). Whether this will remain so, it is impossible to say at this point.

The complete discredit of the Nazi educational outlook and practices considerably diminished the difficulty of building a Soviet system. The reconstruction of the school system was in practice carried out by the following groups: (1) the non-Nazi members of the teaching profession, mostly old Social Democrats, who provided the main impetus to reconstruction; (2) refugee and expellee teachers, who frequently succeeded in hiding their past; (3) former prisoners of war and emigrants trained in Soviet pedagogical institutions, who though not numerous, assumed the crucial positions in the educational system; and (4) the new teachers whom the system itself educated in short-term courses, later supplemented by additional training required of all "new teachers".

From 1945 to 1948, the school system passed through a period of relative freedom. The Law of Democratization of the German School, passed in May-June 1946, was widely accepted by Communists and non-Communists alike as a sound foundation for the reconstruction of the school system. After 1948 and the Third Pedagogical Congress<sup>74</sup> the school was "mobilized for the struggle for the unification of Germany and the two-year plan". During this period of the "anti-fascist democratic order" the school was gradually re-made into a monopolistic instrument of the regime. Since July 1952, when the decree of

74 Editors' note: The congress took place from 5 to 8 July 1948 in Leipzig.

the Central Committee of the SED concerning the raising of the scientific level of the students was passed, the school system has been sovietized – in grade schools and kindergarten most completely, and universities least thoroughly.<sup>75</sup> The school system of the Soviet Zone has been directed, since 1949, by the Ministry of People's Education, but not the universities nor vocational training.

University education in the Soviet Zone was reorganized by the “order concerning the reorganization of higher education” of February 22, 1951.<sup>76</sup> It provides for a state secretariat for higher education to which all universities, as well as libraries and museums, are administratively subordinate. The duties of the Secretariat include: direction and coordination of all scientific, research and educational work at the universities, libraries and museums under its supervision, promulgation of study plans and lecture outlines for all disciplines (uniform for all universities and broken down into the greatest detail), control of the publication of textbooks; hiring, firing and control of academic personnel, approval of the election of the rectors and deans, and final decision of the acceptance of prospective students and the professional placement of graduates. Most important, perhaps, the universities are now run by government appointed administrators, the “curators” – a system which resembles the Nazis' autocratic control of the formerly autonomous and self-governing university faculties.

The Secretariat is guided by the five-year plans and works in conjunction with the State Planning Commission, which has established a *Zentralamt für Wissenschaft und Technik* and with the various Ministries. The economic and cultural goals set by the plans define the personnel requirements and space in schools and in departments within schools. Accordingly, certain branches of learning may be selected for emphasis (*Schwerpunktfächer*) because they possess particular significance for the five-year plan. Special attention is devoted to them, and the students enrolled in these courses receive additional assistance. The students are allocated to the various disciplines by the Secretariat. In 1954–5, thousands of students had been directed into studies different from those chosen by themselves. 70 percent had applied for study in natural, technical or medical sciences, but only 40 percent were accepted. The rest were placed in areas where shortages existed: agriculture, law, economics, finance, mining,

75 Editors' note: Cf. in that regard: Zur Erhöhung des wissenschaftlichen Niveaus des Unterrichts und zur Verbesserung der Parteiarbeit an den allgemeinbildenden Schulen. In: Zentralkomitee der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands (ed.), Dokumente der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands. Beschlüsse und Erklärungen des Parteivorstandes des Zentralkomitees sowie seines Politbüros und seines Sekretariats, Vol. 4, Berlin (East) 1954, pp. 116–128.

76 Editors' note: Verordnung über die Neuorganisation des Hochschulwesens (22.2.51). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1951, Nr. 23 (February 26, 1951), pp. 123–125.

Table I: Percentage of Refugees Among Receivers of Farmland Course of Land Reform

Year	Vocational Schools ( <i>berufsbildende Schulen</i> )			Vocational Schools at Peo- ple's-owned Plants ( <i>Betriebs- berufsschulen</i> )		Vocational Training Shops ( <i>Lehrwerkstätten</i> )	
	Num- ber of Schools	Num- ber of Teachers	Number of Stu- dents	Num- ber of Schools	Num- ber of Stu- dents	Num- ber of Training Shops	Number of Stu- dents
1945-6		4,221	283,446				
1946-7		8,314	600,278				
June, 1948				165			
May, 1950				275			
Sept, 1950				320			
1952				1,217			206,000
1955						3,200	

Sources: Max G. Lange, *Totalitäre Erziehung. Das Erziehungssystem der Sowjetzone Deutschlands*, Frankfurt a. M. 1954, pp. 215, 217; Aktionsgemeinschaft Freier Jugend Mitteledeutschlands (ed.), *Jugendkommentar*, 4 (1955) 2 (5 March 1955), pp. 7f. Editors' note: The second source could not be reviewed.

construction, mathematics, physics, history, Slavic languages, and the teaching particularly of political subjects. Representatives of academic institutions visit the *Oberschulen*, trying to persuade the prospective students to enter these fields. The teaching of philosophy and the humanities is neglected – in 1954-5, only 45 new students in philosophy were permitted to enroll.

Although the choice between a vocational and an academic career is allegedly free, most youths of working-class origin are forced by economic pressures to choose the former. This, together with the growing need for skilled labor in the expanding industry, accounts for the growth of the vocational school system summarized in Table I. Vocational education usually requires two or three years. At the final examination vocational attainments are considered as well as “social activity”. The subjects include ideological indoctrination to which as much as one day (out of two, or 12 hours) per week is devoted. Vocational education is continued in the factory for at least six months after

Table II: The Development of Secondary Schools in the Soviet Zone

Year	Schools		Students		Teachers	
	Number	Percent of all General Education Institutions	Number	Percent of all General Education Institutions	Number	Percent of all General Education Institutions
1945-6	327	3.1	74,992	3.4	4,055	9.1
1946-7	390	3.5	81,154	3.2	4,845	7.6
1947-8	407	3.6	76,311	2.8	4,967	7.5
1948-9	402	3.6	73,262	2.7	4,794	7.4
1953-4	650	...	129,803	...	...	...
1955-6	...	...	...	...	...	...

Sources: Lange, *Totalitäre Erziehung*, pp. 191, 208; Heinz Kersten, *Schulen unter kommunistischer Kontrolle*. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 5 (1954) 14 (20 July 1954), p. 214. In 1952, an additional 10,000 attended the ten-year-schools. *Statistische Paxis*. *Monatszeitschrift für theoretische und angewandte Forschungs-, Verwaltungs- und Betriebsstatistik*, 10 (1955) 12, Karteikarte "DDR: Schulwesen".

the graduation. The number of students in technical schools increased from 32,850 in 1950 to 39,124 in 1951 and 48,571 in 195(?).<sup>77</sup>

The development of the four-year High School (*Oberschule* or *Oberstufe*) which leads to an academic or professional career, is shown in Table II.

The regime has been interested in the expansion of the secondary school system because as it was it did not ensure the training of a sufficient number of individuals qualified for university study, politically as well as intellectually. At the same time, it has attempted to change the social composition of the student body in the secondary school by excluding various classes of middle-class children and by encouraging the children of working and peasant class origin, as well as the "progressive intelligentsia". The quota of working-class students in 1951-2, for admission to the new High School was 60 percent; it was 80 percent for the ten-year-schools.<sup>78</sup>

77 Editors' note: The final year is incomplete in the original manuscript. Despite extensive research the source could not be identified, the year could not be completed.

78 Editors' note: Lange, *Totalitäre Erziehung*, p. 210.

Table III: The Percentage of the High School Students of Working and Peasant Class Origin

Year	Percent of Students of Working and Peasant Class origin at High Schools
1945-6	4
1949	31
1951	42
1953-4	48

Sources: Lange, *Totalitäre Erziehung*, p. 210; Kersten, *Schulen unter kommunistischer Kontrolle*, p. 214; *Statistische Praxis*, 10 (1955) 12, Karteiblatt „DDR: Schulwesen“.

The regime has also excluded the politically unreliable from the High School, thus reducing their chance of rising in the social scale. The students are tested from this point of view in the upper grades of the primary school. The High School in turn is employed as a mechanism for testing the political reliability of candidates for university study.

However, the regime has not had complete success in these efforts. The working-class students either were not sufficiently interested in the kind of education provided and dropped out because of unsatisfactory grades or were forced by economic pressures to take remunerative employment instead of studying, while the exclusion of a proportion of the “bourgeois” students led to a decreased attendance. The High Schools even became one of the main centers of resistance to sovietization, and the measures taken by the regime, such as disciplining of students, dismissal of the teachers, and closing particularly “reactionary” High Schools only served to undermine the efficient functioning of the system as a whole.

The relatively slow expansion of the school system can be gleaned from Table IV.

Curricula are prescribed in the most minute detail by the Ministry. Sovietization of these curricula has gone further in the treatment of subjects considered crucial to Communist education – history, current events, geography, biology, literature and modern languages, particularly German and Russian, to which four to five hours a week are devoted in the primary school. However, other subjects are also given ideological content. With the exception of a greater emphasis on German history, language and literature, the school of the Soviet Zone does not differ in its treatment of basic subjects in any essential way from the school of the USSR.

Table IV: The Expansion of the School System of the Soviet Zone

Year	Primary Number	Schools Addition over Previous Year	Number of Students		All Schools (Primary, Secondary, and Vocational) Number of Schools
			Total	Average per School	
			2,115,439	206	
1945-6	10,242	...	2,437,096	230	
1946-7	10,619	377	2,622,102	244	
1947-8	10,745	126	2,660,926	245	12,129
1948-9	10,839	94			12,410
1955 (Plan)					

Source: Lange, *Totalitäre Erziehung*, p. 199. According to the estimates of April 1952, the total number of "school children" was in 1951 3.5 million (Editors' note.: *Ibid.*, p. 90).

There has likewise been a consistent effort made to sovietize the universities as much as possible. Higher education and more especially the university has, in the Soviet Zone, the primary function of preparing the future cadres. Yet because the plans for industrial expansion and social reconstruction require large numbers of academically trained personnel, the universities had retained a certain prestige even during the Nazi period, and because the prestige value of known academicians can be utilized, the regime has shown a certain caution in applying the levelling techniques to the same extent at the university level as elsewhere in the educational system. For this reason, the program of complete sovietization has not only been started later, but it also has not been as thoroughgoing as in other schools. Nevertheless, the campaign has been going on since 1946. Centers of Communist influence among the faculties and the students have been created. The so-called people's universities were created to qualify adult working-class individuals for university study. In 1949-50, they were integrated into the universities as workers' and peasants' faculties, but are actually a kind of college. Students of these schools are usually delegated by the trade union groups or by local Communist political or mass organizations. The course of study is three years. The students are subdivided into work groups consisting of 20 to 30 students studying under the supervision of a group instructor. After passing their final examinations, the students of these "colleges" are automatically enrolled in the university, while high school graduates, except for honor graduates, have to pass entrance examinations. 75 percent of all scholarships are given to students of working

Table V: The Percentage of Students of Worker and Peasant Class Origin at the Academic Institutions of the Soviet Zone

Year	Percent of All Students
1945	3
1948	30–35
1949–50	39
1952	over 50
1953	45.4
1954	65

Sources: Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften (ed.), *University News [Hochschul-Informationen]*, (1955) 4, p. 6; Marianne Müller/Egon Erwin Müller, „... stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft!“ Die Sowjetisierung der mitteldeutschen Universitäten seit 1945, Berlin-Dahlem 1953, pp. 60, 147, 285; Heinz Kersten, *Kaderschmieden der kommunistischen Intelligenz*. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 5 (1954) 20 (October 20, 1954), pp. 309–313, here 309. Editors’ note: The first source could not be reviewed.

and peasant class origin.<sup>79</sup> As a result, the percentage of Communist students has been increased, while the politically reliable instructors of these colleges provide a Communist stronghold in the governing bodies of the universities. In order further to increase the percentage of working-class students, trade unions and communal organizations were authorized to “delegate” members to attend the universities. In line with these policies, faculties of social science were established in several universities in 1947–8, in which all the new policies were applied with particular vigor, but they have since been reintegrated. As a consequence, the percentage of students of working-class origins has also significantly increased (Table V).

The complete sovietization of the universities was initiated in 1950, with the SED campaign against “bourgeois science”. In 1951, a Soviet-type system of training for academic teaching and research (*Aspirantur*) and a ten-month study year<sup>80</sup> was introduced, and in 1952 pre-military training. An “academic trade union” was founded in 1952 for the express purpose of extending Com-

79 Editors’ note: Cf. Marianne Müller/Egon Erwin Müller, „... stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft!“ Die Sowjetisierung der mitteldeutschen Universitäten seit 1945, Berlin-Dahlem 1953, p. 190.

80 Editors’ note: Cf. Fritz Baumgart, *Das Hochschulsystem der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, ed. by Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1953, pp. 14–17.

munist control within the university. Soviet pedagogy has become obligatory since 1952. Organizationally, as we have shown earlier, the university structure of East Germany has been, since 1952, almost completely modeled on that of the USSR. Within this structure, "bourgeois science" is doomed to destruction as soon as suitable substitutes for individual scientists can be found.

One feature of this sovietization is the trend toward technical specialization. General education is neglected, since the aim is to train specialists as soon and as efficiently as possible. Marxist-Leninist indoctrination is substituted for general education as a character-building discipline needed by any intellectual to enable him to pursue his work intelligently.

In all disciplines, the student has to follow rigidly detailed study plans issued by the Secretariat. These plans allow study of the subject of specialization alone, except for Russian and a compulsory course of ideological basic training (*Grundstudium*). It consists of a three-year course, 3 hours a week, on "scientific" socialism, dialectical and historical materialism, and political economy, and is supplemented by obligatory courses in the Russian language and literature, 2 hours a week. The student has to pass yearly examinations in this basic course, which is the prerequisite for admission to the annual examination in his subject of specialization. According to the study plans, he has to spend six weeks annually in "professional practice" in industrial plants or political and cultural institutions. After spending the necessary time at the university and passing all preliminary examinations, the student is required to take his final state examination without delay.

Since November 1951, the Soviet *Aspirantur* has been established to provide training of future academic personnel, while assessing their ideological compliance. The *Aspiranten*, or candidates-in-training for academic positions are selected, in accordance with centralized plans, by the universities approved by the Secretariat and trained for 3 to 4 years on the basis of individual study plans under the supervision of a study director. The Secretariat makes the final decision concerning their subsequent employment.<sup>81</sup>

Since 1950, arrangements have been made at the universities to make possible correspondence courses for individuals who do not want to interrupt their work or cannot be released. Prerequisites for admission to a correspondence course are: excellent productive achievements, proof of a developed "democratic" civic conscience through active participation in the political struggle in the Soviet Zone, proof of educational attainments adequate for university studies, and delegation by a plant trade-union organization.

A brief sketch might here be added regarding the Communist control of admission to the universities and other institutions of higher learning.

81 Editors' note: Cf. Baumgart, *Das Hochschulsystem*, pp. 18-22.



Prospective students have to appear before a preliminary selection board, containing an FDJ representative, while still in high school, or in their place of employment. Political as well as educational qualifications are considered. This board decides whether the student can apply for admission at an academic institution. His application, accompanied by a certificate prepared by the school director together with the FDJ representative, is then considered by a committee consisting of the rector of the university, the assistant rector for student affairs (who is also in control of all examinations in a university), the dean of the school or department concerned, and one representative each of the FDJ, the trade union Association (FDGB), the Communist women organization (DFD), and the Communist peasant organization (VDGB) each. Since the assistant director is appointed by the Secretariat and invariably a SED member, a Communist majority of at least five members is assured on the committee.

An extremely large percentage of the students (96.1 percent in 1954) receive scholarships, which run generally from DM-O 130 to DM-O 180 per month. There are extras for good scholarship, special scholarships for particularly competent students of Soviet Communism and for especially active and competent students of the workers' and peasants' faculties. Students of the disciplines selected for emphasis are released from tuition, which amounts to DM-O 450 annually, as are all scholarship recipients. Altogether, 98 percent were so released in 1954.<sup>82</sup>

Every university student in the Soviet Zone belongs to a seminar group, which consists of 20 to 30 students of the same class and discipline. These groups usually stay together throughout the whole course of studies. They are directed by a secretary, usually from the FDJ, and are guided academically by a member of the teaching staff. The group is responsible for supervising the student's attendance at lectures, his individual work, study habits, and public activities. Efforts have been made at organizing all social and cultural activities of students with the framework of the groups, and thus continuously to control them by the party. It is one of the functions of the group secretary to observe the professional and political development of every student and to report on him. This information goes to the office of the assistant rector for student affairs and is considered in connection with examinations, scholarships, professional assignments etc.<sup>83</sup>

The number of students at the higher educational institutions of the Soviet Zone has more than doubled from 1950 to 1955 (Table VI) and the enrollments

82 Editors' note: Cf., for instance, Kersten, *Kaderschmieden*, p. 310.

83 Editors' note: Cf. Baumgart, *Das Hochschulsystem*, pp. 17f.; Müller/Müller, „... stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft!“, pp. 271-275.

Table VI: The Number of Students Attending Academic Institutions in the Soviet Zone

Year	Number of Universities and Other Academic Institutions Considered	Number of Students	Students of Workers' and Peasants' Faculties	Number of Students in Correspondence courses
1947	6	13,790		
1950		26,890	6,693	
1951	19	28,000	9,500	
1952		34,700	11,000	
1953-4		46,844		10,092
1955 (Plan)	26	55,000		
1954-5		57,538	13,000	13,138
1955-6		61,685		

Sources: Lange, *Totalitäre Erziehung*, p. 191; Verband Deutscher Studentenschaften (ed.), *Hochschul-Informationen*, (1955) 4, p. 6; Müller/Müller, „... stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft!“, pp. 46, 213. Note: Only university students have been considered for 1947; *Statistische Praxis*, 10 (1955) 12, Karteiblatt „DDR: Schulwesen“. Editors' note: The second source could not be reviewed. Cf. also Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1955*, Erster Jahrgang, Berlin (East) 1956, pp. 65 f.

increased by 380 percent from 1946 to 1954 (32 students for 10,000 inhabitants in 1954, as against 24 in West Germany).<sup>84</sup>

The increase is partly explained by changes in the number and types of school classified as academic institutions. Since 1945, 25 new academic institutions were established, many of them of a strictly technical nature. The same expansive tendency is reflected in the increase of financial outlay devoted to the six Soviet Zone universities from 246 million DM-O in 1951 to 447 (according to another source, 395) million DM-O in 1954. The sum devoted to scholarships alone has been increased from 28 million DM-O in 1949 to 67 million DM-O in 1950 and to 147 million DM-O in 1954.<sup>85</sup>

84 Editors' note: Cf. Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1955*, Erster Jahrgang, Berlin (East) 1956, p. 258.

85 Editors' note: Cf. Kersten, *Kaderschmieden*, p. 310.

As in the Soviet Union, study abroad is permitted for the students of the Soviet Zone only in the countries of the Soviet bloc. The system of foreign study has been slow in evolving. It has been estimated that up to 1953 only 400 Soviet Zone students had the opportunity of studying in the Soviet Union. At present about 500 Soviet Zone students are matriculated at universities in the USSR, most of them at the University of Moscow. They are trained for diplomatic service, in legal research and, in Leningrad, in nuclear physics, shipbuilding and aeronautical engineering.<sup>86</sup>

Several additional school systems exist side by side with that of general and professional education. They are concerned with ideological, pre-military and organizational training. These systems are ultimately controlled by the Central Committee of the SED, just as all other academic institutions are. Chief among them are:

- (1) The training system of the SED, which trains party functionaries and consists of plant party schools (six weeks), county party schools (three months), district party schools (one year), and central party schools (three years). There are three central schools, specializing, respectively, in agriculture, economy and government. On top of the structure is the Karl Marx Academy (*Parteihochschule*) in Kleinmachnow. At this school, which can grant academic degrees, one-, two-, three-year courses, each for 200 persons, for the party elite, as well as for selected intellectuals, are given.<sup>87</sup> Attendance at some party school is a prerequisite for the assignment of any of the more important party functions. Up to December 1951, over 200,000 party members had attended one of these schools.

In addition to this system of schools, the party organizes "party study years" in the course of which it sets up study circles of Marxism-Leninism and contemporary affairs. 250 such groups functioned in 1954 in one city alone, under the supervision of the section for propaganda and agitation at the Halle county committee of the SED: Complaints have appeared though, that the attendance at study groups established in the course of the fifth (1954-5) party study year had in some cases dropped to 30 percent of those enrolled in the month of December 1954.

- (2) The FDJ schooling system trains its own functionaries. The regular system in 1947, consisted of 35 leader training schools, including the Central Youth Training School at Bogensee (attendance: 300). In addition, since 1951 "school years" are organized for the general membership for the study of (a) the statutes of the FDJ, (b) the "ABC of the FDJ member", (c) the

86 Editors' note: Cf. Müller/Müller, „... stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft!“, p. 253.

87 Editors' note: Cf. anonymous author, Die „Kaderschmiede“ der SED. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 5 (5 March 1953), pp. 76 f.

social structure of the Soviet Union, and (d) the biographies of Stalin and Pieck. In 1952, there were 37,800 study groups with 758,000 participants. The FDJ has also organized competitive campaigns for winning the medal "For Good Knowledge" in political matters and Soviet Russian literature. Up to May 1952, 152,873 students had won gold, silver or bronze medals.

- (3) Trade union schools exist at four levels: (a) schools of "activists" set up at individual plants to spread the knowledge of progressive working methods; (b) schools of individual trade unions; (c) central schools of the trade union association; and (d) the higher school of the trade unions.
- (4) The schooling system of the GST (*Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik*) or Society for Sport and Technology, is established to provide pre-military training for the youth of the Soviet Zone, and to expose them to intensive propaganda campaigns to join the People's Police. Since April 1, 1955, all inhabitants of the Soviet Zone aged 17 to 22 who have not joined the People's Police are obligated to take, under the auspices of the GST, a four-month-course of pre-military training. Afterwards they are enrolled in the "fighting groups" at their places of employment, where training is continued. The first 60,000 were to be trained for "police" duty by August 1, 1955.
- (5) Finally, special educational courses are set up for the purpose of indoctrinating particular important sections of the population, e. g. the Associations of Creative Artists, of Composers and of Theoreticians of Music within the Cultural League for Democratic Renovation of Germany have been given the duty of organizing the study of Marxism-Leninism by its members. Such programs are carried out under the immediate direction of the SED.

The teaching profession, seriously depleted by denazification after 1945, has grown steadily since as Table VII shows.

The teaching body has been replenished mainly by recruitment and training in short-term courses of individuals, not previously engaged in teaching, but considered reliable by the regime.

Since one of the aims of the reconstruction of the school of the Soviet Zone has been the breaking up of old patterns, the newly trained educational cadres have been young. In 1952, 35 "youths" (*Jugendliche*) were said to be county school supervisors (*Kreisschulrat*), and 6,500 to be school directors. In Soviet usage, the term "youth" refers to someone usually under 25. Apparently over half the schools therefore were, in 1952, under the directorship of such young people. There was also an increase in the percentage of women teachers, 25.7 percent in 1926, 47.5 percent in 1948/49. In 1953, at least 60 to 70 percent of the teachers belonged to the SED. How many of them were convinced Communists, however, is difficult to say.

Table VII: The Number of Teachers in the Soviet Zone

Year	Total Number	Teachers of General Educational Institutions
1945-6	48,645	44,424
1946-7	68,879	63,707
1947-8	72,106	65,835
1948-9	72,506	65,207
1950-1 (est.)	74,000	appr. 65,000
1952-3 (Plan)	...	79,650
1952-3 (a)	...	80,000
1953 (b)	...	72,000
1955	113,820	...

Sources: (a) Lange, *Totalitäre Erziehung*, pp. 196 f.; (b) Kersten, *Schulen unter kommunistischer Kontrolle*, p. 214. The numbers for 1952-3 and 1955 are regarded by Lange as questionable.

Since a majority of the “new teachers” has been trained in courses of at most one year, “on-the-job” training has been developed. Teachers are obliged to take two additional examinations. Since 1952, on-the-job training is given in correspondence courses; teachers may thereby qualify for teaching at a higher level. SED members of the teaching profession receive additional training in special courses of the party.

Large demands are made upon the teachers, beyond the directly educational tasks. In pedagogical meetings and school council sessions, the teachers have to evaluate their own teaching techniques and those of their colleagues. Every school lesson is supposed to be prepared in advance in writing, – a rule not followed in actual practice, – and the subject matter related to current events. Teachers have to participate in public activities and in all agitation campaigns of the SED. In the province of Brandenburg in 1950, 89 percent of the teachers were functionaries in some kind of organization; 36 percent had more than three positions. The 11 percent, who were not functionaries at all, were usually older teachers; recently too, teachers have been required to undergo quasi-military training.

Because of these heavy demands, because of the increasing sovietization of the school, and because of the confusion in school administration, the teaching profession has lost its initial attraction. A flight into other professions and, in the case of women teachers, into marriage started. 70,000 teachers were

estimated to have fled before 1955 to West Germany.<sup>88</sup> In 1953, less than half of the graduates of pedagogical schools accepted teaching appointments. As a result of all this, a shortage of teachers has developed. To prevent further defections, teachers have been forbidden to shift to another occupation without the permission of the Ministry of Education.

In 1952, 1,743 persons were teaching at the universities of the Soviet Zone.<sup>89</sup> Although materially favored, personnel shortages have also developed at the universities, particularly in the humanities. Many professors have not yet even superficially accepted Marxist tenets, yet all are required to inject Marxism-Leninism into their work.

Until 1953, the Soviet Zone had international connections only with the Soviet bloc. More recently, efforts have been made to establish closer connections with West Germany. In the first four months of 1954, 320 members of the Soviet Zone universities visited West Germany, and more than 100 West Germans returned the visit. Guest lecturers from West Germany are teaching at several universities. At the same time 25 guest professors from the USSR are lecturing at the universities of the Soviet Zone.<sup>90</sup>

In the Soviet Zone, the state-wide youth organizations Young Pioneers (JP) and the Free German Youth (FDJ) are working hand in hand with the school in fulfilling the program of the sovietization of the youth. The pioneers enlist boys and girls between the ages of six and fourteen, the Free German Youth is open to youth of both sexes from fourteen to twenty-six.<sup>91</sup>

Both organizations are nominally voluntary and have been built upon geographical and occupational lines. The basic units of the JP and the FDJ coincide with school classes, plant, farm and office units, as well as study-collectives of university students.

The JPs were formed by a decision of the Second Central Council of the FDJ on December 13, 1948 and were given their present name "Ernst Thälmann" on August 23, 1952. Originally based on the organization "Kinderland",<sup>92</sup> the JPs came to model themselves after the example of the Soviet Pioneers and followed the political course of the FDJ and SED. The activities of the JPs are carried on within the schools, in JP houses, in vacation camps and on athletic

88 Editors' note: Cf. Kersten, *Schulen unter kommunistischer Kontrolle*, p. 214.

89 Editors' note: Cf. Kersten, *Kaderschmieden*, p. 311.

90 Editors' note: Cf. *ibid.*

91 See Anonymous, *Neue FDJ-Statuten*. In: *Ost-Probleme*, 7 (1955) 25/26 (24 June 1955), pp. 1013-1019.

92 See Gerd Friedrich, *Die Freie Deutsche Jugend. Auftrag und Entwicklung*, Köln 1953, pp. 40f. The text follows this study on many points. For the Communist side, the magazine "Junge Generation" is most useful.

fields. The purpose of the JPs is to aid in the education of children and to shape “progressive young people of a new type”.

Through leaders selected by the FDJ from among the faculty or older students, the organization has made the greatest strides inside the elementary schools. The conquest of the elementary schools by the JP has been accomplished rather quickly due to the inability of young children to resist Communist pressures and persuasions.<sup>93</sup> Financially supported by the SED, the JPs have been able to woo children with houses or so-called “pioneer-palaces” which provide workshops and rooms for a variety of activities, such as photography, building of model airplanes, art and the like. Despite their privileged position, the JPs have not been able to enlist more than one and one half million which had enrolled by January 1951.<sup>94</sup>

Children are not enthusiastic about the constant demand made upon them and frequently join the organization only in order to pass examinations or to obtain jobs upon graduation. When leaving school, youngsters give up their JP membership automatically. In order to prevent this, FDJ groups are now formed in the graduating class of the elementary schools to assure FDJ membership of boys and girls after graduation.

The Free German Youth (FDJ) was officially founded in the Soviet Zone on March 7, 1946, to continue the work of the anti-fascist youth committees which had been initiated immediately after the German collapse in May 1945. The FDJ is linked to the Communist Youth League of Germany (KJVD) of the Weimar Republic and to the exile-FDJ which had been founded in Prague in 1936 and in London in 1941. This double ancestry accounts for conflicts in the organizational and strategic concept of the FDJ today. KJVD had regarded itself as the elite formation of the proletariat, whereas the exile-FDJ sought to provide a mass organization for all the youth on the basis of anti-fascism.<sup>95</sup>

The need of winning the majority of the East German youth to Communism, embodied in directives from the SED, forced upon the FDJ the concept of a broad mass organization on a non-partisan basis, which was directed and led by communist functionaries. The Communist party’s purpose was disguised behind the anti-fascist unity front. Owing to the limited appeal of antifascism, the FDJ shifted its emphasis to the campaign for democratic re-education and national unity in the fall and winter months of 1946. The insistence on one

93 For particulars see Lange, *Totalitäre Erziehung*, pp. 237 ff. and id., *Neue Errungenschaften in der Pädagogik*. In: *Ost-Probleme*, 4 (1952) 45 (8 November 1952), pp. 1522 ff.

94 For a survey on the development of the JP see Heinz Kersten, *Fünf Jahre ‘Junge Pioniere’*. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 24 (20 December 1953), pp. 374–376.

95 Editors’ note: Cf. Friedrich, *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, pp. 10–23.

united youth movement was paralleled by increased pressure on youth groups of non-communist parties and of the churches (1.10). The FDJ reached out to widen its sphere of influence to include all athletic activities through the founding of the German Sports Committee (DSA) in October 1948.<sup>96</sup> The DSA was to be led by FDJ functionaries. The FDJ also succeeded in exerting pressure on the “trade unions” (FDGB) to dissolve its youth groups in the factories and to delegate the function of industrial representation of young workers to FDJ commissions. This plan was realized on July 15, 1949.

Despite these efforts at mass organization, the FDJ proved its revolutionary character through its activities against the besieged Berlin at the time of the airlift, especially with the attempt at storming the city hall on September 6, 1948. FDJ functionaries received small arms and training in street fighting. Time, however, proved that the elite training received by the functionaries was accompanied by a neglect of the great majority of the FDJ membership. By October 1949, the FDJ sought to overcome this inner contradiction by an intensive drive for sovietization under the name of the National Front. The campaign was intended to mold the entire youth in Soviet fashion.<sup>97</sup> Ideological training was emphasized, the principle of collective study was applied to the universities, and scientific objectivism was decried as reactionary. Yet despite these efforts, the membership did not increase after 1951 and disillusionment crept into the ranks. At this time the SED demanded that FDJ members develop an interest in national defense and military affairs. By 1952 intensive military propaganda exhorted the FDJ to prepare itself as the fighting reserve of the party, the People’s Police and the fatherland. The adoption of the organizational structure of the Soviet Komsomol was to revive the lagging spirit of the FDJ. Imitation of the Soviet Komsomol dates back to the policy of the KJVD. The first FDJ delegation went to Moscow from July 19 to August 6, 1947.<sup>98</sup> From March 29 to April 8, 1949, another delegation participated at the Eleventh Komsomol Congress in Moscow. As the organization showed signs of disintegration under the heavy demands put upon it, “saboteurs and Western agents” were conveniently discovered among FDJ members. The demand for their quick punishment served to detract attention from the real problems of the organization. Even these terrorist measures could not stem the decline. When the “new course” was proclaimed in 1953, it advocated an FDJ policy of moderation. The upris-

96 Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, p. 60.

97 This campaign was accompanied by a wave of terror against dissenting youngsters. See *Opfer sowjetzonaler Terrorjustiz*. Hermann Joseph Flade. In: *PZ-Archiv*, 2 (1951) 6 (20 March 1951), p. 2–23, and Otto Eugen Hassno Becker, *Jugend im Widerstand*. In: *PZ-Archiv*, 2 (1951) 14 (20 July 1951), pp. 6–8.

98 Editors’ note: Cf. Friedrich, *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, pp. 47f.



ing of June 16–17, 1953, and the relatively extensive participation of youth, persuaded the FDJ leadership to revert to a two-pronged approach. On the one hand the FDJ concentrated its efforts on the training of loyal, dedicated young Communists, the so-called “activists”; on the other hand, it embarked on the on the program for “a gay and interesting life of youth” for the mass membership of the organization.

The organizational structure of the FDJ is based on the principle of “democratic centralism” (cf. 2.2 and 2.3). Basic units may be formed by three members or more in “a plant, a machine-tractor station, a government-owned factory, a rural collective, an office, an educational institution, a housing unit or in a unit of the People’s Police”.<sup>99</sup> Several basic units may form groups, these may be organized into a city or a county league, and these again into district organizations. The conferences of district delegates are to meet every two years and are to send delegates to the Congress of the FDJ, which is to meet every fourth year unless called to convene by the Central Council or by the majority of district organizations. The Central Council, supposedly elected by the Congress, and its secretariat directs the activities of the FDJ between the meetings of the Congress. It is the real power determining the policy of the FDJ. It in turn receives its orders from the Central Committee of the SED.

The great mass meetings of the FDJ are called “Youth Parliaments”. They are supposed to meet annually and to demonstrate the strength of the organization as well as to serve as media for the proclamation of the new policies. The first parliament was held at Brandenburg from June 8 to 10, 1946. It reported 250,000 FDJ members in the SZ.<sup>100</sup> The second parliament at Meißen, May 23–26, 1947, reported 454,231 members.<sup>101</sup> By the time of the third parliament at Leipzig, June 1–4, 1949, FDJ membership had increased to 677,000. To this have to be added 550,000 members of the JPs which were formed near the end of 1948, and 83,560 members of the German Sports Committee (DSA), a subsidiary organization to the FDJ (though there are duplications here).<sup>102</sup> The fourth parliament at Leipzig (May 27 to June 2, 1952) reported a combined FDJ and JP membership of 3,500,000.<sup>103</sup> The fifth parliament, which took place at Erfurt from May 25–30, 1955, reported 1,725,425 FDJ members as of May 1, 1955, including the JP. As mass meetings on a Soviet Zone wide scale seemed to prove their propaganda value to the FDJ, the parliaments were supplement-

99 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 63.

100 Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 23 f.

101 Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, p. 42.

102 Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 78 f.

103 Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, p. 143.

ed by the “Germany meetings” (*Deutschlandtreffen*) which were to emphasize the all-German propaganda line of the SED and FDJ.

The SED holds that the FDJ, if properly trained in Communist ideology, is one of the most reliable and effective agents for the realization of Communist policy in Germany. The SED thus has never failed to call upon the FDJ for the execution of political, economic and cultural tasks. The FDJ began with the propaganda campaign for the “plebiscite for the expropriation of war criminals and Nazi activists” in 1946; it has been continually active in the service of the SED ever since.<sup>104</sup>

To create a legal basis for the participation of FDJ in plebiscites and elections, a law was passed on May 17, 1950, which lowered the legal age limit from twenty-one to eighteen, and made it conform to the lower voting age limit (2.1) set for the right to vote set by the Soviet Zone constitution article 52. The importance of the services of loyal FDJ functionaries to the SED can be seen by the fact that by May 1952, 34 percent of all government employees were members of the FDJ, that on February 5, 1951, 984 members were working as mayors, 351 as high postal officials, 642 in similarly high positions with the state railroad, and 10 in the diplomatic service.<sup>105</sup>

In the economic sector the chief task of the FDJ has been to increase production norms set by the SED (3.3). Occupational contests were begun in 1949 and have continued ever since. Their appeal, however, has much declined: the number of “youth brigades” in industry and agriculture declined from 36,613 in September 1949, to 1,700 in August 1953; it has been slowly increasing to 19,400 in December 1954. The FDJ began to function as plant police and as supervisors of farm collectives “to exercise continual vigilance against saboteurs and negligence”, and against the passive resistance of other co-workers, particularly older ones, who, in the eyes of the SED, were unreliable. Naturally, this system of continual spying, watching and eternal prodding to work more and more brought about increased opposition and hostility and repeatedly led to strikes and passive as well as active revolt against the FDJ and SED overseers.

FDJ activities have always been weakest in the rural areas and FDJ membership lowest in villages and rural communities. On March 1, 1952, only 28.1 percent of the young agricultural workers and 19.7 percent of young peasants were FDJ members. To remedy this failure, the FDJ increased its propaganda, insisted on the further raising of norms and initiated a system under which members obligated themselves to achieve higher productivity (1.14). The var-

104 Editors' note: *Ibid.*, p. 31.

105 Editors' note: *Cf. ibid.*, pp. 106 f.

ious strained FDJ campaigns and especially the continual attempts at further norm increases contributed to the revolt in June 1953 (2.6). But the FDJ campaign for higher productivity continued, turning its attention particularly to the farms. A movement of “young innovators in agriculture” was started in 1955. Increased attention was at the same time paid to the control posts which were to watch over negligence and mismanagement. As the mass of the membership was to enjoy a “gay and interesting life of youth”, the task of economic pioneering became predominantly the concern of the FDJ activists.

Until the winter of 1951/52 the FDJ had shown little interest in cultural activities. Where such activities existed, they had frequently been led by non-communist elements within the FDJ. When the FDJ discovered the suitability of cultural work for communist indoctrination, they embarked upon the program for “socialist realism” and the rejection of “American cultural barbarism”.<sup>106</sup> This “realism” turned Christmas into a festival of light – a term reminiscent of Nazi [...] camps, rewards and medals, loses much of its attractiveness, when it is coupled with the enforced insistence on ideological training and with the obligations to serve as an activist, as an inventor, or as a soldier in the “people’s army”. The desire for comradeship vanishes once the discovery is made that Communist comradeship is synonymous with continual mutual supervision, surveillance and denunciations. The appeal of the high ideal proclaimed from above is lost in the incessant strain and enforcement of a policy that too plainly contradicts the very ideal (see 1.17 for further comment). Still there remains a body of hard-core Communist FDJ functionaries and activists. These rather narrow-minded and ideologically “safe” youth functionaries are being trained to take over the leading functions of the party, the police, the army, and the state administration.

All in all, a recital of the detailed facts we have given shows clearly that the government of the Soviet Zone of Germany has gone a long way towards sovietizing the schools, universities and other educational institutions. None the less, the East German educational system still differs somewhat from the Soviet model. Orthodox Communist doctrine does not yet completely predominate especially at the university level. Furthermore, religion continues to play a substantial role in East German education. This is manifest in the continued maintenance of theological faculties in the universities. To be sure, these faculties are somewhat discriminated against in professional appointments, new buildings and the like. What is perhaps even more important, their students receive substantially fewer scholarships than students in other faculties, and

106 Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, p. 103.

107 Editors’ note: Two pages are missing in the original manuscript here (123 and 124). This gap could not be filled.

yet are obliged to participate in the basic study of Communist doctrine (1.17). It might finally be noted that the schooling preparatory to university study continues to be twelve years rather than ten years, in spite of the beginning made in the ten-years-schools described earlier. Also, students are admitted after their eighteenth year to ordinary technical training schools below the university level. Broadly speaking, in spite of some survivals, the system is moving steadily in the Soviet direction.

The most important agency in this process of sovietization is of course the party, but as we have shown, the FDJ also plays a vital role. In order to extend their influence, various other organizations, known as collectives, have been formed, which tend to be dominated by Communist activists of one sort or another. There is usually a Teachers' Council, a Parents' Council, a party school group, a Trades Union local special Teachers' group belonging to the FDJ, and groups of JPs and FDJs at the student level. All of these groups check on faculty students and each other, thus providing the most channels for SED control. It is believed, and it seems possible, that amongst these groups, the party collectives are the most significant. Indeed, the whole work of the FDJ is centered around the school, unlike the Hitler Youth, which operated outside the school. These FDJ groups work within, and they spend much effort at impressing all school children as members of the FDJ, with the importance of doing their schoolwork. Naturally they are also very much concerned with vacation programs. It is reported that in 1955, the FDJ organized such programs for two million children, thus reinforcing the sovietization of youth. Obviously, summer camps, in which the youth can be isolated from the influence of their family and supervised for 24 hours of the day can be especially effective. The ideological program in these camps is very concentrated and linked to every activity.

What is true for school children, is equally true for university students. We have some statistics about the organizations to which 673 students of philosophy at the University of Leipzig belonged in 1951. 630 were members of the FDJ, 470 of the Trades Unions, 360 of the Society of German Soviet Friendship, 305 of the SED, 150 of the Communist controlled Culture Association. These figures contrast sharply with those of participation in non-Communist groups, for only 45 belong to the CDU and 40 to the LDP. Teachers, in addition to participating in the various organizations mentioned above, which enable them to influence parents, are further employed for the program of adult education, there are parents' seminars, schooling courses and various other activities of this kind.

It might be interesting to say a word in conclusion about the factors making for resistance to this process of sovietization (see also 1.17 below). Among these factors, religion is a source of primary importance, but nationalism also

plays a role, reinforced as it is by regional loyalties (1.3 and 1.4). The family and the continued strong attachment of peasants and small proprietors to their farms and their possessions, plays an important role. Besides these, certain specific elements of the German educational tradition deserve to be mentioned, especially the humanist tradition in the high schools (*Gymnasias*), the reform idealism of the Weimar period, and finally the scientific attitude, which insists upon the value of objective truth.

As a result of one or more of these factors, as well as the general tendency of youth to oppose any system of compulsion, we find a substantial amount of personalized resistance, which expresses itself in Western jazz, gaudy clothes, promiscuity and other forms of juvenile delinquency. There is also a certain amount of organized resistance and a good deal of retreating into professional and vocational ivory towers. But these do not alter the fact that youth in the Soviet Zone is increasingly molded by the prevailing totalitarian modes of thought and feeling.

Indeed, at quite a few recent meetings West German students have been struck by the difficulty of carrying on even ordinary conversations with young people of their own age educated in the Soviet Zone.

### 1.10 Religion [*Wolfgang G. Friedrich/Carl Mayer*]

The basic Communist approach to religion is determined by its unwillingness to tolerate any competing spiritual force to which men might give their loyalty. Religion is viewed as dangerous because it may distract men's attention from the task of building socialism. Religion is tolerated in the Soviet Zone only on the condition that it maintains strict political neutrality. In accordance with Marxist views of the relations of ideas to economic forces, religion is regarded as a prejudice of unenlightened and reactionary social classes, especially the peasantry. Specific measures against religion in the Soviet Zone must take account of the probable adverse reaction not only of the East German population but also of Germans in the Federal Republic. Uneasy and unstable compromises result, such as partial preservation of the church tax and religious education in school buildings, although not as part of the curriculum. At the same time, the regime has attempted, in a half-hearted way, to play on the traditional submissiveness to the state of the Lutheran Church. The Nazi period, however, had made a breach in this tradition, by arousing opposition and thus strengthened the Lutheran Church for its present task of fighting for its autonomy.

The fact that such a very high percentage of the population of the Soviet Zone are members of the official churches (more than 90 percent), must not

be misunderstood. Historically, the churches were “established churches”. Membership was practically obligatory, and in any case taken for granted, without necessarily implying actual participation in church life. Neither the constitutional loosening of the relationship between the state and the church in the Weimar Republic nor the massive pressures of National Socialism, not even the developments after 1945, have brought about a basic change in the traditional attitude of the German population toward church membership. In the Soviet Zone and in Berlin, more than four-fifths of the population were Protestants, and more than one-eighth Catholics.

In comparison with 1939, the percentage of Protestants in the German population decreased by 0.7 percent in 1946; that of Catholics increased by 2.2 percent. In the three West Zones the ratio between Protestants and Catholics remained practically the same. In the Soviet Zone and Berlin, the ratio of Protestants in the total population decreased by 1.2 percent, and that of Catholics increased by 4.9 percent.

The Soviet Zone, excluding Berlin, counted 17,314,000 inhabitants in 1946. Of these 14,132,000, or 81.6 percent, were Protestants; 2,110,500, or 12.2 percent, Catholics; 90,000, or 0.5 percent, belonged to other religious groups; and 955,000, or 5.5 percent, were religiously non-affiliated.

In Berlin, with 3,191,000 inhabitants, 71.4 percent were Protestants, and 10.9 percent Catholics; 0.8 percent belonged to other religious groups, including 0.2 percent Jews; and 16.9 percent were religiously unaffiliated. No separate figures for the West and East Sectors of the city are available; it may be assumed, however, that approximately the same ratios obtained in both of them. Among the refugees and expellees, the percentage of Catholics was from three times (Brandenburg) to eight times (Saxony-Anhalt) as large as among the natives (Table I).

The religious scene in the Soviet Zone is dominated entirely by the official Protestant Churches (*Landeskirchen*), and the Roman Catholic Church. The combined membership of the so-called Free Churches, such as Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites, and some strictly German denominations, is approximately 0.5 percent of the population. Protestant sects form only a fraction of the 0.5 percent following of “other” religious organizations. Their influence has dwindled further since the ruthless suppression of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the fall of 1950. The well-known Herrnhut “Evangelical Brother-Union” still claims more than 5,000 members in the Soviet Zone, but most of them also belong to an official Protestant Church.

The official Protestant churches in the DDR are regional churches having an exclusive ecclesiastic jurisdiction in their respective districts that is recognized by the state. There are eight such *Land* churches (*Landeskirchen*). In 1950, these churches had an estimated membership of 16,880,000 in 7,979 parishes.

Table I: Changes in the Percentage of Catholic Inhabitants of the Soviet Zone, 1939–1946

Province	Percentage of Catholics	
	1939	1946
Brandenburg	7.8	9.2
Mecklenburg	6.1	14.2
Saxony-Anhalt	8.6	15.2
Thuringia	3.5	16.7
Saxony	4.5	8.1
Soviet Zone	6.2	12.2

Sources: The 1939 figures are from Seraphim, *Die Heimatvertriebenen in der Sowjetzone*, Berlin (West) 1954, p. 55. The 1946 figures are from Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission für die Sowjetische Besatzungszone/Statistisches Zentralamt (ed.), *Volks und Berufszählung vom 29. Oktober 1946 in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands*, Vol. 2, Hefte 1–5. They diverge from Seraphim's. Editors' note: The numbers for 1946 can also be found in: Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik (ed.), *Statistische Praxis. Monatszeitschrift für theoretische und angewandte Forschungs-, Verwaltungs- und Betriebsstatistik*, 3 (1948) 9, Beilage „Endgültige Ergebnisse der Volks- und Berufszählung vom 29. Oktober 1946, 5. Folge“.

Four of these Land churches in former Prussian provinces or their remainders within the Soviet Zone are members of the Old Prussian Union, now known as the Evangelical Union Church. (These are abbreviated to APU or EKO, respectively.) Two *Land* churches in the Federal Republic also belong to the Union. More than 60 percent of the members of the Union live in the Soviet Zone; it has its central offices in West Berlin.

The three Lutheran Churches in the Soviet Zone, situated in Saxony, Thuringia and Mecklenburg, are members of the United Evangelical-Lutheran Church (VELKD). The latter was established, in 1948, with central offices in Hanover. More than 40 percent of its members live in the Soviet Zone. The “United” (*Unierte*) Church of Anhalt is the only church in the Soviet Zone which is affiliated neither with the APU/EKU nor with the VELKD.

Having after 1945 lost the bulk of the diocese of Breslau (Silesia), the Catholic Church is a minority church in the Soviet Zone. Between 1946 and 1948, the number of Catholics in the Soviet Zone and in Berlin increased by 120,490. No later data are available.

The churches in Germany are the only social institutions that have maintained a single organizational structure and an inner cohesion for the entire

country. The churches in the Soviet Zone are part and parcel of the German church organizations that have their central offices outside of the Soviet Zone.

All *Land* churches in the Soviet Zone, together with the West German *Land* churches, are affiliated with the overall organization of German Protestantism, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), which was formed in August 1945. Each congregation in almost every town and village in the Soviet Zone is sponsored by some congregation in West Germany, which attends to its spiritual and material needs. All Protestant Land churches in the Soviet Zone are affiliated, through the Evangelical Church in Germany, with the World Council of Churches, founded in 1948. After 1950, the Evangelical-Lutheran churches in the whole of Germany also joined the World Council individually.<sup>108</sup> All Evangelical-Lutheran churches in the Soviet Zone are members of the Lutheran World Federation.

The churches comprising the APU/EKU include Lutheran and also Reformed parishes, the latter being based on Zwinglian-Calvinist tenets. The APU was originally formed in 1817 as an administrative association of all Protestant Churches in the Prussian provinces, regardless of denomination. The APU disappeared in 1945 together with Prussia, which was dismembered by the Allied Occupation Authorities. In the process of its reconstruction from 1945 to 1951, the APU constituted itself as a genuine church, recognizing both the Lutheran and the Reformed Confessions in its constitutions and establishing the mutual unity of communion. But in the Soviet Zone, the Lutheran parishes have greater influence, and Lutheran doctrine is predominant.

The affiliations of the Catholic Church units are also complex. The diocese of Meißen, covering roughly the territory of the former Land Saxony, is directly subordinated to the Apostolic See. The remainder of the former archdiocese of Breslau (Silesia) forms a church province by itself, together with Berlin-Brandenburg. The seat of the archbishop is in Görlitz. The seat of the Bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg is in the West Sector of Berlin, outside of the jurisdictional sphere of the government of the Soviet Zone. Only 40 percent of the members of the diocese of Berlin-Brandenburg live in Brandenburg proper.

The Catholics in Thuringia largely belong to the diocese of Fulda with its seat in West Germany, but with a suffragan bishop residing at Erfurt. 50 percent of the members of the diocese live in West Germany. In turn, a great majority of Catholics in Saxony-Anhalt belong to the archdiocese of Paderborn. The seat of the latter is in West Germany, but a suffragan bishop has been installed in Magdeburg. Only about one-quarter of the members of the diocese

108 Other German members are the Mennonites, the Moravians, and the Old Catholic Church.



live in the Soviet Zone. The Catholics in Mecklenburg are under the ecclesiastic jurisdiction of the diocese of Osnabrück in West Germany and represent about one-fifth of the latter.

All archdioceses and dioceses in the whole of Germany are subordinated to the Fulda Bishops' Conference, a body consisting of all reigning archbishops, bishops and holders of Catholic offices with proper jurisdiction. All Catholic bodies, of course, are under the theological and pastoral supervision of the Bishop of Rome, the "Supreme Head of the Church".

As for religious education, Protestant theological faculties were maintained in the Soviet Zone Universities of East Berlin, Greifswald, Halle, Jena, Leipzig and Rostock. Altogether, about 800 were enrolled in them in 1952. This is only about 16 percent of the total number Protestant theology students for the whole of Germany and is quite inadequate. In addition, a considerable proportion of the 380 students enrolled in the Ecclesiastic College (*Kirchliche Hochschule*) in West Berlin come from and may return to the Soviet Zone. This college is maintained by the Church of Berlin-Brandenburg. Preparatory preacher seminaries are maintained by Evangelical-Lutheran Churches in Saxony (Luckendorf), Thuringia (Eisenach), and Mecklenburg (Blücher). In 1950, the Evangelical Churches maintained 40 institutes in the Soviet Zone for the training of religious instructors for school children. There are, however, far too few men entering the ministry. The constant flight from the Zone (1.5) cuts out a large part of the new generation. The lack of young clergymen has led to training preachers without university education or high-school graduation. The theological faculties of the universities suffer greatly from inadequate appointments to the professorial chairs, and from teaching opportunities restricted only to the classroom. However, the young theologians at the universities are not entirely excluded from the benefits of government scholarships (1.9).

None of the six German Catholic theological faculties is situated in the Soviet Zone. Nor does the Catholic Church apparently maintain any seminaries for the training of priests there. However, since the transfer of priests who have been trained in West Germany has been greatly hampered and on occasion forbidden, the Catholic Church created a center of theological studies at the Philosophical Theological College in Erfurt.

The activity of Catholic Orders in the Soviet Zone is sporadic at best. In 1950 the diocese of Saxony had four local religious orders with only 50 members. There were 65 local chapters of female orders with 581 members and 22 novices. In comparison to the past, the diocese had 75 fewer priests in religious orders and 1,557 fewer nuns. A total of 130 houses of female orders had to be closed.

All lay activities of both churches have been fairly severely curtailed, with the partial exemption of charitable enterprises. In 1951 the Lutheran *Innere Mission* maintained 31 of its diacony homes (excluding Berlin). The "Relief

Work of the Evangelical Church in Germany" (*Hilfswerk der EK*), through its Berlin office, extended considerable help to the latter as well as to other church welfare institutions. This aid included making available buildings for religious education, seminars for religious instructors (catechetes and kindergartens, and the reconstruction of destroyed churches). House-to-house collections made for such purposes within the Soviet Zone itself netted 2,215,000 DM-O in 1952.

Despite considerable difficulties, the Protestant churches managed to establish and maintain two Evangelical academies. It is the purpose of these academies to bring people from various walks of life together, regardless of church affiliation, usually for weekend meetings, in order to discuss freely religious as well as social matters. One of them is located in Saxony-Anhalt, with a number of meeting places, and the other in Eisenach. In addition, the Evangelical Academy in West Berlin frequently organizes meetings, at which there are large members of participants from the Soviet Zone.

The activities of the numerous Catholic lay organizations have likewise been greatly reduced. In 1950, a diocesan office of a laymen's organization for Saxony was still maintained in Bautzen. The Catholic welfare organization "Caritas" maintained central offices both in the dioceses of Silesia and Saxony. Presumably, its activities in other dioceses continue.

The membership statistics of the German churches include all who have been baptized, unless an individual expressly and legally refuses such affiliation. Only insignificant minorities resorted to this step even in the Soviet Zone. A large percentage of the SED are also members of churches. The reluctance, or unwillingness, of nominal members to cut themselves off legally from their churches explains the strong difference in the number of nominal church members and the active core of practicing Christians.

From 85 to 95 percent of the children of Protestant parents are baptized. Similarly, at the age of fourteen most baptized children are confirmed as full members of the church and receive their first communion. The great majority of Protestants elect to be married in church, in addition to the obligatory civil marriage. Burial rites again bring most Protestants in contact with their church. In 1948, 89 percent of the deceased Protestants in Thuringia had a church burial, in Saxony 92 percent.

Apart from baptism, confirmation, marriage and burial, only a minority participate in church affairs, with the exception of religious instruction during childhood. It is difficult to appraise the strength of the adult faithful of the Evangelical Churches in the Soviet Zone. Some indication of its strength is given in the figures for participants in communions. They run from 13 to 30 percent in the different provinces. Averages for all Germany amount to 23 percent for the Lutheran churches and not more than 20 percent for the churches of the Old Prussian Union.

The Evangelical churches expect each member to come at least once a year to communion; non-participation, in this respect, does not, however, sever the tie between the church and the individual.

In the Catholic Church the situation is roughly the same. No data are available, but there may be a somewhat higher participation among Catholics.

The strength of the Catholic faithful can be seen from the figures for Catholic participants in the Easter Communion, ranging from 26.6 percent in Saxony, to 40.0 percent in Thuringia. This is considerably below average, which is 52.7 percent for all of Germany. Of course, taking of the Easter Communion is obligatory for Catholics. The fact that children are included in the figures for membership, but not allowed to take communion should be borne in mind in considering all these figures; participation appears lower than it actually is.

How is the wide gap between nominal and active membership to be explained? As was the case in the whole of Germany before 1945 and in West Germany today, nominal church membership entails the liability for payment of church taxes, collected by the government together with other income taxes. In the Soviet Zone, the government, at best, offers information on taxpayers, which allows the churches to assess their members and collect church taxes directly from them. It is doubtful whether all people in the Soviet Zone who have not legally relinquished their church membership are actually paying church taxes. It seems to be the adopted policy of the churches, neither to enforce payment of taxes by civil-law procedures, as they are entitled to, nor to strike non-paying members from the records. As a result, the collection of the church tax has been exceedingly difficult, in part almost impossible. In East Berlin, for example, the customary collection of the church tax was suspended by the fiscal authorities without giving the church any warning or opportunity to adjust itself to the new situation. The congregations have given gladly at church services and door-to-door collections, but these offerings are insufficient. The virtual disappearance of an independent middle class of manufacturers and businessmen has had, of course, a disastrous effect.

The nominal membership of the German churches is distributed over practically all social strata, with Protestantism reaching more extensively into the upper classes. Traditionally, the German Protestant churches are middle class churches, with a certain upper-class lay influence of big business and the landed nobility. In East Germany, the upper-class influences have been eliminated with the extinction of these classes. The churches, however, maintain their middle-class following, though harassed by governmental policies aiming at the eventual nationalization of all private enterprise. Mass flights of employers, independent craftsmen and peasants may have affected the number of active church members. In addition, the process of the secularization of the villages, which has been considerably accelerated by the agricultural policies of the re-

gime, has become a serious source of trouble for the Protestant churches. On the other hand, pressures and persecutions have caused the Protestant faithful to rally more closely around their clergy.

Traditionally, the German Evangelical Churches have had little or no contact with industrial workers. Events since 1933 and especially since 1945, however, have brought a significant change. Prior to 1933, the most prevalent attitude of German workers toward Protestantism was one of indifference, if not hostility and contempt. Religious indifference seems still to be largely prevalent, but it is now combined with a well-meaning tolerance of and, even respect for, churches. In part, this may be due to the changing attitudes of clergymen toward the working classes and their interests, resulting from experience with the National Socialist and Communist regimes. The small minority of workers with pietist tendencies, who before 1933 were largely followers of the small radical Protestant sects, seem now to be predominantly members of the Evangelical Churches.

Traditionally, the Catholic Church in Germany mobilized a substantial part of all the nominally Catholic strata. But it found its most devoted supporters in the ranks of the lower-middle classes among the rural population, and in urban areas among workers in skilled, as well as in unskilled occupations. Presumably, this continues to be the situation in East Germany. It is also likely that the Catholic Church is faced by the same kind of "rural crisis" which confronts it in Western Germany; there is a considerable decline of religious interest among the rural population.

Common difficulties, as well as the extensive intermingling of the two confessions resulting from the influx of refugees, have brought the Evangelical and Catholic Churches into closer contact. They assist each other in many ways, e. g. building facilities for purposes of worship. There are no signs, however, that the *Una Sancta* movement,<sup>109</sup> which flourished for several years in West Germany, has taken hold in East Germany.

There is a striking increase in intermarriage; some Catholic dioceses in 1948 reported very high figures for mixed marriages. The overall average being 295 mixed for 1,000 pure Catholic marriages, they reported 279 mixed marriages for every 1,000 pure Catholic marriages in Saxony. Most Protestant churches in

109 Editors' note: Katholische Form der ökumenischen Bewegung (Catholic form of the Eucumenical Movement), whose central objective is „to serve the unity and sanctity of the church” (der „Einheit und Heiligkeit der Kirche zu dienen“). The movement, which has its origins in the second half of the 20th century, is not a uniform one. In 1969, the *Una Sancta* initiatives merged into the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Ökumenischer Kreise (Committee of Eucumenical Circles, AÖK). In some places, *Una Sancta* circles still exist (for instance in Munich). Cf. Britta Kleinschwärzer-Meister, *Una-Sancta-Bewegung*. In: *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Online at: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-8262\\_rgg4\\_COM\\_025216](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2405-8262_rgg4_COM_025216); 18.4.2022.

the Soviet Zone reported much lower percentages of Protestant-Catholic marriages, in relation to all marriages performed in their parishes during the year 1948, ranging from 7 percent in Mecklenburg to 13 percent in Anhalt. Even so, Protestant-Catholic marriages, are roughly twice as high as those performed in 1933. Accordingly, the tendency toward a greater number of intermarriages, which started after 1933, continued after 1945. The degree of mixed marriages is larger on the Catholic side. It is not possible to be sure about what this Protestant-Catholic lay "rapprochement", namely intermarriage, signifies. It could be an expression of a growing secularization in which, especially, the disapproval of mixed marriage by the Catholic Church becomes more and more ineffective, as the influence of the priesthood upon personal life wanes. But it could also be an expression of a burgeoning conviction, among the laity in both churches, about the essential compatibility of the two faiths, or at least a growing mutual respect. In fact, the relatively high number of intermarriages may result from a combination of these two tendencies.

The relations between the legally recognized religious associations and the government of East Germany are regulated by the Constitution of October 1949. The latter is extensively based upon the provisions of the old Weimar Constitution; however, the separation of State and Church has been made almost complete. "Full freedom of belief and conscience" is guaranteed; the practice of a religion is protected. "There exists no state church"; but the "freedom to unite into religious associations" is guaranteed.<sup>110</sup> Misuse of religious institutions for political purposes is forbidden. Churches remain "corporations of public law" (*Körperschaften des öffentlichen Rechts*), they are entitled to give religious instruction to children in public school buildings and through teachers selected by them. Property and similar rights of the religious associations are guaranteed insofar as destined for purposes of worship, instruction and welfare. Parents decide about the religious affiliation of their children; from the fourteenth year on children may decide for themselves. In order to leave a religious association of public law a person must declare so orally before a court or by a notarized written declaration.

The constitution of East Germany incorporated the substantially identical provisions of the five *Länder* constitutions which had been adopted between December 1946 and March 1947. Aside from the *faits accomplis* produced by the orders of the Soviet occupation authorities, the elimination of religious in-

110 Editors' note: Cf. in this regard: Die Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Textausgabe, Deutscher Zentralverlag, Berlin (East) 1949, pp. 19f. (articles 41 and 43).

struction from the curriculum of the public schools had been legalized through the “laws concerning the democratization of the German school”, enacted by the parliaments of the five *Länder* in May and June 1946 (1.9).<sup>111</sup> The respect for every religious conviction and ethical worldview had been proclaimed in the five-point program of the four “anti-fascist-democratic” parties in July 1945. The actual efforts of these policies are difficult to gauge.

It is remarkable that the occupation regime of the Soviet Zone and subsequently the government of the DDR were quite unsuccessful in their repeated attempts to gather local clergymen behind their policies. The National Socialists had their “German Christians”, a minority movement which nonetheless gained, with the help of the government, control of the official Protestant church apparatus. The “progressive preachers” of the DDR have remained a handful of outsiders and nowhere have been able to gain more than occasional local influence. In 1950, it was estimated that approximately 150 Lutheran pastors, out of 6,000, had been attracted to the Communist side, and but one out of 2,000 Catholic priests.

During the first years of Russian occupation, not only was a peaceful co-existence of the churches and the emerging social system possible, but actual cooperation was practiced. The churches accepted the clearer separation of state and church affairs, including the elimination of certain previously established financial obligations of the government toward the churches in return of the recognition of the principle of the freedom of worship.

On the other hand, the active cooperation of the churches in areas of welfare and relief, especially for the refugees from East Prussian provinces, etc., was very welcome to the regime. And while no church-sponsored youth organizations were permitted, the churches were allowed to cater to the religious needs of young people within their parish work. The only youth organization officially permitted in the Zone being the FDJ (1.9) representatives of both the Protestant and the Catholic Churches at first entered the leading bodies of this organization. In a similar way, representatives of the churches participated in the directing bodies of the Cultural Association (1.8). But soon tensions developed, leading to a domination of all welfare, youth and cultural organizations by the SED and the resignation of all official church representatives. Nevertheless, the co-existence of the churches and the occupation regime remained on the whole a peaceful affair, until 1949.

111 Editors' note: Cf., for instance, Gesetz zur Demokratisierung der deutschen Schule. In: Landesverwaltung Sachsen, Abteilung Schulwesen (ed.), Die demokratische Schule, Heft 1, pp. 3–6. Can be found online at <https://portal.dnb.de/bookviewer/view/1046524127#page/n0/mode/2up>; 19.6.2022.

After the establishment of the DDR, the regime adopted an intransigent attitude. The churches then undertook to combat the increase of totalitarian pressures.

At Pentecost services in 1949, the Protestant Bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg, Dibelius, attacked the practices of a certain department of the People's Police, likening them to Gestapo methods. In July 1949, the Pope ordered the excommunication of Catholics who joined Communist parties. Catholic authorities in the Soviet Zone announced a cautious application of this order.

From this period on, the tensions mounted visibly; leading as early as the fall of 1949 to protests of the churches. In 1950 the government attempted to outmaneuver the leading bodies of the churches by organizing a series of conferences to which local preachers and priests were directly invited without however, achieving much success.

In December 1950, the government of the province of Brandenburg demanded that the seat of the bishop and consistorium of the Berlin-Brandenburg Protestant Church be transferred from West Berlin to the city of Brandenburg in the Soviet Zone. Despite threats of financial retaliations, the church resisted this demand successfully.

At the beginning of 1951, county committees of the Communist-controlled National Front of Democratic Germany attempted to influence the elections for the presbyterial bodies of the Protestant parishes, and to sponsor their own candidates. Again, this Communist effort was not successful. Another great clash occurred in early summer of 1951, when the SED put the local parish preachers and church members under considerable pressure to support actively the referendum against the remilitarization of West Germany. The churches not only complained to the government about these methods but simultaneously made their position clear from all pulpits.

Until the summer of 1952, however, most conflicts were local affairs and occurred in regions of marginal state and church interests. The government of the DDR seemed not to be interested in an open and total conflict. A sharp change of the church policies in East Germany occurred in the summer of 1952 with the proclamation of the "construction of socialism". A systematic attempt was made to reduce the activities of the churches to that in the other satellite countries.

The direct attack upon the churches started with strong measures against the *Junge Gemeinde* (Youth Congregation), comprising the young members of the parishes who gathered in small informal groups for discussion and devotional purposes. Although the *Junge Gemeinde* was not an organization, it was declared to be such by the SED subject to persecution as an "illegal organization". The churches protested and pointed out that the *Junge Gemeinde* constituted an integral part of the work of the churches among young Christians,

guaranteed by the SZ constitution. The SED opened a campaign of vilification and terror against the members of the *Junge Gemeinde*.<sup>112</sup> Attendance of East Germans at the meeting of the Lutheran World Federation and at the Evangelical Church Convention (*Kirchentag*) in Stuttgart was forbidden. In July 1952, Walter Ulbricht demanded that the churches abandon their “neutrality” in the conflict between West and East Germany.

In the fall and winter of 1952/53, the campaign was intensified. Main targets were the Protestant student preachers and the Protestant student groups at the universities, as well as the students at secondary schools who belonged to the *Junge Gemeinde*. In 1953 from 30 percent to 60 percent of high school students were said to have been members of the *Junge Gemeinde*. Many student preachers were arrested not only for alleged political transgressions but for actions directly connected with their ecclesiastic duties. Many members of the *Junge Gemeinde* were excluded from the secondary schools, the estimated number being 3,000. Despite this pressure the *Junge Gemeinde* was maintained.

In April 1953, the Communist Youth magazine *Junge Welt* called the *Junge Gemeinde* a front for warmongers, saboteurs and American spies. The Bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg demanded the prosecution of the editors as slanderers, but the Attorney General refused.

In March, the government began to confiscate all welfare institutions, rest homes, etc. belonging to the churches. Locally, rooms in schools and village inns which had served as temporary places of worship were closed, or their use denied to the congregations. Premier Grotewohl at the end of May invited 13 “progressive” preachers who sympathized with the regime to a meeting where further measures were discussed. However, the government suddenly reversed its general tactics with the proclamation of the new course on June 9, 1953. On the following day, a conference took place between Grotewohl and the church authorities, leading to a quick settlement of the conflict.<sup>113</sup> The government

112 Editors' note: Cf. Hans Köhler, *Der Kampf gegen die Junge Gemeinde*. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 9 (5 May 1953), p. 138.

113 Editors' note: Alongside Otto Grotewohl, Otto Nuschke, Volksbildungsminister (Minister for Public Education) Paul Wandel, Staatssicherheitsminister (Minister for National Security) Wilhelm Zaisser and Artos Grötschel (Staatssekretariat des Innern; Secretariat of State of the Interior) took part as representatives of the state, as well as the bishops Friedrich Karl Otto Dibelius, Moritz Mitzenheim, Hugo Hahn (Saxony), Niklot Beste (Mecklenburg), Ludolf Hermann Müller (church province Saxony) and Karl von Scheven (Evangelische Kirche Pommern), together with Oberkirchenrat (member of the High Consistory) Waldemar Schröter and Oberkonsistorialrat (Chief Consistorial Councilor) Hans-Joachim Fränkel, Generalsuperintendent (General Superintendent) Friedrich-Wilhelm Gustav Adolf Daniel Theodor Krummacher and Probst (Provost) Heinrich Grüber as representatives of the Evangelical Church. Cf.



agreed to allow continuation of the work of the *Junge Gemeinde*; it promised the reinstatement of the expelled students of secondary schools and universities; it announced its intentions of establishing adequate facilities for religious instruction to school children; it agreed to return the confiscated property; it promised a general review of all arrests and of sentences against preachers and other leading church members; and it agreed to restore payment of the state subsidies to the churches. Most of these promises have been kept and the concessions made.

In the wake of its conciliatory policies, the government of the DDR granted permission to the Protestant churches to organize a *Kirchentag*, a mass gathering of believers, from all parts of the country, both the West and the East. The *Kirchentag* took place in Leipzig between 9 and 11 July, 1954. 65,000 church delegates were among the 300–500,000 Protestants who attended this great congress.

However, the respite was temporary. Soon the regime returned to a policy of restriction and interference. Only the strategy changed; instead of assaulting the churches frontally, divisive tactics are to force the churches into submission. The general attitude of the churches, of course, has not changed: resistance against the regime on religious grounds persists. But people, in general, have become weary. The elan of the *Junge Gemeinde* during the earlier struggle with the regime is gone; what remains of it seems very subdued. Especially where people had set their hopes for a change upon the reunification of the country, their disappointment is likely to lead to apathy.

In the spring of 1955, another campaign was launched, that of the ceremony of “consecrating youth” the *Jugendweihe*, which was to be a secular substitute for confirmation. On 17 June, 1954, the Society for the Spreading of Scientific Knowledge had been set up. It was modeled on a similar society founded in 1947. Like its model the society was mainly concerned with atheistic propaganda among the adult population on a “scientific” level. In early 1955 this organization was charged with the carrying through of the *Jugendweihe*. This “initiation rite” was described in *Neues Deutschland* as “a festive ceremony to prepare young people for their departure from grade school into the life of an adult”. Although children were permitted to participate in confirmation as long as they were willing at the same time to participate in the youth rites, the churches offered strong resistance, and were successful in preventing many of their children from participating in the rites.

The estimates of how many youths participated in the youth rites in the spring of 1955 are contradictory. They range from “scarcely more than 15,000” in the whole zone to “as many as 65 percent in some localities”. Official Soviet Zone statistics run from 31 percent of eligible students in Leipzig to 54 percent in the small town of Meuselwitz. The numbers of students registered in the *Jugendweihe* courses are presumably particularly unfavorable for the regime, since only a few statistics have been published. According to the estimate of the *KgU-Archiv* (8 March, 1955)<sup>114</sup> about 10 percent of eligible youths were taking part in the course preparatory to *Jugendweihe* in the countryside, and about 30 percent of the city youths. Obviously, the churches in the DDR are now involved in a hidden war of attrition, the consequences of which may be, in the long run, more serious than those of the open church struggle.

Even in those towns where sufficient numbers of young people could be brought to attend the *Jugendweihe*, it was really a gathering of scattered children from fairly large districts, with a substantial proportion drawn from older age-groups. The state’s *Jugendweihe* hardly left a mark: the number of children taking confirmation classes did not diminish, nor did any noticeable number take time off from regular studies. Indeed, the state’s propaganda for the *Jugendweihe* and the church’s resolute refusal to recognize it rather enhanced the significance of the confirmation. Parents and children were obliged to take a clear position, and the power of tradition and opposition showed itself sufficiently strong to surmount timidity, even in circles that were not close to the church. After the first show of anxiety, there was everywhere very great exaltation and devotion at the confirmation ceremonies. In 1955–56, however, *Jugendweihe* propaganda was pushed to an even higher pitch; the pressures on children, parents and teachers have been increased as part of a general intensification of the struggle against religion.<sup>115</sup>

Religious instruction is the point where church and state clash; for the church is largely dependent upon using rooms in the state schools for its teaching; at the same time the school is the keystone of the totalitarian state (1.9). It is true that the government has permitted two hours of religious teaching a week to be held before or after regular school hours. But it is constantly on the look-out for ways of erecting difficulties. Schedules are constantly being changed; classrooms are unexpectedly discovered to be already in use; the children’s time is claimed for other tasks. All this, together with educating the children in a materialistic view

114 Editors’ note: This source could not be identified or reviewed.

115 Editors’ note: As early as five years after the implementation of *Jugendweihe*, ca. 80 percent of graduating classes took part, later almost 100 percent did. Cf. Holger Kremser, *Der Rechtsstatus der evangelischen Kirchen*, pp. 164 f.; Detlef Urban/Hans Willi Weitzen, *Jugend ohne Bekenntnis? 30 Jahre Konfirmation und Jugendweihe im anderen Deutschland 1954–1984*, Berlin (West) 1984, pp. 27 f.

of the world, makes the work of the teachers of religion (*Katecheten*, as they are called) difficult and demanding to the point of exhaustion. Nervous breakdowns and similar signs of strain are alarmingly frequent. In the upper grades, it has for the most part become impossible to maintain instruction in religion worthy of the name. On the other hand, in various places in the Soviet Zone, the Lutheran Church has had considerable success with weekend meetings between selected groups of the best of the older pupils with Christian scholars in their field of interest (atomic physicists, psychologists, art historians, etc.).

The religious instructor's position is made hard by far too heavy duties, frequently taken on in addition to his own proper work, and by wholly inadequate means of transportation (bicycle or motorcycle) in covering considerable distances. However, in the country, unlike the towns, the religious instructors find a great deal of understanding and support amongst the schoolteachers, who are themselves in thinly disguised opposition to the dictatorship.

Altogether, the church position in the Soviet Zone, as in the other satellites, is more and more difficult. The persecutions in the early part of 1954, made great inroads into the Sunday schools in East Berlin and in the entire Soviet Zone, which so far have not been made good. The gaps have been caused not only by dereliction of the faithful, but also by the large number of refugees to West Germany, especially amongst the older pupils. At the moment no direct obstacles are being put in the way of the Sunday schools, but every decree that deals, for example, with leisure time, has been interpreted in such a way as to vex, hinder and interrupt.

As far as services in churches or church buildings are concerned, obstructions occur only occasionally, as when preachers from other districts are refused travel permits. In the towns, interference with churchgoing is rare; in the country, this is more frequent on account of deadlines for the delivery of various production quotas. Such pressure arouses the opposition of the peasants and sends them to church more often; larger numbers take communion; collections are higher. However, these same country areas report that many people stay away from service despite their genuine Christian convictions, out of fear. At the same time, those Vicars of Bray who try to fit their sermons to the political system, are unmistakably boycotted by their congregations.

Missionary work in the Eastern Zone is very narrowly restricted to such activities as working among the aged and infirm. A certain amount of missionary activity is nonetheless carried on amongst the people, but it is confined to the church's own premises. Little is heard of it in the new industrial centers, with their social tensions and alarming moral decline. All missionary activities are constantly threatened and spied upon.

The financial difficulties of the churches are very great. They depend upon outside help. The salaries of all church workers are quite insufficient, in spite of

occasional gifts and supplementary allowances to families with children. This distress is particularly great among the young religious instructors, or *Katecheten*; it often proves impossible to continue employing properly qualified people, because they can enter other professions where they are properly paid. Lack of funds has also prevented the rebuilding of churches in damaged towns, and the building of new churches in recently established settlements. The problem of publications is discussed in the next section (1.11).

The church in the Soviet Zone exists in a fundamentally hostile environment. If the SED regime is to attain that full measure of totalitarian dictatorship to which it aspires, the ethical norms and traditional values which find expression in religion will have to be obliterated. Relations between the church and the regime have been uneasy from the start. The government's specific policies have been dictated by tactical considerations. At no time, however, has the church been able to function as it would in a free society. After a period of apparent accommodation during the "new course", the government has once again taken the offensive against the church. Religious railroad missions have been denounced as centers of espionage for the West. Funds paid into the account of the EK from West Germany have recently been stopped as "illegal currency transactions". It is freely rumored that the state subsidy to the church will be further reduced and eventually curtailed.

The future of religion in the Soviet Zone cannot be taken for granted. Although the church has demonstrated remarkable powers, the regime expects that when "objective social conditions" have been altered, i. e., when socialism has been built, religion will wither and die. It may be expected that the regime will attempt to help history along in familiar Communist fashion, by further restricting and harassing the practice of religion.

### 1.11 Public Information [*Herbert Kundler*]

The system of public information in the Soviet Zone is part of the machinery of government. For this reason, it differs basically in structure and function from the systems of information in the democratic societies.

Its function is twofold. First, it is supposed to serve the education of the masses in "socialist consciousness". In this its task is similar to that of the schools, mass organizations (1.6) and cultural activities (1.8). Second, it has to make known, justify and popularize the contemporary course of the policy of the USSR and of the SED.

The structure of the system of public information corresponds to its function. The instruments of information are almost exclusively the property of the state and the SED. The content and the form of the system of public informa-

tion are centrally directed and supervised on various levels by the party and the secret police.

Only one source of information, usually distorted, cannot be so controlled, and that is rumor, it is an important source of information in any totalitarian state, though it is hard to determine how important. It spreads because official information is withheld. On certain topics, such as catastrophes in the Soviet Zone, information is suppressed as a matter of principle. Rumor is influential if it helps to interpret at least slight signs indicating something unusual in the air. However, rumor is sometimes spread by the regime, if that is desirable. The situation is particularly advantageous for the growth of rumors when something entirely unexpected happens and there are no prescriptions from Moscow as to how to deal with it. In this case, local authorities (even at the highest levels) have shown a tendency to withhold a clear-cut statement concerning the situation until directives arrive. Consequently, no official pronouncements are made, and the population compensates with enthusiastic rumor. If skillfully and imaginatively exploited by Western agencies, rumor can be an effective means for strengthening the anti-Communist morale of the population, both in the period of crisis by working with naturally developing popular sentiment and rumor, and after the crisis by ridiculing the disorientation of the "leading cadres" before Moscow spoke.

The central office of direction and for party control of the system of public information in the Soviet Zone is the department of Agitation in the Central Committee of the SED. Fred Oelßner, head of the department of propaganda of the Central Committee of the SED, is also responsible for the activity of the Department of Agitation. The task of the Agitation Department is the planning, direction, and control of propaganda in the sense of Western usage; the task of the Department of Propaganda is the Communist indoctrination on a higher level of sophistication, principally within the SED, the apparatus of the state, the mass organizations, and the People's Police.

The central organ of the SED, *Neues Deutschland*, is under the direct supervision of the department of Agitation. This newspaper serves as the general model for SED publications and serves as political guideposts for those media of communication which are not directly under the supervision of the SED. In May 1949, Otto Grotewohl, chairman of the Council of Ministers, delegated the task of leadership to the party paper in the following words: "The task of *Neues Deutschland* is, in closest cooperation with the politburo of the party, to make known the voice of the leadership of the party."<sup>116</sup>

116 Otto Grotewohl, Die neue Aufgabe. In: Neues Deutschland, 3 May 1949, p. 1.

The political line of *Neues Deutschland*, and with it that of almost all Soviet Zone publications, is daily laid down in a press conference in the Department of Agitation. Usually, the conference is directed by the responsible Secretary from the Central Committee itself. In this conference the editors of *Neues Deutschland* as well as the program directors of the East German radio system (*Deutscher Demokratischer Rundfunk*), the editors of the SED press service and delegated press officials receive their directives. The Press Bureau in the office of the Minister President directs the press which is not immediately subordinate to the SED. Camouflaged as a government department, it is the field office of the Department of Agitation. Fred Oelßner outlined the task of the Press Bureau as follows: "... to coordinate the work of our democratic press, including all field editorial offices of the SED press as well as those of the press of other parties and of the non-party press, in order to avoid conflicts and to assure a correct distribution of tasks and roles according to the importance of the media in question."<sup>117</sup>

In addition to the channels of direction mentioned so far, the monopolistic state news agency ADN is important. For the press and the radio are allowed to bring only such foreign news as is transmitted to them through ADN after prior scrutiny.

The daily directives to press and radio are supplemented by the establishment of editorial policies in so-called *Perspektivpläne*, which have to be submitted by the radio and the press subordinated to the SED, for a month or for a quarter ahead; these plans indicate topics of emphasis (and forbidden themes) for the designated period. The *Perspektivplan* of *Neues Deutschland*, which is worked out in cooperation with the Department of Agitation, is sent as a model plan to all editors of the press directly supervised by the SED. These editors, in turn, submit their "perspective plans" through the SED office cells to the Department of Agitation. Additional control of editorial activities is exercised through the members of the SED office cells, through the local party leadership, and through agents of the SSD (Security police) and the Soviet MVD. The Department of Agitation in the SED Central Committee receives only partial reports on the supervision of the system of information and the persons active in this system. The complete material of these reports is submitted to a department of the MVD stationed at the Soviet embassy in Berlin. This department cooperates closely with the Department of Agitation. The secretary of the Central Committee in charge of this department is responsible to the MVD department.

117 Editors' note: Quoted in Herbert W. Kundler/Ulrich Heinemann-Rufer/Christamaria Selle, *Das öffentliche Informationswesen der Sowjetzone Deutschlands*. In: APuZ, 6 (1956) 18, pp. 281–294, here 281.

## 1.11.1 Press

There are 39 daily papers with a total circulation of 15.3 million and 23 weeklies with a circulation of 4,615,000, published in the Soviet Zone. All told, 560 press publications, two of them in the Sorbian language, originating in the Soviet Zone are sold there. Distribution is handled by the German Postal Department which annually publishes a newspaper list containing the papers licensed for distribution. This list includes about 10,000 titles. Especially barred from distribution are the daily papers of the non-totalitarian Western press. Permitted for mailing are: (a) the press publications of the Soviet Zone, (b) some professional and church publications from West Berlin and West Germany, (c) press publications of the USSR, of the People's Democracies and Red China which are published partly in a foreign language and partly in German (d) Communist or Communist-directed press publications of the West. Little private use has been made of the opportunity to receive foreign press publications. Persons receiving the publications listed under (b) encounter difficulties.

Two groups of dailies must be distinguished: the papers under the direct supervision of the SED or its mass organizations and those of the so-called bourgeois parties. As far as the character of political information and its value for determining public opinion is concerned, it is a distinction without a real difference. The so-called bourgeois papers differ from the SED papers not in their propaganda aims but in their *form* of agitation, which appeals in language and association to bourgeois interests and thinking. Consider the following appraisal by the Soviet Zone CDU: "Socialism can only be established by following the way indicated by Marxism-Leninism. This means for us friends of the Union in the area of the press that we must pay very close attention to the demands of the responsible organs of the SED, the paths which they indicate, the criticism which they offer, and the urgent tasks on which they place major emphasis."<sup>118</sup>

See also the minutes of the meeting of the Cottbus district executive committee of LDP on April 15, 1954, which read as follows: "When I ask our members to read our press I am always told that our newspapers bring the same things as those of the SED."<sup>119</sup>

During the first period of sovietization the circulation of the bourgeois press greatly exceeded that of the SED papers. This ratio has been reversed, the total circulation of the SED daily press has been estimated at 1 3/4 to 2 million cop-

118 Editors' note: Quoted in Kundler/Heinemann-Rufer/Selle, *Das öffentliche Informationswesen*, p. 282.

119 Editors' note: From the session protocol of the Cottbus district executive of LDP on 15 April 1954, quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 282.

ies, the total circulation of the CDU press has been estimated at 182,000 copies, that of the LDP at 190,000 copies, and that of the NDP at 162,000 copies.

Numerous means are available to drive out the bourgeois press, which, with the increasing standardization and more primitive layouts, claims less reader interest anyway. Above all, this is accomplished through the arbitrary cuts in the quota of rationed newsprint. Since such cuts occur frequently, the number of pages of the so-called bourgeois papers changes from month to month. Sometimes they cannot be issued daily. Another technique of harassment is the boycott of the printing offices of the bourgeois newspapers by other publishing houses, which leads to bankruptcy, or, on the other hand, the excessive use of the printing offices for other orders which then exceed the capacity of the printing presses and make it impossible to print the newspaper. Such impediments forced a number of bourgeois papers to discontinue publication or to reduce the area of distribution. However, they are still tolerated because of their bitter and cultural sections, and they bring the SED political line to segments of the population, sceptical of the regime, and thus hard to reach by party publications.

The techniques for harassing the bourgeois press are complemented by an effective method for stimulating distribution of the SED press. Since the Postal Department newspaper distribution agencies handle newspaper distribution and also supply the stands, it can easily be determined which newspapers are subscribed to by the individual citizen of the Soviet Zone. The SED checks particularly on cancellations of newspaper subscriptions. A memorandum of August 1953 of the distribution department of *Neues Deutschland* indicates the method used: "We have asked the Minister for Post and Telegraph to direct the PVZ to send the subscription cards of those subscribers who have cancelled their subscriptions to the responsible county post office so that you may receive them there. You are sufficiently familiar with the further processing through the county office and with the follow-up to be used with the cancelling subscriber."<sup>120</sup>

While this maintenance of subscriptions by intimidation secures the status quo, periodic circulation campaigns serve to gain new subscribers. Individuals, party cells, plants, People's Police units, consumer co-ops, HO stores, schools, law courts, athletic and other organizations pledge themselves to secure a certain number of subscriptions. In numerous cases, if the pledged goal is not reached, the plant, or cell, as the case may be, assumes the costs for the non-existent subscribers and reports to the party the achievement of the quota. Because of these methods of securing and maintaining subscriptions, it is not possible to draw any reliable inference as to the actual number of readers from the circulation figures.

120 Editors' note: Quoted in: *Ibid.*, p. 283.



The elimination of the bourgeois press in favor of the press directly subordinated to the SED should not be evaluated exclusively as a propagandistic change of emphasis by the Department of Agitation. It probably is closely connected with the financial needs of the SED which finances its apparatus partly from the significant surplus profits of its press. As a business system the press is organized into the largest press combine in Germany, *Zentrag*,<sup>121</sup> a corporation with limited liability.

*Zentrag* has existed since October 29, 1945 as a so-called Union of Publicly owned Plants. According to the Berlin Trade Register (- 62/64 HRB 4010/ -) the economic enterprise of the SED Central Committee is "the central printing office, purchasing and revision corporation with limited liability. The object of the enterprise is the coordination of the economic units, especially the printing offices, publishing houses, and similar units, for the purpose of acquisition of raw and subsidiary materials as well as the means of production, the supervision of all units through expert supervisors, acquisition of the means for further enlargement of the units, as well as participation in such businesses and companies as are suited to further the economic interests of the joint units."<sup>122</sup>

The major stockholders of *Zentrag* are Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl. In addition to all party-owned publishing houses there are united in *Zentrag* about 90 printing offices, the two largest paper mills of the Soviet Zone, the Plauen machine corporation, the bookstores of the "people's-owned" book trade, and the movie distributors. *Zentrag* also controls the *Deutsche Buch Ex- und Import GmbH*, of Leipzig, which has the monopoly on the import and export of books and magazines, as well as the *Leipziger Kommissions-Gesellschaft* which holds a monopoly on the distribution of the products of the publishing trade to the book retailers. Furthermore Dewag,<sup>123</sup> the party-owned publicity agency which holds the publicity monopoly, is a subsidiary of *Zentrag*. Also closely united with *Zentrag* is the SED party publishing house, *J. H. W. DIETZ NACHF. GmbH*, which is subordinated to the Department of Propaganda of the SED Central Committee.<sup>124</sup> It publishes millions of copies of the Communist classics as well

121 Editors' note: Zentrale Druckerei-, Einkaufs- und Revisionsgesellschaft mbH.

122 Editors' note: Quoted in Kundler/Heinemann-Rufer/Selle, *Das öffentliche Informationswesen*, p. 283.

123 Editors' note: Deutsche Werbe- und Anzeigengesellschaft.

124 Editors' note: Cf. Kundler/Heinemann-Rufer/Selle, *Das öffentliche Informationswesen*, p. 283. The mentioned publishing house Dietz, which is named after a Karl Dietz from Rudolstadt, was founded by SED to suggest a continuity with the social democratic publishing house Dietz, established in 1881. Only after reunification, a court decision was reached that the business, today belonging to Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, must operate under the name „Karl Dietz Verlag, Berlin“, so that confusion with the „historical“ publishing house J. H. W. Dietz Nachf. (based in Bonn) may be ruled out. See online at <https://www.dietz-verlag.de/historie.htm>; 18.4.2022.

as the speeches, essays and writings of the party leaders, and party resolutions (*Dokumente der SED*) and other material for indoctrination.

*Zentrag* employs 35,000 people. Its plan is approved by the Central Committee of the SED independent of the government's planning committee. Before the annual financial report is made, up to 35 percent of the net receipts of the various *Zentrag* units are turned over to the SED Central Committee. In 1953, the SED Central Committee received about DM-O 50,000,000 in this manner. The SED thus not only safeguards the sale of its unpopular press products through monopolistic and terroristic practices, but it also finances party activities with its profits. To a lesser degree this method has also been allowed to the bourgeois parties for financing their party activities. Thus, there exists *VOB Union*, an economic amalgamation of the CDU press publishing houses and printing plants; the *VOB Aufwärts*, an amalgamation of five LDP newspapers, three LDP-owned and six "people's-owned" printing plants; and the *VOB National* of the National Democratic Party with six newspapers and four printing houses.

Together with the ever-growing displacement of professional old-style journalists, the *Association of the German Press (VDP)* laid down principles and directives for the journalistic profession on March 27, 1950. This resolution demanded that in the future the editors of the Soviet Zone should be recruited from among workers and peasants. At the University of Leipzig an Institute of Journalism was founded to train journalists from among worker and peasant students and to give additional courses for party journalists in order to raise their educational level. Since 1954 it has been obligatory for every journalist of the Soviet Zone to pass an examination at this institute. Only the passing of this examination gives one the right to use the title "editor" and to receive the corresponding salary.

The introduction of the so-called people's correspondents has played an important role in displacing the old-style journalists. People's correspondents are regular authors of letters to the editor. Their reports usually deal with local matters. They serve as newspaper agents in plants, and organizational cells, in the rural areas, and in training and educational institutions. Some of the people's correspondents who report from the schools are only ten or eleven years old. The people's correspondents are paid by the line, in addition to their regular income which as a rule they earn as workers or office employees. *Neues Deutschland* has about 1,000 people's correspondents. *Freiheit* Halle has about 1,700, the *Märkische Volksstimme* and the *Magdeburg Volksstimme* about 1,500 each. Other newspapers average from 200 to 500 people's correspondents. The people's correspondents' movement is supposed to become one of the mainstays of the new-style journalism.

Another product of this new-style journalism is the plant and village newspapers. In May 1955 they numbered 875 and totaled about 1,940,000 copies. Plant newspapers alone are issued in 325 plants with a total edition of 1.5 million copies. The political responsibility for the plant newspapers is carried by the leadership of the SED plant cells.

There are no essential differences among the press publications of the Soviet Zone. Centrally directed and controlled, the daily political and ideological publications of the Soviet Zone are uniform. Differences result only from the various formal means. Since the introduction of the new course in June 1953, however, some publications were permitted to appear which appealed more simply to the tastes of the public, with less emphasis on indoctrination. The most prominent of these is *Das Magazin*, published since January 1954, which tries to avoid political subjects as much as possible and to approximate the Western type of entertainment magazine. Various public organizations have specialized house organs. All of them, however, contain the same political themes presented on different levels of sophistication and in party jargon (1.4). Attempts are also made to adapt newspapers to local traditions, such as utilizing popular local legendary figures. Lists of the Soviet Zone dailies and the most important non-daily publications follow:

The Daily Newspapers of the Soviet Zone, as of June 1, 1954

No.	Title	Publisher	Location	Circulation
1.	Tägliche Rundschau and Rundschau am Montag	Soviet military administration (on July 1, 1955, ceased publication)	Berlin	200,000 (in 1945-48, about one million)
2.	Neues Deutschland and Vorwärts (Monday section)	SED	Berlin	400,000
3.	Neue Zeit	CDU	Berlin	65,000
4.	Der Morgen	LDP	Berlin	60,000
5.	National-Zeitung	NDP	Berlin	60,000
6.	Bauern-Echo	DBD (Democratic Peasants' Party)	Berlin	90,000
7.	Tribüne	FDGB	Berlin	200,000
8.	Junge Welt	FDJ	Berlin	150,000
9.	Berliner Zeitung	"non-partisan", but under the influence of the SED	Berlin	120,000
10.	BZ am Abend	same	Berlin	180,000

Brandenburg:				
11.	Lausitzer Rundschau	SED	Cottbus	90,000
12.	Märkische Volkstimme	SED	Potsdam	110,000
13.	Neuer Tag	SED	Frankfurt	
14.	Märkische Union	CDU	Potsdam	13,000
15.	Brandenburgische Neueste Nachrichten	NDP	Potsdam	30,000
Mecklenburg:				
16.	Freie Erde	SED	Neubrandenburg	} 220,000
17.	Ostsee-Zeitung	SED	Rostock	
18.	Schweriner Volkszeitung	SED	Schwerin	
19.	Der Demokrat	CDU	Schwerin	18,000
20.	Norddeutsche Zeitung	LDP	Schwerin	12,000
21.	Norddeutsche Neueste Nachrichten	NDP	Rostock	10,000
Saxony:				
22.	Freie Presse	SED	Zwickau	} 400,000
23.	Leipziger Volkszeitung	SED	Leipzig	
24.	Sächsische Zeitung	SED	Dresden	
25.	Volksstimme	SED	Chemnitz (Karl-Marx-Stadt)	
26.	Die Union	CDU	Dresden	35,000
27.	Sächsisches Tagesblatt	LDP	Dresden	50,000
28.	Sächsische Neueste Nachrichten	NDP	Dresden	24,000
29.	Nowa Doba (Noviny serbskeho luda)	“non-partisan”, but under the influence of the SED; Sorb-language newspaper	Bautzen	10–12,000 <sup>1</sup>

Saxony-Anhalt:				
30.	Freiheit	SED	Halle	} 250,000
31.	Volksstimme	SED	Magdeburg	
32.	Der Neue Weg	CDU	Halle	28,000
33.	Liberal-Demokratische Zeitung	LDP	Halle	40,000
34.	Mitteldeutsche Neueste Nachrichten	NDP	Halle	8,000
Thuringia:				
35.	Das Freie Wort	SED	Suhl	} 200,000
36.	Das Volk	SED	Erfurt	
37.	Volkswacht	SED	Gera	
38.	Thüringer Tagesblatt	CDU	Weimar	23,000
39.	Thüringische Landeszeitung	LDP	Weimar	28,000
40.	Thüringer Neueste Nachrichten	NDP	Weimar	30,000

#### Most Important Non-daily Periodicals of the Soviet Zone

No.	Title	Character	Frequency of issuance
1.	Wochenpost	Political & entertainment	Weekly
2.	Das Magazin	Entertainment, somewhat political	Weekly
3.	Sport-Revue	Sports, but political	
4.	Filmspiegel	Movies, also political	Biweekly
5.	Neues Leben	Cultural journal of the FDJ	Monthly
6.	Freie Welt	Organ of the Society for German-Soviet Friendship	Semi-monthly
7.	Sonntag	Organ of the Kulturbund (Cultural League) highly political	Weekly
8.	Neue Berliner Illustrierte	Illustrated magazine; political	Weekly
9.	Zeit im Bild	Illustrated magazine; political; SED-published	Biweekly

10.	Illustrierte Rundschau	Illustrated magazine; political; published by Soviet military administration	Biweekly
11.	Eulenspiegel	Political satire	
12.	Einheit	Theoretical organ of the SED	Monthly
13.	Neuer Weg	Organ of the Central Committee of the SED for Party Workers	Biweekly
14.	Die Volkspolizei	Police journal, mostly concerned with political matters	Biweekly
15.	Der Politarbeiter	Political-theoretical organ of the Garrisoned People's Police	Monthly
16.	Der Kämpfer	Popular paper of the Garrisoned People's Police (divisional papers are also issued)	Three to four times per week
17.	Der Grenzpolizist	Paper for the frontier police	

Source: Kampfgruppe gegen Unmenschlichkeit (ed.), *Die Presse in der sowjetisch besetzten Zone Deutschlands*, KgU-Archiv, 5/55, p. 7-11. Editors' note: Cf. also Karl W. Fricke, *Monopolisierte Meinungsbildung*. In: SBZ-Archiv, 5 (1954) 11 (June 5, 1954), pp. 162-164, here 163.

<sup>1</sup> Editors' note: Estimated by the authors, data not given in the source.

A number of professional publications and some religious periodicals are also issued. From Berlin, various underground and propaganda publications originating in West Germany reach a segment of the population (e. g. the satiric monthly *Tarantel* and publications of the Social Democratic Party, some of these are disguised as *Einheit!*). How significant these are is hard to say.

The importance of the state news service ADN for the centralized direction of the Soviet Zone press has been mentioned above in connection with the censoring of all foreign news by ADN. However, ADN is not only the monopoly agency for foreign news; it is also the main source for commemorative articles for national and international Communist holidays, and for the feature services of the USSR and the people's democracies. ADN is required to give monthly reports to Moscow on the placement of these articles. Since April 1953 ADN has supplied a Soviet Zone feature service which is distributed by the Foreign Office to foreign communist countries. ADN has a permanent staff of about

800. Staff turnover in positions of political trust is remarkably high. From 1948 to 1953 alone, 42 ADN editors were arrested or fled to West Berlin.

### 1.11.2 Radio and Television

As in the case of the press, the structure of radio and television in the Soviet Zone reflects the special function of the East German system of information. The Department of Agitation of the SED Central Committee is the central office for direction and party control; but because the SED does not wish to have as its organ, radio and television, they are formally subordinated to the government, i. e. to the press bureau of the Prime Minister. The legal representative of the program, studio, and technical organization of radio and television is the so-called State Radio Committee, a twelve-man board. Chairman of the committee is a former emigrant to Russia, Kurt Heiß.

The radio of the German Democratic Republic had three daily broadcasting services with a total length of 63 hours which are relayed over 14 middle wave, 10 FM, 3 short wave, and 1 long wave station in the winter of 1955-6. In addition to the Berlin studio, 15 regional studios headed by the Leipzig studio, contribute 20 two hour and twenty minute local programs. The television system, likewise attached to the State Radio Committee, was established at the end of 1952. Contrary to all plans, it is developing slowly and is still in the experimental stage; it has little significance. However, by distribution of the television receivers to people's-owned plants, and agricultural collectives, the regime attempts to utilize this completely new means of communication, as it is being developed, in areas of collective endeavor, in the building of socialism (industrial plants) or where other means of communication leave undesirable gaps through which one can escape from the monotony of the propaganda.

Four million inhabitants of the Soviet Zone were registered as radio owners as of the list of the 1st of January 1955. There is a radio fee of DM-O 2.05 per month (0.05 mark for a so-called cultural fund) payable on each receiver. Accordingly, the total budget of the DDR radio system runs to about DM-O 96 million annually, minus the amounts given to the Postal Department for technical services.

The present structure of the Soviet Zone radio – three broadcasting services directed by the State Radio Committee and relayed over 28 lengths – is the result of a concentration of equipment and personnel accomplished after the Second SED Party Conference in July 1952 (2.3). This concentration was facilitated by the fact that since its founding, German radio has operated relatively few stations of quasi-public-character which reflected in their listening area the political-administrative system of a federal state. Radio Berlin was the first of

these stations to resume the broadcasting which had been interrupted by the war. It began in the Soviet Zone of occupation in May 1945 with a short program service controlled by the Soviets. It was soon followed by Radio Leipzig. These provided the basis for the broadcasting system of a Central German Radio, which in June 1946, began at a program of its own with station at Leipzig and also Dresden and Weimar. In December 1946, Halle was added. In the northern part of the Soviet Zone a station at Schwerin began operations. In 1948, the *Deutschland Sender* (Station Germany) directed from Berlin began to broadcast, beaming programs to West Germany. There are also local radio studios in Cottbus, Rostock, Chemnitz (Karl-Marx-Stadt) and Erfurt; a radio school at Berlin-Grünau completes the picture. Detailed directives, the obligation to broadcast ADN news and official information bulletins as well as a complex mechanism of control, similar to that organized for the newspaper editorial offices, guaranteed that the individual stations followed a uniform, up-to-date political and cultural line. The long-range general policy and programs of the individual stations were determined through a "perspective plan" developed by the Department of Agitation, the Soviet Control Commission, and the director-general. These plans were given to the station directors semi-annually by the director-general. In view of the dependence of the individual stations as far as political approach and program development was concerned, the centralizing reorganization of the Soviet Zone radio system was mainly a matter of administrative simplification. It also offered an opportunity for mass dismissal of politically undesirable staff members.

The division of the broadcasting system into three broadcasting services, Berlin I, II and III, which was undertaken at the same time as the centralization and the purge of the personnel of the East German Radio, was to correspond to a differentiation of propaganda tasks. According to a summary published in *Tägliche Rundschau*, on May 14, 1950, the major emphases of Berlin I are: (1) to call for the reunification of Germany; (2) to strengthen German-Soviet friendship; (3) to utilize the experience of the Soviet people for the establishment of democracy.<sup>125</sup> Here the important thing is to combine a well-balanced mixture of folk art and political broadcasts.

The East German radio attempts to slander the staff members of RIAS (Radio in the American Sector) and to intimidate RIAS listeners. RIAS is accused of instigating sabotage and espionage. The Department of Agitation spreads such assertions not with the expectation that they will be believed, rather, since there is no law which forbids listening to western radio stations, they wish to make contact with RIAS, and thus potentially also listening to its broadcasts

125 Editors' note: Quoted in Kundler/Heinemann-Rufer/Selle, *Das öffentliche Informationswesen*, p. 287.



appear punishable under the laws for the protection of the republic. For the same reason it is usually stressed in political trials that the defendant has been a RIAS listener. Extensive jamming to prevent the reception of western broadcasts was conducted parallel with the reorganization of the Soviet Zone radio. According to recent data of the Free Jurists, an organization in Berlin; up to the beginning of 1955 three hundred small jamming stations with a capacity of 150 watts and thirty stations with a capacity of 2 KW had been installed mainly in larger towns. Furthermore, seven mobile 5 KW jamming stations and one 20 KW station had begun operations. The latter beams eastern broadcasting programs on western frequency ranges or sends jamming signals. Projected are the utilization of additional mobile jamming stations.<sup>126</sup> The jamming program has at various times led to a "disturbing whistling sound" in the reception of the Soviet Zone radio itself. Complaints about this have appeared in the Soviet Zone press. This led the Ministry to recommend the reception of FM programs which are free of disturbance. RIAS responded to the increased jamming activities directed against western broadcasts by using more frequencies, especially for broadcasting of political programs. The communist jamming operations do not suffice to cover all these frequencies. Thus, the efforts during 1953 to 1955 to create a broadcasting monopoly for the Soviet Zone have fallen short of the expectations held when the State Radio Committee was founded. Hence the Committee is forced to take into account the interests and wishes of the public to a greater degree than is the Soviet Zone Press.

### 1.11.3 Films

The production of movies in the Soviet Zone is also a part of the centrally directed propaganda apparatus. *The Deutsche Film A.G. (DEFA)*, licensed on May 17, 1946, received a production monopoly. The Soviet authorities handed over to DEFA the movie center of the UFA (former German Motion Picture Producer) in Babelsberg near Berlin, as well as the property of the *TOBIS* movie company in Berlin-Johannisthal. The latter had to be evacuated later for the use of television. On November 4, 1947, DEFA was reorganized into a Soviet Cooperation; 55 percent of the joint-stock capital of 10,000,000 RM was held

126 Editors' note: Cf. Untersuchungsausschuss Freiheitlicher Juristen (ed.), *Katalog des Unrechts*, Berlin (West) 1956, pp. 66–68; Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *Unrecht als System. Dokumente über planmäßige Rechtsverletzungen in der Sowjetzone Deutschlands. Zusammengestellt vom Untersuchungsausschuss Freiheitlicher Juristen, Teil 2: 1952–1954*, Bonn 1955, p. 36.

by the Ministry for the Movie Industry of the USSR (as owners were named the Soviet LINSAG and SOVEXPORT) and 45 percent by the SED concern *Zentrag*. In 1951, DEFA was transformed from a Soviet Corporation to a government-owned industry. During August 1952, at the same time at which the “concentration” of the broadcasting system was carried out, a State Committee for the Film Industry was created by a decision of the Council of Ministers. The individual departments of DEFA were subordinated to the Committee as newly constituted government-owned industries.

This outfit attained considerable artistic quality in the production of political, but by no means definitely Communist, feature films during the period 1946–48 such as “Murderers Are Amongst Us”, 1946; “Marriage in the Shadow”, 1947; “Wozzeck”, 1947; “Affaire Blum,” 1948.<sup>127</sup> Yet in 1950, DEFA was subordinated to the control of a body called the *DEFA Kommission*.<sup>128</sup>

The DEFA Commission licensed the filming of scripts, decided on the release or withholding of completed movies, and determined whether re-writing or additional filming were needed for finished movies. After the Commission began its work, DEFA produced almost exclusively communist propaganda movies. The following titles may serve as examples: “Hoegler’s Mission”,<sup>129</sup> 1950, dealing with western sabotage of government-owned industries; “The Benthin Family”, 1950, a moral justification of the expropriation of small and medium-sized industries, “The Council of the Gods”, 1950, agitation against war-mongering American and German monopoly capitalism which already had been allied against the Soviet Union during World War II; “Train Service Irregular”, 1951, West Berlin as center of American agents; “The Call of the Seas”, 1951, poverty in West Germany, construction of a fishing combine in the DDR, recruitment for the People’s Police; “The Condemned Village”, 1952, resistance of a West German village against the American occupiers; “Secret Files Solvay”, 1953, moral justification of the expropriation of large industry; “Novel of a Young Marriage”, 1952, muck and dollar corruption in the cultural life of West Berlin. The quality of these films is increasingly poor. The quantity of production also decreased rapidly. In 1949, twelve feature-length movies

127 Editors’ note: “Die Mörder sind unter uns”, directed by Wolfgang Staudte, first German feature film in postwar history; “Ehe im Schatten”, directed by Kurt Maetzig; “Wozzeck”, directed by Georg C. Klaren, based on Georg Büchner’s “Woyzeck”; “Affaire Blum”, directed by Erich Engel. All online at: <https://www.defa-stiftung.de/filme/filmsuche/>; 18.4.2022.

128 This happened at the same time that the director-general was to eliminate the independence of individual radio stations.

129 Editors’ note: The movie’s title has been corrected by the editors (German original title: “Der Auftrag Höglers”).

had been produced, in 1950 ten, in 1951 eight, and in 1952 six. DEFA movies became increasingly unpopular. In spite of this the second SED Party Conference in 1952 demanded a further intensification of the unpopular course. After the revolt of June 17, 1953, concessions to popular tastes were made in the planning of movie production. Due to the lack of sufficient domestic production, feature movies from West Germany and features and social-problem movies from western countries were imported in large quantities together with the unpopular movies from the USSR and the people's democracies under the program of the "new course". This system has been retained; the State Committee for Movie Industry was dissolved and its functions delegated to the Ministry of Culture, founded on January 7, 1954. There exists also the DEFA studio for newsreels and documentary movies; this studio receives detailed directives from the Department of Agitation. The DEFA newsreel, *The Eyewitness*, a newsreel of the Soviet Zone first produced in 1946, is a clumsy instrument of Communist propaganda. It has been boycotted by the people right along. DEFA production of documentary movies is, as might be expected, devoted mainly to the "achievements of the workers' and peasants' state" as, for instance in the full-length documentary about the first anniversary of the DDR, "The Upward Path". Other themes are the Communist mass meetings and congresses, such as the world youth festivals. The full-length movie "Wilhelm Pieck – The Life of Our President", a documentary from the DEFA newsreels and documentary studios, was prepared with great care by the party and presented in group film showings. After the production of "The Invincibles" which gave a party-line presentation of Bebel and Liebknecht, the filming of the life of Ernst Thälmann was begun under the titles "Ernst Thälmann, Son of His Class" (part I) and "Ernst Thälmann, Leader of His Class" (part II).<sup>130</sup> This is a technicolor movie of two feature-length parts produced according to the party line. SED propaganda termed the movie the "largest movie project so far" in the history of the German film. Even though the people in the Soviet Zone very rarely attend movies of this kind voluntarily, the propaganda carried on through the medium of the movie has the advantage over the press and the radio that the party is able to confront workers and youth with this propaganda in group film showings sponsored by the mass organizations.

The strength of the public information system of the Soviet Zone is inherent in its unitary organization which eliminates alternative ideas and leads to the

130 Editors' note: Part 1 premiered on March 9, 1954. Part 2 followed on October 7, 1955. Kurt Maetzig acted as director, see online at <https://www.defa-stiftung.de/filme/filmsuche/ernst-thaelmann-sohn-seiner-klasse/a>, alternatively <https://www.defa-stiftung.de/filme/filmsuche/ernst-thaelmann-fuehrer-seiner-klasse/>; 15.5.2022.

consolidation of the impact of any message by having it repeated, uncontradicted over all official channels of communication. Its large resources, both material and social, and its close integration with other institutions, both state and public, lend it further strength. But its strength is also its weakness. For such an organization necessarily leads to repetitiveness and lack of imagination. Hence its appeal wears thin over time. Attempts to escape this result by allowing "bourgeois" and some other popular papers, are not very successful. On balance, a considerable impact of this massive and clever propaganda cannot be denied. In East Germany, Western radio is the most significant counteragent to Soviet propaganda. Western movies are being carefully screened; it may be doubted whether television will be able to do the same.

The distribution of Western newspapers is necessarily limited. Personal correspondence with the West is dangerous and therefore generally discouraged. Nevertheless, it has a certain value in spreading information about conditions of life in West Germany. Therefore, it is encouraged in West Germany by agencies interested in this aspect of psychological warfare and discouraged in East Germany, except in so far as it is carried out in the form of organized campaigns of writing of stereotyped letters extolling the East German order (as students frequently are forced to do).

As can be seen from all that has preceded, the information of the public in the Soviet Zone is rigidly and centrally controlled. As in other totalitarian dictatorships, there has come into being that complete monopoly of all means of mass communications which such a regime requires for the effective exercise of its total control over the minds of men. The small remnants of private activity in this field no longer disguise the fact that public information in the Soviet Zone is today more completely controlled by party and government than it ever was under the Nazis, even though their monopoly is challenged by the fact that free information does drift into the Soviet Zone from West Germany through various channels and that the work of RIAS goes on.

### 1.12 Labor Force [*Albert Mavrinac*]

Of the 17,300,000 persons in the population of East Germany, about 7,513,000 were thought in 1952 to be gainfully employed, with about 8.7 million persons in the labor force. The number of employed is greater than the number of gainfully occupied in the same area in 1939. Of this total number of employed, about 13.5 percent were self-employed, 7.8 percent were employed in family enterprises, and 78.7 percent were officials, employees or workers. These percentages compare with 14.8 percent, 14.4 percent, and 70.8 percent respectively in West Germany. The movement of workers from family enterprises in East

Germany is also indicated in the drop to the present 7.8 percent from the 12.9 percent engaged in these enterprises in the same region in 1939.

The great effort of the East German planners to draw women into industry, even if it has caused the percentage of women among the gainfully employed to rise above 40 percent as claimed by the East German propagandists (though the percentage is thought to be 39 percent by West German observers) has a long way to go before reaching the 45 percent of the total active labor force attained in 1946 when former soldiers were just beginning to return from captivity.

The 1951–55 five-year plan called for an increase of 60 percent labor productivity and a 13 percent increase in the labor force. By 1953, the number of gainfully occupied had risen by 500,000. It is very doubtful that it can go any higher and even Soviet Zone authorities are not planning a larger increase. Government Offices have taken on 350,000 more workers than they employed in 1939, and the Militarized People's Police<sup>131</sup> have about 120,000 men under arms. Agriculture has held on to a large number of workers because of insufficient advances in productivity.

It is estimated by West German observers that the efficiency of the East German worker is far below that of the West German.

Statistics on the distribution of skills in the East German labor force are not readily available. The intensive program of occupational retraining must produce rapid superficial changes in skill distribution from year to year, anyway. However, one thing is known, that is that great efforts have been made by the East German authorities to concentrate as much highly skilled labor as possible at the reparations and export industries, drawing such labor away from private enterprises generally and from low-priority public enterprises.

As compared to 1939, labor in East Germany is now distributed among the several branches of the economy, according to most recently available reports as follows:

	1939	1949
Agriculture and Forestry	22.1 %	25.1 %
Industry and Handicraft	47.9 %	45.5 %
Trade and Commerce	16.6 %	14.0 %
Public and Private Services	9.8 %	12.9 %
Household Help	3.6 %	2.5 %

Source: Faber, *Einkommensstruktur und Lebenshaltung in der sowjetischen Besatzung Zone*, p. 66.

131 Editors' note: In the text, for "Kasernierte Volkspolizei" the term "Garrisoned People's Police" is used as well. Today, it is also referred to as "Barracked People's Police".

The economic character of the several provinces is evident from the fact that 49 percent of the Mecklenburg labor force is engaged in agriculture, and only 24 percent in industrial and handicraft work, while in the case of Saxony 53 percent of the workers are in industry and handicrafts and only 16 percent in agriculture. Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt's labor forces are almost evenly divided between these two main fields. Thuringia's labor force, with 44.8 percent in industry has a somewhat more industrial character than these two states.

While in 1950, 41 percent of the industrial labor force was engaged in private enterprises, it is now calculated (November 1955) that this percentage has been reduced to about 20 percent of the industrial labor force.<sup>132</sup>

The quantitative limitations of the industrial labor force have given special urgency to the endeavors of the regime to raise output per man. In 1953, for instance, it had planned to increase productivity at the rate of 16 percent over the preceding year. The "new course" lowered the objective for the year to 10 percent; but even this was probably not even approximately fulfilled. For 1954, the plan postulated an average productivity increase in industry of 6.8 percent over 1953, but the real increase was reportedly 4.1 percent.<sup>133</sup> If true, even this figure would be quite respectable, although it lags behind the ambitions of the government.

It is interesting to note that the lag in productivity which has just been mentioned was accompanied by a more than planned increase in average industrial wages. Planned at 5 percent for 1954, the actual increase of the average wage is reported to be 9.2 percent over 1953.<sup>134</sup> This suggests that lack of wage incentives was not the major cause of unsatisfactory productivity. Indeed, the incentives offered by extreme wage differentials, premium wages and concurrent tax advantages, are extreme in the Soviet Zone. The disappointing development of productivity must rather be ascribed to disorganization and frictions in the economic system, which are only partly balanced by improved technical equipment.

Provisions of the constitution and of labor statutes are regularly pointed to by government spokesmen and trade union leaders as examples of the progressive nature of the regime's care for the worker. The constitution emphasizes such principles as "equal pay for equal work", the right of every worker to recreation, and the duty of the state to ensure the worker's safety. The basic labor law

132 See Press and Information Office of the German Federal Government (ed.), *The Bulletin. A weekly survey of German Affairs*, 3 (1955) 39 (November 24, 1955), p. 4.

133 See Hellmut Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft der sowjetischen Besatzungszone im vierten Jahre des Fünfjahrplanes*. In: *Vierteljahrshefte zur Wirtschaftsforschung*, (1955) 2, pp. 157-177, here 169.

134 Editors' note: *Ibid.*

of April 1950 provides that overtime beyond the legally prescribed 8-hour day or 48-hour week is forbidden except in grave emergency, as is work on Sundays and holidays, and in any event is to be permitted only with the approval of the trade unions.<sup>135</sup> The fact that wages in the nationalized plants are “determined by law” is also boasted of by East German leaders. These claims and legal prescriptions are misleading, however, if the context within which they are made and executed is not borne in mind. All wage payments, all determination of the length of the working day or week, the nature of recreation, the plant facilities for protection of the worker and for the treatment of his ailments, exist within the context of “plan fulfillment” and “socialist competition”. The result is that in fact the working week is longer than 48 hours for many workers, that the principle of equal pay for equal work militates against the interests of some workers, particularly in comparison with their opposite numbers in West Germany, that the spirit of “socialist competition” institutionalized in a setting of “technically calculated work norms” produces a constantly rising norm, that such benefits as planned vacations, factory clinics and nurseries are intended by the political and trade union leadership to further Communist control over the movement and political education of the worker, and that, under the impact of pressure to fulfill the plant quota, plant leadership neglects safety standards.

That some of the legal prescriptions, particularly those relating to overtime, have been disregarded even in their literal sense is recognized publicly by the East German Government. The important “Order for the Further Improvement of the Working and Living Conditions of Workers and of the Rights of Trade Unions” of December 1953 admits that the overtime restrictions have been seriously violated in the past.<sup>136</sup> It calls for a “determined struggle” against what is in many factories the most flagrant violation of the rules relating to overtime. Overtime, when needed by reason of threatened damage to the plant or some serious public emergency, is to be approved in each instance by the district or county executive committee of the industrial trade union on recommendation of the plant trade union leaders and application of the plant management. In any event the number of hours of overtime for a worker in one year is not to exceed 120 hours, nor is it to exceed four hours over a period of two consecutive days. Such overtime, it has recently been claimed, was materially reduced during 1954, as a result of strong trade union intervention.

135 Für eine einheitliche Arbeitsgesetzgebung in ganz Deutschland. Bedeutsamer Brief des Ministers für Arbeit und Berufsausbildung, Macher, an den westdeutschen Bundesarbeitsminister Storch, 10. Dezember 1954. In: *Arbeit und Sozialfürsorge*, 10 (1955) 1, p. 3.

136 Editors' note: Cf. Verordnung über die weitere Verbesserung der Arbeits- und Lebensbedingungen der Arbeiter und der Rechte der Gewerkschaften (10.12.1953). In: *Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* 1953, Nr. 129 (December 11, 1953), pp. 1219–1226.

Socialist competition and the incentive of the five-year plan, however, provide what seems to be a much more frequent distortion of reality from the picture presented by legal regulations and the claims of government spokesmen. There is in fact a great deal of unpaid overtime labor in the Soviet Zone. It takes many forms, and one of the tasks of the Communist agitator seems to be the invention of occasions for justifying an appeal to workers to devote their free time to continuing at the lathe or to doing some work on a public project. There are, for example, the techniques of the "special shift", the foregoing of rest-periods, the "ten-minute movement", organized shift alternations, and the care of machinery outside the paid working period. Special shifts are periods of overtime work voluntarily donated by the worker, without pay, and which extend over periods of hours. In some cases, individual members of brigades may agree to join with individuals from other brigades to do extra work or perhaps a whole brigade will be persuaded to continue work beyond the normal closing time for an extended number of hours. The "ten-minute movement" calls on workers to begin working ten minutes before the usual beginning of working time, without pay. The "organized shift alternation" is a variation of this. A whole brigade is persuaded to arrive at the workplace ten to twenty minutes before its normal reporting time and work alongside the brigade still at work, which in turn promises to remain working alongside the first brigade for ten to twenty minutes beyond its normal quitting time. The plant management in this way receives a half hour or so production time without any wage charges enabling it more easily to meet its profit requirements. The slogan under which much of this extra work takes place is "the full use of the eight-hour day". Sometimes factory workers are persuaded to volunteer for work on public projects outside their working day. In approving the plant collective agreement for 1952 for example, the workers of the Karl Liebknecht Transformer Works bound themselves to work through the instrumentality of the Plant Sports Association for a total of 3,806 hours on the reconstruction of Berlin. It is estimated by some observers of East German labor conditions that in 1951 each worker in the VE plants had to put in about 240 hours of unpaid overtime by way of "special shifts" alone, this required labor being extracted by way of compulsory "volunteering".

An example of how a legal prescription at first glance favorable to workers has been used deliberately to the disadvantage of some is the elimination of age and family allowances for employees in the public service, that is, in the regular governmental administrative offices. Such age and family supplements for officials in the public services have long been a feature of the German economy and their elimination was a heavy blow to many older officials. While this particular action had about it the flavor of the Communist attempt to bring about an end to the distinctive economic situation of government employees, it fitted in also with the more general Communist program of reducing wage



spreads among workers as much as possible. The principle of equal pay for equal work has also been used as a justification for eliminating the distinction between the pay of apprentices and the lower categories of skilled workers and for eliminating any difference between payments to men and women working at the same job.

It would seem therefore that although the state has claimed to be protecting him in the area of wages, the East German worker has in fact been under a heavy disadvantage as compared to workers in a free economy. In those wage areas where the principle of "socialist competition", and the needs of the plan have been more avowedly the bases for determination of the worker's remuneration, the worker would also seem to have felt an almost intolerable demand on his physical and psychic resources (cf. 2.6).

The wage structure of the Soviet Zone is characterized by a very high degree of inequality of wages within and between industries, much in excess of that in Western countries. The government has fixed different wages for different industries and caused an extreme differentiation of basic wages within industries. Moreover, the widespread use of piece rates and of premium payments to "activists" i.e. workers who habitually exceed the fixed norm, makes for considerable differences in labor incomes. These arrangements aim, of course, to spur the production drive. They were pushed to the extreme during the time before the uprisings of the summer of 1953. Subsequently they were mitigated through wage concessions to the lowest paid labor groups.

Table I illustrates the wage structure in four industries and its evolution from 1950 to 1954. In 1950, the basic hourly wages for the eight wage groups showed a range or wage spread of about 100 percent in all of these industries. That is to say, the wage for the eighth or highest group was about double that for the first. In July 1952, the wages for the four highest groups (V to VIII) were raised substantially in mining, metallurgy and heavy machinery and on the railroads. The percentage raise was greatest for the top group, 92 percent in mining, 50 percent in metallurgy-machinery and 29 percent in railroading; and it showed a characteristic differentiation between industries. The greatest stimulus was directed toward mining, the bottleneck industry with the most distasteful working conditions. The textile industry, which ranked lowest in plan priorities, received no raises at all at that time.

Not only the average amount increases with the significance of an industrial branch, but also the range of wage differentiation within it. In ore mining, eight wage categories exist with a difference of 350 percent between the top and the bottom. Among the technical and engineering personnel, five groups have been devised with the span of 301 percent. Premiums are paid for overproduction. Particularly high salary rates favor the academic personnel, scientists and artists - a very small but prominent group presentable as a facade (1.6). The dif-

Table I: Basic Hourly Wages on Four Industries Before and After the "Concessions" of 1953

	DM-O - Wage Groups							
Industry	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Mining, underground								
before (a)	.88	1.11	1.27	1.38	1.55	1.67	1.73	1.79
(b)		un- changed			1.73	2.18	2.73	3.43
after	1.06	1.19	1.36	1.43		un- changed		
Percent increase	20	7	7	4	12	31	58	92
Metallurgy and heavy machinery building								
before (a)	.87	.96	1.10	1.20	1.35	1.49	1.63	1.80
(b)		un- changed			1.47	1.80	2.20	2.70
after	.98	1.07	1.21	1.31		un- changed		
Percent increase	13	11	10	9	9	21	35	50
Railroads								
before (a)	.83	.91	.99	1.10	1.21	1.33	1.46	1.60
(b)		un- changed			1.29	1.51	1.78	2.07
after	.92	1.00	1.08	1.19		un- changed		
Percent increase	11	10	9	8	7	14	22	29

Textile industry								
before	.68	.75	.79	.86	1.00	1.12	1.21	1.31
after	.84	.88	.92	.96	1.11	1.21	1.34	1.60
Percent increase	24	17	18	12	11	8	11	22

Sources: Editors' note: The reference for this overview („Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung“) was not conclusive and the source could not be identified. Cf., however, Dorothea Faber, *Einkommensstruktur und Lebenshaltung in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, Bonn 1953, pp. 73 f.; Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1956*, Stuttgart 1956, p. 551.

Wages “before (a)”: effective after September 1, 1950.  
 “before (b)”: effective July 1, 1952 to August 1, 1953.  
 “after”: effective after August 1, 1953; in the case of groups V to VIII in the textile industry, after January 1, 1954.

differentiation in terms of wages and salaries is extremely pronounced, to which other kinds of rewards are added in direct proportion to the size of the basic income, e. g., the highest-paid bureaucrats can buy at special stores reserved for themselves, have opportunities for medical care not available to others, etc. The wage system has been unequivocally put into the service not only of industrial expansion, particularly in areas of production relevant to the military needs of the USSR, but also of reconstruction. The qualifications for the highest-paid categories include the political ones, except in a limited number of cases in which a show is made, for West German consumption, of rewarding well-known specialists without such qualifications.

Since the differentiated wage system must balance the advantages provided for the top categories and is generally used as a technique for effecting the most economic utilization of available resources, extreme economy measures and low standards of pay for the mass of industrial workers have become imperative. On one hand, this has had the desired effect of forcing women into the labor force (since families could not subsist on the husband's wage), and, on the other hand, has led to an increased unemployment, caused by saving through dismissal of personnel. The planned percentage of women in the labor force (37 percent of the labor force in 1953) could not be attained, but women workers had reached 25 percent of the labor force by that time. The effects of a ruthless utilization of female labor power in all branches of industry, including mining, has resulted in increasing rates of industrial accidents but has opened a relatively cheap reservoir of untrained labor power for the industrial system.

In recent years the regime has emphasized a program of introducing wherever feasible in industry the principle of “efficiency payments” based on what are called “technically-based work norms” (TAN) – meaning that a supposedly scientific and objective determination has been made of what production should normally be obtained on a particular job over a certain period of time. Superficially this might seem to resemble the “piece-work system” in force in many private enterprises in capitalist economies. There are other factors present, however, in the Soviet Zone economic, political and legal systems which make the TAN system distinct from a piece-work system in a free economy. The first factor is the nature of the underlying wage structure. In free economic systems like the American the piece-work system, if it exists, is tied in with a fundamental wage scale which is part of a contract freely negotiated between the employer and the workers’ representatives and which is subject to modification on agreement of the parties. In the Soviet Zone, however, the basic wage scale on which the TAN calculations are superimposed is determined by government authorities, although the pretense is made of worker participation through the FDGB. Second, the term “technically-based” when used in connection with the calculation of the labor norm must be understood in the sense of its setting in an overall scheme of economic and social planning positing a definite set of goals and a certain shape to a future society. Whatever norms exist at the moment cannot be merely judged as sound or unsound technically in terms of some objective physical or “industrial management” standards apart from the overall development of the society. What is the “norm” in one situation may not be the “norm” in another, even given the same machines, and the same workers. The social as well as the material and objective physical circumstances must be taken into account by those who determine the norm. This is what the Central Committee of the SED meant when it said in October 1951, that in many plants so-called “experience norms” were still being used. These, it said, were lingering on from a period when there were still no exact plans for individual factories to follow within the terms of a larger, overall economic plan. In the new circumstances, where the goals were more clearly defined, new norms must be established. The practical consequence of this concept of the norm is that the norm never stands still, it moves upward or downward in response not only to technological changes, but also in response to changing ideas of the political leadership of the tactical demands of momentary social and economic needs of the society.

As in the other parts of Germany, wages were frozen by the Soviet Military Administration in their zone at the end of World War II. Long before the other powers, the Soviets permitted relaxations of the wage-freeze in certain industries, coal mining, for instance, always however determining themselves exactly what the new wage scales would be. Although in the Western Zones

the determination of wage scales was left to the collective-bargaining process after the currency reform of 1948, in the Soviet Zone, the government continued controls. In the early years of the post-war period some leeway was permitted workers in applying the general principle of the wage-stop to the particular plant situation and it was possible for plant assemblies, in considering the collective agreement to agree with the plant management, subject to governmental approval, on modifications of some wages, perhaps where technological conditions had "radically changed". Gradually, however, through the use of a collective master agreement, negotiated between the trade unions and particularly the FDGB itself, the appropriate technical commission or ministry, and the central state finance agencies, the possibility of making changes in wage rates was denied to the workers. This situation was crystallized in the 1951 system of collective agreements for an entire industry between the technical ministry and the central committee of the respective industrial trade union, under the control of the FDGB. These general agreements dictated the nature of the wage provisions to be applied in particular factories. In so doing they modified considerably the system of wage payments which had prevailed throughout the Hitler and post-war period and which had had its origins in the collective bargaining negotiation conducted in the pre-Hitler period by employers' and workers' associations. The number of wage classes was expanded to eight, although provision was made for only a very few workers to be included in the top three categories, and the number of local classifications was standardized at three and sometimes at one, as in the case of coal-mining, whereas formerly in some industries, the wage scale for workers in the same industry varied from one section of a city to another.<sup>137</sup> All individual labor agreements had been eliminated by 1950.

All these collective agreements simply repeated the provisions of the government regulations and appear to have been designed to provide a transition from the wage agreement system in which some element of collective bargaining between workers and employers was still present and the forthright dictation of labor conditions by the government. Nonetheless, even this transitional device was the source of embarrassment to the FDGB leadership. So long as an agreement had to be approved formally by the plant assembly of workers, however sham the "agreement" really was, skillful leaders of resistance to FDGB leadership could use the discussion of the agreement for the airing of worker grievances against the regime and for strengthening the solidarity of workers against the regime's arbitrary conduct. As a result, all discussion of wage provisions by plant assemblies was ended in 1953; by this time East

137 See Faber, *Einkommensstruktur und Lebenshaltung in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, pp. 34f.

German labor was on what the labor and political leadership called the “new course”. There now seems to be no doubt that the basic wages for all jobs in state-owned factories are determined to practically the exact pfennig by direct government ordinances or through “collective agreements” forced on the workers. In private enterprises collective bargaining over wages continues, but any change in the wage scales must be approved by government authorities.

The TAN for each specific job in a plant is determined by the Calculation and Timekeeping Office of the Labor Division in the Plant Director’s Office, which has the last word. The basis for the establishment of the norm is the wage group catalogue for the industry, worked out by the ministry for that industry in consultation with the Central Committee of the industrial trade union, and with the approval of the Ministry of Labor, the FDGB keeping a controlling influence at all points. The “basic performance rate”, paid to the worker when the norm is exactly met is supposed to be 15 percent higher than the basic time rate provided in the wage group catalogue.<sup>138</sup> The reward for meeting the norm is therefore a 15 percent increase in wages over the time wage. The final wage of the worker under the TAN system is therefore dependent on the basic time rate plus the worker’s ability to meet the standards of quantity and quality symbolized by the norm. When the plant labor division calculates the norm it is expected to do four things: make a thorough investigation of the possibilities for improving the production technique in the particular department; anticipate the results of the full use of mechanization; anticipate the results of an improvement of labor organization and of “the full use of the eight-hour day”; and make an analysis of the production experiences of the most qualified workers and especially of the activists. Thus, the norm is intended to be a stimulant to progress as well as a measure of what progress has been made. However, the technical limitations on the ability to predict realistically the possibilities for realization of the potential which each of these rules expresses are so great that they provide the government with a flexible set of instruments for dealing with labor. When norms have been pushed by calculators, who themselves are often under pressure to

138 See Committee for German Unity (ed.), *250 Questions, 250 Answers about the German Democratic Republic*, 1st English ed., based on the 4th rev. and expanded German ed., Berlin (East) 1955, p. 33. Editors’ note: “Alle Arbeiter, die Leistungslohn erhalten, bekommen einen Leistungsgrundlohn, der 15 Prozent höher ist als die angegebenen Grundlöhne für die Zeitlohnarbeiter und bei einer Normerfüllung von 100 Prozent gezahlt wird.” (“All workers who receive performance-linked payment will receive a basic performance-linked payment which is 15 percent higher than the indicated basic rates for time rate workers and which will be paid if a quota of 100 percent is achieved.”) Ausschuss für deutsche Einheit (ed.), *250 Fragen, 250 Antworten über die Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, 4. edition Berlin (East) 1954, p. 34.

boost norms as their part in the fulfillment of the plan, to the point of strong worker resistance, the government can easily order a review in order to scale down the norms. When the time has come for an “enthusiastic” boost to be given to production, the mechanism for translating the contrived experience of Hennecke,<sup>139</sup> the German Stakhanov, into general norms is there.

One of the most forceful means of pressing the norm upward is the use of activists. Although very often in practice propagandists in factories and in public talk as though the activists were intended to be the establishers of goals to be met at once by workers, such in theory is not their function. The directives of Stalin at the first conference of Stakhanov workers in the USSR in November 1935 have been followed in East Germany on this point.<sup>140</sup> Correctly fixed norms, said Stalin, must be established according to the best standards and fixed in such a way that they are approximately between the achievements of the leading Stakhanov workers and the achievements of the mass of workers. The activists therefore show the way by new technique or increased concentration to the other workers, who are expected to follow in the long run.

The brigade is the unit of calculation and payment under the TAN system. Should the quality of the work produced be so low, for instance, as to cause it to be rejected, the brigade may be penalized by having its pay for the day limited to 90 percent of the time pay, but in no case less than fifty pfennig per hour in the case of any particular worker. The frequency with which the worker is called upon to deal with inferior material is reported to have increased considerably the frequency with which such deductions in pay occur.

The brigadier thus, besides being a worker, has a vested interest in pushing the brigade’s output higher. His earnings are calculated by taking the basic rate paid for his particular skill on exact fulfillment of the norm, multiplying this by the average percentage fulfillment of the norm by the brigade, and then dividing by 100. Should the brigade’s quota be fulfilled to 100 percent or more, the brigadier also may receive a bonus.

In enterprises where the nature of the production process makes calculation of norms more difficult, production bonuses have been substituted. In its recent ordinance of early 1955 concerning the payment of some of the

139 Editors’ note: This is Adolf Hennecke. See the biographical sketch about Adolf Hennecke in the section “Biographies of Leading Personalities in the Soviet Zone of Germany” in this book.

140 Editors’ note: About the formation of the Stachanow movement in 1935 and the economic situation in the USSR, cf. Robert W. Davies/Oleg Khlevnyuk, *Stakhanovism and the Soviet Economy*. In: *Europe-Asia Studies*, 54 (2002) 6, pp. 867–903.

key personnel in such plants, as well as of key personnel in plants where the norm is used, the government attempted to correct deficiencies in the earlier bonus ordinance of June 1951 by stressing that the payment of bonuses was contingent not only on quantity but on quality as well.<sup>141</sup>

The establishment of the present system of calculating wage payments is the result of a gradual evolution that appears to have depended on the ability of the Communist leadership in the Soviet Zone to consolidate its control of political and economic institutions. The idea of the “activist” goes back to 1948, and the principle that the basic wage must be determined by government authorities is a hang-over from the Nazi regime. There was some attempt made to introduce the idea of performance-rates from 1948 on, but the real introduction of the TAN came in June 1951 with a directive of the Central Committee of the SED requiring action to be taken with a view to the introduction of the performance-rate system at the beginning of 1952. This resolution was intended to fit in with the building up of pressure for meeting the goals of the five-year plan. The outbreaks of June 1953 against the regime (2.6) were a product of the build up of that pressure to an intolerable point.

A comparison of wages in East Germany with those in West Germany is not always possible as the method of recording wage statistics varies between the two parts of Germany, particularly in respect to the breakdown of industries into two groups. However, insofar as it was possible to make this analysis for 1950–51 wages, it appeared that the highest wages in each of the compared trades in Western Germany exceeded the highest in that trade in East Germany. For instance, the top skill of building workers in the Soviet Zone (Wage Group VIII) was then being paid 1.44 DM-O per hour. The top skill in the building trade in West Germany earned 1.72 DM-O per hour. In very few skill categories in any of the comparable trades was a worker in West Germany at a disadvantage in respect to his opposite number in the East. This of course is a comparison of gross wages. It is not a comparison of purchasing power. When looked at in this light there seems to be little doubt that the West German worker is steadily extending his lead over the East German worker. The limitations imposed by way of governmental influence on the possibility of any large number of workers receiving premium payments for exceeding their norms are great. Such payments well as those for paid

141 See M. Pampel, *Zur Verordnung über die Prämienzahlung für das ingenieur-technische Personal, für die Meister und für das leitende kaufmännische Personal in den volkseigenen und ihnen gleichgestellten Betrieben*. In: *Arbeit und Sozialfürsorge*, 10 (1955) 6, p. 165. Editors' note: Cf. also *Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Teil 1, 1955, Nr. 15 (March 1, 1955), pp. 135–139.



overtime work, work at night, Sundays and holidays, legal-overtime rates are 25 percent for overtime, 10–50 percent for night work, and 100 percent for holidays, and they have been avoided by plant managers.

One thing may be noted, finally, with respect to workers' wages. This is that the range of wages is very wide, from 85 pfennig to 3.85 DM-O per hour.

In addition to wages and hours matters, there are other working conditions to be considered, especially the problem of dismissals, annual holiday provision, and health facilities. In the matter of furloughing, the Labor Law of 1950 applied the principle of "equality". In place of the provisions of pre-Hitler collective agreements, and of Nazi labor ordinances which required a much longer notice period to be given to workers with seniority, the 1950 Law divides workers into two categories: those employed for less than two weeks, and those for more. The former are entitled to a minimum notice of three working days, the latter to a minimum of fourteen calendar days. There is now no longer any special provision for employees as distinguished from workers. Dismissal without notice is possible for "serious reasons". Among other things, the Soviet Zone Supreme Court has declared such a reason to be a demonstration on the part of a worker of anti-democratic political attitudes which would make his continued employment in public service intolerable.

Under East German, as under West German law, most workers and employees receive a basic annual vacation of twelve working days. Those performing heavy labor receive vacations ranging from 18 to 24 working days. Not even in his vacations is the East German worker free of the influence of the FDGB, however; indeed, workers' vacations now seem to be organized by the FDGB. It controls 267 "rest homes" and has contracts with 700 private pensions. It is almost impossible therefore for a worker to get a room in a tourist town without help from the FDGB. Workers complain constantly about the bureaucratic misadministration which causes their vacations to be scheduled at inappropriate times during the year.

The factory clinic is also a device for fulfillment of the five-year plan (1.15), as is the award of special distinctions (1.6).

A word needs to be said finally about the condition of the safety service in East Germany. Although the constitution emphasizes the state's duty to protect labor, and although there is a very elaborate scheme of three inspection systems, labor safety for general purposes; a special "security inspection" system for coal, energy, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, machine tools, chemical, and German railroads; and a trade union safety inspection system, the whole scheme is considered by many observers outside the Soviet Zone, and very often within the Soviet Zone as well, to be illusory. The economic organization of the Soviet Zone seems to preclude the efficient treatment of labor safety problems. The plant manager is on the one hand made responsible

(Ordinance of November 1, 1951) for the maintenance of safety standards. Failure to do this is punishable. On the other hand, the plant manager is also responsible for the fulfillment and over-fulfillment of his plant's production under the plan. The tendency of the management is therefore to avoid eliminating a machine or taking a crane out of action or losing time and personnel in the maintenance of blowers, other sanitary equipment, or even basic machinery, in the hope that everything will come out all right.

Serious accidents do occur, however, and there is a periodic attempt to assess the long-run consequences of short-run emphasis on the fulfillment of goals rather than on the maintenance of working personnel at peak physical condition. When the 21st Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the SED calls for a lowering of costs in government plants (VEB), safety specialists and even labor leaders are quick to urge that this not be done "at any cost". Higher production it is stressed, must go hand in hand with an improved system of labor and health standards. But even this is not always the case.

To conclude: in the area of wages, hours, and working conditions the idea of the plan fulfillment, stressed evermore strongly in recent years, dominates the execution of constitutional provisions and of specific legislation. While spokesmen for the Soviet Zone regime insist on such principles as "equal pay for equal work", maintenance of labor safety standards, and "no overtime", every action of the government or trade unions is taken with a view to expanding production and making it more efficient in the cost-accounting sense. The result is that workers are required to volunteer for long hours of unpaid work, to spend vacations at trade union resorts where propaganda continues, and to work in installations where very often their health and safety are jeopardized.

### 1.13 Forced Labor [*Albert Mavrinc*]

In this section we shall be particularly concerned with one specific form of un-free labor in East Germany, the labor of political prisoners.<sup>142</sup>

No complete statistics are available of course on the number of political prisoners in East German installations. One estimate, by the West German So-

142 Editors' note: Officially, the GDR detention centres only held criminal prison inmates, not political ones. On September 5, 1951, the use of the term „politischer Häftling“ (“political prisoner”) was banned by circular order of the Ministry of Justice under Max Fechner and reserved for the “victims of fascism” (“Opfer des Faschismus”): “Today, no one is imprisoned because of his basic convictions. Who attacks our antifascist regime, who disturbs the development of our peacetime economy, commits a criminal

cialist Party (SPD) made in 1950, claimed that from 1945–50 between 180,000 and 230,000 persons had been interned at one time or another for political reasons. Of these, 90,000 to 150,000 were thought to have died in captivity. Another 30–40,000 were believed deported to the Soviet Union. Considering that the total number of employed in the East Zone at that time was about 7,6 million this is not an inconsiderable loss of manpower. The June 1953 uprising (2.6) added a large number of prisoners, possibly 30,000. The United Kingdom representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations is said to have reported in the 1953 Report of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labor, that there was every reason to believe that 200,000 to 300,000 prisoners were interned in 6 major and 6 to 7 smaller camps.<sup>143</sup> There were forced camps or MVD (Russian Secret Police) camps, he understood, at Buchenwald, Fünfeichen, Bautzen, Jamlitz, Pirna, Dresden and Mühlberg. Apart from those in camps it is reported that there are some 20,000 political prisoners, opponents of the Communist regime, serving sentences of forced labor in normal penitentiaries.

offence and will be punished for his criminal deeds” (“Heute wird niemand seiner Gesinnung wegen inhaftiert. Wer unsere antifaschistische Ordnung angreift, wer den Aufbau unserer Friedenswirtschaft stört, begeht eine strafbare Handlung und wird seiner verbrecherischen Taten wegen bestraft”; quoted in Falco Werkentin, *Politische Strafjustiz in der Ära Ulbricht*, Berlin 1995, p. 381). To this day, no generally accepted definition exists for “political prisoner”. For a quantitative analysis and statistical evaluation, cf. Wilhelm H. Schröder/Jürgen Wilke, *Politische Strafgefangene in der DDR. Versuch einer statistischen Beschreibung*. In: *Historical Social Research*, 23 (1998) 4, pp. 3–78.

- 143 Editors’ note: International Labour Office, Report of the ad hoc committee on forced labour, Geneva 1953, pp. 41–44, 260, can be found at [http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/ILO-SR/ILO-SR\\_NS36\\_engl.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/ILO-SR/ILO-SR_NS36_engl.pdf); 24.4.2022. Alongside representatives of the United Kingdom, accusations of forced labour were also made by the USA and the “American Federation of Labor” in the Economic and Social Council. Additionally, such allegations were brought before the UN body by the “Confederation of Free Trade Unions”, the “International League for the Rights of Man” as well as the “Committee of Free Jurists” (cf. *ibid.*, p. 258). The ad-hoc committee reached the following final conclusion: “The Committee finds (a) that the legislation of the Democratic Republic of Germany contains provisions referring to punitive and corrective labour, but it has been unable to verify whether or to what extent this legislation is applied as a means of political coercion, as alleged; (b) that, although certain laws examined above seem at first sight to be promulgated mainly with a view to facilitating the direction of manpower in the interest of the reconstruction of a country devastated by war, there are indications that they are used for the compulsory assignment of workers to enterprises important for the execution of State economic plans and in particular for the compulsory assignment of persons to work as miners, and that if such legislation were widely applied it would lead to a system of forced labour for economic purposes” (*ibid.*, p. 44).

The same 1953 United Nations report made reference to statements of representatives of the German Committee of Free Jurists which suggested that there were two main areas of concentration of forced labor. One was the Aue district, where the uranium mines are located. These might have had as many as 300,000 workers at one time. The other concentration arose from the recent stress on the expansion of steel plant in the Eastern Zone. Two new combines using forced labor were reportedly being built, one at Kalbe on the Saale, and the other at Fürstenberg on the Oder.<sup>144</sup>

It appears that there are four ways in which political prisoners are organized for "labor purposes": in special work camps, as teams in the government-owned enterprises, in prison off-shoots of these enterprises, and in more permanent and independent prison factories. The special work camps seem to be established when there is need for speedy completion of some important military project. There is some payment of wages to workers on all these projects, in theory approaching the value of the wages of non-prisoner labor. However, deductions made for "maintenance", that is, for room and board, and for other purposes, become so great that in the end the prisoner has practically nothing left. In many installations time-off from the prison sentence is reportedly given to workers who exceed their norms. However, the norm is alleged to be set so high as to be almost unattainable.

Testifying before the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labour, a representative of the United Kingdom said that conditions in the camps were very bad, the death rate very high. Prisoners who had been in Nazi as well as in Soviet camps reported that conditions were the same in both camps.<sup>145</sup> Reports by former workers at the uranium mines operated by the Wismut A. G. speak of the "impossible" work quotas, of starvation diets, of tortures, and of a high death rate due to a lack of protective clothing and medical care.

In addition to this system of forced labor in camps, there exists in the Soviet Zone an official system of labor registration and labor placement which subjects all adults to the continuing possibility of being required to work, against their will, in a particular place and at a particular skill. Under this system many people have been and evidently still are being so required to work.

The system of administrative organization and the substantive details of labor placement in the Soviet Zone is related to the plan (3.1). The consequence has been that labor placement agencies in the Soviet Zone have been

144 Editors' note: Cf. *ibid.*, p. 261.

145 Editors' note: "Though the death rate was extremely high, those camps were always full. [...] Prisoners who had been in nazi camps as well as in Soviet camps had ascertained that absolutely the same conditions prevailed in those two categories of camps" (*ibid.*).

put under the government. Another consequence has been that the movement of labor, almost completely free in the Western Zones from the beginning of the occupation, and now completely free, is in many cases restricted in East Germany.

Under such regulations as the first implementation of the Ordinance Concerning Functions of Labor Administrations and the Direction of Manpower of August 7, 1951,<sup>146</sup> the prescriptions of the old Allied Control Council Order No. 3 of 1946<sup>147</sup> are substantially retained, while in the Federal Republic they have been discarded. The registration of all persons between the ages of 14 and 65 in the case of men, and 15 and 50 in the case of women is required, although some persons are exempted, like members of independent profession, tradesmen and independent craftsmen and their families, scholars and students, religious workers, women with children under six years of age or with two children under fifteen years, and those physically or mentally incapable of working. Even these exceptions, however, may be suspended by the Ministry of Labor. All persons registered including those already employed, are subject to compulsory assignment to jobs. The registrant, upon registration, receives a labor book in which his vital statistics are recorded and in which thereafter his employers will record the duration of employment, his occupation, the capacity in which he was employed, and his wage and salary group. The elimination of the labor book, an instrument of the Nazi regime, was a goal of West German trade unionists after the war, which was successfully realized.

Firms are required to report to the labor authorities when a worker has been hired or when he leaves their employment. They are also required to

146 Erste Durchführungsbestimmung zur Verordnung über die Aufgaben der Arbeitsverwaltungen und die Lenkung der Arbeitskräfte. In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1951, Nr. 96 (August 15, 1951), pp. 753–755; Dokument Nr. 91, Erste Durchführungsbestimmung zur Verordnung über die Aufgaben der Arbeitsverwaltungen und die Lenkung der Arbeitskräfte. In: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (Hg.), *Unrecht als System. Dokumente über planmäßige Rechtsverletzungen im sowjetischen Besatzungsgebiet*. Zusammengestellt vom Untersuchungsausschuss Freiheitlicher Juristen, Teil 1, Bonn 1952, S. 94. Editors' note: Can also be found at <https://www.gvooon.de/unrecht-system-dokumente-rechtsverletzungen-sowjetischen-besatzungsgebiet-1950-1952/seite-94-886036.html>; 24.4.2022. This collection of documents was published in at least three parts until 1958 and was also released in English ("Injustice the regime") and French. The references in the original manuscript were inconclusive and have been corrected accordingly.

147 Editors' note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 3 – Registrierung der in arbeitsfähigem Alter stehenden Bevölkerung, Registrierung der Arbeitslosen und deren Unterbringung in Arbeit (17. Januar 1946). In: *Amtsblatt des Kontrollrats in Deutschland*, Nr. 6 (March 31, 1946), pp. 131–133.

report their own labor needs when they are not able to fulfill them by their own recruiting methods. In the early days of the occupation there was a considerable amount of compulsory assignment of workers, particularly of the unemployed. In 1946 almost 14 percent of the total number of new registrants were compulsorily assigned.

Soviet Military Administration Order No. 234 of October 1947 seems to have been intended to soften the stringency of labor direction somewhat by its warning against indiscriminate and excessive use of compulsory direction.<sup>148</sup> Since then, compulsory direction seems to have been confined for the most part to the uranium mining field. There the recruitment program has been vigorously pushed periodically. Special brigades are set up from time to time to canvass the working personnel in what are considered less important enterprises for “volunteers” to work in the Wismut A. G., the uranium mines in Saxony, also referred to as the “basic materials industry in Saxony”. During intensive recruitment campaigns the brigades (supervised by a coordinating group made up of the head of the local district labor department, representatives of the FDGB, of the German Women’s League, of the Free German Youth, of local industry, and of an instructor from Wismut) have been required to report daily on a number of points. They are expected to provide information on the number of fully employable workmen they feel are available in the installations they have visited, the number spoken to, the number of contracts signed, the number of written promises, the number of potential recruits asking for more time, the arguments against volunteering given the brigade by the plant director, by the political parties and other mass organizations, whether any special support is necessary, and particularly which employees evidenced a positive hostility to the program, and why. In some cases, particular enterprises are summarily informed by the labor authorities that on a certain date they will make available a certain number of workmen. This is often accompanied by the advice that “increased instructional work is to be carried out concerning the importance of the basic materials industry”. In 1952 it was estimated that 154,000 workers were engaged in the Wismut A. G. installations.

Apart from such activities one of the major efforts of the labor administration has been to encourage housewives to work in industry, commerce, or

148 Editors’ note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 234 (9. Oktober 1947) – Maßnahmen zur Steigerung der Arbeitsproduktivität und zur weiteren Verbesserung der materiellen Lage der Arbeiter und Angestellten in der Industrie und im Verkehrswesen. In: Zentralverordnungsblatt, hg. namens aller Zentralverwaltungen von der Deutschen Justizverwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland, Nr. 1 (January 15, 1948), Berlin (East) 1948, pp. 1–6.

transportation. A better ration card, a wage based on the principle of "equal pay for equal work", and other amenities have been used as inducements. In almost all large enterprises there are nurseries and kindergartens, where a mother may leave her child for fifteen East Marks (DM-O) per month for day care or twenty-five East marks per month for 24-hour a day care. Under the terms of the five-year plan of 1950, employment of women was to increase by 39 percent during the five-year period. By December 1953, East German authorities report, it had already increased by 40.4 percent, though the accuracy of this figure is in doubt.

Another category that labor authorities have consistently sought to exploit is that of the physically handicapped. Under rules promulgated by the Soviet Zone government, 10 percent of all positions in an enterprise must be filled with physically disabled.

A labor shortage was already in evidence in the Soviet Zone in 1948, in certain skills, especially, and the needs of the five-year plan, including the requirements of the uranium mines, seem to have made the shortages more acute. In December 1950 the number of job seekers was reported by Soviet Zone labor authorities to be about 4 percent of the total employed. Subsequent developments are obscure, the Soviet Zone authorities claiming that the percentage dropped to one-half of one percent in December 1954, while West German experts claim that as late as June 1953 a study of social insurance statistics showed 6.1 percent of the population to be unemployed. Unemployment in East Germany may be attributed to poor planning, material shortages, and the desire of plant managers of government enterprises to save money by reducing employment rolls.

A form of compulsory service in East Germany, particularly designed for young people, was the *Service for Germany*, which was introduced in July 1952. The labor administration has the right to assign young men of 17 years of age to a six-month period of service "for important and large construction enterprises". The compensation for services performed during this period is minimal: the organization, however, had to be dissolved again on March 1, 1953, because of "lack of supplies". However, plans were in existence in 1954 for reestablishing the Service.

Administratively, the most significant change in the labor placement field has been the elimination of the old autonomous labor offices (*Arbeitsämter*). Traditionally the head of a land labor office was chosen by the land prime minister after consultation with both industry and labor, with the same man heading the labor office permanently, whatever political changes might take place in the state government. The office was run by its president with the advice of a council composed of representatives of local industry, labor, and citizens. The existence of such offices, particularly ones of such importance

in a regime concerned with labor and industrial controls, outside the chain of command was a real anomaly in Soviet Zone. It is not unlikely that they were refuges of persons hostile to the regime. The elimination of these autonomous offices in July 1951 was therefore not surprising. The ordinance on tasks of labor administration and the direction of manpower charged that the old labor offices characterized by *arranging* employment had failed to justify themselves in the DDR. In the changed circumstances they were unable to fulfill as special offices in the framework of the "anti-fascist-democratic regime" the comprehensive variety of tasks arising from the five-year plan. Their previous structure and function no longer corresponded, it was said, to the radical changes which had taken place in society. As a result, the functions of the labor offices have now been vested in a labor department in the regular municipal or rural local government, under the direction of the local council.

#### 1.14 Labor Relations and Organization [*Albert Mavrinc*]

Like the constitutions of the West German Länder and the Basic Law of the German Federal Republic, the Constitution of the DDR guarantees a number of rights to the workers. Among them, the right to organize for the improvement of wage and other working conditions, the right to strike, the right to a job or to support if without work, the right to recreation, to annual vacations, and to care in sickness and old age. Subsequent legislation reveals the broad meaning of these rights. The basic Labor Law of 1950 (*Gesetz der Arbeit*)<sup>149</sup> declares that political power and the key positions in the economy are to be in the hands of the working people. On this foundation, there is to be built a new planned economy. The Free German Trade Unions are designated as the legal representatives of the working people in the factories and in the executive and administrative branch of the government, and all organs of the DDR are ordered to conduct their operations in closest cooperation with the governing bodies of the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB).

The repeated references in laws and decrees to one specific trade union organization rather than simply to trade unions in general reflect, however, the actual relationship between this trade union organization and the dominant political group in the DDR.

149 Editors' note: Cf. Gesetz der Arbeit zur Förderung und Pflege der Arbeitskräfte, zur Steigerung der Arbeitsproduktivität und zur weiteren Verbesserung der materiellen und kulturellen Lage der Arbeiter und Angestellten (19.4.1950). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1950, Nr. 46 (April 28, 1950), pp. 349–355.



The Statutes of the FDGB recognize the SED as the party of the working classes (2.3). It is the workers' most conscious, most highly organized vanguard, and the shaper of the plans for the development of the workers' economy. A study of the membership of the Executive Committee of the FDGB indicates that all of its members are also functionaries of the SED, very often also holding important governmental positions. This situation is a development to SED monopoly from an earlier post-war condition in which non-Communist elements fought with Communists for control of the labor unions. The first Executive Committee of the FDGB included such anti-Communists as Jakob Kaiser, a Christian Democrat now a member of the Government of the Federal Republic and likewise Nikolaus Bernhard of the old Construction Workers Union, and the Socialist Dr. Otto Suhr, now Lord Mayor of Berlin, were members of the Trade-Union Committee which elected the Executive Committee. The FDGB appears to have been one of the last organizations to submit to SED control.

In the August 1947 elections to the trade union council in the government service, the majority of seats actually went to Social Democrats. This was one of the results of having its offices in Berlin. But in time the policy of the trade unions was completely coordinated with that of the SED.

The assumption of complete control of the FDGB by officials of the SED was paralleled by three developments which made it possible for this control to mean complete control of East German worker organizations, a monopoly of worker representation, an identification in propaganda of the policy of the FDGB with the interests of the workers. These three developments were: the persistence of the idea that there should be but one unified trade union organization; an assumption by the FDGB of control over the activities of the 20 constituent industrial unions, and the identification of hostility on the part of a worker to the FDGB with disloyalty to the DDR.

It is emphasized that it is the duty of all workers to belong to the FDGB. A worker who fails to join may be dismissed, even if he works in a socialized plant.

Most of the money received by local unions and by the component industrial unions from their membership is sent to the treasury of the FDGB executive committee. This procedure has been followed from the early days of trade union revival, the justification at that time being given as the need for "preventing competition among the constituent unions". All this is now part of a general pattern which results in the industrial unions, e. g. the zone-wide metal, building, mining, leather, etc. unions having little more than a propaganda and agitation function among the workers. A study of administrative procedures within the East German trade union system suggests that important orders originate exclusively in the FDGB Executive Committee and are transmitted downward to the plant not by way of the industrial unions but

through the intermediate federations at the district level. For example, it was on a simple decision of the Executive Committee of the FDGB that the works councils were eliminated from most Soviet Zone plants in 1948.

One of the most significant actions taken by the FDGB to ensure its monopoly of control in the representation of the workers was the elimination of the works councils in the Fall of 1948. The works councils had had a long history in Germany, in some areas tracing their origins back to orders of Napoleon I, and more recently owing their existence to Bismarck's attempts to undermine the influence of the trade unions. During the Weimar period they were the intended instruments of social reformers for the introduction of a measure of worker participation into the government of industry, as envisaged by Article 65 of the Weimar Constitution. Gradually, the works councils and the trade unions delimited their respective spheres, with the works councils fulfilling important tasks at the plant level that in many other countries, such as the United States, are taken care of by trade union representatives. The German trade unions, however, tended to restrict their economic interest to the negotiations with employers at the nation or state-wide level. The works councils, therefore, for all the cooperative relationship that might in fact have existed between them and the trade unions, were actually autonomous entities. After World War II, works councils were revived throughout Germany under the terms of an Allied Control Council Law, No. 22.<sup>150</sup> This law was clearly intended to retain their old autonomy. It provided for cooperation between the works councils and the trade unions but insisted that in works council elections in the plant (which must be free, equal, secret, and direct) all the plant's workers and employees must be permitted to participate. It appears that as early as 1946, upon the promulgation of the law, the Soviet Military Administration was encouraging the transfer of Works Council functions to the FDGB. In 1948, after elections to the Land parliaments had been postponed, the FDGB, in the "Bitterfeld Resolution", claimed that in all enterprises where more than 80 percent of the workers were members of the FDGB the trade union should assume the functions of the works council.<sup>151</sup> It has been suggested that the holding of the works councils' elections on the terms laid down in the law of the Control Council might have been embarrassing to the Communists in the results. Shortly thereafter, the FDGB assumed works council functions in almost all factories, and by 1951 works councils

150 Editors' note: Cf. Gesetz Nr. 22, Betriebsräte (10. April 1946). In: Amtsblatt des Kontrollrats in Deutschland 1946, Nr. 6 (March 31, 1946), pp. 133–135.

151 Editors' note: Cf. for the mentioned Bitterfelder Beschlüsse [http://library.fes.de/FDGB-Lexikon/texte/sachteil/b/Bitterfelder\\_Beschl%FCsse.html](http://library.fes.de/FDGB-Lexikon/texte/sachteil/b/Bitterfelder_Beschl%FCsse.html); 2.7.2022.

disappeared even from private factories and religious organizations. By this elimination, the FDGB also got rid of what might have served, because of its autonomy, as the local core of resistance to the Communists.

In sum, then, by exploitation of the arguments on the need for trade union unity, by coloring trade union loyalty and giving it a political cast, and by eliminating one of the traditional German forms of worker representation, the FDGB has attained a monopoly of the public representation of the workers. It is recognized in law as the legal representative of the workers, a fact enabling it to control or influence the activities of many institutions, public and private, which in former days were governed by representatives of many walks of life or were in what then seemed more appropriate, non-union hands. Social insurance systems and employer organizations alike feel the weight of the FDGB decisions.

Formally speaking, the FDGB has a total membership of about 4.25 million or what would be 70 percent of all the "workers" (as distinguished from the employees). It is reported that of these, 1.5 million are women. Any statistics of this kind, however, are approximations. In the beginning every effort was made to discourage the revival of a special union for salaried employees. However, one was eventually set up for them. It is evident that not all workers are members of the FDGB, even though thereby, with the elimination of works councils, such workers lose all representation. Though occasionally there have been dismissals for failure to join the union, it seems that there has been no really determined drive to enroll all production workers, perhaps because participation of all workers in trade union elections might be more embarrassing to the union than their dues were worth. At the plant level every effort is made by "activists" to ensure that representatives from the plant to the higher trade union organs are Communists.

As noted earlier, there are 20 industrial unions, or more properly speaking sub-divisions of the FDGB. Craft organization has been discouraged, some non-Communist commentators pointing out that the old leadership of the craft unions was much more conservative than the leadership generally in unions operating in the mass industries.

The supreme executive body is the Federation Executive Board of 103 members; a secretariat of 9 members supervises 17 departments, such as Education and Agitation, which provide services to the Federation as a whole and to its subdivisions. Liaison between the FDGB and the subordinate unions is also provided by a Presidium made up of the Secretariat and the presidents of a number of the larger unions.

Since 1953, the Executive Committee of the Chambers of Industry and Commerce of the DDR is made up of 15 elected representatives of the private economy, of which 5 are named by the executive committee of the FDGB.

The Chambers of Industry and Commerce are traditionally organizations of employers designed to facilitate the exchange of trade information. The rulers of the Soviet Zone have from the beginning been reluctant to sanction formally employer representation of private industry in collective bargaining. It is not yet clear what if any pattern has been evolved. But certainly, the presence of labor representatives on the governing board of an employer organization creates difficulties when it is to be used in such bargaining, even if the area of bargaining is rather restricted.

Given this centralized FDGB control over the workers and the great power vested in the trade unions for the operation of the government-owned enterprises, and for the management of private enterprises as well, it is not surprising that the system for resolving labor disputes should be rather insignificant. Where disputes arise under the terms of a collective agreement, and this is almost every dispute arising in the government-owned enterprises, the matter may be taken to a labor court, provided that the trade union gives its consent. A district labor court exists for each of the 14 districts into which East Germany is now divided. Appeals may be taken, by the government only, from this court to the East German Supreme Court since there is no higher labor court. The decisions rendered by these courts reveal them to be staffed by judges versed in the decrees of the Central Committee of the SED and in the pronouncements of political leaders.

On the whole it appears proper to say that this higher centralized and hierarchical trade union system is so closely integrated into the plan set down by the regime's political and economic leaders for the fulfilling of labor norms and for the attainment of new economic, political and social forms of society that the distinction between trade unions and management has broken down except organizationally: the East German trade unions have become in a sense an arm of management, their primary purpose now is to urge the worker on to the goals which have been set for him by the state planners. The worker does not participate in any of the planning. He is simply an object rather than a responsible participant in trade union action.

#### 1.14.1 The Labor Community and the Worker in the Plant

Most of the productive enterprises in East Germany are nationalized, the so-called *Volkseigene Betriebe* (VEB) or government-owned enterprises. Some, however, are privately owned. Any discussion of the life of the East German workers must necessarily take cognizance of the existence of both. But in terms of the life of the worker the distinction between private and public seems to be of little significance. In both cases the dominating influence is the goal of

“plan fulfillment”, and private enterprises have their role to play in that plan just as do the nationalized enterprises. In both cases there is no real collective bargaining, the wages all being based ultimately upon state-determined wage tables. The application of the general plan to the role each one plays is now so affected by the close calculation of plan ends and by the rise of plan technicians that the formerly vaunted participation of workers in the elaboration of details is now non-existent and is indeed more and more coming to be discouraged even in theory. What dynamism exists seems more and more to come from above, a situation in contrast to that of the early post-war days, when the workers in many plants did in fact take advantage of the existence of a vacuum in the leadership of the economy and government to assume operating control of the factories in which they worked.

The forces influencing the life of the worker are illustrated by the current attitude of the government toward strikes. Article 14 (2) of the Constitution of the DDR guarantees to the trade unions the right to strike. It was evidently on this provision that Max Fechner, who was then Minister of Justice, based his view, in connection with the anti-Communist demonstrations of June 17, 1953, that “the right to strike is constitutionally guaranteed”.<sup>152</sup> His successor, Dr. Hilde Benjamin, held shortly after, however, that Fechner had confused what was indeed a right with what in fact had been an attempted coup against the people in the guise of a strike. A handbook distributed in East Germany now seems to speak authoritatively when it answers the question, “Can the Workers in the German Democratic Republic strike?” by saying “You cannot strike against yourself. The nationally owned factories belong to the workers, they are directed by the workers, and the full right of co-determination is guaranteed [...] A cessation of work in the DDR would have a negative effect on the workers, their state, and nationally owned economy. It would benefit no one except the expropriated capitalists and bankers.”<sup>153</sup> Considering the role played by private enterprises in the fulfillment of the economic plan there is no reason to believe that a strike in one of these would be tolerated any more than a strike in a public enterprise.

152 Editors' note: Max Fechner, who had come to SED from SPD, was removed from office because of this statement in an interview with the SED party newspaper “Neues Deutschland” (“Alle Inhaftierten kommen vor ein ordentliches Gericht”, June 30, 1953), subsequently arrested and, in a secret trial on May 24, 1955, sentenced to eight years in penal servitude by the Supreme Court of the GDR. Cf. Sylvia Kubina, Streikrecht. In: Dowe/Kuba/Wilke (eds.), FDGB-Lexikon.

153 Editors' note: Committee for German Unity (ed.), 250 Questions, 250 Answers, p. 32. German edition: Ausschuss für deutsche Einheit (ed.), 250 Fragen, 250 Antworten, pp. 31 f.

As was suggested above, rather than fulfilling its traditional role of representing the workers *vis-à-vis* the employer, with the strike as an ultimate weapon, the trade unions in East Germany have become instruments for the integration of the individual worker for the fulfillment of the plan. They have become, in fact, agents of management. The leadership of the DDR has made every effort to prevent a distinction from developing between management and the workers, but it would seem nonetheless that the distinction continues to exist for many workers. One reason is that the DDR leaders have found it difficult to integrate the activities of administrative technicians, with those of a non-technically minded labor leadership.

Continuing attempts are made to persuade the worker that his primary duty is to the productive process, to the most efficient use of his working time and materials, and in general to helping his plant to fulfill the quotas which have been assigned to it, whether they be quotas of unit production, of finance, or of quality. The worker is supposed to feel that it is his personal responsibility to insure the filling of all these quotas. At the same time the pressure is on the trade union functionaries and on the "activists" of the SED to fulfill or overfulfill the quotas. Drives are presented as "struggles", and the atmosphere of urgency pervades all. The leaders who do not bring the enterprise to the required level may find themselves criticized in the press or may even find themselves imprisoned for sabotage.

In attempting to fulfill their responsibilities the trade union and party leadership have turned factories into forums for political agitation. The meetings prescribed by law for the consideration of collective bargaining agreements are now, for want of any possibility of changing terms dictated from above, little more than occasions for pep-talks. Apart from these quarterly meetings the most frequent opportunity for agitation is during the noon-day rest. Under the provisions of the Labor Safety Ordinance, these rest periods must be forty-five minutes long, a change from an earlier shorter period. The reason for the change, however, was not so much hygienic as political. The Master Plant Agreement of 1952, drafted by the central administration of the FDGB in collaboration with the ministries of the DDR made all this change politically meaningful and economically efficient, in terms of the meeting of production quotas, by declaring that this rest period should not be considered part of the working time. The result is that workers leave work later in the day, having given some of their free time over to indoctrination efforts. Workers are expected to be familiar with the Communist line on world and domestic affairs, and frequent exposures of gross ignorance on the part of workers help keep agitators interested and concerned.

Apart from its function as a center of agitation, the plant is an administrative center as well. The distribution of housing facilities to those employed

in government-owned plants is made through the trade union machinery in the plant, employees of private enterprises receiving assignments from the municipal housing office. Ration cards are also distributed through the agency of the trade union in the plant. Every effort has also been made to make the plant the center for the day-to-day administration of the social insurance program. Plant clinics and nurseries are all intended to increase the dependence of the worker on his working place for many of the essentials of life, and the government, party, and trade union then seek to use this place as a forum for the indoctrination of the worker and for firing his enthusiasm to work as well as for keeping him as physically sound as the need to fulfill the short-term demands of the plan permits.

One of the permanent problems of administration of the economic plan appears to be the difficulty of reconciling the vaunted principle of "co-determination" of workers in management with the technical quality of the material being dealt with and the need to integrate a great number of details into a finely balanced scheme. As was the case in West Germany, one of the most prominent ideas in labor circles in East Germany following the war was that of worker participation in management. Article 17 of the constitution of the DDR provides that "the regulation of production as well as of wages and working conditions will be the consequence of the determinative participation of workers and employees".<sup>154</sup> Communist leaders like Walter Ulbricht early stressed that this was not only to mean participation by the trade union leadership, but participation by the workers themselves in all questions involving wages, labor law, the rights of works councils, and social insurance. The plant assembly of workers was to be the arena of this. However, early plant assemblies for the discussion of such matters as the collective agreements seemed to have been used for criticism of the general idea of the plan by opponents of the regime. Finally, in 1952, most of the debatable points of the collective agreements were made a part of a legal ordinance, and thereafter the collective agreements dealt only with such things as restating in the form already decided by the FDGB and other government agencies, (a) the overall economic plans and the plan for the plant itself; (b) duties of the plant management in the area of vocational education and in the area of caring for the social needs of the workers, e. g. plant reading-rooms, recreation areas, athletic teams, and clinics; (c) duties of the workers in the area of "labor assignment"; and (d) excerpts from the state wage decrees. This change took place at a time when the whole problem of worker participation in management was being discussed

154 Editors' note: Cf. *Die Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Textausgabe*, Deutscher Zentralverlag, Berlin (East) 1949, p. 13 (article 17).

at the Second Party Conference of the SED and the Tenth Meeting of the Executive Committee of the FDGB in 1952. At this conference such prominent SED and FDGB leaders as Ulbricht and Warnke warned against maintaining the co-determination idea in “an exaggerated form”. At the conclusion of these conferences, decisions were taken to stress forcefully the principle of the “plant director’s exclusive responsibility for decisions”.<sup>155</sup> It seemed that thereafter the worker in all plants would be allowed to undertake to work out techniques for speeding up or improving the quality of the plant’s production. But it appeared that any attempt to interfere with the general schedule of production, or with the general form of production techniques, would be considered sabotage.

That the collective agreements as they exist today are not the same as formerly is tacitly admitted by SED theoreticians in their discussions of factory organization and operation. There have in fact been two forms of collective agreements since 1945, and in the change from one to the other corresponds to the evolution of the collective agreements in the Soviet Union. As in the Soviet Union during the 1920’s and early 1930’s the first agreements in the Soviet Zone were concerned with wages and hours, with leaves and vacations, and with the elaboration of other working conditions. Not only have such details now become superfluous, the whole approach to wages has changed since 1950. The calculation of wages has been placed on an allegedly “scientific” basis that would seem to preclude much negotiation. The collective agreements, instead, have become instruments for focusing the attention of the worker on a quantitative and qualitative production goal that has been established for him by government and party.

A refinement in the techniques of worker organization for disciplinary and production purposes within the plant has been evident in the Soviet Zone since the visit of an FDBG Committee to Moscow in the Autumn of 1952. Even before this, however, the influence of the Russian system of factory organization was evident in the ordinance of May 20, 1952. Under its terms, all workers were ordered to be instructed in Soviet labor methods, by way of “activist schools”, “schools for higher productivity”, and technical evening schools. All masters were ordered to be made familiar with Soviet labor methods, and for this purpose to be organized into special instructional teams.

155 Editors’ note: The Second Party Conference (II. Parteikonferenz) took place from July 9 to July 12, 1952. For its decisions, cf. *Zur gegenwärtigen Lage und zu den Aufgaben im Kampf für Frieden, Einheit, Demokratie und Sozialismus*. In: Zentralkomitee der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands (ed.), *Dokumente der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands. Beschlüsse und Erklärungen des Zentralkomitees sowie seines Politbüros und seines Sekretariats*, Vol. IV, 1952–1953, Berlin (East) 1954, pp. 70–78.



There are two moods running through the implementation of the new ideas on labor organization in national factories. The first might be characterized as positive, the second negative. A characteristic theme of the first mood is that of “socialist competition”. In accordance with this idea one of the tasks of socialist leadership is to encourage one group of workmen to outdo another in production, one shift to exceed the output and quality of another, one plant to exceed another in profits for the year, and so on. As we shall see, the task of the agitator is to conceive of new and exciting ideas that will serve as stimulants and goads to workers already being pushed hard to push still harder, preferably without pay. Stalin’s birthday or the meeting of the Central Committee of the SED, may be used as the justification for demanding more. The output of some particularly productive workers like the miner Adolf Hennecke, the 1948 East German equivalent of the 1935 Russian Stakhanov, is held up for emulation as well as for introduction into the bookkeepers’ set of statistics on which to base the norm on which particular wage payments are calculated.

The negative mood is exemplified in such themes as that of “socialist discipline”. The idea of “Socialist discipline” was introduced into East Germany by an ordinance of 1948. This order was issued following SMA Order No. 234.<sup>156</sup> Under the Soviet, and now East German theory of labor discipline, socialist labor discipline is voluntary, unlike that in capitalist countries where the employer is always there to haunt the worker. The purpose of labor discipline regulations is simply to encourage the worker to do that which he would want to do anyway in the society in which he works for himself instead of for others. Among evident infractions of labor discipline are tardy reporting for work, or early leaving at the end of the shift, and loafing during the working day. In East Germany, these acts cease to be personal failings as they are in a capitalist economy (with the consequent possibility of losing a job); they take on the quality of socially significant derelictions. Criminal prosecution may and has followed repeated infractions of “socialist labor discipline”. The idea of discipline is not limited to such fairly obvious points, but it may be extended to include errors in planning or in plant management that have jeopardized the attaining of the production goal. It is possible for a railroad official to be [...]<sup>157</sup> for having scrapped non-serviceable equipment and then been unable

156 Editors’ note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 234 (9. Oktober 1947) – Maßnahmen zur Steigerung der Arbeitsproduktivität und zur weiteren Verbesserung der materiellen Lage der Arbeiter und Angestellten in der Industrie und im Verkehrswesen. In: Zentralverordnungsblatt, hg. namens aller Zentralverwaltungen von der Deutschen Justizverwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland, Nr. 1, 15 January 1948, Berlin (East) 1948, pp. 1–6.

157 Editors’ note: The original manuscript is missing a word here, there is a large gap in the text in this place.

to meet traffic demands. The problem of labor discipline is theoretically not handled in the agreements. However, the Central Committee of the SED itself in its 21st Plenary Session (1955) emphasized the need for reinforcing the idea of labor discipline in workers' thinking.

The organizational setting is that of the Soviet system of brigades and cadres. Insofar as this has been possible, the productive process has been organized so that it can be divided up and thought of in terms of "brigades" of 20-30 workers. Each of these brigades is led by a "brigadier", not necessarily the technical leader of the group, but preferably an activist, and a convinced Communist. The purpose of the brigadiers is to combine the agitator with the organizer. The organization of more efficient productive techniques for the brigade, within the confines of the plan, the stimulation of more active work, the control over workers so as to reduce "bumming", loitering, sabotage, and other products of the lingering influence of capitalism are the brigadier's task. From a disciplinary point of view, it appears that the brigadier has a superior voice in the determination of the assignment of work in the brigade, even though he be not the most technically qualified member: he is also in control of all the movements of the brigade members. Since the autumn of 1952 there have also existed small trade union groups in the factory (15-20 members), paralleling the brigades. The purpose of these appears to be more education and leadership of the workers in public activities, such as demonstrations and other manifestations of worker solidarity. However, both the brigade system and the system of small trade union groups paralleling the brigade, were evidently found wanting during the anti-Communist strikes of July 17, 1953. In order to be able to intervene more firmly in the event of future unrest, the SED is reported to have decided upon the creation within each enterprise of a "combat group", made up of loyal armed worker-militia men to whom the protection of the plants and the throttling of demonstrations can be entrusted. The members of these combat groups, all of them holding membership in the SED, are forbidden to change their working place or to move their residence without the authorization of the local committee of the SED.

The Soviet system of criticism and self-criticism has been transported to East Germany. Plant newspapers, bulletin boards, and assemblies are used to praise, to blame and to self-accuse.

To sum up all this, since the start of the five-year plan in 1950, there has been greater and more effective control and stimulation of the worker, so that he will at once be encouraged to new exertions and discouraged from loafing and otherwise interfering with attainment of production quotas. In the evolution to the new form, such ideas as that of "co-determination" have become nothing but words in the mouth of the propagandist. There is no possibility for the individual worker to participate in the making of any vital decisions in the

operating of the plant. The trade union leadership, a self-perpetuating group of SED sympathizers does this. More recently, even the attempts of the trade union officials to take a significant part in the operation of a particular enterprise have been blocked by a return to the idea that the productive process is a highly technical one demanding the balancing of many details, and that the task of management ought to be left to specially trained personnel whose activities will be coordinated by one man, in whom the decision-making power will be vested. Only this one man is now usually a government official rather than a free enterpriser.

Viewed in terms of institutions the most striking feature of labor life in the Soviet Zone is the artificiality of the public labor institutions which exist. Whether trade unions, labor offices, or social insurance agencies (1.6) – they seem to be shells, outwardly resembling their nominal predecessors, but having lost all autonomous power. The centralized planning toward a new society has brought with it a system of centralized control which takes the initiative out of institutions below and reduces them to the status of automatons. One cannot therefore talk really of trade unions, labor offices, or social insurance organizations as existing in East Germany, for there is nothing that these institutions do that makes them in any way kin of the free institutions of the West which they claim to be the perfection of.

In terms of persons, it is evident that the person is nowhere treated in the German Soviet system as an objective personal entity. Whether he is a worker on the job, a worker sick, or a worker become old and wanting to retire, he is viewed by the leadership of this totalitarian society in terms of the way he and his abilities and desires to fit into a social situation, both absolutely in terms of the ultimate goal, and immediately in terms of the present “struggles” which are a characteristic of Soviet thinking.

### 1.15 Health and Sanitation [*Vytautas Kavolis*]

At the end of the war the whole organization of healthcare in the Soviet Zone was shattered. Large numbers of medical personnel had left the Soviet Zone. The governmental public health organization, which had been largely staffed by Nazi personnel, ceased to function; epidemics threatened. Since this would have affected the Soviet army of occupation, the Soviet military government took active steps to restore the medical system.

As a first step, the organization of public healthcare was transferred from the government to the communities and built up “from below”. Shortly after, central institutions were created which assumed the control of the structure thus developed. In this way, local initiative and democratic sentiment was uti-

lized for the construction of a centralized government system of medical care. A Ministry of Health was eventually placed in charge.

In spite of shortages in both personnel and supplies, the rebuilt medical system did a remarkable job of controlling the postwar health situation. With the introduction and strict execution of obligatory reports and hospital treatment, the spread of venereal disease was checked. The number of hospital beds for venereal patients, numbering 26,700 in 1946, was reduced by 75 percent by 1948. Epidemics were also successfully controlled, partly because the Soviet military administration left the system of hygiene supervision and epidemic control relatively undisturbed by the "reconstruction" which affected other areas of medical practice.

The reconstruction of the system of healthcare in the Soviet Zone centered on the problem of nationalization of medical practice. Two particularly important foci were: concentration of medical practice in industrial plants and in polyclinics. Polyclinics are the traditional German state clinics for all non-paying patients who desire free care. The purpose of the first was that of controlling the sickness level in industry through greater familiarity with the patient and his situation. The main purpose of the second was to nationalize the medical profession and to increase the degree of control over the medical profession. The actions which accompanied the development of the polyclinic movement after 1949 show that the welfare of the sick was not its only purpose: material advantages for doctors joining the polyclinics, coupled with increases in taxation and the control of medical supplies for doctors in private practice favored the nationalized system, and, similarly, supplies for existing private hospitals were poor compared with those for polyclinics. In spite of relative stagnation in other areas of medical practice, the number of polyclinics has increased from 148 in 1950 to 284 in 1954, the number of country-side polyclinics from 136 to 273 and the number of communal "nursing stations" from 2,620 to 3,882. The number of plant polyclinics has increased from 36 to 71, and plant sanitary stations from 3,566 to 7,855.

After 1953, the whole machinery for granting sickness leave was transferred to medical commissions consisting of the polyclinic personnel and the polyclinic made the center of the organization of medical practice.

The concentration of medical practice in industrial plants sought to place beyond the ken of the private practitioner the task of controlling the sickness level in industry. By 1950, there were about 2,500 plant clinics in the Soviet Zone. After 1951, sickness leave could be granted only by plant doctors belonging to the social insurance system and working under the supervision of management and the plant SED. Strict criteria for justifying sick leave, as well as definite quotas were given to plant doctors: economic, as well as medical, considerations were important in a decision regarding sickness.

In order to minimize interference with the process of production by illness, night clinics were established at the larger plants. Convalescents were set to work in convalescent brigades.

At present, the public health of the Soviet Zone is controlled by the Ministry of Health, which in turn is supervised by the section for health of the Central Committee of the SED. The Ministry supervises health and hygiene, mother and child care, medical supplies, and research. It does not supervise either the training of medical practitioners (1.9) or health insurance (1.14), but controls a number of research and educational institutions for training auxiliary personnel and a part of the pharmaceutical industry; it guides the activities of medical societies and in medical research, it collaborates with the State Planning Commission. No one is permitted to do research unless he is a member of an officially recognized research institute. Medical publishing houses are coordinated, under the supervision of the Ministry. On the local level, the functions of health organizations are performed by communal Public Health Offices.

In 1952, the German Red Cross of the Soviet Zone was established by the regime without connection to the International Red Cross. SED personnel are usually appointed as chairmen of the county committees of the party. In 1953, the Red Cross had 500–800 helpers in each county. By March 1953, the total membership was 155,000, 51,000 of whom had been trained as helpers. In addition to their medical work, the Red Cross was expected to be active in public life and to promote Communist “social science”. Interest in working with the Red Cross declined after people realized that it functioned on behalf of the regime.

The health picture in the Soviet Zone can be gleaned from Tables I and II. The tables reflect the main tendencies: a remarkable reduction of epidemics, a continuing and increasingly high level of incidence of tuberculosis, the unhygienic state of the food distribution industry, which accounts for the increasing number of bacterial foodstuff poisonings, and increasing sickness among industrial employees particularly since the tempo of sovietization was intensified in 1950. One source, operating with purportedly secret social insurance statistics shows that in the period of most intense sovietization, from January to May 1953, the sickness level increased in various industrial branches from 162 to 303 percent.

Table I: Main Contagious Diseases in the Soviet Zone

Disease	1946		1947	
	Incidence	Mortality	Incidence	Mortality
Spotted Fever	5,463	1,084	56	4
Typhus	35,084	5,830	10,953	1,335
Paratyphus	1,532	44	2,073	45
Dysentery	2,812	429	2,326	327
Diphtheria	90,685	4,507	35,475	1,457
Epidemic Cerebrospinal Meningitis	432	229	458	219
Scarlet Fever	15,656	242	7,332	71
Contagious Infantile Paralysis	302	73	1,022	166
Postnatal Puerperal Fever	222	44	239	40
Puerperal Fever after Miscarriage	280	70	474	102
Bacterial Foodstuff poisoning	230	18	1,637	24
Tuberculosis	57,417	18,711	73,036	23,230
Malaria	4,615	28	2,925	34
Enceph. Epidemical	28	17	24	17
Trachoma	47	-	52	-

Source: Wilhelm Weiß, *Das Gesundheitswesen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, Bonn 1952, p. 80 (the numbers are not final).

Actual sickness may have been higher than the official statistics indicate, for a number of important industrial establishments reported a considerably higher percentage than the zonal rate. The general increase is reflected in the planned sickness level for 1955, which, although lower than the actual rates of 1954, is higher than the plan for 1954.

The high sickness rate is basically to be explained by constant pressure to overproduce and anxiety as to the future, as well as by the whole complex of hard living conditions such as change of place, lack of homes, of heat and of clothing, famine and family disruption (1.7). All these resulted in physical and

Table II: The Incidence of Disease Among the Socially Insured Employed in Industry

Year	Percent	
	(a)	(b)
1948	3.95	7.2
1949	4.12	7.2
1950	4.67	7.3
1951	5.61	
1952	6.20	

Sources: (a) Alfred Leutwein, *Der Krankenstand in der Sowjetzone. Ein Gradmesser für die allgemeine Situation der Bevölkerung*. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 23 (December 5, 1953), p. 356; (b) Vorstand d. Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands: *Das Gesundheitswesen in der Sowjetzone*, Bonn 1954, p. 18. The latter source also shows that the incidence of disease was up to seven times as frequent among the general working population than among the (variously privileged) "activists". The (a) set should be regarded as basic, since it agrees with other sources.

psychic conditions characterized by disturbances of blood circulation and the nervous system, as well as by weakening of the heart muscles.

The struggle against some diseases, such as tuberculosis, was at first made difficult not only by living and working conditions, but also by the lack of medical supplies, which is one of the most important health problems of the SZ. The situation was aggravated by the concentration of the pharmaceutical industry in West Germany. Shortages in a great number of important medical and chemical supplies developed. Medical, especially dental, instruments, bandages and hospital laundry were in particularly short supply. Investments and scientifically trained personnel for a medical supplies' industry are lacking. This situation radically changed after 1952: the production of basic materials for the pharmaceutical industry and hence, the supply of medicines, has been on the whole assured, and even export to other countries of the Soviet bloc made possible, except for certain, special and highly developed medicines. The quality of the pharmaceutical products has been poor but is improving. Since 1953, a stockpile of medical supply, principally of Western-imported medicines, has been created. In 1952, 75 percent of the imports were from the West, and 80 percent in 1953.

The production and distribution of medicines is governed by law which place heavy burdens on pharmacies and resulted in the nationalization of many pharmacies, although the number of private pharmacies is still considerable. In 1950, there were 737 state pharmacies, 254 polyclinic pharmacies, 5

plant-policlinic pharmacies, 40 hospital pharmacies and 519 private pharmacies. The law, by prescribing the kinds of preparations to be sold, has caused the decline of private pharmaceutical industry. From 1949 to 1953, its share had declined from 57.8 to 10 percent. The total consumption of medicine is estimated to amount 335–360 million DM-O annually.

In December 1952, there were 10,816 doctors (including those who did not practice), in the SZ and their number has not considerably changed since. It is estimated that at that time one doctor was practicing for every 2,000 inhabitants, the desired ratio being one doctor to 1,000 inhabitants (in West Germany it is 1 to 800–900). Between 1951 and 1953, the Zone was variously estimated to be short of medical practitioners by 6,000–10,000. At present, the Zone has about 5,000 medical students. The supply of auxiliary personnel, particularly nurses also is inadequate. Because of this shortage in medical personnel the regime has since 1952 made use of medical helpers. These are members of the auxiliary medical and sanitary personnel, who are selected partly on the basis of political qualifications and trained for one year at a hospital and are then considered qualified to treat the less difficult cases, and even perform operations except for those involving the removal of organs. Regular medical training at the universities, because of the resistance to political indoctrination among the teaching staffs, has not developed into thorough-going Communist indoctrination. In fact, students of these schools have in several cases been particularly active in opposing the demands of the system. There was greater scope for incorporating indoctrination into training courses for auxiliary medical personnel, such as nurses as well as helpers (1.9). This educational program is likely to create tension between the doctors and the auxiliary personnel.

As in the USSR, the whole medical system of the SZ is part of the general plan. The functions of the medical system within the context of the planned social process may be summed up thus: to keep workers in production and to indoctrinate them in the process.

The medical system as a whole provides a strict control of doctors and patients. The medical profession is controlled by medical associations which are arms of the government and which organize professional work according to the needs of the regime; by trade unions, which function as transmission belts for the regime and as means of control of medical practitioners; by the social insurance and state medical institutions; by various forms of inspection in the plant and policlinic medical practice; and by the Central Committee of the SED supervising the personnel of the Ministry of Health. The medical profession is broken up into various organizational groups, some favored, and others at a disadvantage, and forced into the same trade unions with semi- and non-professional groups, who do not have the same tradition of independence, professional ethics and academic standards.



On the assumption that the sick person is less resistant both to divulging normally guarded secrets, and to indoctrination a good share of attention is devoted to the patients. In addition to preventing malingering, the task of more direct political control and indoctrination has been imposed upon the hospital personnel. Information gleaned from patients must be reported back to the secret police, which is said to be quite active at the hospitals, and persuasion is directed at patients to prove both the truth of communist ideology and the desirability of getting well fast. In health resorts, courses of ideological schooling are organized; the SED members among the patients have to join the SED chapter of the health resort and participate in supervision and indoctrination of the other patients. Thus, the system attempts to control the doctor and, partly through him, but partly through other functionaries as well as the patients themselves, to control the patient.

#### 1.16 Public Welfare [*Vytautas Kavolis*]

In the Soviet Zone public welfare is subordinated to political considerations. As long as standards of living were determined primarily by the rationing process, individuals who contributed least to industrial production, such as housewives and recipients of public assistance, received the smallest rations. Rations were increased in proportion to the strategic significance of the individual in the productive process, activists and brigade leaders receiving higher rations than other workers, as well as in proportion to the position of the individual in the SED hierarchy. These supplementary rationing cards for the privileged were divided into three categories: (1) those for high party and government functionaries as well as particularly favored scientists and artists, in all 28,000 persons (in 1951), (2) those for the key employees, artists, scientists, in all 160,000 persons (in 1951), (3) those for technicians, engineers, shop stewards, in all 480,000 persons. Altogether, these privileged groups constituted 3–4 percent of the total population. For the particularly select, special stores were established.

This rationing system was used as a reward in the sense that individuals who overproduced at the work bench or who distinguished themselves in political action could without any further qualifications rise to the intelligentsia level. On the other hand, undesirables in the professions e.g. privately practicing doctors, were not recognized as members of the intelligentsia. Since the system did not have sufficient resources to reward all who might contribute significantly to the industrial process, it picked and chose. However, the possibility of attainment of the privileged position by practically every able-bodied person, has been used as the most economic kind of incitement.

Similar principles have prevailed in the allocation of housing. A smaller percentage of housing in the zone (11.5 percent) had been destroyed during the war than in West Germany (25.7 percent). But so little effort has been devoted to housing construction that it declined from 8.4 square meters per person in 1946 to 7.6 square meters in 1948 and only increased to 7.9 square meters in 1950, at which time the decline of the population of the Soviet Zone had started. Thus, the housing situation has improved because of an exodus from the zone, not because of new construction.

The neglect of housing construction was caused: (1) by the dismantling of the construction-materials industry after the war, (2) the extensive exports of the remaining production of construction materials to the USSR, and (3) the priority given to the construction of industrial as well as representative buildings rather than apartment houses. The priority list placed buildings of foreign missions at the top, then buildings for the People's Police, communications, industry, culture, the party, commercial enterprises, agricultural housing, education, health (polyclinics), administration and, last of all, dwelling houses. The five-year-plan in the area of housing construction achieved only 42 percent by 1955, although construction activities had been pushed up somewhat since June 1953. In 1951, the Soviet Zone was short of approximately 1 million apartment units (as compared with 1.2–1.4 million in 1946).

In the distribution of such a scarce commodity as housing, political as well as economic considerations have been decisive. The construction of housing has been concentrated in areas of industrial development, particularly Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Magdeburg, Rostock, the uranium area in Saxony, and the new industrial concentrations, such as Stalinstadt at Fürstenberg/Oder, and the distribution of housing space thus created was turned over to the housing commissions of industrial establishments. Privileged persons, such as those who were overproducers, members of the intelligentsia and scientists, and the politically active, were given priority ahead of working mothers with many children (sixth priority rank) and the physically handicapped (seventh priority rank). Those who could not produce, the aged and recipients of public assistance, were evicted from their homes, if they happened to live in areas of housing-shortage and put into other parts of the Soviet Zone, such as Thuringia and Mecklenburg, in spite of the fact that Mecklenburg had been at the end of the war the area with the largest percentage of destroyed housing, 24.4 percent. In spite of these measures, housing per person in the crucial industrial areas declined to 4–6 square meters. The housing situation is improving, but, for the general population, not appreciably so. It will remain an excellent means for manipulating and rewarding individuals in need (3.1).

### 1.16.1 Social Insurance

The social insurance system of the Soviet Zone has been gradually brought within the structure discussed above. The principle of hierarchy and of centralization, as well as the principle that the value of each activity must be considered, not abstractly, but in terms of the immediate social, economic and political situation and the demands of the long-range plans of the regime, have been applied to a system of social insurance protection with deep roots in German life and have twisted it so that the same words no longer have the same meaning in East as in West Germany.

The chief characteristic of German social insurance organization as it existed before the Hitler period and as it exists now in West Germany is the principle of autonomous self-government of social insurance organizations. Within the broad confines of supervision by a national body, whose independence of partisan politics is insured by the diversity of organizations represented on their governing bodies, the insurance organizations are self-governing.

In the Soviet Zone, the determination to eliminate the multitude of self-governing organizations was evident from the beginning of the occupation. Under Order No. 28 (1947) of the SMA a unification of social insurance was directed, and this was implemented by the Ordinance on Compulsory Social Insurance of January 28, 1947.<sup>158</sup> Under its terms all social insurance, accident, disability, sickness, old-age and survivors', employees', and miners', was brought under the control of one Social Insurance Organization (*Anstalt*) in each state of the Soviet Zone, and all such social insurance institutions as guild, plant, local and substitute associations were dissolved, their membership being thereafter taken care of by the land organization.

Under the terms of the Ordinance for Social Insurance of April 26, 1951, a top Soviet Zone organization was established with the title "Social Insurance" (*Sozialversicherung*).<sup>159</sup> This unitary system of social insurance, obligatory for workers and employees in state and private establishments, private practitioners, and students, was placed into the hands of the trade unions (FDGB),

158 Editors' note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 28 (28. Januar 1947) – Einführung eines einheitlichen Systems und von Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung der Sozialversicherung in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands. In: Arbeit und Sozialfürsorge, 2 (1947) 5, pp. 91–105 (including attachments: Verordnung über die Sozialpflichtversicherung, Verordnung über die freiwillige und zusätzliche Versicherung in der Sozialversicherung und Verordnung über die Pflichtversicherung gegen Arbeitslosigkeit in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands).

159 Editors' note: Verordnung über die Sozialversicherung (26. April 1951). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1951, Nr. 49 (April 28, 1951), pp. 325–327.

although by no means all the insured are members of trade unions. Those who are not, and particularly the privately practicing individuals, such as doctors, are in various ways disadvantaged when the time comes for the social insurance administration to perform. Under the direction of the FDGB the basic unit of social insurance administration has been the FDGB-controlled Social Insurance Council in government-owned plants and the Social Insurance Commission in private enterprises. There are no representatives of employers on the governing bodies of the social insurance agencies, although the employer is obliged to pay one-half of the total social insurance contribution, matching the employees' contribution of 10 percent of his gross pay.

Within the factory itself the responsibility for day-to-day administration is vested in representatives who were first appointed in October 1947 by the FDGB for every 40 or 50 men under the provisions of SMA Order No. 234.<sup>160</sup> The election of these men is supervised by the FDGB, and the Union has the power to ensure that each representative is "fit" for the task. The FDGB appoints the members of the Plant Insurance Council or Commission from among the representatives.

The Ministry of Labor supervises the whole system. Financially, it is dependent on the budget, since payments on the insurance policies are made through the Ministry of Finance, and the resources for premium payments are made available to the social insurance from the budget and in the amount determined by the plan rather than either the need or the sum of the social insurance policy payments. Thus, there is no balance to be expected between policy and premium payments in the social insurance, and in point of fact the latter corresponds to only a part of the income. The rest is diverted to other government expenditures. The lump sum made available to social insurance is allocated to the various branches of industry in a way not directly proportional to need but, at least in part, to their strategic significance in terms of the plan. It is this fact that makes meaningful the persistent efforts of the government to reduce the expenditures of the social insurance system. In February 1953, for instance, a confidential directive was issued by the social insurance organization which emphasized the need for economy, and which then went on to order that beginning in March all cases of disability pensioners and all widows and orphans' cases were to be systematically reviewed in order to determine

160 Editors' note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 234 (9. Oktober 1947) – Maßnahmen zur Steigerung der Arbeitsproduktivität und zur weiteren Verbesserung der materiellen Lage der Arbeiter und Angestellten in der Industrie und im Verkehrswesen. In: Zentralverordnungsblatt, hg. namens aller Zentralverwaltungen von der Deutschen Justizverwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland, Nr. 1 (January 15, 1948), Berlin (East) 1948, pp. 1–6, here 5.

the eligibility for pensions. The organization appeared eager to save as many of the benefit payments as possible for its own use.

Looking at the social insurance system in terms of benefits it is evident that one of the main tasks of its administrators is to increase the manpower available for industry (1.15). The same system of favoring some and disadvantaging other categories of the population is evident, as in other fields, such as rationing; the activists, members of the intelligentsia, etc. are favored. Individuals of whom subsequent productive or cultural performance is expected are maintained on a level conducive to the restoration or preservation of their ability to work. With regard to individuals who still have some productive potential, in spite of infirmities, social insurance is arranged in such a way as to assist the exploitation of any such potential as might be left (up to a 66 percent disability). Finally, for persons of whom no productive performance can be expected, such as the totally disabled or the aged, social insurance provides a minimum benefit that is insufficient for any but the most pitiable kind of existence.

The most developed aspect of social insurance is the sickness insurance, which provides for various kinds of medical attention free of charge. However, the medical professions are under strict orders to economize in their profession, particularly with regard to medicines (1.15). The miners have greater claims than other industrial workers in case of sickness. Premiums are paid in the case of death and birth (Table I).

Table I: The Birth and Death Payments of the Social Insurance

Year	Cases of	
	Death Payments	Birth Payments
1949	196,749	228,731
1950	169,119	243,129
1951	151,984	220,979
1952	190,822	240,757
1953	175,879	212,109

Source: Alfred Leutwein, *Die sozialen Leistungen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, hg. vom Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1954, p. 52.

The maternity aid includes two aspects. All expectant mothers who are employed are released from work for 5 weeks before and 6 weeks after the birth and receive payments corresponding to the average earnings of the last quarter. However, since women employed in industry are frequently assigned the easier and lower paid jobs while pregnant, this decreases the size of the payments.

Working women receive an additional payment of DM-O 50 for procuring necessities for an infant. Secondly, mothers of a third child receive an allotment of DM-O 100, of a fourth child - DM-O 250 (and monthly payments of DM-O 20 until the child reaches 14), of fifth and subsequent children - D-Ost 500 and monthly payments of DM-O 25.

The payments for the aged, the disabled, widows, orphans, former officials, and war victims are insufficient and utilized as a means for forcing members of these categories into productive life, insofar as it is at all possible. However, the regime encourages orphans to continue their education by paying premiums up to the age of 18, instead of the usual age of 15. It is believed that an effort to have persons remain at work as long as possible has been the reason for keeping the monthly old-age benefit down to an average of DM-O 85 a month.

This attempt to keep people at work who might claim social insurance benefits produces shifts and turns of the administration when determining the extent of an insured's disability. An East German student of social insurance has emphasized that the determination of disability entitled to compensation must not be made only on the basis of objective medical opinion, but that it must also take into account the "general and particular conditions of the economy, especially the condition of the labor market". The percentage of persons receiving old-age and disability payments is nonetheless increasing. Members of the technical intelligentsia, of the scientific, artistic, medical and pedagogic professions, and employees of certain selected plants receive additional old age premiums. Finally, there are "honor pensions" for the deserving few.

Industrial accident payments generally run at a level surpassing that of the rest. The number of industrial accidents is constantly increasing, hence payments almost doubled in the period from January 1949 to June 1953. However, the number of accident insurance payments is relatively small compared with other insurance payments (Table II).

In addition, 489,091 war victims received payments. The actual number of persons receiving accident insurance payments in the course of a year is, of course, higher than at any given time, and has been increasing annually, at least up to 1952 (Table III) and probably since that time.

Table II: Receivers of Social Insurance Pension Payments, January 1954

Type of Payments	Number of Receivers
Accident	136,054
Disability	524,076
Old Age	1,088,303
Widow	386,347
Full Orphan	19,574
Half Orphan	321,399
Miners	136,743
Total	2,612,496

Source: Leutwein, *Die sozialen Leistungen*, p. 128.

Table III: Annual Rates of Work Accidents and Vocational Diseases in the Soviet Zone

Year	Total Number of Cases	Vocational Diseases
1949	386,903	1,897
1950	396,474	2,621
1951	414,378	3,289
1952	535,488	4,583
1953	496,144	2,773

Source: Leutwein, *Die sozialen Leistungen*, p. 148.

For individuals who are not cared for by social insurance and who cannot be supported by relatives, social welfare payments are made, with the exception of war criminals and families of the arrested and of escapees (Table IV). These payments, however, are made only to individuals who cannot be retrained and allocated to positions in production, which as we said is the primary aim of the social welfare organization. Social welfare assistance is to be repaid when the individual becomes capable of doing so. The number of payments has been decreasing because of the greater strictness of the criteria which are applied.

Table IV: The Number of Receivers of Public Assistance in the Soviet Zone

Time	Number of Male Receivers	Number of Female Receivers	Total
December 31, 1948	83,233	315,730	398,963
December 31, 1949	73,805	286,436	360,241
December 31, 1950	72,976	270,481	343,457
December 31, 1951	71,354	257,363	328,717
December 31, 1952	61,225	232,417	293,642
December 31, 1953	47,153	171,754	218,907

Source: Leutwein, *Die sozialen Leistungen*, p. 156. Note: These are persons who depended on public assistance exclusively. Recipients of social insurance payments had, until 1953, frequently received additional support from the public assistance organization. The total number of the needy declined from 1,058,000 in 1947 to 530,000 in 1950. See Leutwein, *Die sozialen Leistungen*, p. 90.

A relatively small percentage of the unemployed who, according to some West German sources, constituted 6.1 percent<sup>161</sup> of the total population of the Soviet Zone in June 1953 (1.12) receive payments from social insurance. These again are insufficient for maintaining the minimal level of existence. As a consequence, social welfare institutions have to be appealed to by the unemployed receiving unemployment insurance payments. Only the unemployed for whom no other work can be found and who, although willing, cannot be retrained to fit them for the work available, are eligible for unemployment payments. Individuals who refuse work provided for them or who either have their own income or live in the households of relatives who are in a position to support them, do not receive payments. Thus, unemployment insurance assumes the character of public charity rather than of the right of the socially insured to be supported in the case of unemployment.

Assistance to refugees as well as returned prisoners of war has been very limited. Late returners from Soviet prisoner of war camps have been treated as war criminals and received no assistance.

161 Even if this percentage was correct for 1953, it should have decreased since – if only because of the drafting of the unemployed into the People's Police.



### 1.16.2 Social Welfare and Standard of Living

Social welfare payments have not been oriented to the needs of the population. Population groups that could not be ordered into the Socialist sector were disadvantaged and the positive enemies of the regime, as well as their families, excluded altogether from social welfare assistance.

The standard of living in the Soviet Zone is contingent on the highly differentiated system of remuneration (1.12) as well as social assistance. Since 1949 the rationing system as a means of reward for productive performance has been replaced by wages and salaries. A double price system has been established, which persists until this day with regard to products still rationed (meat, fats, eggs, milk, sugar and coal) (3.6). While the price for products purchased on ration cards may be on the same level or lower than in West Germany, rations are insufficient for sustenance except as a hunger diet. The rest has to be bought at special stores, where the prices are exorbitant because of special taxes on freely sold products, particularly tobacco and alcoholic beverages. Taxes from these sales contributed 4 billion DM-O to the budget in 1952 (3.6). Prices of products which are not rationed are set at a level somewhere between the rationed and the free market prices, since the free market prices are higher.

With the development of internal trade organizations and partial de-rationing in 1951, the upper-income groups have been able to better their standard of living, while that of the low-income categories has worsened. It is estimated that from September 1950 to June 1953, the expenses for food of an East Berlin family with an income of DM-O 200 – increased by 20 percent. Altogether, the living costs increased from 1938 to 1951 by 182.3 percent (166 percent in West Germany). The supply situation of the civil population was estimated, in 1950, to have reached a level of 50 percent of that of 1936. The standard of living was lower in 1951 by 20 percent than in West Germany. It was depressed by reparations and obligatory exports to the USSR, the malfunctioning of the productive system, poor planning, diversion of production to military purposes, and bottlenecks in distribution which make certain products available in some areas and unavailable in others, although in general no essential regional differences are noticeable.

The general diet is still short in meats, sugar, fats, (particularly butter), cereals, potatoes (extensively used in the production of alcoholic beverages), vegetables, fruits and milk. The protein, calcium, and vitamin supply is insufficient. This lack is a contributory factor in the high incidence of tuberculosis and relatively high infant mortality rate. The poor quality of bread, meat, and fats has led to chronic disturbances of the stomach and the alimentary tract. There are no significant improvements in the quality

of food in sight from within the Soviet Zone. The foodstuff import plan of 1954 has been fulfilled only up to 53.3 percent. Since the heavy industry resumed its privileged position in the zonal economy in the autumn of 1954, the quantity and quality of foodstuffs available has further declined. Free sale of sugar, which is in particularly short supply, has ceased altogether, and the production of sweet liquors has been prohibited, the butter ration is not available at the stores. The food situation, however, is somewhat ameliorated for an uncertain number of families by packages sent from West Germany, although the regime does not encourage and sometimes even hinders this. Curtailment of this service would bring hardships for many.

Various other kinds of consumer commodities are either in insufficient supply or too expensive for the average wage earner to use. Certain kinds of specialized medicines, household gadgets, agricultural implements, automobiles and bicycles, and their parts, products for which non-ferrous metals are used, and wool products are available only to a limited extent if at all. The prices of clothes and household gadgets has more than doubled since 1938. Milk products, fats (when bought in the "free market") and leather products were in 1952, three to six times as expensive as in West Germany. But education, transportation and rent costs are relatively low. Gas and electricity are still rationed, and their supply is frequently interrupted for certain periods for the purpose of saving energy, the production of which has lagged. The delivery of seasonal goods (summer and winter clothes) is still too often delayed.

The system of two price levels for the most essential and rationed products has decreased the absolute advantage in terms of things that can be bought with income above the minimum level. Nevertheless, the system of remuneration has been sufficiently differentiated to allow for very considerable differences in the standard of living, although somewhat less than proportional to wage differences. The supply of the advantaged groups can be considered sufficient and, in some cases, luxurious. The majority of the working-class population, as well as recipients of the various kinds of public support – whose proportion is very large in East Germany – are not satisfied with the standard of living they are granted by the regime. With regard to the working population, the regime has attempted to counter this dangerous dissatisfaction by using the whole program of differentiation and encouragement of individual competition within the industry as a means of diverting the attention of the disaffected working force. The effects have been only partially successful, partly because the rewards have been utterly insufficient. The regime is largely disinterested in the recipient of public support. This group may belong to the enemies of the regime, but it is the least dangerous to the system precisely because of its helplessness. The individuals whose standard of living has been reduced drastically by the regime – members of the former possessing and

middle classes – would naturally feel their present standards of living to be extremely unsatisfactory. However, this group has decreased in numbers because of flight, or it has been assimilated, as members of the intelligentsia, into the present structure.

The generally low standard of living and the easily observable differentiation favoring the functionaries, the intellectuals, and the party elite (1.6) cause much dissatisfaction. Insofar as the regime may be able to raise the general standard of living, it may assuage their dissatisfaction. But it cannot do so on the basis of supplies locally available, and it remains to be seen whether the USSR will be willing to share its good harvest of this year (1955) with East Germany. In any case, there is not any tendency for high rewards in terms of living standards at the top of the social structure of the Soviet Zone to be lowered, or the poor performances for individuals of whom no useful social product can be expected to be radically increased. Any eventual increase in the total supply of consumption goods will favor the strategic working force, particularly in industry, and the recipients of social insurance payments of whom a future performance can be expected. The lower functionaries of the party and the government – at present considerably disadvantaged in relation to the position enjoyed by top functionaries – will also receive more. It is not to be expected, however, that any increment from available resources would be used purely for the welfare of the people, without also being used to manipulate the population toward the goals of the regime.

### 1.17 Attitudes and Reactions of the People [*Vytautas Kavolis/ Herbert J. Spiro*]

#### 1.17.1 German Attitudes

In considering the attitudes and reactions of the people of the SZ, one must bear in mind that the population of the SZ probably does not form a public with autonomous views regarding its own country. This is true because the SZ is not peopled by a distinct nation: rather the nation is Germany. Attitudes concerning this nation are not peculiar to the people of the SZ, but are to a considerable extent shared by it with the population of the Federal Republic.<sup>162</sup>

162 In the Federal Republic, the territory of the SZ has, since 1950, been referred to officially as Central Germany, in order to distinguish it from the Polish administered area beyond the Oder-Neisse and East Prussia which is called East Germany. To what extent this terminology is also accepted in the SZ, one cannot say at the present time. Editors' note: The conceptual change within the GDR is outlined by Andreas Morgenstern, "Mitteldeutschland": Ein Kampfausdruck? Der Begriffswandel in der DDR-

The single most important public attitude is the desire to have an end put to the division of Germany. In fact, no one dares publicly to contradict this attitude, in either East or West Germany. The governments of both the DDR and the Federal Republic, as well as all political parties, insist that reunification is their primary aim. German feelings of national unity, first achieved in 1871, have been welded into a powerful sentiment by the trials and sacrifices of two world wars. It stands to reason that they have been further strengthened by the division of the country, which is generally considered unnatural. Indeed, some people in the SZ, if not in the Federal Republic, are so concerned with reunification that they would be willing to accept Soviet domination if necessary, and of course the entire SED leadership is committed to this course, and presumably a considerable part of their following share these sentiments. How far others outside the party go along in this is not known, but it may be presumed that some of them do. In any case, since the main propaganda theme on both sides of the Iron Curtain is reunification, this issue tends to be uppermost in peoples' minds. It is therefore in this general area of public policy, that there is most likely to develop a conflict of sentiment between the public and the government.

The majority of the population of the SZ is by this time likely to be convinced that their government is not working towards reunification, in spite of the fact that the government loudly claims to be the only one genuinely interested in that goal. Unfortunately for them, the public knows that the three Western powers, the US, Great Britain and France, as well as the Federal Republic, have made free elections in the SZ a condition for reunification, whereas the government of the DDR has insisted on prior negotiations between itself and the government of the Federal Republic. Since such negotiations are unacceptable to the West, because the government of the DDR is not a freely elected democratic government, the insistence of this government to be accepted as a partner appears to the public of the SZ as clearly motivated by their fear that free elections in the SZ would put an end to the SED rule. Consequently, the very existence of the government of the DDR stands in the way of the universal aspirations of the Germans to be reunited (2.5).

There is another component of the general public's attitudes, which generates widespread conflict between the population and the government of the DDR. This is the feeling of profound animadversion, if not hatred of most Germans against the Russians, which were caused by the outrages committed by the Red Army at the end of the war. These feelings have however deeper roots. Many Germans traditionally entertain feelings of superiority, if not active dis-

like for all Slavs, since considerable parts of Eastern Slavic Europe were “colonized” centuries ago by certain Germans such as the Teutonic Order. School children absorb some of these feelings in their early history teaching. The German government, during the days of the Weimar Republic, made a considerable effort to counteract and, if possible, to uproot these traditions, but unfortunately, this contributed to the violent reaction of the Nazis, represented more particularly by Hitler’s personal anti-Slavic sentiments, – sentiments, which were fairly common amongst Austrians, particularly in Bohemia, from where Hitler’s people came. As a result, anti-Slavic sentiments, fanned during the Hitler period, caused this deep-seated reaction. The Soviet Union added further fuel by the transfer of the German territories east of the Oder and the Western Neisse to Poland, by the retention and maltreatment of German prisoners of war, by the large-scale dismantling and general destructiveness, as well as the over-shadowing threat to Western civilization and Christianity, which is felt throughout Europe. Consequently, any German government, such as that of the DDR, which is closely identified and dependent on the Soviet Union for its very existence, is bound to incur pronounced hostility among many Germans.

Another source of continuing conflict is the DDR government’s major goal, namely the construction of a communist society by imitating Soviet development. Anti-Russian sentiments are intertwined with anti-communism, because the SED seeks to “construct socialism” by slavishly imitating Russian models, not only in the field of political and economic organization, but also in technical production methods. German Communists have exposed themselves to ridicule by accepting inferior Soviet models: they have further enhanced their difficulties by suggesting the cultural superiority of artistic and intellectual products of the Soviet Union (1.8).

### 1.17.2 Symbols and Slogans

The national symbols of the DDR are an amalgam of German republican and Soviet Communist symbols. The national colors are black, red and gold; the same as the Federal Republic. They are meant to appeal to all supporters of the Weimar Republic and of previous German republican tradition, dating back to 1848. They also are significant in suggesting opposition to the traditions of Imperial Germany, whose colors black, white and red became a symbol of nationalist groups during the Weimar Republic and have continued to a minor extent to play a similar role in the Federal Republic. On the other hand, the DDR has sought to capture nationalist sentiment by introducing the tradi-

tional German uniform for the SZ army and through glorification of Prussian military figures, especially of the period of Prussian-Russian alliance.<sup>163</sup>

Alongside the national colors the flag of the SED is often displayed. It is a red flag with the party symbol, two linked hands, in the upper left-hand corner. The two hands stand for the two parties which joined to form the SED. Hammer and sickle were presumably omitted on purpose, since the red flag by itself, as the banner of the international Marxist Workers' Movement since its inception, has powerful appeal to Social Democrats as well as Communists. Usually, in the DDR, the red flag is displayed alongside these colors, this is the red flag carrying the hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union. But for this fact, the red flag would have a powerful appeal to Social Democrats as well as Communists, since it has been the banner of the International Marxist Workers' Movement since its beginning. As it is the hammer and sickle confines its appeal largely to the Communists.<sup>164</sup>

Berlin, the former German capital, is the capital of the DDR. There is a very widespread sentiment for Berlin among all Germans, especially since the capital's vigorous stand during the Soviet blockade of 1948. The SED indeed hopes to symbolize by its adoption of Berlin as capital its claims that the DDR is the only legitimate Democratic Government of Germany. This effort, however, is effectively counteracted by the maintenance of the free democratic government in the three other sectors of Berlin, which maintains effective cooperation with the Federal Republic. Such institutions as the Free University of Berlin act as dramatic counter symbols, and, of course, free Berlin is a primary avenue of escape for all those seeking to flee the SZ totalitarian terror.

The SZ government has sought rather ineffectually to deal with the problem of the national anthem. The German national anthem "*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*" which is still used in the Federal Republic, has been abolished in the DDR and replaced by a new anthem *Auferstanden aus Ruinen*. At the present time this anthem has not apparently taken hold of popular emotion. At the same time the *International* is not played very often either, probably because this traditional battle hymn of fighting Marxism would arouse too many divisive sentiments.

163 Editors' note: The tradition continued until the end of the GDR. Thus, the highest military award of GDR, instituted on February 17, 1966, bore the name of Prussian General Gerhard von Scharnhorst. Several units of Nationale Volksarmee (National People's Army, NVA), too, periodically bore the names of Prussian officers of the Wars of Liberation, for instance the Kampfhubschraubergeschwader (attack helicopter wing) 3 (KHG-3) „Ferdinand von Schill“ (awarded 1984) or the KHG-5 „Adolf von Lützow“ (awarded 1980).

164 Editors' note: There is a strange (and probably unintentional) repetition or duplication of content in this paragraph.

The SED inspired slogans are everywhere in evidence in the Soviet Zone. The most frequently encountered slogans are those plastered all over the SZ by the SED. They deal with goals of the particular campaigns which the regime is running at any given time – and it is always running at least one great publicity campaign (2.7). They may be concerned with such matters as the fulfillment of production norms, the desirability of negotiations between the DDR and the Federal Republic governments (“Germans around One Table!”), anti-American statements (“Ami Go Home!”), and the like. At large public meetings, the word “friendship” (*Freundschaft!*) is often shouted as a sort of greeting, somewhat like the older Nazi “Sieg Heil!”. Much of the political symbolism of the SZ has been copied from the USSR. This is true, for example, of the uniforms of the People’s Police, the practice of naming large industrial enterprises and streets after Soviet Russian or Soviet German politicians, the decoration of halls for public meetings, the architecture of public buildings on the Stalin Allee in Berlin. Some of the symbolism also bears resemblance to the trappings used by the National Socialists, who in turn, had learned much along these lines from the Communists of the days of the Weimar Republic. This went as far as borrowing tunes or Nazi songs and then rewriting the lyrics appropriately. There is in other words, a large reservoir of symbolic associations in the SZ on which its rulers can and do draw. In the Federal Republic, some of these symbols already have given rise to controversies. This has been true, e.g., of the national colors, singing of the third or the traditional, slightly more nationalistic first stanza of the *Deutschlandlied*, the designation *Reich* for a reunited Germany, the past and future role of Prussia. These symbols will probably generate further controversy in the struggle for reunification. Some of them already have, and more will do so, especially if concrete negotiations concerning the technical and administrative aspects of reunification ever do take place. Clearly, considerable importance is attached to the manipulation of symbols in the SZ. A related phenomenon is the very extensive use of titles and decorations (1.6), therein also following Russian Communism. The decorations are quite generally worn, especially at public meetings. Both types of decorations fit of course into a long-established European practice, constituting a continuation rather than an innovation.

The SED rigorously observes the rule of addressing all party members as *Genosse*. This practice was taken over from the Social Democrats curiously enough, whereas the German communists used to address one another as *Kamerad*. In the FDGB, as in the West German Trades Unions, members address each other as *Kollege*. Great importance is attached to these questions of symbolic etiquette. As everywhere in Europe, so more particularly in Germany, no government can really hope to manipulate public attitudes and reactions effectively, without utilizing these methods for enhancing the prestige of individuals.

As already mentioned, the present leaders of the DDR envisage the reunification of the Soviet Zone with the rest of Germany under the Soviet aegis as their most important goal. What this means, of course, from their point of view, is the absorption of the Federal Republic by the DDR. In order to make this seemingly utopian aim more feasible, the regime must seek to strengthen the point where it appears more prosperous than the rest of Germany. In their efforts to achieve this goal, they have recently received considerable assistance from the Soviet Union, which may regard the SZ as an important show window toward the West. Yet so far the Federal Republic remains decidedly ahead of the SZ. There is another major difficulty which the SED propaganda for the reunification of Germany encounters. The DDR has formally agreed to the Oder-Neisse line and has permanently ceded the territories east of it to Poland and the Soviet Union. This readiness to abandon basic German territorial claims, without any apparent, corresponding advantage weighs heavily against the SED. Probably this issue is attenuated by the party's commitment to international Communism as an order for the whole world. For it claimed that if this goal were achieved, such boundary issues would lose their significance. Just what special role the SED would see for itself in such a Russian dominated international order is not known, nor is its attitude very important, since the SED is completely dependent on Soviet support for its continuance of power.

Of other key groups, the leadership of the non-SED organizations and the new technical, administrative, and scientific intelligentsia deserve mention. Many of the leaders of the non-SED organizations, such as the East-CDU and LDP, and of such "mass organizations" as the Democratic Women's League, wish to see Germany reunited as a constitutional state, that is, under non-Communist auspices. Their aspirations in this all-important respect coincide closely with those of their West German counterparts. They are playing their present role as political or "cultural" satellites of the SED, either because terror forces them to do so, or because they hope through their participation to be able to mitigate some of the effects of the terror, or even to contribute actively toward bringing about its end and accelerating reunification.

The SED, like the Soviets, single out the creative intelligentsia as a distinctive segment of the workers and peasants. It offers to the members of this intelligentsia many special advantages (1.6). Their efforts seem to have been successful in buying the support of many intellectuals, for they were notably absent from the June 1953 uprising (2.3).

Something more might be said regarding the reactions of youth as a special group. As we have noted elsewhere (1.9) the reaction of young people, in spite of the regime's very great efforts to win them over, is quite mixed. Besides a certain amount of open resistance, they are continually developing small groups, clubs, and gangs. Some deeply religious, like the *Junge Gemein-*



de (1.10), others, merely playful pranksters, like the *Texas Boys*.<sup>165</sup> All these groups have in common the desire to meet and share spontaneous experiences and to get away from the repetitive drabness of official propaganda and the continuous supervision of the party's agents. The main reaction however, and for the leaders of the FDJ, the most perplexing sign of its failure, is the widespread apathy prevalent throughout the SZ. Time and again, we read in the party publications of FDJ and SED complaints about such apathy.

## Conclusion

All in all, it could be said that the attitudes and reactions of people in the SZ are highly polarized, that a small and very active core of party members and followers, probably not exceeding 10 percent, confront another smaller percentage of active opponents of the regime as well as a vast mass of rather dependent and apathetic people, who are vaguely hoping for a day of liberation and reunification with the rest of Germany, but who are not prepared to do anything to bring this about. Among this largely apathetic majority many are likely to remain conditional for a long time to come and to yield to attitudes of positive hostility whenever economic failure or danger of warlike conflict heightens the sense of oppression and as a result the prospect of a collapse of the regime.

165 Editors' note: In the 1960s, the SED used the term „Texasideologie“ („texas ideology“) in the sense of an american „lack of culture“ („Unkultur“) negatively influencing the GDR youth. Closely related to it was the term of „Rangertum“. Both denotations developed based on the US tv show „Texas Rangers“ that was popular at the time. Cf. Ulrich Weißgerber, *Giftige Worte in der SED Diktatur. Sprache als Instrument von Machtausübung und Ausgrenzung in der SBZ und DDR*, Münster 2010, p. 329.



## 2. Political Background

### 2.1 The Constitutional System [*Herbert J. Spiro*]

#### 2.1.1 Importance of the Constitution

The Soviet Zone of Germany (SZ) was formally established as a state, the German Democratic Republic (DDR), through adoption of its present constitution on October 7, 1949. This occurred five months after the Federal Republic of Germany had been established through adoption of its Basic Law for the territory of the Western zones of occupation.<sup>1</sup> Thus the adoption of a constitution in the Soviet Zone occurred in direct response to developments in the Western zones. In effect, the Soviets were saying to the Germans: 'Anything the Western Allies can do in their Zones we can do, too, and do it better.' The formal provisions of the constitution of the DDR should, therefore, be looked at in terms of comparison with those of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic.

But is there any point in looking at the SZ constitution at all? Off-hand, there would seem not to be, since it is a common feature of totalitarianisms to disregard constitutional provisions even when there are any to disregard, and the DDR is no exception to this rule. For example, basic provisions of its constitution regarding the very structure of the government have been made completely ineffective without so much as an acknowledgement of the fact of violating – or at least amending – the constitution, which was involved in such changes. All that this implies, however, is that the constitution of the SZ, as also those of other Soviet satellites, is not to be looked at in the same light as, say, the written constitution of the United States of America or the unwritten British constitution. It does not mean that the constitution of the DDR is a mere scrap of paper of no interest whatsoever.

On the contrary, the constitution is of major importance, for three main reasons: First, it plays a role in the propaganda battle which is constantly being waged between East and West Germany. Second, it contains some statements of the fundamental ideological goals of the SZ regime. And third, it reflects communist views, and changes in these views, about unique features in Germany's development toward socialism.

In their efforts to win the support of their own population and the sympathy of the population of the Federal Republic, the rulers of the SZ constantly point to the superior economic and social provisions concerning the working classes, which their constitution contains compared with that of the Federal

1 Editors' note: On May 23, 1949, the Grundgesetz (Basic Law) came into force.

Republic. On the other hand, a major part of the West German propaganda effort is directed toward pointing out to the population of the SZ the many discrepancies between DDR constitutional provisions and the economic, social, and political facts of life in the SZ. Several of the West German agencies which are engaged in work designed to prepare the way for the reunification of Germany thus spend a great deal of their time selecting passages from East German publications which directly contradict DDR constitutional provisions. These are then published or broadcast at once to the SZ population, so that the constitution in this way presents important opportunities for subversive work. These contradictions between constitution and facts are also collected in anticipation of their being used during diplomatic negotiations about reunification.

This suggests the second reason for the importance of the paper constitution of the SZ. Its rulers can never afford to ignore it completely, partly because its existence is forever brought to mind by Western propaganda, and partly because they themselves have not yet succeeded in sloughing off the last remnants of legalistic habits of thought and action. These habits are strongly embedded in German and general continental European tradition. They are also necessarily re-enforced by the demands of any modern industrial society, and especially one which is not only highly complicated and organized, but in which the government tries to control literally all spheres of life. When this is attempted, some kind of general and specific rules have to be laid down, by means of which the activities of the planners and the plan-executors can be coordinated. In a sense, parts of the constitution amount to the regime's basic overall plan and lay down some of its long-range goals. Thus, just as the Basic Law of the Federal Republic makes provisions for the reunification of Germany as the highest goal, so does the constitution of the DDR. Moreover, it also contains statements of the goals of Soviet Communism for Germany.

What finally provides the third and perhaps most useful reason for an examination of the constitution of the DDR, is that it provides an interpretation of German history. While it tells us little about the fixed fundamentals, simply because nothing is so fixed and fundamental as to be beyond radical change at almost any time, it does tell us something about the fixed goals of Soviet German ideology, as these fit into the Marxist-Leninist-theory of history in general, and German history in particular. The one goal, that is the most unalterable is the goal of emulating the USSR. This is in turn reflected in the constitution. This is, of course, a common feature of Soviet satellites and their constitutions, and again one might be tempted to dismiss study of the constitution for that very reason. Again, however, this would be a mistake, because the SZ has been looked upon by its rulers as a special case, whose development differs from that of both the USSR and the Eastern European satellites. The DDR constitution makes allowances for these differences.

The differences in developmental patterns have been stated, though not in the constitution, to be the result of the following factors: In the USSR and, to a lesser degree, in some of the satellites, the working class came to power as a result of its own revolutionary initiative; in the SZ, the working class was installed as the most powerful class, but not the sole class in power, as the result of the victory over fascist Germany of the “heroic Red Army”. In the USSR, the working class in alliance with the working peasantry was in possession of all the power from the time of the revolution, whereas in the SZ an alliance with “sincerely anti-fascist bourgeois” elements was made necessary by the first difference just cited. The USSR was forced into a giant industrialization campaign in order to produce heavy industry as a prerequisite for the construction of socialism and in order to build up Soviet defenses against the hostile capitalist and imperialist outside world. In Germany, heavy industry had already existed for many decades by the end of World War II, and the DDR could rely on the aid of the USSR and the entire Soviet bloc of states. On the other hand, the DDR is engaged in the process of “building socialism”, not “in one country” as the USSR was according to Stalin’s theory, but in one-third of a country. In other words, the division of Germany once more differentiates the German situation from that of both the USSR and the other satellite countries. All of these differences find their conscious reflection in the DDR constitution and indeed in the very name of the state, for it was not initially designated as a “people’s republic”, as were such countries as Bulgaria, Romania, etc., but rather as a “democratic republic”.

The constitution of the DDR was passed by the Third People’s Congress on March 10, 1949. It was proclaimed on October 7, 1949. Its content does not differ substantially from that of a draft worked out earlier by the Executive of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) on November 14, 1946. But in the introduction to that draft, the state which it was to establish was called a democratic “people’s republic”, a term which the present constitution does not mention.

### 2.1.2 Provisions of the Constitution: Basic Rights

The constitution runs to 144 articles, which are organized, as follows: Preamble; Part A – Bases of State Power; Part B – Content and Limits of State Power: I. Rights of the Citizen, II. Economic Order, III. Family and Motherhood, IV. Education and Culture (*Bildung*), V. Religion and Religious Associations, VI. Effectiveness of Basic Rights; Part C – Structure of State Power: I. People’s Representation of the Republic, II. Representation of the States (*Länder*), III. Legislation, IV. Government of the Republic, V. President of the Republic,

VI. Republic and States, VII. Administration of the Republic, VIII. Justice, IX. (Local) Self Administration, X. Transitional and Concluding Measures.

The Preamble well illustrates the propaganda use to which this constitution was meant to be put: "Inspired by the will to guarantee the rights of man, to structure community life and economic life with social justice, to serve social progress, to promote friendship with all nations, the German people has given itself this constitution."<sup>2</sup> There is no mention of the division of Germany, by contrast with the Preamble of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic, which makes the claim that its constituent power acted also on behalf of those Germans (in the SZ) to whom participation was denied.

The DDR constitution grants most of the usual, and some unusual, political, civil, economic and social rights. Citizens have the right and duty to participate at all levels of government, by means of initiatives and referenda, acting as voters or being candidates for office, and holding office in public administration and the administration of justice (Art. 3). All government measures must be in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. The question whether or not they are is decided by a constitutional committee, which is elected by the People's Chamber. It is composed of members of the People's Chamber, three members of the Supreme Court and three professors of jurisprudence (Arts. 4 and 66). "Everyone has the right and the duty of resistance against measures which go counter to decisions of the people's representatives" (Art. 4). "No citizen may participate in warlike actions which serve the oppression of the nation" (Art. 5).<sup>3</sup>

According to Article 6, "all citizens have equal rights before the law". The same Article then contains one of the most novel and most frequently used provisions: "Incitement to boycott against democratic institutions and organizations, incitement to murder against democratic politicians, evidence of religious, racial or national hatred, militaristic propaganda, as well as incitement to war and all other actions which are directed against the equal-rights provision, are crimes in the meaning of the penal code. The exercise of democratic rights in the meaning of the constitution does not constitute incitement to boycott."<sup>4</sup> Anyone who is convicted of this crime loses all civil and political rights.

The constitution then contains an equal-rights provision for the sexes (Art. 7). It guarantees personal liberty, the inviolability of the home and secrecy of the mails, and the right to choose a place of residence (Art. 8). Article 9 guarantees freedom of speech, of assembly, and of the press. Extradition of

2 Editors' note: Die Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Textausgabe, Deutscher Zentralverlag, Berlin (East) 1949, p. 8.

3 Editors' note: Ibid., p. 10.

4 Editors' note: Ibid., p. 11. In the original, the term reads "Boykotthetze".

citizens is prohibited (Art. 10). “Every citizen has the right to emigrate” (Art. 10).<sup>5</sup> Cultural autonomy is guaranteed to non-German-speaking groups in the DDR (Art. 11). Article 12 grants citizens the right of organization or association. The right to belong to labor organizations is granted by Article 14, along with the trade unions’ right to strike. Article 15 guarantees the right to work. “The state secures work and subsistence for every citizen through economic planning” (Art. 15).<sup>6</sup> Article 16 guarantees the right to have holidays, vacations and social security. Wage-earning workers and salaried employees are given the right of co-determination concerning production and conditions of pay and work within enterprises (Art. 17).

The economic order is designed to be socially just, to meet the demands of the whole nation, and to permit individual economic liberty within this framework (Art. 19). Private property is guaranteed, as also the right of inheritance, with limitations to be decided by legislation (Arts. 22–24). “To secure the bases of life and to increase the prosperity of its citizens, the state makes the public economic plan, through its legislative organs, with direct participation of its citizens. Supervision of its execution is the task of the people’s representatives” (Art. 21).<sup>7</sup>

Article 24 expropriates businesses belonging to war criminals and National Socialists, and other private firms which serve a war policy. They become “government property” (*Volkseigentum*, abbreviated VE). Private monopolies are prohibited. Large-scale private real estate ownership of more than 100 hectares is dissolved and divided up with compensation. “After completion of this land reform, peasants are guaranteed private ownership of their land.”<sup>8</sup> All natural resources, mining, iron, steel and power companies become people’s property (Art. 25). Every citizen and every family has the right to a healthy home, with preferential treatment accorded “victims of fascism, the badly disabled, disabled veterans and resettled persons” (Art. 26). Private economic enterprises which are suited for socialization may become “communal property” (Art. 27).<sup>9</sup>

Articles 31–39 deal with education (1.9). Articles 40 through 48 contain provisions for religious rights. Although no state church exists, the churches may collect taxes from their members and own property (1.10). Articles 133 to 138 deal with citizens’ rights in the courts, such as trial in his proper jurisdiction, protection against *ex post facto* laws except with regard to nazism, fascism, militarism and crimes against humanity; habeas corpus; and protection against administrative discretion in administrative courts.

5 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 12.

6 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 13.

7 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 14.

8 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 15.

9 Editors’ note: *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Most of these rights, as many other important provisions of the DDR constitution, are being violated in the SZ every day. But they are also being used daily by Western propaganda and subversion agencies, both to remind inhabitants of the SZ of the violation of their constitutional rights and to help those of them who wish to offer resistance to the regime by using the very laws which are supposed to provide its basis of legitimacy.

As is shown in the sections dealing with the church, the school system, the economic and political life in the SZ, most of these provisions have either been violated, or been reinterpreted to take on a meaning quite different from that in which a Western reader would understand them. Only the economic articles were meant to be genuine statements of intention, although most of the intentions which they state had already been realized by 1949. Such provisions as the ones about incitement to boycott and Nazi-owned businesses were designed to be tools for achieving in a quasi-legal fashion the goal of building the Soviet Zone's totalitarian regime. Others were included mainly because of their symbolic significance and propaganda value as stimulants of German nationalism. This is true of the adoption of black-red-gold as the national colors, and Berlin as the capital of the Republic (Art. 2).

Nevertheless, the provisions of the DDR constitution just described should not be treated as just so much window dressing. On the contrary, the very fact that the rulers of the SZ considered it politic to include these provisions and have not made any move in the direction of abolishing them, suggests four conclusions.

First, they believed that these provisions expressed the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the population of the DDR. Second, they are themselves so much a part of the Western tradition of legalism and constitutionalism, or at least believe their populations to be, that they consider the existence of a constitution indispensable, and the inclusion in it of the traditional civil and political rights as at least tactically useful. A third conclusion may be subsumed under the heading "preparations for German reunification". Whenever Germany is to be reunified, and whatever the conditions under which this is to take place, Soviet German and Soviet Russian negotiators will be in a better position to negotiate, because of the precedent of a constitution which will by then have been in effect in a large part of Germany for at least seven years. And even non-communist writers of a new all-German constitution are likely in some ways to be influenced by this precedent. Many of the social and economic provisions of the DDR constitution, no matter how much watered down they will be, may find some reflection in any constitution for a reunified Germany which will ever be written. Finally, the rulers of the DDR, by producing this constitution with these provisions under the heading of rights, produced a two-edged sword: In the beginning, their willingness to



guarantee many rights probably gained them some support, as also their general readiness to stay within the general tradition of modern constitutionalism at all. But when violations became the rule and consciousness of them general among the SZ population, only the most agile gyrations or the dialectically trained mind could hope to be able to refute charges of unconstitutionality. Amending the more liberal constitutional provisions out of existence was out of the question, because that would have been the same as pleading guilty to the accusation. The only way out of this dilemma would be the adoption of a wholly new constitution. This way may well be taken whenever achievement of a new stage on the road to socialism will have been declared.<sup>10</sup> Until that day, however, the rights granted and guaranteed by the DDR constitution may be most effectively used against the rulers of the Soviet Zone.

### 2.1.3 The organizational features

Article 50 describes the People's Chamber as the highest organ of the Republic. "Deputies are elected in general, equal, direct and secret elections according to the principles of proportional representation for a period of four years" (Art. 51). "They are representatives of the whole nation. They are subject only to their conscience and not bound by instructions."<sup>11</sup> The franchise applies to all citizens aged eighteen or over. Any citizen is eligible for office upon reaching his twenty-first birthday. There are to be 400 deputies (Art. 52). Elections take place on Sundays or legal holidays. "Freedom of election and secrecy of choice are guaranteed" (Art. 54).<sup>12</sup>

The provisions concerning the convening rules of procedure and dissolution of the People's Chamber are of minor interest, because of the insignificant role played by the parliament of the SZ. According to Article 63, its powers extend to determining the principles of government policy and of their execution; confirming, supervising and recalling the government (cabinet); determining the principles of administration; supervision of the entire activity of the state;

10 Editors' note: In 1967, at the VII Party Congress of the SED (VII. Parteitag), Walter Ulbricht suggested drafting a fundamentally new constitution that should take into account the changed reality in comparison with 1949. The new constitution became law in 1968 and was revised again on the day of the 25th anniversary of the GDR in 1974. On December 1, 1989, this revised constitution underwent its most significant alteration with the removal of the paragraph about the SED's leadership role. Cf. Michael Richter, *Die Friedliche Revolution. Aufbruch zur Demokratie in Sachsen 1989/1990*, 2. edition, Göttingen 2011, p. 926.

11 Editors' note: *Die Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, p. 23.

12 Editors' note: *Ibid.*

legislation in the absence of a referendum; passing the state budget, the economic plan, loans and state credits of the Republic; ratification of state treaties; passing amnesties; the election of the President of the Republic jointly with the Chamber of States (*Länderkammer*); and election of members of the Highest Court of the Republic and of the Chief Prosecutor of the Republic, as well as their recall.

Articles 67 through 70 provide for representatives' immunities, their pay and free public transportation. Articles 71 to 80 deal with the Chamber of States, in which each state (Land) is to be represented by one deputy for every 500,000 inhabitants. The details of these provisions are, however, of no current interest, because the states as administrative and legislative units were abolished on June 23, 1952, by simple legislation and without specific amendment of the constitution. For the five states, fourteen districts (Bezirke) were substituted. Nevertheless, the Chamber of States was not abolished as a result of this reform, though it has lapsed into innocuous desuetude. Clearly the constitution of the DDR is not a charter defining the fundamental structure of the government.

The provisions for amending the constitution resemble those of the constitution of the Weimar Republic. A two-thirds' majority of a two-thirds' quorum of the People's Chamber can amend the constitution, or a majority of those entitled to vote in a plebiscite (Art. 83). But, since the People's Chamber in practice passes all laws unanimously, it need not worry about the constitutionality of its legislation. This also explains in part why the committee on questions of constitutionality (Art. 66) has never gone into action. On the other hand, despite their ability to command a constitutional-amending majority at all times the rulers of the SZ have never yet chosen explicitly to amend their constitution. Rather they have preferred to leave unanswered the question of whether new legislation such as that abolishing the states, did or did not amend the constitution.

Popular initiatives and referenda may be conducted under Article 87. One-tenth of those entitled to vote, or parties or mass organizations representing one-fifth of the electorate may ask for a referendum, if the People's Chamber fails to pass a bill embodying the demands contained in the initiative. A majority of those voting can pass such a bill, but the budget, revenue laws and laws governing the pay of public employees are exempt from the referendum provisions.

The Government of the Republic, according to Article 91 to 100, consists of a Minister President, furnished by the strongest party group (Fraktion) in the People's Chamber, and Ministers. Other Fraktionen which have at least 40 deputies in the Chamber are represented proportionally to their strength in the Government, by either Ministers or State Secretaries. The latter partici-

pate with advisory vote in cabinet deliberations. Ministers must be deputies in the People's Chamber. "The Government and each of its members requires for the conduct of business the confidence of the People's Chamber" (Art. 94).<sup>13</sup>

Article 95 contains interesting provisions concerning the replacement of a government, which somewhat resembles those in effect in the Federal Republic under Article 67 of its Basic Law. They are, of course, at present meaningless in the DDR, but suggest that a reunited Germany would include some such safeguard against cabinet instability in its constitution. A vote of lack of confidence is admissible only if a new Minister President and his program are simultaneously proposed to the People's Chamber and voted on. At least half of the legal membership of the Chamber must vote for lack of confidence to make the vote effective. At least a quarter of the members must sign the demand for such a vote, and the debate may not take place before at least two days have passed after the demand was presented.

## 2.2 Structure of Government [*Herbert J. Spiro*]

### 2.2.1 Lack of Structure

The government of the SZ has no fixed structure. One could almost say that its regime is totalitarian to such an extent that there is in a sense no government at all. Things are in constant flux. If one looks at the changes in political organization since the establishment of the Soviet Military Administration (SMA) in 1945, one finds that the governmental and political agencies organized under it have been constantly reorganized. Of course, there has been a good deal of reorganization in the Western zones of Germany as well. However, any comparison of the frequency and extent of such reorganizations in West and East Germany would let the SZ come out way ahead. Nor was this process slowed down by the establishment of the DDR through the proclamation of the constitution in October 1949, or the granting of sovereignty to it by the USSR. On the contrary, it was rather accelerated. The only constant factor in this process of change has been that of personnel, and that only to a very limited extent at the very top of the hierarchy, where the triumvirate of Ulbricht, Pieck and Grotewohl has occupied the three highest positions throughout the years since 1946. Below their level, frequent change is common, too. Nor is this characteristic confined to the "government" of the SZ. It extends also to the SED and such other organizations as the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB) and the Free German Youth (FDJ). It is just as true of

13 Editors' note: *Ibid.*, p. 34.

the organization of the economy. Similarly, it applies to policies in all of these fields. Just because some ministry has definite functions and a definite policy one day, and official policy with regard to its tasks goes in a very clearly defined direction, does not mean that tomorrow the ministry will not be completely reorganized or even abolished, and official policy with regard to it makes a complete about-face. This possibility, indeed this likelihood, must always be borne in mind in considering the politics of the SZ. Its rulers are in a position to bring about such radical changes or reversals because of their total lack of accountability to anyone but their Soviet Russian masters. And because of their addiction to dialectical materialism, they are encouraged or even driven to preside over this kind of “permanent revolution”. To let any arrangements become permanent, fixed, fundamental would constitute, in their own minds, the unforgivable sin of being “formalistic and mechanistic”, i. e. reactionary, bourgeois, capitalist and generally on the side of the historical devil.

For this reason, as already mentioned, it would be wrong to look at the DDR constitution as though this document fixed the fundamental structure of the government. It fixed only some ultimate ideological goals of the regime, for with regard to lesser and more immediate ideological goals, frequent reversals are again encouraged by the dialectical method. One could, therefore, almost say that the politics of the Soviet Zone of Germany has no structure at all, but only dynamics. Nevertheless, if one were to take a snapshot of political arrangements at any point in time, a structure would, of course, show up. It is only when one compares different snapshots taken at different times, that very little resemblance would be evident between any two of them. And precisely because of this continuous process of flux, one can get a rather good idea of the most important characteristics of the regime by asking which factors, in addition to the three men at the top of the hierarchy, have changed the least.

### 2.2.2 The Government

Most important of these is the control of government agencies at all levels by the SED. This control is usually achieved by placing SED men in key positions. But control is achieved not only by this method, but also by insisting that any non-SED government official get clearance for all his moves by his opposite in the parallel SED hierarchy. Since such clearance can in practice be given by parallel levels of the SED instead of its central headquarters, this procedure does not seem to clog up too much the flow of decision-making. Many government policies have been first proclaimed at meetings of various organs of the SED, only to be adopted verbatim afterwards by the People’s Chamber or the Government. Nevertheless, SED and government are not one and the same.

In fact, statistics of the number of government functionaries and the number of SED members suggest that only a minority of government officials belong to the party. Only the top SED and government leadership is identical.

While one should, therefore, never forget the predominant power of the SED, the machinery of government should nevertheless not be considered identical with it. But just as changes in the Statute (charter) of the SED are more significant than any amendments of the constitution would be, so changes in the structure of the government, frequent though they have been, are not as significant as changes in the organization and the leading personnel of the SED. In any case, government changes usually follow and are reflections of party changes.

After the defeat of Germany, SMA was established by Marshal Zhukov's Order No. 1, dated June 10, 1945.<sup>14</sup> After founding of the DDR, the SMA was replaced by the Soviet Control Commission (SKK), established on November 7, 1949. The SKK was dissolved soon after the creation of the office of High Commissioner of the USSR in Germany, on May 5, 1953.

Order No. 17 of the SMA, dated July 25, 1945, created a number of German Central Administrations.<sup>15</sup> At first, there were eleven of these, but by June 1947, the number had risen to sixteen, each of them headed by a President. They dealt with the following fields: Labor and Social Welfare, Fuel and Energy, Finances, Health, Commerce and Supply, Industry, Agriculture and Forestry, Traffic, Postal and Telecommunications, Justice, People's Education, Statistics, Resettlement, Interior, Internal and Interzonal Commerce, Sequestration and Requisitioning. These Central Administrations, just as those established by SMA Order No. 110 in the five states, were German agencies of the SMA.<sup>16</sup>

14 Editors' note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 1 (9. Juni 1945) über die Organisation der Militärverwaltung zur Verwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland. In: Befehle des Obersten Chefs der Sowjetischen Militärverwaltung in Deutschland. Aus dem Stab der Sowjetischen Militärverwaltung, Sammelheft 1, 1945, Berlin 1946, p. 9. Can also be found online at <http://www.verfassungen.de/de45-49/verf45-i.htm>; 26.6.2022. Please note: As indicated in this footnote, the order originates already from May 9, 1945.

15 Editors' note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 17 (25. Juli 1945) betreffend die Einsetzungen von deutschen Zentralverwaltungen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone. Can be found online at <http://www.verfassungen.de/de45-49/verf45-i.htm>; 26.6.2022.

16 Editors' note: Cf. Befehl über die Einräumung des Rechts an die Provinzialverwaltungen und Verwaltungen der föderalen „Länder“, in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands Gesetze und Verordnungen zu erlassen, die Gesetzeskraft haben (22. Oktober 1945). In: Befehle des Obersten Chefs der Sowjetischen Militärverwaltung in Deutschland. Aus dem Stab der Sowjetischen Militärverwaltung, Sammelheft 1, 1945, Berlin 1946, pp. 19 f.

Following the election of state diets on October 20, 1946, the state administrations were replaced by state governments. These agreed to let the Central Administrations coordinate their activities with regard to the planning and control of industry, commerce and supply. The German Central Administrations in the economic fields were replaced by the German Economic Commission (DWK), which was established on June 14, 1947. It consisted of the Presidents of the Central Administrations and the chairmen of the Trade Union Federation and the League of Mutual Peasants' Assistance. SMA Order No. 32 of February 12, 1948, gave the DWK the power to issue orders and instructions to all German agencies in the SZ.<sup>17</sup> By September 1949, the DWK was organized as follows: A Secretariat of nine members, chaired by Heinrich Rau and four deputy chairmen; twenty Main Administrations: Coal, Energy, Metallurgy, Chemical Industry, Machine Construction and Electrical Industry, Light Industry, Building Materials (*Steine und Erden*). Material Supply, Interzonal and Foreign Commerce, Traffic, Commerce and Supply, Agriculture and Forestry Economics, Finance, Postal and Telecommunications, Labor and Social Welfare, Resettlement, Central Statistical Office, Committee for the Protection of People's Property, Central Control Commission, Information. On November 27, 1948, the SMA ordered stronger participation by the population in the activities of the DWK.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, membership of the DWK was raised from 36 to 101. Of these, 48 were selected by the state diets (Mecklenburg 6, Brandenburg 7, Saxony 15, Thuringia 8, Saxony-Anhalt 12), 3 each represented the five parties (SED, CDU, LDP, NDP, DBD), and 10 represented the "mass organizations" (FDGB 3, VDGB 2, FDJ 1, DFD 1, Culture League 1, Cooperatives 2). By this time, the Secretariat of the DWK had for all practical purposes become, under the auspices of the SMA, the first German central government of the Soviet Zone.

Meanwhile, on December 6, 1947, the First German People's Congress had been convened, as a propaganda measure in the fight to have Germany reunified under Soviet aegis. It consisted of 2,215 delegates, 664 of whom came from Western Germany. Its Presidium convened the Second German People's Congress on March 18, 1948. Its 1,938 delegates – 500 of them from Western

17 Editors' note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 32 (12. Februar 1948) – Zusammensetzung und Vollmachten der Deutschen Wirtschaftskommission. In: Zentralverordnungsblatt, hg. namens aller Zentralverwaltungen von der Deutschen Justizverwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland, Nr. 8 (March 20, 1948), Berlin 1948, p. 89.

18 Editors' note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 138 (27. November 1948) über die Erweiterung der Deutschen Wirtschaftskommission. In: Zentralverordnungsblatt. Amtliches Organ der Deutschen Wirtschaftskommission und ihrer Hauptverwaltungen sowie der Deutschen Verwaltungen für Inneres, Justiz und Volksbildung, hg. von der Deutschen Justizverwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland, Nr. 55 (December 7, 1948), Berlin 1948, pp. 543 f.

Germany – elected the People’s Council (*Volksrat*) from amongst their midst, as their deliberative and resolving organ, to be in action between sessions of the People’s Congress. 100 members of the Council came from the Western Zones of Occupation. The Council had a number of committees. Its constitutional Committee worked out the draft of the DDR constitution, which the People’s Council passed on March 10, 1949. On May 15 and 16, 1949, the Third German People’s Congress was elected from the unity lists of the Central Bloc of Anti-fascist Democratic Parties and mass organizations. This Third Congress had a membership of 1,523. Of these, 330 were elected to make up the Second People’s Council which met on October 7, 1949, and constituted itself as the Provisional People’s Chamber. On October 11, it elected Otto Grotewohl as Minister President. There were three Deputy Ministers President: Walter Ulbricht as General Secretary of the SED, Otto Nuschke as Chairman of the East-Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and Hermann Kastner as Chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Fourteen Ministers were put in charge of the following Ministries: Interior, External Affairs, Justice, Planning, Finance, Industry, Agriculture and Forestry, People’s Education, Reconstruction, Traffic, Postal and Telecommunications, Labor and Health, Foreign Commerce and Material Supply Commerce and Supply.

On February 8, 1950, the People’s Chamber passed a bill creating the Ministry of State Security. The name of the Ministry of Foreign Commerce and Material Supply was changed into “Internal German Commerce, Foreign Commerce and Material Supply”. But no other changes in the organization of Ministries took place between the founding of the DDR and the elections of October 1950.

The Chamber of States was created by legislation of October 7, 1949. 34 deputies there represented state diets and governments. The People’s Chamber and the Chamber of States together elected Wilhelm Pieck State President.

### 2.2.3 Administrative Developments

Following its election from unity lists on October 15, 1950, the new People’s Chamber approved a new Government. Again, it was headed by Grotewohl and contained, as Deputy Ministers President, Heinrich Rau (SED), Nuschke (CDU), Dr. Hans Lochner (LDP) and Dr. Lothar Bolz (NDP). This time, there were seventeen Ministries: External Affairs, Interior, State Security, Heavy Industry, Machine Construction, Light Industry, Agriculture and Forestry, Foreign and Internal German Commerce, Commerce and Supply, Labor, Health, Traffic, Postal and Telecommunications, Reconstruction, People’s Education, and Justice and Finance. Rau was also made Chairman of the State Plan-

ning Commission. This Commission consisted of Rau, two State Secretaries as his deputies, and the State Secretary for Material supply, the Head of the Central Statistical Office and the Head of the Main Department "Circulation of Goods". In addition, in connection with the five-year plan initiated by the law of November 8, 1950,<sup>19</sup> four independent State Secretariats were founded: for Coordination of Fiscal Administration, for Inventory and Purchase of Agricultural Products, for the Nutrition and Food Industry, and for Vocational Training. On February 22, 1951, the State Secretariat for Higher Education was added. On November 2, 1951, the State Secretariate for Construction, Industry, Coal and Energy, Chemical Industry and Building Materials were added. The name of the Ministry for Heavy Industry was changed into Ministry for Steelworks and Ore Mining.

On May 23, 1952, the Law Concerning the Government of the DDR superseded its predecessor of November 8, 1950.<sup>20</sup> This new law empowered the Government to change its own structure by its own decisions in order to adapt itself to the exigencies of economic plans. Instead of five, there were now six Deputy Ministers President, and 18 instead of 17 Ministers, since the Chairman of the State Planning Commission received ministerial rank. A number of structural changes then occurred, and five Coordination and Control Offices were established: for the Work of the Administrative Organs and the State Secretary of the Minister President; for Industry and Traffic; for Agriculture, Forestry and Water Resources, and for Inventory and Purchasing; for Internal Commerce; and for Instruction, Science and Art. According to a bill passed on July 17, 1952, the Presidium of the Council of Ministers was formed. It consists of the former Minister President now styled Chairman of the Council of Ministers, his Deputy Chairmen, and the Chairmen of the State Planning Commission and the Commission for State Control. The Presidium's task is preparation of "the great and significant decisions of the Council of Ministers".

By the end of 1952, three new Ministries replaced the Ministry for Machine Construction: Heavy Machine Construction, Construction of Agricultural and Transport Machinery, General Machine Construction. The Council of Ministers also decided to dissolve the State Secretariat for Construction Industry transferring its functions to the Reconstruction Ministry. On February 2, 1953, the State Commission for Commerce and Supply was created. Its chairman has ministerial rank and vote. On July 26, 1953, the Ministry for

19 Editors' note: Gesetz über die Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (8.11.1950). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1950, Nr. 127 (November 9, 1950), pp. 1135 f.

20 Editors' note: Gesetz über die Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (23.5.1952). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1952, Nr. 66 (May 29, 1952), pp. 407 f.



State Security was dissolved, and its functions transferred to the Ministry of Interior. The Traffic Ministry was dissolved in 1953, and on April 2, 1953, a new Railroad Ministry came into being, as well as the independent State Secretariats for Shipping and for Motor Transport and Roads. On June 11, 1953, the State Secretariat for Nutrition and Food Industries was transformed into a Ministry. On November 4, 1952, a new Ministry for Heavy Industry was created out of the existing Ministry for Steelworks and Ore Mining and the State Secretariats for Coal, for Energy and for Chemical Industry. Similarly, the old Ministry for Machine Construction was recreated out of the three Ministries which had replaced it. On November 26, a new independent Secretariat for Local Economics was established. On January 7, 1954, the Ministry for Culture was created.

After the unity list elections of October 17, 1954, a new Council of Ministers was formed by Grotewohl. Willi Stoph (SED), new Minister of Interior, was added as the seventh Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers. This time, the Ministry for Traffic reappeared. The Ministry of Labor now added "and Vocational Training" to its title, taking over the functions of that State Secretariat. The President of the German Notenbank, the central bank of the Soviet Zone, was made a member of the Council of Ministers, as also the Chairman of the State Committee for Physical Culture and Sport.

Another major reorganization of the government was announced on November 26, 1955. The Ministry for State Security was brought back into being, with Ernst Wollweber at its head. This preceded the transfer of the incumbent Interior Minister, Willi Stoph, to the newly created Defense Ministry. At the same time, three Commissions were organized: for Industry and Transport, headed by Fritz Selbmann, a new deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers; for Production Problems of Consumer Goods and Supply, headed by Fred Oelßner, the party theoretician and also a new deputy chairman; and the Agricultural Problems, headed by Paul Scholz, already a deputy chairman. Selbmann's old Ministry of Heavy Industry was once more broken up into three ministries. Hans Loch, another deputy chairman, turned over his job as Finance Minister to his State Secretary, Willi Rumpf, in order to devote himself to questions of German reunification.

The important point to bear in mind in connection with the preceding recital is the extreme flexibility of the structural organization of the "executive of the DDR". Drastic changes could speedily be effected every time that some change in policy, such as the ones occasioned by internal power shifts in the USSR and by the proclamation of the "softer" new course, if this should appear expedient. Neither the structure of the executive, nor its procedure, nor its policies have been in any important way constant during the period between 1945 and 1955, except where such constancy is made necessary by the

SED's control of the government and the society, and by the control of the SED itself by men of absolute loyalty to the USSR. And since the government has been formally empowered to change its own structure without approval by the People's Chamber, there would be no limitations on this flexibility even if the People's Chamber did not always operate unanimously as it in fact does. As things stand, the Council of Ministers, i. e. its Presidium, and for all practical purposes, the politburo, can make any, even the most revolutionary structural changes it desires to make, and at any time.

The reform of the territorial organization of the DDR provides the most striking illustration of this structural flexibility. The provisional Chamber of States consisted of 34 deputies. After the elections of October 15, 1950, a law was passed on November 8, raising this number to 50, plus another 13 representatives of Berlin (Saxony 13, Saxony-Anhalt 11, Thuringia 10, Brandenburg 9, and Mecklenburg 7).<sup>21</sup> According to Articles 78 and 84 of the constitution, the Chamber of States can veto bills passed by the People's Chamber, unless the latter then repasses the bill by a similar majority. The Chamber of States, however, never made use of this power – not even when the law of July 23, 1952, decreed the end of the state parliaments and state governments. The states had been barriers to the effective application of the communist policy of “democratic centralism” and had therefore to be liquidated. Consequently, the law in question was entitled “Law concerning the further Democratization of the Structure and Working Method of State Organs in the States of the DDR”.<sup>22</sup> Fourteen districts were substituted for the five states. But the states were not formally abolished, and the Chamber of States remained in existence. The members of state diets were transferred to the newly created district diets, whose membership varies between 60 and 90. They were set up on the basis of the “Order concerning the Structure and Working Method of State Organs in the Districts”, dated July 24, 1952.<sup>23</sup> The district diets usually have ten committees, to one of which each delegate must belong. The Committees deal with the budget, agricultural and rural construction, local industry, health and social welfare, people's education, commerce, traffic, housing and

21 Editors' note: Gesetz über die Zusammensetzung der Länderkammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (8.11.1950). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1950, Nr. 127 (November 9, 1950), p. 1135.

22 Editors' note: Gesetz über die weitere Demokratisierung des Aufbaus und der Arbeitsweise der staatlichen Organe in den Ländern der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (23.7.1952). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1952, Nr. 99 (July 24, 1952), pp. 613 f.

23 Editors' note: Ordnung für den Aufbau und die Arbeitsweise der staatlichen Organe der Bezirke (24.7.1952). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1952, Nr. 101 (July 29, 1952), pp. 621–623.

communal utilities, cultural mass indoctrination, local People's Police and justice. The district diet elects the district council, which is usually composed of its chairman, five deputy chairmen, a secretary and between five and eight other members. The secretary's position is by far the most powerful one, and he is always a member of the SED.

The districts are in turn divided up into a number of counties (Kreise), which are similarly organized, each with its diet and council. But each county council is subordinated not only to the assembly which elects it, but also to the district council, i. e. the executive of the district, the next higher territorial unit. This is known as the "principle of dual subordination" and dual responsibility and is designed to insure the effectiveness of democratic centralism in the realm of administration. The powers of the diets at the county and district levels are not greater than those of the People's Chamber at the level of the DDR as a whole. For all practical purposes, the members of the councils who are in charge of its various departments take their orders from the next higher council, from DDR Ministries, and from their own opposites in the SED hierarchy.

Despite the non-existence of state governments or parliaments, a new Chamber of States convened after the 1954 elections. It again had 50 members.

The administrative personnel had to be "reformed" by the regime of the SZ for purposes of replacing bureaucrats whom it considered politically unreliable. There are no figures available as to how many of pre-1945 professional civil servants are left in the bureaucracy of the DDR. Some estimates place it as low as five percent. Many bureaus are said to follow the practice of retaining one professional expert in their field. He is given an entirely subordinate position, but the bureau head will rely on him for advice when difficult technical questions arise. Largely, the Soviet Zone bureaucracy consists of personnel recruited since 1945. At the middle and higher levels, these people have usually been given some kind of administrative training, either in part-time courses, or at schools of public administration, of which the highest in the hierarchy bears Walter Ulbricht's name. A few of the top administrators have spent many years in the USSR, and some at the top and the next lower level have more recently been sent to administrative schools in the USSR to take courses there. Soviet experts on administration, both practical and academic, have visited the DDR in order to supervise, give advice, and teach. In addition, the presence in the SZ since 1945 of not only Soviet Administrators, but also of the Red Army has had its effect.

The result, so far as DDR administrative procedure is concerned, is an amalgam of German and Soviet Russian practices. The role of secrecy in internal communications may serve as an illustration. In German practice, both inside and outside of government, the concept of secrecy has always been taken

relatively seriously. In Soviet Russian practice, insistence on secrecy of administrative proceedings has been one of the most effective tools in strengthening the totalitarian dictatorship. In the SZ, these two conceptions of secrecy have been combined. Bureaucrats are permitted to become acquainted only with such material as they absolutely must know for the satisfactory performance of their own work.

#### 2.2.4 Functions of Parliament

Neither the Chamber of States nor the People's Chamber which overshadows it can be considered legislative organs in the usual meaning of that term. Decisions are made, ordered to be put into effect, and their execution is supervised by the Presidium of the Council of Ministers and, ultimately, by the politburo of the SED. The two houses of parliament, and especially the People's Chamber, exist for the sake of the artificial production of fake consent to these decisions by the population of the DDR. But since they are not really representatives of that population, they do not really have either a representative or a deliberative function.

The People's Chamber which was elected on the basis of the unity lists of October 15, 1950, distributed membership among parties and mass organizations on the basis of a scheme previously agreed to, i. e. imposed by the SED leadership. The SED got 25 percent of the seats, the East CDU and LDP 15 percent each, the NDP and DBD 7.5 percent each, the FDGB 10 percent, the FDJ 5 percent, the DFD and VVN 3.7 percent each, the KB 5 percent, and VDGB and Cooperatives 1.3 percent each. The Chamber elected its President, Johannes Dieckmann (LDP), four Vice Presidents, and other officers, and formed 16 committees. However, it never deviated from the unanimity rule. Its deputies were not effectively protected by the immunity provisions of the DDR constitution, and nine of them were arrested during the four years of its term of office. Fifteen fled to the Federal Republic. Ten lost their seats for other reasons. 180 of the 400 members were nominated to "run" again in the elections of October 17, 1951.

At meetings of the People's Chamber, there is no genuine deliberation or debate. Rather, members of the various groups rise to speak in support of the particular policy which the Council of Ministers puts forward. The main interest, consequently, which attaches to the Chamber must be in terms of its political and social composition, because this gives some indication of the value which the SED bosses assign to the various groups whose support or non-opposition they wish to elicit by means of permitting them representation on this body.

Occupation	Number in People's Chamber of	
	1950	1954
State and SED Functionaries	191	169
People's Police Functionaries	1	8
Agricultural Workers	47	58
Miners	11	15
Industrial Workers	62	56
Intellectuals, Physicians, Teachers, Professors	59	60
Craftsmen	11	20
Others and Housewives	15	12
Clergymen	3	2

Editors' note: No references exist for this overview. Inferences might be made from the following publications: *Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (ed.), *Handbuch der Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Berlin (East) 1957; *Handbuch der Sowjetzonen-Volkskammer*, 2. Legislaturperiode 1954–1958, Informationsbüro West, Berlin-Schlachtensee 1955.

Because the Chamber has no effective power, differences in make-up between one Chamber and the next can be of no real significance. On the other hand, it is at least conceivable that in case of the reunification of Germany its members may be able successfully to advance a claim for further participation in politics because of their previous experience in the parliament of the German Democratic Republic.

## 2.3 Political Dynamics [*Herbert J. Spiro*]

### 2.3.1 General Considerations

Political awareness is highly developed among the population of the SZ. Even to the extent that this statement is applicable to Western European peoples in general, it applies particularly to the Germans of the SZ, simply because of the tremendous importance of politics for their everyday lives. Under any totalitarianism, many of the most important events in the life of the individual are the result of political decisions, so that hardly anyone but a complete fatalist could afford to show no interest in politics. But the extent of political awareness of people in East Germany surpasses even this general expectation, for several reasons: These people have passed through the experience of the fall of the

Weimar Republic, the twelve years of Nazi totalitarian rule and the disastrous military defeat in which it ended. Since then, the allegiance of the population of the SZ has been one of the main prizes of the cold war, so that this population has been exposed to as much propaganda from both sides of the iron curtain as anyone. Moreover, and quite aside from these manifestations of the special role played by the SZ in the cold war, the importance of political indoctrination is one of the main tenets of Marxism-Leninism. As a result, this indoctrination in the principles of dialectical materialism and the history of the CPSU<sup>24</sup> sometimes goes on at a pitch of such intensity, that people become thoroughly saturated and, eventually, unable to absorb any more propaganda. Outwardly they may still pretend to be participating in indoctrination courses, though actually they are just going through the motions. When such a point of saturation has been reached, people are often unreceptive to any kind of political propaganda and/or information, since they no longer trust any source, having been deceived by too many in the past. For large parts of the population of the SZ, this stage must have been reached.

Even when these groups are taken into account, however, the general development and extent of political awareness must be considered relatively high. Even those who attempt to shut themselves off completely from politics are not allowed to do so by the regime. The most important human material needs are distributed by it on the basis of purely political considerations: How much food, clothing, fuel, shelter, education, mobility, and entertainment an individual gets depends on political decisions made by the SED. And even those who try to stay in the graces of the party by observing the party-line in a “merely formal and mechanical manner” – to use communist jargon – are not permitted to get away with it. They are forced to participate in one or more of the many ideological training courses which are being offered at their places of work or residence, or by the party or mass organization to which they belong. The two subjects which figure most prominently in these indoctrination courses are the history of the Communist Party of the USSR and dialectical materialism, i. e. on the one hand the concrete series of events which is looked on as *the* model for the future development of “socialist” parties everywhere, and, on the other hand, that method of reasoning which is alleged to be capable of providing solutions for all concrete problems which may ever arise.

How unusually high the extent and development of political awareness is among the population of the SZ becomes even more evident, if we consider, in addition to these factors, two others: respect for academic knowledge and the tradition of the Social Democratic Party. In both parts of Germany, one

24 Editors' note: This is the Kommunistische Partei der Sowjetunion, Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

is much more likely to consult academic knowledge before making political decisions than in the United States. The educated man, and especially one with a university education, occupies a more respected position and is given greater deference than the college graduate in the United States. The role which he consciously plays as an *Akademiker* is much more important than that consciously played by his American counterpart. Thus, it happens even at SED party congresses that speakers make use of Latin proverbs in attacking one another. The second additional factor is the political education received by large segments of the population prior to the establishment of the East German Soviet regime. This applies particularly to those segments of the working class which have for several generations provided stable support for Germany's non-communist Marxist political party, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). These people, often for three or four generations in the same family, have believed in the dogmas of evolutionary Marxism as articles of faith. Their general view of the world and of political processes in it are deeply colored by this ideology. While this often means that they think they are seeing things which are not really there such as the imperialist motives of the Marshall Plan, it does provide the foundation for their high degree of political awareness and factual information about politics.

The degree of preparation for political responsibility is partly a matter of age. People who went to school and reached maturity before Hitler came to power in 1933, i. e. aged about 40 or over as of 1956, may be expected to be better prepared than their juniors for assuming political responsibility in a constitutional democracy. Those who completed school after 1933 never had opportunities for either getting any practice in constitutional and democratic politics, or even acquiring an understanding of what sort of responsibilities citizens may be reasonably expected to assume in a constitutional democracy. Those who were exposed to National Socialist ideological indoctrination were taught to think in terms of the superiority of the Aryan race and the infallibility of the leader or *Führer*. Since the catastrophe of 1945 definitively demonstrated what this infallibility amounted to, most of them shed their Nazi convictions at that time. Those members of these generations who have since 1945 been dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the SZ have by now come to hate any form of totalitarianism, whether it be Nazi or communist. The uprising of June 17, 1953, showed that they would prefer a freely elected government, and there can be no doubt that they favor the reunification of Germany. But for people who have had no experience in the give-and-take of democratic politics, these aspirations by themselves hardly constitute preparation for political responsibility.

One of the main efforts of the SED has been directed toward building up new "cadres" of personnel capable of assuming political responsibility in the

communist meaning of that term. The SED was forced to adopt this policy by assuming that people who had received their political training under auspices other than the party's own could not be considered reliable. As a result, many positions of great responsibility are today filled by individuals of surprising youth, often in the early twenties. Moreover, older age people have been forced to participate in public life, often against their will, partly because of the regime's desire to politicize all aspects of the individual's existence and partly because someone simply had to be found to fill both newly created positions and those left vacant by alleged enemies of the regime who had been purged. Since the key positions in virtually all of these organizations are in the hands of SED members, and because of the general character of the SZ regime, the experience which these people are getting hardly trains them for assuming political responsibility in a constitutional democracy. Nor is it designed to make them fighters in the forefront of any movement which aims at overthrowing the regime. Nevertheless, a young person who has had some experience with the responsibilities of leadership is more likely than one who has not to play a similar role and to put to better use the experience they have gathered.

Some comment is perhaps not amiss regarding one peculiarity of dialectical materialism. Orwell's take-off on this method in his book *1984*, in which he calls it "double-think", shows that it enables its users to call the same thing true today and false tomorrow. But the population for whose control the method is being used, once it is sufficiently indoctrinated in it, can do the same thing. There are already numerous reports from the SZ of the use of the dialectical method against SED functionaries. In this sense, it is possible that the training which the SED is now providing in order to enable people to assume responsibilities as loyal communists may do both, turn against the SED and at a later date turn out to have prepared these same people for assuming political responsibilities in a constitutional democracy.

### 2.3.2 Locus of Power

In the system of political dynamics of the SZ, there are two main loci of power: the top echelon of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), and the men who control the Soviet Union's German policy. Both of them operate almost entirely outside the DDR's constitutional system – but only "almost", because the constitution itself was tailor-made to suit the requirements of the SED as the dominant party. Also, the constitution contains provisions which facilitate satellite-like behavior on the part of the DDR vis-à-vis the USSR. However, the fact that the main loci of power operate outside of the constitutional system of the DDR does not mean that they operate in a completely unconstitution-



al or even anarchic and therefore unpredictable fashion. Rather, these power relations have their own quasi-constitutions – the USSR in the form of the orders, agreements and treaties which define its relations with the DDR (to be treated under 2.5), and the SED in the form of its own charter, the party statute. This statute is treated by leaders and followers alike as an important and meaningful document, and the two major changes which it has undergone since the founding of the party are more vital documents than any others for a proper understanding of SZ politics. In the same way, the constitutional provisions concerning parties are insignificant when compared with statutes of the SED and the other parties, whose continued existence the SED, for its own purposes, either tolerates or encourages. Of further importance is Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist ideology, dialectical materialism, for it provides, as we said, the overall framework, as a theory of knowledge of which its adherents believe that it is capable of providing solutions to all conceivable practical problems. It is within this framework that changes in the party-line, and therefore also the party statute, take place.

### 2.3.3 The SED

For an understanding of the present role, organization, ideology, composition and goals of the SED, one needs to go back beyond the founding of the party in April 1946, when it was created through the merger of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and the SPD, to the history of these two parties during the period of the Weimar Republic (1919–33) and of National Socialist rule (1933–45). The KPD had come into being after the First World War when it split off from SPD and advocated the establishment of socialism in Germany by revolutionary means according to the Russian model. The SPD, on the other hand, continued to act on the basis of a belief in the possibility of establishing socialism by non-violent, parliamentary means. The SPD participated in many cabinets and furnished the chancellor in some. The KPD refused such participation in the government, rather taking advantage of every opportunity to sabotage any stabilization of politics in the Weimar Republic. Going even beyond that, during the last years preceding Hitler's appointment to the chancellorship on January 30, 1933, the KPD, on Soviet Russian orders, followed a policy which was purposely designed to put an end to the constitutional order and to facilitate Hitler's rise to power. This policy was based on ideological considerations. Fascism was interpreted as the final stage of monopoly capitalism and as a necessary stage through which society would have to pass before the dictatorship of the proletariat, under leadership of its vanguard, the KPD, could quickly be established. As a logical part of this policy, the KPD opposed

the SPD and labelled its members “social fascists”. Soon after Hitler came to power, most of the KPD leaders either ended up in concentration camps or left Germany. Many of the survivors who have important jobs in the SZ today spent a large part of their years in exile in the USSR. Similarly, many of the SPD’s top leadership were either put into concentration camps or got out of the country to establish the SPD’s headquarters in exile, first in Prague, and later in London.

The Communists almost immediately went to work on a new program, part of which was to serve later as the basis for the KPD’s espousal of union with the SPD. In the “Reich Conference of the KPD”, held in Brussels in October 1935<sup>25</sup> achievement of unity of action of the German proletariat with the rest of the working masses was declared to be the right way to overthrow the Nazi regime. At the next conference held by the KPD, in Berne in 1939, the concept of the anti-fascist popular front was used. During the war, experts, both German and Russian, were put to work in the USSR to prepare Soviet policy in Germany after the Allied victory. At the same time, the Russians organized the “National Committee of Free Germany”, which was founded on June 12, 1943. It consisted of leading German Communists and German officers and enlisted men who were Russian prisoners of war and addressed an anti-Nazi manifesto to the German population. With the end of the war, the Committee was dissolved, but many of its members were given important jobs in the SZ after they had been properly indoctrinated in a Soviet school.<sup>26</sup>

When the first KPD leaders were flown into Berlin by the Russians on May 1, 1945, slogans similar to those worked out in 1935 and 1939 reappeared. These men, among them Walter Ulbricht and Anton Ackermann, were under instructions not yet to refound the KPD.<sup>27</sup> Instead, they were to construct a

25 Editors’ note: In fact, the conference took place in Kunzewo near Moscow. For conspiratorial reasons the venue Brussels was indicated. For the history of the conference, cf. Die „Brüsseler Konferenz“ der KPD von 1935, CD-ROM, ed. by Günther Fuchs, Erwin Lewin, Elke Reuter and Stefan Weber, Berlin 2000. This CD-ROM is part of the following publication: Klaus Kinner, *Der deutsche Kommunismus. Selbstverständnis und Realität*, Band 2: *Gegen Faschismus und Krieg (1933–1939)*, Berlin 2005.

26 Editors’ note: As exiled communists, Anton Ackermann, Wilhelm Pieck and Walter Ulbricht were members of the “Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland” (“National Committee Free Germany”). Among the prisoners of war were, for instance, Heinz Keßler, later General of the National People’s Army and Minister for National Defense, as well as Heinrich Homann, chair of the bloc party National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands (NDPD) from 1972 to 1989.

27 Editors’ note: Alongside Ulbricht and Ackermann, Gustav Sobottka was a central figure. According to the “Richtlinien für die Arbeit der deutschen Antifaschisten in dem von der Roten Armee besetzten deutschen Gebiet” (“Guidelines for the work of German antifascists in the German territories occupied by the Red Army”) of

“Bloc of Fighting Democracy”, which was to consist of all antifascists, starting on the left with former Communists like themselves and going all the way to anti-Nazi former *Wehrmacht* officers on the right. But this policy was suddenly reversed, when a second group of German Communists arrived in Berlin from the USSR. This group included Wilhelm Pieck and Fred Oelßner, among others. Their directive was to proceed immediately with the founding of the KPD. Their operations were well coordinated with those of the SMA. When the SMA issued Order No. 2 on June 10, 1945,<sup>28</sup> permitting the founding of German parties and trade unions in the SZ, the Central Committee (ZK) of the KPD followed suit the very next day by proclaiming the founding of the KPD. The proclamation called for the conclusion of the “bourgeois-democratic revolution begun in 1848” and for the fight against militarism, fascism and imperialism. It then explicitly rejected the notion of imposing the Soviet system on Germany at that time, because of Germany’s special situation, and rather urged establishment of an “anti-fascist, democratic regime, a parliamentary democratic republic with all democratic rights and liberties for the people”.<sup>29</sup>

The Central Committee of the SPD in Berlin came out with its founding statement on June 15, 1946. It called for “democracy in the state and the communities, socialism in the economy and society”, and emphasized the SPD’s readiness to cooperate in bringing about the unity of the working class. Soon after its foundation, the SPD initiated negotiations with the central committee of the KPD about uniting into one workers’ party. But till the fall of 1945, the KPD insisted that the time was not yet ripe for fusion and that important ideological differences would first have to be cleared out of the way. On October 12, 1945, however, Ulbricht urged unity of action between the two parties during forthcoming local election campaigns, and on October 23, Franz Dahlem urged that KPD and SPD put up common lists of candidates. The likely reason for this change in party-line were Communist setbacks in shop

April 5, 1945, these KPD operatives were above all tasked with securing food, installing new local self-governing bodies and bringing about an “antifascist” re-orientation. Cf. [https://www.1000dokumente.de/?c=dokument\\_de&dokument=0009\\_ant&object=context&l=de](https://www.1000dokumente.de/?c=dokument_de&dokument=0009_ant&object=context&l=de); 1.5.2022.

- 28 Editors’ note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 2 des Obersten Chefs der Sowjetischen Militärverwaltung Deutschland (10. Juni 1945). In: Befehle des Obersten Chefs der Sowjetischen Militärverwaltung in Deutschland. Aus dem Stab der Sowjetischen Militärverwaltung, Sammelheft 1, 1945, Berlin 1946, pp. 9 f.
- 29 Editors’ note: Aufruf des Zentralkomitees der Kommunistischen Partei an das deutsche Volk zum Aufbau eines anti-faschistisch-demokratischen Deutschlands vom 11. Juni 1945, Flugblatt, BArch RY 1/I 2/8/108, Bl. 36, online at [https://www.1000dokumente.de/index.html?c=dokument\\_de&dokument=0009\\_ant&object=abstract&st=&l=de](https://www.1000dokumente.de/index.html?c=dokument_de&dokument=0009_ant&object=abstract&st=&l=de); 1.5.2022.

council elections, as perhaps also of elections held in Soviet occupied countries and also in Austria. On December 5, 1945, the two Central Committees held a joint meeting to prepare for local elections then coming up in the SZ.

At this time, Pieck still asserted that no fusion of the two parties would take place during the next few months. But meanwhile, the SMA had forced fusion of some local organizations of the two parties. On December 20 and 21, 1945, a meeting of 30 KPD and SPD representatives was held, at which the SPD agreed to the merger on the condition that it would occur for the whole of Germany and not just for the SZ. The SMA prohibited publication of this condition. During the next two months, there raged a battle inside the SPD, both between the Berlin Central Committee headed by Otto Grotewohl on the one hand, and the Western leadership of the SPD, but also inside the Soviet Zone SPD. The party's leadership in the Western zones, headed by Dr. Schumacher, rejected fusion of the parties, and about half of the Eastern leadership were also opposed to it. In the meantime, however, the KPD's chief theoretician and member of the Central Committee, Anton Ackermann, published an article entitled, "Is there a Special German Road to Socialism?"<sup>30</sup> His answer was "yes", which appealed to those evolutionary Social Democrats whose position with regard to the merger was wavering at the time.

At a joint conference of the two SZ parties, held on February 26, 1946, an "Organizational Committee for Carrying Out Unification" was formed and charged with drafting the statute of the new party. This conference decided that unification was to take place on April 21. Party organizations at lower levels were ordered to form unification committees there. When some local SPD officials proceeded to oppose unification, some were arrested by Soviet occupation authorities. In the Western sectors of Berlin, under the auspices of the US Military Governor, a referendum of SPD members was held on March 31. 73 percent of the 32,547 party members entitled to vote availed themselves of the opportunity. Of these, 82 percent voted against fusion, 12 percent for fusion. On the second question, "Are you in favor of cooperation of both parties, which ensures common work and excludes fraternal strife?", 62 percent voted for cooperation with the KPD, and 23.1 percent against it. The SMA did not permit the referendum to be held in the Soviet sector of Berlin. In any case, the Party Congress of Unification was held on April 21 and 22, 1946,

30 Editors' note: Online at [https://digitalisate.sub.uni-hamburg.de/detail/?tx\\_dlf%5Bid%5D=93066&tx\\_dlf%5Bpage%5D=3&cHash=566011bfbb86354a50e22e7aea4d3d75;1.5.2022](https://digitalisate.sub.uni-hamburg.de/detail/?tx_dlf%5Bid%5D=93066&tx_dlf%5Bpage%5D=3&cHash=566011bfbb86354a50e22e7aea4d3d75;1.5.2022). Cf. also Anton Ackermann, *Gibt es einen besonderen deutschen Weg zum Sozialismus?* (1946). In: Hermann Weber, *Von der SBZ zur DDR 1949–1968*, Hannover 1968, pp. 265 f.

and the fusion of the Soviet zonal KPD and SPD into the Socialist Unity Party proclaimed then and there.

The SED has had three statutes defining its organization and operations. The first was adopted by the founding congress of April 1946; the second by the third party congress of June 20 to 24, 1950; and the third, which is still in effect today, by the fourth party congress on April 5, 1954. These dates mark the formal recognition of changes in the party's role, which fit into the ideologically determined interpretation of the general political evolution of the SZ by its leaders. Other important turning points are usually marked by proclamations of resolutions made at party congresses, party conferences and meetings of the party's central committee (ZK). Each party statute has defined the composition and functions of these three organs of the SED, as also of its real ruling bodies, the politburo, the secretariat, the central party control commission (ZPKK), the central commission for revision (ZRK) and the machinery of the ZK.

According to the first statute, the party congress was to lay down directives for the party-line, to accept the reports of the executive (predecessor of the ZK) and of the ZRK, and to elect the members of the executive and the ZRK. The party congress was to meet annually. The major change made in this respect by the second statute provided instead for biennial meetings of the congress. It also provided that the next ZK would convene party conferences between meetings of the party congress. While both congress and conference are composed of "representatives" of lower levels of the organization, their members are in fact nominated by the ZK, that is, for all practical purposes, by its agency for "Leading Organs of Party and Mass Organizations" (LOPM), and this is even more true of the conference than the congress. Resolutions passed by the conference have to be approved by the ZK. The conference can also make personnel changes in the composition of the ZK. The third statute, which is still valid, leaves the functions of congress and conference pretty much where they were before, and otherwise presents a fairly faithful copy of the current statute of the Communist Party of the USSR. According to it, the ZK convenes the congress every four years. So far, there have been four congresses, in April 1946, September 1947, July 1950 and April 1954; and two conferences, in January 1949 and July 1952.

The first congress served the main purpose of fusing SPD and KPD. It gave the two parties equal shares in the leadership of the SED. The second congress made the "struggle for the unity of Germany" the main task of the SED. On this occasion, Grotewohl called for intensification of the class struggle. On June 30, 1948, the SED started the two-year plan with the main purpose of eliminating remnants of capitalism and thereby creating the basis for a planned economy.

At this time, the party-line still rested on the theory of Germany's special road to socialism, advanced earlier by Ackermann. This theory had to be ditched completely when the Cominform expelled Tito in July 1948. The SED leadership admitted that this theory and all that had been derived from it had been erroneous from the beginning. Ackermann himself, in September 1948, stated that the theory had to be "liquidated and completely eradicated".<sup>31</sup> The possibility of the peaceful achievement of socialism was one derivative which was not also rejected. The need for the coordination of the economic plans of member-states of the Soviet bloc was emphasized in its place. The party, which then counted about two million members, was not to become a mass party, but a "cadre" party, i. e. an elite party. To carry out the first purge of its membership, the ZPKK was instituted on September 16, 1948.

The first party conference (January 1949) summed up the lessons which the SED executive had drawn from the Tito case. It concluded that the current regime in the SZ was anti-fascist and democratic, with the working class in the leading position. But it was not yet a People's Democracy. The SED was now to be transformed into a "party of the new type", using a Leninist phrase, i. e. it was to be based on Marxism-Leninism and the experience of the CPSU. This resulted in a number of measures, in addition to setting up the ZPKK. Future members of the party had to pass through a period of candidacy. The politburo was created. Equal representation of former KPD and SPD members in the SED leadership was abolished. And the West German KPD was made organizationally independent of the SED.

Of these changes, creation of the politburo was the most important. Previously, the party executive, consisting of 80 members, elected the central secretariat (ZS) of fourteen members, including the co-chairmen, Pieck and Grotewohl. The ZS contained seven former KPD and seven former SPD members. The first politburo of January 25, 1949, had four former KPD and three former SPD men, and one candidate for membership from each party. But its secretariat contained only one ex-SPD man among its five members. Walter Ulbricht, as chief of the Secretariat, became general secretary of the politburo, so his position in the SED was the same as that of Stalin in the CPSU. Ulbricht retained this position until his title was changed to that of first secretary, on July 24, 1953, paralleling the same change with the advent of collective leadership in the USSR after the death of Stalin.

The third party congress confirmed these decisions of the first conference by accepting the second statute (July 1950). It declared war on remnants of "social democratism". It elected the second politburo, consisting of nine

31 In February 1956, the XX Party Congress of the CPSU has revived the idea; it will presumably therefore reappear also in SZ.

members and six candidates, of whom only two were ex-SPD men, Grotewohl and Friedrich Ebert, son of the first president of the Weimar Republic. The secretariat now consisted of eleven former KPD members, again headed by Ulbricht. The third congress also elected the central committee and the ZRK and approved the draft of the five-year plan for the period 1951–55.

The second party conference (July 1952) called for the “construction of socialism”. It asserted that the anti-fascist democratic order had finally been succeeded by a people’s democratic order, since the necessary economic basis for this change had been achieved. “Main instrument for creation of the basis of socialism is the power of the state.”<sup>32</sup> As a result, the five states (*Länder*) were abolished as administrative units and replaced by the fourteen districts. New codes of labor, civil and penal law were ordered to be written. The “voluntary” formation of agricultural production cooperatives (LPG) was recommended. The conference also elected replacements for the ZK and the ZRK.

The SED’s “new course”, proclamation of which preceded by one week the uprising of June 17, 1953, was neither proclaimed at, nor sanctioned by, a party congress or conference of the People’s Chamber. It was authorized solely by the politburo. The next party congress did not meet till March 30, 1954. It accepted the third statute and elected a new ZK and ZRK. The most important difference between the third and second statutes is the provision for increased power of the ZK. The old statute stated that “the ZK *exercises its influence* in the central state and social institutions through party members working in them”. The new statute states, “the ZK *directs the work* of the central state and social institutions and organizations through the party groups which exist in them”.<sup>33</sup> For this purpose, the ZK has been equipped with an apparatus consisting of twenty-two departments. They and their heads, called secretaries, were for some time to play a more important role in the politics and administration of the DDR than ministers in the government. The new ZK then elected a new politburo of nine members, among them the same two ex-SPD men, and a new secretariat of six ex-KPD men.

According to the statute, the ZK is the highest organ of the party between meetings of the congress, which elects the ZK. The ZK elects both politburo and

32 Editors’ note: Zur gegenwärtigen Lage und zu den Aufgaben im Kampf für Frieden, Einheit, Demokratie und Sozialismus. In: Zentralkomitee der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands (ed.), *Dokumente der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands. Beschlüsse und Erklärungen des Zentralkomitees sowie seines Politbüros und seines Sekretariats*, Vol. IV, 1952–1953, Berlin (East) 1954, pp. 70–78, here 73.

33 Editors’ note: Statut der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, angenommen auf dem IV. Parteitag der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, Berlin, 30. März bis 6. April 1954, Berlin (East) 1956, pp. 43 f. (*italics supplied*).

secretariat. Actually, however, it is the politburo, the secretariat and the party apparatus attached to these two institutions, which control the ZK. Some of the most important policy decisions have not only been made by the politburo on its own, but proclaimed without first receiving the sanction of the ZK. The main functions of the ZK are those of a permanent "elite" serving as sounding board for the politburo and of a quasi-representative body of the SED. As elected in 1950, it consisted of 51 members and 30 candidates. As elected in 1954, it is made up of 91 members and 44 candidates. Of this total of 135, 18 are women, 32 are functionaries of the SED, 20 have government administrative jobs, 6 are with the police or military, 17 come from the mass organizations, 21 from VE industry, 1 from VE commerce, 13 from agriculture, 12 from the arts and sciences, 3 are "veterans of the labor movement", and the background of 10 is unknown. The main difference between the first and second ZK is the much stronger representation on the second of the VE sectors of the economy. This is consistent with the DDR's self-styled achievement of the status of a "workers' and peasants' state" during the term of the first ZK. But by itself, this does not permit conclusions concerning the relative influence on policy-making of various groups inside the SED. Thus, the fact that the number of ZK members, whose main job is with the party apparatus, has decreased from 25 to 22, does not mean that the party or its top leadership intends to weaken its control of these newer groups which may someday become rival contenders for power. Seventeen members and twelve candidates of the first ZK are missing from the second ZK. Most prominent among the members thus excluded were Zaisser, Herrnstadt, Fechner, Ackermann, Dahlem, Jendretzky and Elli Schmidt. All of these were strongly censured, or worse, by the ZK session of January 22 and 23, 1954 (the 17th ZK session), for being connected with Zaisser's and Herrnstadt's "defeatist line, which was directed against the unity of the party". These two men, a member and a candidate, respectively, of the second politburo, had already been expelled from the ZK at its 15th session, July 24-26, 1953. The same session resolved to exclude Fechner, until then the Minister of Justice, from the SED, after he had been arrested in July 1953, for taking too soft a line against participants in the strikes which started the uprising of June 17, 1953. Dahlem had also been a member, and Ackermann, Jendretzky and Schmidt were candidates of the second politburo.



#### 2.3.4 Politburo and Secretariat

The real locus of power inside the DDR is to be found in the politburo and secretariat. All that the SED statute has to say about it, is this: "The ZK elects the politburo for the political direction of the work of the ZK between its plenary sessions."<sup>34</sup> Today it consists of nine members and five candidates. These are the men who have the most direct contacts with their counterparts in the USSR and the Soviet Embassy in Berlin. Only four of them have survived all the changes and purges since the founding of the SED and the simultaneous founding of the politburo's predecessor, the central secretariat: Pieck, Grotewohl, Ulbricht and Ebert. Of these, Ulbricht as general secretary (later first secretary) has been the dominant figure. Dahlem, Zaisser and Herrnsstadt were his strongest rivals, whom he successfully eliminated in 1953.

The politburo used to meet once a week as a rule. According to reports from persons present at meetings until 1949, it sometimes arrived at decisions by actually polling its members, but this was not done on crucial issues, on which Ulbricht had already made up his mind. In any case, it is possible that at present, while "collective leadership" is the current Soviet fad, polling or similar methods are in use in the politburo. Its leg work is done for it by the secretariat, founded at the same time as the politburo on January 24, 1949. It was first known as the little secretariat of the politburo. In the course of 1949, it was renamed the secretariat of the ZK. At first, the secretariat consisted of five members, of whom only Ulbricht and Dahlem were also in the politburo. The second statute assigned the secretariat "the general direction of the organizational work and the daily operative leadership of the party's activity". It then had eleven and, as of 1952, thirteen members. The ZK, at its 15th session of July 1953, dissolved the secretariat, and instead elected six men as secretaries of the ZK. But according to the third statute, the secretariat was reinstated once more, to be elected by the ZK for the "direction of current work, mainly for the organization of the control of the execution of party resolutions and for the selection of cadres".<sup>35</sup> Its most important members are Ulbricht, Oelßner, Mückenberger, Ziller, Wandel and Schirdewan.

These men control the departments of the ZK. Ulbricht is the Secretary responsible for the Department of State Administration. Oelßner is the secretary in charge of the Departments of Agitation, Press/Radio, Propaganda, Science and Higher Education. Schirdewan is responsible for "Leading Organs of Party and of Mass Organizations" (LOPM), the Western Department, the

34 Editors' note: Statut der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, p. 44.

35 Editors' note: Ibid.

Traffic Department (network of agents in Western Germany and liaison with the KPD). Wandel handles the Department of Schools, of Literature and Art. Ziller is responsible for the Departments of Raw Materials Industry, Commerce, Supply and Light Industry, and Construction Industry. Mückenberger is the secretary in charge of the Agricultural Department. He had previously been Minister of Agriculture, Ziller Minister for Heavy Industry, and Wandel Minister for People's Education.

### 2.3.5 ZPKK and ZRK

The central party control commission (ZPKK) was first created in September 1948. According to the third party statute, its main task is "to protect the unity and purity of the party".<sup>36</sup> That is, it is in charge of conducting internal party purges by investigating members whose loyalty is to be questioned and by pronouncing disciplinary sentences, which can range all the way up to exclusion from the SED. The ZPKK has been headed throughout by Hermann Matern, who is also a member of the politburo (and spent part of the Nazi period in the USSR).

The central commission for revision (ZRK) was established at the time of the foundation of the SED and charged with supervising the financial affairs of the ZK and other agencies of the party leadership. Since then, however, its supervision has been expanded to include the administrative and technical operations of the SED apparatus as a bureaucracy. Among other things, this means that the ZRK is to see to it that SED members pay their dues. In 1953, only 60 percent of the membership did so regularly, and some of these did not pay as much as they were supposed to according to their income, i. e. with a gross monthly income up to DM-O 400, 0.5 percent; DM-O 401 to 500, 1 percent; a gross monthly income of between DM-O 501 and 700, 1.5 percent; DM-O 701 and 1,000, 2 percent; above DM-O 1,000, 3 percent. But the ZRK had only five members, and these held other full-time jobs. For this reason, the fourth party congress increased the membership of the ZRK from five to eleven, and the number of candidates from three to five. Only two of the newly elected members and candidates had previously been members of the commission. Most of the new personnel of the ZRK seem to be financial or administrative experts.

36 Editors' note: Ibid.

### 2.3.6 Basis and membership

The organization of the party at the district, county and city level is virtually the same as the organization at the top.

The basic units of the party are the enterprise groups, home groups and village groups. These are to be formed wherever there are at least three members or candidates. In large enterprises or administrative offices (including those of the SED itself), one basic party unit is organized for all the personnel of a large plant or department. Most enterprise groups are made up of smaller groups of between eight and ten members and candidates, headed by a party organizer. He is to start the day by discussing current events with the members of the group, in order to prepare them for defending the party-line to other politically unorganized workers. Larger party organizations in important enterprises, administrative departments or universities are headed by full-time party secretaries, who are assigned by the next higher SED office. These assignments are made directly by the ZK in the case of especially important or sensitive areas, according to the present statute.

Originally, the KPD had been in favor of making the place of work rather than the place of residence the basic unit of the new SED. The SPD, on the other hand, had favored a residential basic organizing unit. The first statute compromised this difference, but the Communists were to win out in the end. According to a politburo decision of April 28, 1953, the enterprise groups were further strengthened by requiring SED-county office permission for a change of employment on the part of members or candidates of the SED. The main function of these basic units is the organization and the "enlightenment" of the workers and other working strata of the population, in addition to a number of other specified tasks. In fact, however, the basic units have not been very successful, and the transcripts of the congresses of the SED are full of self-critical admissions of low attendance at meetings and similar shortcomings.

Since the beginning of 1949 membership in the party can be attained only by way of being a candidate first. The period of candidacy varies from six months to two years, depending on the job and the class origins of the individual applicant. The SED has also organized activists, particularly active members, who receive some preferred treatment. At the time of the fourth congress, there were about 90,000 of these activists.

Total membership figures of the SED have varied between the merger figure of April 1946, about 1,300,000 of whom or 52.3 percent came from the SPD and the rest from the KPD, a high of 2,000,000 reached in June of 1948, and the April 1954 total of 1,272,987 members and 140,326 candidates. This last figure amounts to 10.8 percent of the adult population of the SZ (aged 18 or over). The decrease from the 1948 high was due mainly to the several purges

conducted by the ZPKK, the first starting in 1948, the next in 1951. The 1951 purge resulted in admitting 63,564 candidates to full-fledged membership, demoting 18,180 members to candidacy and removing from the party 150,696 members and candidates. Many of the excluded members, as also many of those who left the SED on their own initiative, in some cases by seeking refuge in the West, were former members of the SPD. By September 1953, only about 59 percent of the original SPD membership of the SED was left in the party.

In fact, the SED represents the interests of its top echelon of leaders and of the Soviet Russian leaders, to whom these Germans owe their positions. In its own propaganda, it claims to be the "party of the German working class". The proportion of industrial workers in the membership of the SED is, therefore, of some concern to its leadership. It has varied between a high of 47.9 percent by the end of May 1947, and a low in April 1954 of 39.1 percent. For white-collar (salaried) employees, the figure in May 1947 was 18 percent, and in April 1950, 20.4 percent. It has probably risen since then, and this rise of the non-industrial proletarian segment of the party has worried the leadership. Agricultural workers provided 3.4 percent of the membership in April 1950, and peasants, 6.3 percent. The party has often urged recruiting campaigns directed at increasing the industrial working class's share of the membership, but has also often admitted general failure along this line.

The leadership's oft-professed policy of transforming the SED into an elite (cadre) party, has, in other words, not been realized. As of 1955, probably only the activists could be considered an elite core of really dedicated Communists. But in terms of its share of the total adult population of the SZ, the SED cannot be considered a mass party, either. Nor does the party itself stand to gain from becoming a mass party, in terms of its own stated goals. Other instruments stand at its disposal for purposes of its own stated goals. Other instruments are at its disposal for purposes of gathering under one fold, and manipulating, the masses. These instruments are, first, the so-called "mass organizations"; second, other political parties which were brought into being by fiat of the SED and are run by its devoted followers; and, third, for the control of that remnant of the population which is politically conscious and potentially politically active, but non-communist or anti-communist, there are the two remnant "bourgeois" political parties, which owe their continued existence only to the use which they can be to the SED and which are operated solely in its interest.

### 2.3.7 Mass Organizations

Among the mass organizations, the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB) and the Free German Youth (FDJ) are the most important in terms of the role accorded them by the regime and their membership. Also given representation as mass organizations in the People's Chamber are the following: The Culture League for the Democratic Renovation of Germany (*Kulturbund*), founded in July 1945, headed by Johannes R. Becher, who later became Minister of Culture, and designed to organize the intellectuals and gain the sympathies of West German intellectuals; the Democratic Women's League of Germany (DFD), founded in March 1947, with 1,150,000 members as of early 1952, with about 80 percent of these non-party members, though virtually all of the officials are loyal members of the SED; the Association of those Persecuted by the Nazi Regime (VVN), founded in February 1947, dissolved in February 1953, succeeded by the Committee of Anti-Fascist Resistance Fighters; the League for Mutual Peasants' Assistance (VDGB), started on the state level in 1946 for avowedly economic purposes, then charged with organizing MTS's, it later became a primarily political organization, on which the peasants are wholly dependent for their needs including credit. These mass organizations are discussed elsewhere (1.6 and 1.9), but their political importance as "transmission belts" for the SED to the masses, to use Lenin's customary phrase, is illustrated by their share in the membership of the several "representative" bodies which have existed in the SZ. The controlling position, usually that of first secretary, of these organizations is always held by a reliable SED member or clandestine supporter.

### 2.3.8 The other parties

A similar situation has come about in the two remaining "bourgeois" parties, the East-CDU and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). They are Soviet Zone remnants of the CDU and Free Democratic Party (FDP) in the Federal Republic. Unlike the SPD, whose independent existence had to cease as a result of the merger of SPD and KPD into SED, both of these parties continued for some time after that event to maintain official relations with their West German sister organizations.

The CDU was founded almost simultaneously in the Soviet and Western zones. Among its founders were enemies of National Socialism who had supported different non-Marxist political parties in the Weimar Republic, and who belonged to both Christian denominations, Roman Catholic and Protestant. The CDU in the SZ was from the beginning in favor of land reform,

nationalization of natural resources and the elimination of trusts. Its first leaders, Hermes and Schreiber, were opposed to the socialization of private property without compensation. For that reason, SMA authorities removed them from office. They were replaced by Jakob Kaiser, formerly a Catholic trade union leader, and Ernst Lemmer. Under their leadership, the CDU tried to maintain an independent non-Marxist policy. Among other things, Kaiser advocated that the FDGB play a non-political, non-Marxist role. He also maintained relations with the Western CDU, whose leader Konrad Adenauer was just beginning to emerge. On September 6, 1947, Kaiser publicly suggested that Germany, the SZ included, give serious consideration to American offers of economic aid contained in the Marshall Plan proposals. For this and similar reasons, the SED leadership accused him and Lemmer of being American agents. Nevertheless, at the East-CDU's Congress, held September 5 to 8, 1947, both of them were re-elected almost unanimously as first and second chairmen, respectively, of the CDU executive committee. On December 20, 1947, the SMA removed both of them from the party offices and took away the publishing license of the chief editor of the CDU's newspaper, *Die Neue Zeit*. In September 1949, Kaiser, having fled west, became head of the West German Ministry for All-German Affairs, which deals with problems arising out of the division of the country and ways of bringing about its reunification.

The East-CDU meanwhile continues to exist, but under leadership which is entirely SED controlled. Kaiser was first replaced by Dertinger, who became General Secretary of the CDU and later, in October 1949, Foreign Minister of the DDR. He favored unconditional recognition of the Oder-Neisse Line as Germany's eastern boundary. On January 15, 1953, he was arrested by the SSD<sup>37</sup> as a Western spy and a traitor. He was replaced by Götting as general secretary. Since September 1948, Otto Nuschke, one of the co-founders of the party, has been chairman of the East-CDU. He is also one of the Deputy Chairmen of the Council of Ministers of the DDR.

The CDU was founded on June 26, 1945. Despite discrimination against its local and state organizations, it polled a considerable vote in the local elections of September 1946, and the county and state elections of October 1946. In the latter election, the CDU received 2,378,346 of 9,490,907 votes cast. In December 1947, its membership amounted to 218,000, in December 1950, to 150,000, and in the beginning of 1953, to about 155,000. Today, the East-CDU is organized along SED lines all the way to the point of having a party school bearing Nuschke's name, which gives indoctrination and organization

37 Editors' note: SSD, short for Staatssicherheitsdienst (State Security Service), was the denotation for the GDR's Ministry for State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, MfS) commonly used in the Federal Republic of Germany.

courses to party leaders. Götting committed the CDU to an ideology known as “Christian realism”, which accepts the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Most of its remaining members are, nevertheless, probably still opposed to Soviet German policies. The strength of the CDU’s support among the SZ population cannot be accurately gauged. Although it was given 15 percent of the membership of the People’s Chamber, as was the LDP, this was based on pre-election arrangements of the National Front and indicates only that the actual strength of the CDU in free elections would be much greater, especially because of the renown in the SZ of Dr. Adenauer, Chancellor of the Federal Republic and leader of the Western CDU.

The founders of the LDP, as those of the FDP in the Western zones, saw themselves as heirs to the tradition of German liberalism which goes back at least to 1848. Like the CDU, they had been opponents of National Socialism and wanted to reestablish constitutional government in Germany. But while the CDU placed greater emphasis on the “Christian” aspects of its program, the LDP was largely held together by the common belief of its members in the advantages of a “liberal” economy based on private ownership and individual initiative. Unlike the CDU, the LDP was not in the beginning willing to accept socialization. The party was founded on July 5, 1945. Until February 1948, its chairman, Dr. Külz, and Theodor Heuss, later President of the Federal Republic, chairman at that time of the FDP, were co-chairmen of the All-German Liberal-Democratic Party. The total membership of the LDP never reached 200,000, but during the local and state elections held in September and October 1946, the LDP came out as the second strongest party in most of the districts of the SZ and for the SZ as a whole. As of August 1951, it had about 155,000 members, as of 1954, only about 100,000. After its first chairman, Külz, died in April 1948, he was replaced by Karl Hamann, who was more favorably inclined toward cooperation with the SED and the USSR. He became Minister of Commerce and Provisions of the DDR, but was dismissed from his job, excluded from the LDP, and arrested because of sabotage, in December 1952. Hamann was replaced by Dr. Hans Loch, under whom the LDP completed its total reversal of the initial opposition to socialization. Hamann already supported the two-year plan, but Loch has led the LDP to complete support of the SED’s program for the “construction of socialism”.

When the Communists began their policy of forming an anti-fascist democratic bloc, former Nazis were not sought as allies by them. In any case, occupation directives excluded Nazis from participation in political life. Since former National Socialists were not given the franchise for the first few post-war years, they could neither support nor join SED, CDU or LDP.

By 1948, however, the Communist leadership felt that it needed the support of the former Nazis. To get it, they initiated the founding of the NDP,

in May 1948. Since that time, it has been chaired by Dr. Lothar Bolz, who was a member of the KPD before 1933, and spent the war years in the USSR. The avowed purpose of this new political party was to organize an estimated 2,000,000 former Nazis who had been minor party members, as well as former army officers. Some of the officers had been politically indoctrinated while prisoners of war in the USSR. Some had been members of the “National Committee of Free Germany”. Bolz had worked with this group and also edited a newspaper for prisoners of war while in the USSR.

The new party received considerable funds from the SKK, but never attracted very many members. In May 1950, it is said to have had only 19,300 members, and after the National Front election of October 1950, its membership total may have risen as high as 100,000, but not above that. In November 1950, Bolz became one of the Deputy Ministers President of the DDR, and on October 1, 1953, he replaced Dertinger (CDU), who had been arrested, as Foreign Minister. The NDP initially rejected socialism, but advocates a pro-Soviet foreign policy as expedient and realistic for Germany. On June 17, 1952, Bolz stated: “We need national armed forces. We sorely need a German People’s Army (*Volksheer*).”<sup>38</sup> To attract the support of those Germans whose experience qualifies them to participate in the construction of an East German army has been one of the main tasks of the NDP.

The Democratic Peasants’ Party of Germany (DBD) was brought into being by the SED in April 1948, and licensed by the SMA on June 16, 1948, for similar reasons as the NDPD. Ernst Goldenbaum, its chairman, is also an old Communist. Its stated purpose was to secure the peasants’ support for retention of the land reform and at the same time guarantee property in land to owners of small and medium farms. Actually, it was to help the VDGB mobilize the support of the agricultural population on behalf of the SED goals. But it has been even less successful than the NDPD and plays a negligible role in DDR politics. Goldenbaum has been Minister for Agricultural and Forestry of the DDR.

### 2.3.9 Function of Parties and Elections

Obviously neither the “parties” nor the mass organizations have the functions which political parties have in constitutional democracies, although they are represented in the People’s Chamber and, the more important ones of them,

38 Editors’ note: Lothar Bolz, *Wir Deutsche wollen und werden Herren in ganz Deutschland sein*. Rede auf dem 4. Parteitag der National-Demokratischen Partei Deutschlands, Leipzig, 17. Juni 1952, Berlin (East) 1952, p. 30: „Wir brauchen nationale Streitkräfte. Wir haben ein deutsches Volksheer bitter nötig.“



in the governments of the DDR at various levels, from the Central Council of Ministers on down to local councils. They also participate in the East German equivalent of "elections" and election campaigns. It is just these phenomena, the campaigns, the elections which conclude them, and their foreordained results in the form of "representation" in the several "legislatures" of the DDR, which show the real purpose which all of them do serve: to permeate every last nook and cranny of society, to get at and to embrace organizationally every last individual human being, to appeal to him or her in terms of interests and language which are peculiar to his own situation, so that he will have no reason, even if given the opportunity, which is unlikely, to turn to any non-communist group for aid, comfort, company, understanding or explanation.

No elections took place in the SZ prior to the merger which brought into being the SED. However, before introduction of the single-list system of voting, two sets of elections did take place, in which the LDP and the CDU, as well as the VDGB, were able to compete relatively freely with the SED. Figures for the local elections, which took place between September 1 and 15, 1946, showing the distribution of the vote in each of the five states of the SZ, indicate that the SED had a majority of the vote in only two of these, though it came close to half of the votes cast in the other three. But this gives no indication of Communist strength, for two reasons: First, since more than half of the members of the SED at the time of the fusion were ex-SPD men, chances are that an even higher proportion of its supporters were Social Democrats rather than Communists. Second, the local organization of the SED was by far superior to that of both the "bourgeois" parties, mainly because of support and encouragement it received from the SMA, while CDU and LDP got just the opposite. In 1946, there were 11,623 local districts in the SZ, in each of which the SED organized a local group. The CDU organized only in 4,200, the LDP in 2,200. The SMA registered, i. e. recognized, all of the SED organizations, but only half of those of the other two parties, so that only half of their lists of candidates could appear on the ballots. The bourgeois parties did appear only on 3,203 ballots. Similarly, the SED was allocated 80 tons of paper for its campaign needs, while the other two parties together received only nine tons.

The next month, on October 20, 1946, district and state legislatures were elected in the SZ. Compared with the local elections, the CDU and LDP together gained 1,288,002 votes, while the SED lost 403,025. In the states of Brandenburg and Saxony, the SED lost its majority. Of 520 deputies in the five state diets, the SED won 249, CDU and LDP together 255, the VDGB 15 and the Culture League 1.


Since October 1946, no elections in the usual sense of the word have taken place in the SZ. The third People's Congress was constituted on the basis of a plebiscite, held May 15 and 16, 1949, in which voters had the alternative of vot-

ing “yes” or “no” for a single list. Candidates of the various parties and mass organizations shared in this list on the basis of a scheme of distribution agreed to beforehand, i. e. determined by the SED. About 12,900,000 ballots were cast. According to the official returns which according to eye-witness reports of tampering were not true returns 61.8 percent voted “yes”, 31.5 percent “no” and 6.7 percent of the ballots were void. The Congress then elected 300 of its own 523 members to the People’s Council.

On February 3, 1950, the National Council as executive organ of the National Front was founded. It claimed the election results of May 1949 as the source of its legitimacy. Yet there were among its 65 SZ members not only 25 from the SED, 8 from the CDU, i. e. representatives of parties which had not even been founded by the time of the previous election.

Citizens of the SZ next had to go to the polls on October 15, 1950, to elect the People’s Chamber of the DDR, which had meanwhile been established. The distribution of its 400 seats among the five parties and seven mass organizations was published already on June 7. This time, voters could not even choose between “yes” or “no” to the single list of the Central Bloc of Democratic Parties. Voters frequently turned in their ballots in unison, being matched to the polls by their organization, enterprise group or residential association. Failure to vote sometimes resulted in legal prosecution. According to the official results, 99.7 percent voted for the single list. The same story was repeated on October 7, 1954, when a new People’s Chamber had to be confirmed by the voters. But previously, from June 27 to 29, 1954, a referendum took place, which was designed as a propaganda move against the European Defense Community treaties, then about to be considered by European parliaments.

The utility of these plebiscites to the SZ regime is due to the additional opportunities which they provide for giving access to, and gaining influence and control over, the individual. In the case of the October 1954 election, this began with thousands of meetings, at which members of the People’s Chamber and lower diets were to report to their constituents, in July of that year. Then, a month before the election, there began a period during which meetings were held at which candidates introduced themselves to their constituents’ representatives. The latter had previously been elected at voters’ conferences. Apparently, some 30,000 such voters’ representatives were selected. The SED intended that these people should go into action as so many “enlighteners and agitators”. This means that they visited every “house and court community”, at which practically everybody in the SZ was thus reached and subjected to the party’s propaganda.

Recent Plebiscites and Elections					
Plebiscite	Participation	YES	NO	VOID	
October 15, 1950	99.5	99.3	-	-	(all in percent)
June 27-29, 1954 (on EDC)	98.6	93.5	6.5	-	
October 17, 1954 (election)	98.4	99.46	 0.54		

Editors' note: Without reference in the original manuscript. Cf., however, Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1955*, pp. 87-89.

## 2.4 Public Order and Safety [*Herbert J. Spiro*]

### 2.4.1 The Police

If it were not for the backing of the Red Army and the power of its police system, the regime in the SZ would it is believed have collapsed long ago. Its leaders are aware of this, and the prominent role played quite openly by the men who have succeeded one another as heads of the State Security Ministry (or Secretariat) amounts to a public admission of this situation. But Soviet ideology easily enables the regime to rationalize its heavy reliance on force in terms of the need for defense against the external and internal class enemies. The external class enemy is usually symbolized by Anglo-American imperialism and its West German henchmen, the internal class enemy by reactionary non-working-class elements in the DDR who aim at sabotaging the construction of socialism. When the SED therefore calls for intensification of the class struggle, as it repeatedly does, this amounts to issuing instructions to the police, the Ministries of Justice and Interior and to the Prosecutor General and the courts, to get tougher. These agencies have to be considered together in the case of the DDR, where neither a constitutional-legal, nor a functional separation of powers exists.

The Ministry of Interior has undergone several reorganizations which have paralleled those occurring during the same period of time in the USSR. Perhaps better than anything else, this copying even of the organizational patterns of the "motherland of socialism" shows the complete dependence of the DDR regime on the USSR. Today, the Ministry controls not only general police forces, but also the State Security Service (SSD) with all its political functions, and the Garrisoned People's Police (KVP), which constitutes the nucleus of East German armed forces.

The SSD was officially brought into being in February 1950, through the creation of a separate State Security Ministry, which was the equivalent of the MGB in the USSR.<sup>39</sup> At that time, the Ministry of Interior was in charge only of non-political general functions and the build-up of the KVP. But just as the MGB was abolished as a result of Beria's fall, so the State Security Ministry was abolished as a result of the parallel fall of Zaisser, its Minister, in July 1953. For a while, it has existed within the Interior Ministry as the State Secretariat for State Security (SFS), headed by Ernst Wollweber. He, like his predecessor and other men among its top echelon, was active over a period of many decades for international communist espionage and sabotage agencies. In November 1955, he was made Minister for State Security.

There are no effective constitutional or legal limits on the activities of the SSD as the primary terror agency of the SED regime. It controls a vast network of informers (perhaps more than 100,000) and uses the most ruthless secret police methods in order to obtain information, extort confessions of guilt and create an all-pervasive atmosphere of fear and insecurity among the population. The SSD also controls some garrisoned units, as for example an infantry unit of twelve companies stationed in Berlin, and units of company strength in the district capitals. The total of these elite troops has been estimated at about 5,000. The SSD also supervises the Transport Police of between 8,000 and 10,000 men. It guards the entire rail system of the SZ and is also in charge of passenger checks on trains.

In addition to the SFS, the Interior Ministry contains two Main Administrations, one for Border Police (HVDGP) and one for the People's Police (HVDVP). The Border Police was about 34,000 men strong as of January 1954. Its title adequately suggests its functions, i. e. to guard mainly the iron curtain border between DDR and the West.

The HVDVP is headed by Inspector General Karl Maron, known as Chief of the Vopo. His political deputy, Inspector General Grünstein, is responsible for the political loyalty of the Vopo's personnel. He also heads the Main Department "Politics". The HVDVP is in charge of personnel policy for the entire Vopo, including the KVP, operations of the Criminal Police and the General Police (*Schutzpolizei*), Enterprise Police and Fire Departments. It is also charged with responsibility for the execution of all sentences handed out by the courts. Its Main Department Penal Execution (SV) controls prisons and concentration camps except for those which are under the control of the

39 Editors' note: Gesetz über die Bildung eines Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit (8.2.1950). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1950, Nr. 15 (February 21, 1950), p. 95.

SSD. The HVDVP is further in charge of residence registration, passports and health inspection.

In each of the districts of the DDR there is a district office of the People's Police (BDVP). In East Berlin, this office is known as the Presidium of the People's Police (VPP). The BDVP's are usually headed by a Chief Inspector, whose political deputy usually has the rank of an Inspector (equivalent of a colonel). Next below the BDVP's in the chain of command are the Vopo county offices (VPKA) in the district. In the case of the Berlin VPP, there are eight *VP-Inspektionen*. Each of the BDVP's contains a garrisoned unit consisting of from two to four companies, which serves both training and emergency police purposes.

The organization of a VPKA gives a good idea of the extent of police activities in the SZ. The Enterprise Police Department is in charge especially of guarding VE plants. The Department for Enterprise Protection of Organizations is responsible for guarding the offices of the SED and the FDJ. The Department for Passports and Registration is divided into two sections. One of these deals with normal German passport and residential registration matters, as well as travel between the SZ and the Federal Republic. The other controls permits for the possession of arms and poisons, permits for publications and for holding meetings. The Criminal Police has been divided into two independent departments. One of these is in charge of investigations up to the point of the arrest of the suspected individual. The other continues the work on these same cases until the point at which the State Prosecutor takes over. Different sections within these departments deal with different types of cases. Section VE is assigned crimes against People's Property. The Section for General Criminality (AK) works on all other cases. AK is again subdivided into a number of sub-sections (*Kommissariate*) of which Number III deals with political crime not handled by the SSD. This sub-section therefore also apparently takes care of much of the liaison between the VPKA and the parallel SSD office. Similar contacts are also maintained by sub-section IV, since it is concerned with arson, which always raised the suspicion of sabotage.

The territory of each VPKA is divided into a number of sections (*Abschnitte*). To each of these, a politically reliable policeman is assigned (*Abschnittsbevollmächtigter* or ABV), His job consists of familiarizing himself thoroughly with every nook and cranny of his section and of keeping constant track of everything that goes on within it, with special attention to politically dangerous individuals and organizations, such as bourgeois politicians, the churches, etc. Below the ABV, there are a number of Vopo-Helpers. These are supposed to donate voluntarily twelve hours of their time per month for auxiliary police services. Actually, they also serve as informers for the ABV. The Helpers must be at least seventeen years of age and have the approval of SED county headquarters or the local FDJ leadership.

The personnel of the Vopo may be divided into three groups; 1) Old police officials with experience from before 1945 or even 1933, who have survived in the service without complete Soviet retraining. This group seems to be negligibly small, just as is its counterpart among bureaucrats. 2) Police officers with pre-1945 or pre-1933 experience, who have been retrained completely, often in the USSR, and have been more or less thoroughly converted to Communism. This group plays a very important role, especially in the upper levels of the Vopo and the KVP. 3) The large bulk of younger and middle-aged members of the Vopo, who joined voluntarily for reasons of either sincere convictions or opportunism, or who were forced to “volunteer”. The forced volunteers make up the vast majority of this group. All of this group share in common a lack of previous police experience, except in some cases for military experience during World War II. The quality of this personnel, in terms of technical efficiency, is probably poor. Its honesty, in terms of loyalty to the regime which it serves, is also generally low, as witnessed by the high rate of desertions to the West.

The attitude of the general SZ public to the Vopo is one of fear, since almost every sphere of the individual's life may be subject to scrutiny by Vopo or SSD, and he has no opportunities for effective legal or constitutional redress, unless the authorities want to grant him such for reasons of expediency. This popular fear in turn probably counterbalances the internal inefficiency of the police apparatus and even the disloyalty of its members. This suggests the conclusion that VP and KVP, because of the total monopoly of arms which they share with the Red Army in the SZ, and in view of the build-up which they have undergone since the uprising of June 17, 1953, are able today to prevent the violent overthrow of the DDR regime from the inside. They will probably even continue to be able to do so after a possible withdrawal of the Red Army, unless anti-Soviet groups inside the SZ are strengthened considerably and equipped with arms.

#### 2.4.2 Penal Institutions and Prosecutor General

The Ministry of Justice used to control penal institutions until control was transferred to the Interior Ministry between 1950 and 1952. However, on the basis of the Council of Ministers' Resolution concerning “measures for the further strengthening of democratic legality” of March 27, 1952, the Prosecutor General of the DDR was given the power of ultimate supervision of all penal institutions in the SZ, in addition to the supervision of all investigations. This means that the Vopo, whenever the Prosecutor insists, has to take its orders on these matters from him. The same applies to investigations carried on by the SSD or the Control Commission.

The position of the Prosecutor General was modelled entirely on that of his Soviet Russian counterpart. The “Law concerning the Prosecutor General of the DDR” of June 1, 1952, made him an independent member of the Council of Ministers. It proves: The Prosecutor General exercises the highest supervision of strict compliance with the laws and regulations of the DDR. This supervision extends to all Ministries, Departments and their subordinate offices and institutions, to enterprises as well as to all functionaries and citizens.

These tasks are attended to by the Prosecutor General at the level of the DDR as a whole, and by district and county prosecutors at those two levels. These offices concentrate their main work in three departments, of which I takes care of Political Matters, II of Economic Crimes, and III of “Other Criminal Matters”. Department III seems to be neglected in most cases, since the regime is much more interested in political crimes, and in economic crimes which are usually accorded political significance.

1950	Number of convicts	78,293
	Death sentences	15
	Life sentences in the penitentiary	18
	Number of years in the penitentiary	15,712
	Number of years in jail	42,461
1951	Number of convicts	112,382
	Number of years in the penitentiary	30,000 plus
	Number of years in jail	50,000 plus
Sept. 1952 – Sept. 1953	Death sentences	23
	Life sentences in the penitentiary	89
	Number of sentences	103,552
	Number of years in the penitentiary	73,604
	Number of years in jail	52,912

Source: Walther Rosenthal/Richard Lange/Arwed Blomeyer, *Die Justiz in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, Bonn 1955, pp. 46–49.

This same uneven distribution of effort can also be noted in the activity of the courts. Civil cases, even when they involve VE enterprises, sometimes stay on the docket for many months. Political and economic criminal cases, on the other hand, have consistently received preferred treatment as compared with other crimes. Statistics on sentences pronounced will convey some idea of the success of the court system as the “foremost weapon of democratic legality”.

## 2.4.3 Judicial Institutions and Personnel

The personnel of the bench and state prosecution has been increasingly purged of non-communist members. This has been accomplished by means of the new institution of “people’s judges” and “people’s prosecutors”. These are individuals of a non-academic, non-professional, non-legal, usually working-class background, who are considered politically reliable. They are exposed to one or two years of training of a vocational type, designed to prepare them for the job of judge or prosecutor. Statistics show how few judges and prosecutors with a traditional German legal background are left in the DDR:

Date	Total Judges	People’s Judges	Percentage	Total Prosecutors	People’s Prosecutors	Percentage
1/1/1950	1,022	472	47.1	260	162	62.3
1/1/1951	1,160	695	60.0	345	284	82.3
1/1/1952	1,342	977	72.8	394	369	93.7

Editors’ note: Rosenthal/Lange/Blomeyer, *Die Justiz in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, p. 29.

But even those who are not people’s judges or prosecutors, unless they finished their professional schooling before 1950, do not have the traditional background for these professions. As of 1951, the legal curriculum at regular SZ universities was changed by shifting the emphasis from the study of law to the study of the “social sciences”, i. e. Marxism-Leninism.

The extent to which judges and prosecutors are under the thumb of the SED regime is further revealed by their party membership. As of January 1, 1953, 85 percent of all judges and 98 percent of all prosecutors were members of the SED, with the NDP, the LDP and the East-CDU still furnishing 7, 5 and 2.5 percent of the judges, respectively. But even if this small remnant of “bourgeois” judges actually wanted to save some notions of the rule of law, they would not be able to do so. This is so, because all verdicts rendered by lower courts, and even those of the Supreme Court itself, can be annulled. This is done by a process known as “Cassation”, within a year after the judgment is rendered, on the initiative of the Prosecutor General or the President or Vice President of the Supreme Court. This means in effect that the Supreme Court can reverse verdicts which are, within a period of one year, considered politically erroneous or subversive, even though they be its own verdicts.

The Supreme Court of the DDR was founded on December 8, 1949, and on October 9, 1952, there appeared the “Law Concerning the Constitution of the



Courts of the DDR”, which established the whole structure of the judicial machinery.<sup>40</sup> Each county was given a court, urban counties with dense population several of them. County courts have one civil and one criminal chamber. They exercise jurisdiction over cases in which the value at issue is below 3,000 and in which neither of the parties involved is the owner of People’s Property. Each chamber consists of one judge as chairman, and two lay jurors. The jurors are not necessarily selected in the order in which they appear on panels of availability, but rather on the basis of “specialized knowledge”. This makes possible the selection of only politically reliable jurors for political cases. Judges and jurors are under instruction to hold “judicial discussion evenings”, at which the local population may inquire about recent verdicts and about the state of the law in general.

At the district level, there is one court for each of the fourteen districts. Each district court has chambers, called senates, for both criminal and civil cases. This is also true of the Supreme Court, which is presided over by a president and a vice president. All cases which the Prosecutor General considers of sufficient importance are tried before this tribunal from the beginning. It is also the highest court of appeal for suits first tried in a district court. Finally, it can call up cases from below on its own initiative under the procedure for “Cassation” mentioned above.<sup>41</sup>

#### 2.4.4 Reform of Codes

The penal code itself, on the basis of which courts and prosecutors operate, has not yet been thoroughly “reformed”. But this fact is of little importance, for three main reasons. First, a New Code of Criminal Procedure was introduced on October 2, 1952<sup>42</sup>; second, a number of laws and regulations have been issued, which have completely transformed the conception of crimes and have created new crimes; and third, even if neither of these changes had been made, the Soviet notion of law as a tool in the hands of the ruling class would have enabled the DDR’s machinery of justice to adapt existing laws to

40 Editors’ note: Gesetz über die Verfassung der Gerichte der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz, 2.10.1952). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1952, Nr. 141 (October 9, 1952), pp. 983–988.

41 Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, p. 986.

42 Editors’ note: Einführungsgesetz zum Gesetz über das Verfahren in Strafsachen in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Strafprozessordnung, 2.10.1952). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1952, Nr. 142 (October 11, 1952), p. 995.

its own purposes at will through the SED's absolute control of judicial and legal personnel.

In general, the penal code is still the same as that in the rest of Germany. Some important changes have, however, been made in it in the DDR. They deal with the interruption of pregnancy, the execution of sentences, and juvenile delinquency. The pregnancy provisions are particularly interesting, because they accurately parallel developments in the sphere in the USSR in the 1920's (1.7).

So far as the treatment of convicts is concerned, emphasis has been placed on exploiting their labor. In the case of those with short sentences, hard physical labor, especially in the reconstruction of war damage, is provided for. Those with long sentences are to be put to work in such a way, that they can be permanently employed. For every two days of labor, they are to be given credit for three days of their sentence, and even more credit if they consistently over-fulfill their work norm. For this kind of extra credit, the convict has to sign up for work in the same industry for double the remainder of his sentence, but at least for one year (1.13).

Penal laws for juveniles were at first to be applied in a manner which would further the re-education of the delinquent. Meanwhile, however, sentences meted out to youths have become particularly heavy, probably in order to tighten the regime's control over this all-important generation through a kind of preventive cruelty.

The New Code of Criminal Procedure has removed most of the safeguards which the older German Code provided for persons under investigation, indictment or arrest. The State Prosecutor is to exercise general supervision over all investigations, but this does not mean that he is to interfere at the beginning of every such procedure. If this were the case, despite the political orientation of most of the state prosecutors, the accused might still be given some procedural protection, since the prosecutor is at least a person with some legal training. The People's Police, however, is unconcerned with what few legal rights are left the individual, and he is completely at their mercy, unless the State Prosecutor intervenes on his own initiative because of the importance he attributes to the case.

#### 2.4.5 Political Crimes

There are two very important areas in which changes have been made which are designed to further the aims of the SED regime: penal law in political and economic matters. Proceedings against political crimes may be based on Article 6 of the DDR constitution, on Order Number 201 concerning Control

Council Directive Number 38, and Order Number 160 against Sabotage and Diversionary Acts.<sup>43</sup> Directive Number 38 has been found particularly well-suited for political prosecutions, because it makes subject to criminal charges anyone “who, after May 8, 1945, has endangered and is possibly still endangering the peace of the German people or of the world through [...] spreading tendentious rumors”.<sup>44</sup> This means, for instance, anyone who is found to be in possession of a West German newspaper, even if he only happened to pick up one that was left lying around a car of the Berlin elevated railroad, which travels back and forth between the Western and Eastern sectors of the city; it also includes anyone who makes some chance remark in the course of a harmless conversation which can be interpreted to have a political meaning, and of course also people who actually do distribute Western literature in the DDR.

Three instruments serve as the main bases for prosecutions for economic crimes: “The Economic Penal Regulation” of September 23, 1948, the “Law concerning Internal German Traffic in Goods” and the “Law concerning the Protection of Internal German Commerce” of April 21, 1950.<sup>45</sup> These laws are designed as means for two major purposes, as means by which to expropriate businesses and real estate which had not already been taken over by the state under other existing regulations, and as general handles of such breadth, that anyone whom the regime considers at all “undesirable” can be proven to have committed some crime. Thus, a special regulation issued in East Berlin under

43 Editors’ note: Cf. Die Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Textausgabe, Deutscher Zentralverlag, Berlin (East) 1949, p. 11 (article 6); Befehl Nr. 201 (16.8.1947) – Richtlinien zur Anwendung der Direktiven Nr. 24 und Nr. 38 des Kontrollrats, einschließlich Ausführungsbestimmungen. In: Zentralverordnungsblatt, hg. namens aller Zentralverwaltungen von der Deutschen Justizverwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland, Nr. 18 (October 9, 1947), Berlin 1947, pp. 185–191; Befehl Nr. 160 (3.12.1945) – Verantwortung für Sabotage und Störungshandlungen, can be found online at [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:SMAD-Befehl\\_Nr.\\_160,\\_03.12.1945\\_-\\_1.pdf](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:SMAD-Befehl_Nr._160,_03.12.1945_-_1.pdf); 3.7.2022.

44 Editors’ note: Direktive Nr. 38 (12. Oktober 1946) bezüglich der Verhaftung und Bestrafung von Kriegsverbrechern, Nationalsozialisten und Militaristen und Internierung, Kontrolle und Überwachung von möglicherweise gefährlichen Deutschen. In: Amtsblatt des Kontrollrats in Deutschland 1946, Nr. 11 (October 31, 1946), pp. 184–211, here 188. The ellipses were added by the editors.

45 Editors’ note: Verordnung über die Bestrafung von Verstößen gegen die Wirtschaftsordnung (Wirtschaftsstrafverordnung, 23. September 1948). In: Zentralverordnungsblatt. Amtliches Organ der Deutschen Wirtschaftskommission und ihrer Hauptverwaltungen sowie der Deutschen Verwaltungen für Gesundheitswesen, Inneres, Justiz und Volksbildung, hg. von der Deutschen Justizverwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland, Nr. 41 (October 6, 1948), Berlin (East) 1948, pp. 439–443; Gesetz zum Schutz des innerdeutschen Handels (21.4.1950). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1950, Nr. 43 (April 21, 1950), pp. 327 f.

the last two laws made it punishable, up to ten years in the penitentiary, to bring scrap metal, "even in the smallest quantities", into the Western sectors of the city. Under the Economic Penal Regulation, any failure to fulfill orders of the economic planning agencies of the SZ is considered a criminal offense. Similarly, arson even when due to negligence is considered an economic crime, especially when government property is affected. This type of property is further covered by the "Law for the Protection of People's Property" of October 2, 1952. Under its provisions, ordinary business offenses are given the status of something approaching sabotage and may be punished with sentences from 10 to 25 years in the penitentiary and loss of all property.

By and large, the evolution of criminal law in the SZ has been unsystematic. In this as in other respects, there have been frequent oscillations between a very tough and a relatively soft course. Some East German legal authorities, as e.g. the present Minister of Justice, Hilde Benjamin, have recognized this themselves, and it was for this reason that the Institute for Legal Science was established. It seems safe to assume, however, that in its further evolution, DDR law will be made to follow the evolution of Soviet Russian law, though the logic of Soviet ideology does call for some time lag between the two systems.

Soviet justice is recognized for what it is by the overwhelming majority of the German population. Nevertheless, it has happened that courts in the Federal Republic have recognized verdicts rendered by SZ courts, even in cases which had some political aspects. On purely criminal cases, the police systems of the two German states frequently collaborate.

## 2.5 The Foreign Policy of the German Democratic Republic (DDR)

*[Melvin Croan]*

East Germany had no foreign policy before the founding of the DDR on October 7, 1949. The proclamation of the DDR which followed by some months the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany, was itself a premeditated act of Soviet foreign policy. The process of transformation of East Germany from a zone of military occupation to a theoretically independent and sovereign state has been, at least in barest outline, roughly analogous to the emergence of the Federal Republic in the international arena. This process has been marked by a gradual but continual normalization of relations between the occupier and the occupied through a return of the forms and apparent perquisites of national sovereignty. Relations between the USSR and DDR have developed in exactly this direction. Unlike the Federal Republic, however, the state which issued forth from Soviet military occupation and which has been dominated by the Communist SED has never had an independent

foreign policy of its own. The DDR was created as and remains an instrument of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

In the six years of its existence the DDR has developed a network of diplomatic and commercial ties and has entered into treaty obligations. The DDR is only a “workers’ and peasants’ state” (*Arbeiter- und Bauernmacht*) in Communist dialectics and thus not yet the acknowledged equal of the other East European “people’s democracies”. Nonetheless East Germany has come to occupy an increasingly formidable position in the Soviet orbit. Moreover, the DDR enjoys the full diplomatic support of the Soviet Union in its attempt to gain diplomatic recognition outside the Communist realm. Specifically, the USSR has recently insisted that German reunification is attainable only through bilateral negotiations between the Federal Republic and the DDR within the framework of an All-European security system.

It is not surprising that the first principle of the foreign policy of the DDR should be officially designated as “constant and unflinching friendship toward the Soviet Union”.<sup>46</sup> In the first statement of policy of the new government, Premier Grotewohl declared on October 12, 1949 that “peace and friendship with the Soviet Union are prerequisites for [...] the very existence of the German nation and state”.<sup>47</sup> Certainly the East German state owes its continued existence to considerations of Soviet foreign policy.

The dependence of the DDR on Soviet favor was dramatically demonstrated when Soviet armed forces intervened during the uprising of June 1953 to rescue the SED regime from the wrath of its own subjects. The June uprising (2.6) was decisive for the further development of relations between the USSR and the DDR. In its wake the Soviet Union undertook to shore up the regime’s prestige at home and abroad. The first departure on this road occurred on August 22, 1953, when the USSR and DDR jointly announced a series of measures substantially altering their previous relationship. In addition to lowering some occupation costs and curtailing others, extending the DDR credits and outright aid, the USSR undertook to transfer to the DDR a number of Soviet enterprises (SAG) and to end collection of reparations payments. Diplomatic missions between the two countries were raised to the full status of embassies.

The next step in the regularization of relations between the USSR and the DDR was taken on March 25, 1954. On that date the Soviet Government announced that it considered the DDR “sovereign” and would establish “the

46 Deutsches Institut für Zeitgeschichte (ed.), *Dokumente zur Außenpolitik der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Vol. 1, Berlin (Ost) 1954, 1. ed., p. 7.

47 Deutsches Institut für Zeitgeschichte (ed.), *Dokumente*, Vol. 1, *Regierungserklärung des Ministerpräsidenten Otto Grotewohl vom 12. Oktober 1949*, p. 29. Editors’ note: Verbatim: „Frieden und Freundschaft mit der Sowjetunion sind Voraussetzung für ein Aufblühen, ja für die nationale Existenz des deutschen Volkes und Staates.“

same relations with the DDR as with any other sovereign state".<sup>48</sup> Specifically, steps were taken to curtail the activities of the Soviet Control Commission (SKK), successor to the Soviet Military Administration in Germany.

Following the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic, the USSR concluded a treaty defining its relations with the DDR. This treaty, which was announced in Moscow on September 20, 1955, provides that the DDR is "free to decide all questions of domestic and foreign policy, including its relations with the Federal Republic of Germany and the development of its relations with other states".<sup>49</sup> The development of relations between the USSR and DDR has thus been fashioned to give credibility to the Soviet position, reiterated at the 1955 Conference of Foreign Ministers at Geneva, that the reunification of Germany is no longer within the competence of the former occupying powers.

The DDR's relations with Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe parallel its close relations with the USSR. In the regime's policy statement of October 12, 1949, Grotewohl stressed that in addition to pursuing a policy of "peace and friendship with the Soviet Union", his government would seek similar relations with the people's democracies, "especially with our neighbors the new Poland and the Czechoslovak Republic".<sup>50</sup> The DDR has implemented this desire by accepting as final a number of major territorial and population changes. It is doubtful that even these concessions have removed completely the wartime legacy of anti-German feeling in Eastern Europe. They may however have served to direct it against the Federal Republic which advocates peaceful revision in these boundary and population matters.

East Germany's relations with Poland were the subject of the DDR's first treaty, concluded on July 6, 1950. The Treaty of Görlitz defines the Oder-Neisse boundary line, provisionally assigned at the Potsdam Conference, as a permanent "boundary of peace" between the two countries. On every anniversary of the signing of the treaty of demarcation and, indeed, on many other occasions, leading East German officials have pledged to maintain and, if need be, defend the Oder-Neisse line against any attempt at revision.<sup>51</sup>

48 Deutsches Institut für Zeitgeschichte (ed.), *Dokumente*, Vol. 1, Erklärung der Sowjetregierung vom 25. März 1954 über die Herstellung der vollen Souveränität der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, p. 303.

49 Anonymous author, *Vertrag über die Beziehungen zwischen der ‚DDR‘ und der UdSSR*. In: SBZ-Archiv, 6 (1955) 19 (October 10, 1955), p. 301.

50 Deutsches Institut für Zeitgeschichte (ed.), *Dokumente*, Vol. 1, Regierungserklärung des Ministerpräsidenten Otto Grotewohl vom 12. Oktober 1949, p. 29.

51 A recent minor rectification of the boundary has been reported. Zgorzelec (Polish part of Görlitz) has been transferred to the DDR for the purpose of resettlement there of ethnic Germans from Poland. The DDR is also to participate in the administration of Szczecin (Stettin).

On June 24, 1950, the DDR and Czechoslovakia in a joint declaration disclaimed territorial and boundary claims and declared the expulsion of Germans from the Sudeten to have been "just and irrevocable".<sup>52</sup>

On June 24, 1950, the DDR and Hungary issued a joint declaration stating that there were "no outstanding or disputed questions" between the two countries.<sup>53</sup> In September 1950, similar statements were issued with Romania and Bulgaria. In this manner the DDR implicitly accepted the expulsion of German minorities. On the basis of these declarations a series of economic and cultural agreements were announced, confirming the DDR's admission into the Soviet orbit.

Normalization of relations with individual East European states was the necessary precondition to the gradual integration of the DDR into the Soviet satellite system. The pace and timing of this process has been dictated by the apparent requirements of Soviet diplomacy *vis-à-vis* Germany as a whole. The DDR was first admitted to the East European Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (September 29, 1950), thus formalizing the eastern economic orientation of the Soviet Zone which had developed since the first days of the occupation. Joint diplomatic consultation dates from October 1950 when the DDR was invited to a conference of East bloc foreign ministers called in Prague to protest the decision of the Western powers to consider the rearmament of West Germany.

Closer political association of the DDR and the Soviet bloc awaited the outcome of Soviet efforts to prevent the rearmament of the Federal Republic within the Western defense system. In December 1954, the DDR attended the Moscow conference on the safeguarding of peace and collective security in Europe. The conference warned that should the Paris accords on West German participation in NATO be ratified, the participants "would adopt measures for safeguarding their own security".<sup>54</sup> Later that month delegations of

52 Deutsches Institut für Zeitgeschichte (ed.), *Dokumente*, Vol. 1, *Gemeinsame Deklaration der Provisorischen Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und der Regierung der Tschechoslowakischen Republik*, p. 378. Editors' note: „Unsere beiden Staaten haben keine Gebiets- oder Grenzansprüche, und ihre Regierungen betonen ausdrücklich, dass die durchgeführte Umsiedlung der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakischen Republik unabänderlich, gerecht und endgültig gelöst ist.“

53 Deutsches Institut für Zeitgeschichte (ed.), *Dokumente*, Vol. 1, *Gemeinsame Deklaration der Provisorischen Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und der Regierung der Ungarischen Volksrepublik*, p. 430.

54 Deutsches Institut für Zeitgeschichte (ed.), *Dokumente zur Außenpolitik der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Vol. 2, *Deklaration der Konferenz europäischer Länder zur Gewährleistung des Friedens und der Sicherheit in Europa vom 2. Dezember 1954*, p. 137.

the East German People's Chamber, the Polish *Sejm*, and the Czech National Assembly met in Prague to elaborate "joint security measures". Finally on May 14, 1955, the DDR joined the other East European states including the Soviet Union in the Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance. Recently the East German Government announced the formation of its own armed forces to serve in the Joint East European Command set up at Warsaw. Through this process, each phase of which followed unsuccessful Soviet attempts to influence developments in West Germany, the DDR has, in effect, become a full-fledged member of the East European satellite system.

The integration of East Germany into the Soviet orbit has been accompanied by a concerted effort to gain diplomatic recognition for the DDR outside the Communist camp. This goal is by no means only a recent one. Immediately after the proclamation of the Democratic Republic the DDR Ministry of Foreign Affairs specifically invited the establishment of diplomatic relations with all governments "on the basis of mutual recognition and equality".<sup>55</sup> Response was forthcoming, however, only from the members of the Soviet bloc, including such out-lying components as the Mongolian People's Republic and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.<sup>56</sup> Following the 1954 Soviet declaration of DDR "sovereignty", the Foreign Ministry renewed its earlier offer, stressing that the "German Democratic Republic is free to decide on its own its domestic and foreign affairs".<sup>57</sup> To date these efforts have remained unsuccessful. It cannot, however, be safely predicted that they will continue without success. Presumably the recent visit to China and North Korea of an official delegation led by Grotewohl was a calculated demonstration for the neutralist states of the "international importance" of the DDR. Indeed, the Government of the Federal Republic takes East Germany's attempt to win broader diplomatic recognition so seriously that it has threatened to sever diplomatic relations with any government that recognizes the DDR.

55 Deutsches Institut für Zeitgeschichte (ed.), *Dokumente*, Vol. 1, *Die Deutsche Demokratische Republik schlägt die Aufnahme diplomatischer Beziehungen mit allen Regierungen auf der Grundlage der gegenseitigen Achtung und Gleichberechtigung vor*, p. 37.

56 Diplomatic recognition of the DDR has been granted by the following countries: USSR (Oct. 15, 1949), Bulgaria (Oct. 17, 1949), Poland (Oct. 18, 1949), Czechoslovakia (Oct. 18, 1949), Hungary (Oct. 19, 1949), Romania (Oct. 22, 1949), China (Oct. 25, 1949), North Korea (Nov. 6, 1949), Albania (Dec. 2, 1949), Mongolia (April 13, 1950), Vietnam (date uncertain).

57 Deutsches Institut für Zeitgeschichte (ed.), *Dokumente*, Vol. 1, *Erklärung der Regierung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zur Souveränität der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, p. 305.



Failing in its direct overtures, the DDR now seeks to develop vicarious diplomatic connections by expanding its trade and commercial contacts. East Germany claims trade relations with 100 "capitalist" countries and commercial agreements with 20 of these. Trade delegations have been exchanged with Finland, Egypt, and India. The Government is working for the dispatch of DDR missions, which are fond of engaging in diplomatic and consular activities,<sup>58</sup> to other countries with which East Germany trades.

As part of the campaign to "raise the international prestige" of the DDR, the regime has applied for and in certain instances gained admission to international agencies. During 1955 East Germany participated in meetings of various commissions of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). The recent founding in the DDR of the German League for the United Nations and the UNESCO Commission of the German Democratic Republic testifies to the regime's desire for wider participation in international bodies.

The sustained diplomatic, cultural, and trade offensives are intimately connected to what may be after all the DDR's most serious "foreign policy" question: the reunification of Germany. The East German Government, with full Soviet backing, has taken an unequivocal position on this issue. The regime has repeatedly declared that:

As long as there are two states with different social systems in Germany, there is no other way (to reunification) except through a rapprochement between these two states, first of all on specific, limited questions.<sup>59</sup>

In January 1954, the DDR Council of Ministers created its own Committee on German Unity. In addition, the SED directly commands whatever political resources the KPD can acquire from the West German electorate.

The Adenauer Government, with the complete diplomatic support of its NATO allies, refuses to negotiate with its eastern rival. However, non-recognition does not prevent limited contact between agencies of the two governments, especially in the spheres of law enforcement, transportation, communication and trade. By employing such tactics as the imposition of road tolls on traffic between West Germany and Berlin, the SED regime has crudely

58 DDR trade delegations have sought diplomatic consultations with the governments to which they are accredited. In addition, they regularly hold receptions on DDR "national" holidays. The fact that the texts of trade agreements are included in the two volumes of official foreign policy documents indicates the significance which is attached to the political aspects of trade connections.

59 Die Deutsche Demokratische Republik verkörpert die Zukunft Deutschlands. In: Zentralkomitee der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands (ed.), *Einheit: Zeitschrift für Theorie und Praxis des wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus*, 10 (Oct. 1955), p. 967.

attempted to wrench recognition through forced negotiations on “technical questions”. The sending of cultural delegations under official auspices and the reception of visiting West German groups (1.9) is yet another device employed by the regime to point up its separate existence. Recently, in dealing with American military personnel, the DDR has acted to realize its claim of sovereignty over East Berlin against the Western contention that Greater Berlin remains under Four-Power control. In this later instance at least, the Soviet Union restrained its fledgling.

Lacking the substance of independence, the DDR depends for the formulation of its foreign policy upon the direction of the Soviet Union, the power which conceived and continues to foster the East German state. At present, the Soviet Union considers the DDR an integral part of the Socialist camp, constituting the effective government of one part of Germany, whose interests must be consulted in any solution of the German problem.<sup>60</sup> A revision of the Soviet position on Germany would have an immediate and revolutionary effect on the foreign policy of the German Democratic Republic.

## 2.6 Subversive Potentialities as Illustrated by the Uprising of June 17, 1953 [*Carl J. Friedrich/Erich Matthias*]

The uprising which took place in the Soviet Zone of Germany on June 17, 1953, illustrates the potentialities of subversion, as well as its severe limitations. The background of the June 17 uprising goes back to the Summer of 1945. At that time, the SMA started the transformation of its zone without regard for the attitude of the population. Behind the facade of the “anti-fascist and democratic order”, structural reforms were carried out with ruthless determination (2.1–2.3). The discontent, rampant among all the segments of the population, steadily increased. At the beginning of 1953, several factors added to the bitterness and indignation about the foreign oppression. Among these, the abrogation of social benefits and the failure of food supply were important elements. The state of the public mind is reflected in the increase in the rate of persons escaping from the terror: 10,000 persons fled in December 1952

60 E. Grigor'ev, *Germanskaya Demokraticeskaya Respublika – respublika mira i truda* (The German Democratic Republic is a Republic of Peace and Work). In: *Bloknot Agitatora*, Nr. 27 (Sept. 1955), pp. 36–44. Editors' note: “*Bloknot Agitatora*” was a journal by the “*Politische Hauptverwaltung der Armee und Flotte*” (Glavnoe politicheskoe upravlenie Sovietskoy armii i Voennno-morskogo flota SSSR, Polish Main Administration of the Army and Navy) published bimonthly since 1942. Cf. the entry *Bloknot Agitatora* (n. d.). In: *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, 3rd Edition, (1970–1979). Online at: <https://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Bloknot+Agitatora>; 16.5.2021.

to West Berlin; by March 1953, their number had increased to about 50,000. This growth in general discontent while of importance for the future course of events, does not explain the revolts, nor does it account for the particular character of it.

In a more immediate sense, the June uprising resulted from increased production quotas, known as “work-norms”, demanded from the workers (1.12 and 1.13). The party encountered mounting resistance among the exploited workers. In April and May 1953 brief protest strikes multiplied in the larger industrial enterprises. Moreover, workers repeatedly used the meetings of the FDGB to protest against these quotas and the insufficient food. In several nationalized industries, they finally resorted to boycotting government-operated stores. In the face of this mounting discontent, the Council of Ministers of the DDR nevertheless decided, on May 28, to raise the work norms by another 10 percent as per June 30.

At approximately the same time, the politburo of the SED was urged by the Soviet High Commissioner, Semyënov, to slow down sovietization. A series of measures were announced on June 9–11 to ease the situation which had resulted from the ruthlessly pushed development of heavy industry, the suppression of the private economy, the excessive demands on agricultural production and the curtailment of consumer goods production. The grievances of almost every segment of East German society were to be redressed. The sole exception were the workers. The decree of May 28 was maintained. Excitement among the workers continued to rise precisely as the regime was showing signs of weakness and confusion. This combination of factors created a unique revolutionary situation.

As in all enterprises, considerable unrest prevailed among the workers on the construction grounds of East Berlin’s *Stalinallee*. Representatives of the FDGB and of the SED tried in vain to dissuade the workers from going on strike. Could the demand for increased work-norms be enforced? The FDGB paper *Tribüne* took a stand on this issue in a widely circulated article that appeared on the morning of June 16. It declared that “the decision to increase work norms was altogether justified” and it should be “carried out by force” by the end of the month.<sup>61</sup> This article was the spark which set off the explosion. At 10 a.m. 300 construction workers left from block 40 of *Stalinallee* and started on a protest march. Although they did not foresee the consequences, their initiative started a chain reaction. The outbreak occurred spontaneously. Delegates were elected, but when it appeared that individual delegates could be ar-

61 Editors’ note: The mentioned article (“Zu einigen schädlichen Erscheinungen bei der Erhöhung der Arbeitsnormen”) is easily accessible via the following link: <http://www.17juni53.de/chronik/530616.html>; 10.7.2022.

rested, the intuitive decision was taken that all would go; they could not arrest all of them. The original purpose of the demonstrators was merely to protest against the 10 percent increase in work norms without corresponding increase in salary. However, the masons, unskilled laborers and transport workers of Block 40 were only the first group. Soon some 2,000 construction workers of the *Stalinallee* left their posts. They marched to the FDGB headquarters, but no spokesman of the union officials would receive them.<sup>62</sup> Instead, they found the doors of the union building locked. Outraged by this attitude, the workers marched towards buildings of the Government. Around 1 p.m. the demonstrators reached the ministerial offices; by then, groups from the other construction centers of the city, as well as many sympathizers, had joined them. The crowd which finally gathered in front of the government center of SZ is estimated at 10,000.

The workers' demands now took an entirely new turn: open rebellion against totalitarian oppression. The work norms, which had provided the original impulse for the workers of the *Stalinallee*, faded into the background. The objectives which anonymous orators voiced in front of the government buildings reached far beyond the original goal: they called for the fall of the SED regime and its leaders Pieck, Grotewohl and Ulbricht, main targets of hatred; they also called for free elections and the unification of Germany.

One unknown man, speaking for his fellow demonstrators, uttered the battle-cry of "general strike". There was an immediate response. No one stopped to weigh the chances of success; it was as by instinct that the workers rediscovered their most powerful weapon, in spite of the fact that it had never been deemed possible to use it under a totalitarian system. They no longer felt powerless and at the mercy of their oppressors. For a few short hours it seemed as if they had rediscovered the strength of solidarity. Similar conditions in other parts of East Berlin and of the country led to similar results. All over the Soviet Zone the SED was out of control of the situation.

The demand for a general strike went from mouth to mouth. Messengers on bicycles carried it from factory to factory. By evening, travelers reported to the country at large the events which had taken place in Berlin. The news broadcasts of the West Berlin radio station RIAS spread the news throughout the SZ. The station carefully avoided saying anything that could be interpreted as direct "intervention". A construction worker who at 9:30 p.m. wanted to broadcast the call for a general strike to the entire Zone could not get permission. RIAS went out of its way not to mention the key word "general strike" in its broadcasts. Not until 1:30 a.m. did a first-hand report from East Berlin make

62 If at this moment their demands had been fully granted, perhaps no insurrection would have taken place.

casual mention of the proclamation to go on strike. As a result, even those in the East Zone who had stayed up till late at night to listen to the RIAS newscasts, were only partly informed about conditions in East Berlin. The appeal of the West German Minister for All-German affairs, which RIAS broadcast late at night on the 16th, merely created confusion. The much-debated statement from the president of the West Berlin labor unions, Scharnowski, was much better understood, but it did not contain an explicit directive. The appeal to all the leaders of the uprising to look everywhere for their "Strausberger Platz" got across – the Strausberger Platz having been the meeting place of the Berlin demonstrators on June 16. But even this message reached merely a fraction of the workers and therefore did not have a decisive influence on further events. In general, one can say that the general strike order reached all of East Berlin but not the rest of the Soviet Zone.

One must conclude that the sympathy strikes and the demonstrations in the factories and cities of the SZ were decided upon independently. The leaders of the uprising did not receive instructions on how to carry out their action; they reacted spontaneously to the situation. Also, there was no centralized underground movement in existence at the time to give the signal for action and to take over leadership. Indeed, no contact existed between the leaders in the different centers of revolt. Nevertheless, the announcement of the events of June 16 at Berlin led to simultaneous actions in a large number of enterprises and localities. This fact is of decisive importance for a correct evaluation of the events. Attempts to represent the June 17 uprising as a "Berlin revolution"<sup>63</sup> are inaccurate. In many centers of the revolt, the revolutionary achievements went well beyond what happened in Berlin. It is true that the particular conditions resulting from the situation of the divided capital, together with the traditional independence of the Berlin worker helped to create the proper climate for this outburst but the revolt, once ignited, was zone-wide.

It would be impossible to give here a detailed account of the sequence of events in East Berlin and throughout the SZ. The outstanding fact is that uniform, psychological conditions produced a striking unity of action. The revolt spread over the entire SZ with great rapidity. This makes the communist assertion that foreign agents and agitators had fomented the June 17 uprising seem ridiculous.

We must remember that the whole revolt lasted only 30 hours, after which it was suppressed by Soviet tanks and troops. Yet, 300 localities throughout the SZ, including some small rural settlements, are reported to have taken part. The extent of revolutionary action varied from place to place; it ranged

63 Curt Riess, *Der 17. Juni, Berlin (West) 1954*.

from work interruptions to public demonstrations, rioting and attempts to free prisoners. Surveys clearly show the direct correlation between the intensity of the action and the density of population; the most populated areas were in the forefront of the insurrection. On June 16, Berlin was the main focus of activity, but on June 17, the large lignite mining areas of central Germany with huge factories such as Leuna and Buna, became the most important centers. The agricultural parts of the SZ, including the region north of Berlin to the coast of the Baltic, remained more quiet. But the coastal cities with large dockyards were also participating actively.

The geographical distribution of the revolutionary uprisings shows that the working class played the decisive part, but it would be unfair to minimize the participation of other groups. The totalitarian rulers of the Zone really had succeeded in uniting all sections of the population against them. Around noon on June 17, the movement had reached non-industrial cities and towns, while in the afternoon it spread to villages and even smaller settlements. The degree of revolutionary determination and effectiveness varied of course. Revolutionary action also differed significantly among the different groups of workers. Generally speaking, workers in large plants outdid those in smaller ones. The reason is perhaps that the smaller the community engaged in a given enterprise the easier it is to identify an individual leader or agitator, and the more dangerous it becomes to expose oneself. This explains perhaps also the comparatively limited participation of rural communities, in spite of the discontent and bitterness among the farmers. It seems more noteworthy, that in spite of a highly developed system of control and inspection revolutionary action occurred in the villages at all. It would seem to suggest that there may be a considerable potential disposition to resistance among the peasants.

Two other facts are worth noting: in spite of the influence of regimented education and membership in youth movements (1.7) young people played an active part in the uprising, and the "intellectuals", although some certainly participated, on the whole remained aloof.

The events of June 17 suggest that totalitarian communist power is a more vulnerable apparatus in periods of crisis than appears on the surface. During the uprising it became clear that many SED members, petty officials of the various party organizations, and members of the labor unions were in fact on the side of the masses. Even some of the higher officials seem to have wavered. Among the police there were signs of lack of morale, they often publicly showed their sympathy with the cause of the rebels. There was better discipline maintained among the Militarized People's Police (KVP) units.

The purges which took place after the June uprising prove how little the regime could trust its own officials. A surprisingly large number of SED members were purged, including some who had been members of the German

Communist Party (KPD) as far back as 1933. Reports covering 40 out of the 237 regional units of the SED, show an average of 30.6 percent of members purged. It is also noteworthy that in a traditionally Communist area like Halle-Merseburg the insurrection was as strong as in Magdeburg which is traditionally Social Democratic.<sup>64</sup>

In spite of the lack of organized leadership, and although the general strike was not coordinated by the unions, the movement of revolt was not at all chaotic. The workers, who provided the hard core of the revolt, wanted order and organization. Even in difficult situations they remained calm and self-controlled. They knew how to deal with overexcited elements and with the mob. They took pains not to commit any acts of provocation against the occupation forces. When freeing prisoners, they tried most of the time to distinguish the political from the criminal inmates. Even the "excesses" do not generally reflect senseless rage and a blind will of destruction. For instance, when newspaper and propaganda stands on the Potsdamer Platz in East Berlin were destroyed, *one* was spared because it bore a sign indicating that it was privately operated and was not the property of the hated state or one of its organizations. Destruction in the large plants of the Soviet Zone took place on a sizeable scale only after these plants had been seized by Soviet troops. Besides, most of the factories which suffered damage were at least partly producing for the occupying forces. The general picture was one of well-disciplined revolutionary action.

A proper evaluation of the events of June 17 is difficult because so little time elapsed between the beginning of the insurrection and the counteraction of the occupying forces. Even so, it is clear that more was at stake than just rebellion against a hated system. Founded on the revolutionary discipline which prevailed everywhere in the country, a constructive movement, carried and directed by the workers, at once organized itself and developed effective power. The strike committees, which had been nominated independently and by acclamation, soon found themselves in charge of directing the local revolt; here and there, attempts were made to set up regional leadership. Particularly worthy of mention, in this respect, were efforts to revive half-forgotten traditions of the labor movement which led, for instance, to the setting up of managing committees in the German lignite industry. Where the movement made the most progress, people improvised the nomination of representatives who took

64 Stefan Brant, *Der Aufstand. Vorgeschichte, Geschichte und Deutung des 17. Juni 1953*, Stuttgart 1954, suggests that "a proletarianized middle class has put all its hopes in the workers' courage, their spirit of decision and their strength" (p. 319); the author heralds June 17 as a "classless revolution" (p. 318). We cannot agree with him in this interpretation. It was the organized workers who were everywhere in the forefront of events. Editors' note: Written by Klaus Harpprecht (1927–2016) under the pen name Stefan Brant.

over administrative functions. In some cities, such as Görlitz, for instance, the SED city administration was dismissed; in some villages the mayors were replaced, and new city councils appointed.<sup>65</sup>

What can be said of the potentialities of subversion in general on the basis of the uprising of June 1953? Initially the regime is most vulnerable in times of unexpected and drastic policy change. It must be remembered that the “new course” in East Germany was not the *result* of the workers uprising but in a sense a cause of it. The sudden calling of a halt of the quickened pace of “building socialism” left SED and government officials bewildered. Only the prompt intervention of the Soviet Army of Occupation restored order and saved the regime from the wrath of its opponents.

Similar sudden shifts of policy are bound to have a disquieting effect. It may be assumed that the regime is most vulnerable at such a time. On the other hand, it must be realized that much has changed since 1953. The June uprising exposed many of the regime’s most effective enemies and potential opposition leaders. The SED regime has consolidated its power and streamlined its methods of control, so that it is probably more capable of withstanding even sharp policy shifts such as, for example, the devaluation of the role and works of Stalin.

## 2.7 Propaganda [*Carl J. Friedrich/Ernst Richert*]

Political and other propaganda in the SZ has, of course, been touched upon repeatedly in various other sections, since no activity, no communication in a totalitarian regime, such as that of the SZ, is without its propaganda theme. Indeed, since the monopoly of control over all means of mass communication is one of the outstanding features of totalitarian dictatorship, and such monopoly has to all intents and purposes been effectively established in the SZ (see above section 1.11), those controlling this vast network of communication are forced to think of all the channels as so many propaganda facilities.

Nor can we, in any strict sense, identify particular propaganda campaigns, without once again describing all the different activities of the regime, since every such activity is accompanied by a corresponding propaganda campaign. There would be little purpose in listing the various economic, social and po-

65 Stefan Brant states that “wherever a spontaneous movement occurred and wherever the workers united in battle formations which required leadership, they solved, with unflinching assurance, the problem of their organization by creating a system of councilors. This was indeed the quickest way, under the circumstances, to set up a democratic and effective authority”. Editors’ note: Brant, *Der Aufstand*, p. 306.



litical activities which are the subject of special treatment in order to bolster an account of SZ propaganda. Similarly, the content of these campaigns is, of course, identical with the policies pursued in the various sectors of political, economic and social life. The content of SZ propaganda is the entirety of the program of sovietization and collectivization of German life. It is oriented toward the total transformation of life along lines suggested by the development of the Soviet Union, implemented by its major foreign policy "lines", such as "unification of Germany", "establishing world peace" and the like.

It may, however, be worthwhile to sketch briefly certain procedural aspects of this vast propaganda machinery. At the outset, it deserves mentioning that the leaders of the Soviet Zone, in accordance with established Soviet practice, do not use the term propaganda in the broad sense employed here. Rather do they divide propaganda in this our general sense into three subdivisions. Propaganda, properly speaking, consists for them in the task of developing and propagating the principles of Communist ideology in the form in which it is applicable to the DDR. By contrast, they call "agitation" the presenting of current issues, domestic and foreign, according to this guiding ideology and the general "party line". Agitation also includes making this ideology persuasive to the masses and thus to create confidence in its workability. Finally Soviet and SZ leaders speak of "organization" (though this is often confused with agitation) when they give concrete instructions to large segments of the populace, usually of a technical sort. This "organizational" kind of agitation is involved in such campaigns as are directed toward the increase of production or the transformation of the family and the like. It is important to bear these distinctions in mind, when reading SZ material, but for our present purposes we shall, of course, continue to use the term propaganda in the broader and yet more precise sense in which it is employed for political analysis in the West: the manipulation of communications for the purpose of causing people to do or not to do specific things, including the moulding of their minds so as to create a disposition for such action.<sup>66</sup> In this sense, propaganda characteristically proceeds by campaigns; as was already noted, there has been a constant succession of such campaigns in the SZ, as in all Soviet regimes. Some are of local origin, but their main themes are as mentioned set by the ups and downs

66 The general problem of totalitarian propaganda is treated in ch. XI of Carl J. Friedrich/Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1956. For Soviet propaganda operations consult also Alex Inkeles, *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia. A Study in Mass Persuasion*, Cambridge, Mass. 1950. The general problem of propaganda has given rise to many general studies; for an evaluation of this literature see Carl J. Friedrich, *Constitutional Government and Democracy. Theory and Practice in Europe and America*, rev. new. ed. Boston 1950, ch. XXIV.

of Soviet politics: the defection of Tito, the death of Stalin, the “new course” – these are some of the main turning points of recent Soviet propaganda, and hence of zonal propaganda. We have had occasion to note such campaigns in various places in this study.

All of them have the field to themselves, except for similar campaigns of the regime itself; there does not exist at all the countercampaign which is the usual accompaniment of any propaganda campaign in a free society, built upon the competition in the field of propaganda, as in most others, – except of course in wartime.

This complete monopoly of propaganda in the SZ imposes a heavy burden upon the totalitarian rulers. For they are inescapably held responsible for all that is being said and written in the area under their control. This burden is readily accepted by a totalitarian movement, because its leaders possess the requisite firm and unshakeable faith in the righteousness and truth of their own doctrine. They are fanatics, when it comes to maintaining their own ideas, even while they describe the ideas of all other people as “myths”, or “ideology” or “propaganda”. The rulers of the SZ are no exception. Like other Communists, they are aided in this task by the Marxist notion of the dialectic according to which mutually exclusive propositions may be maintained. The re-assertion of this dialectic, as derived from Hegel, during the CPSU congress of 1952 was faithfully echoed by the SED in 1954.

It is evident that all propaganda in the SZ is set within this framework of the Marxian ideology. The “dialectical materialism” (*Diamat*) which interprets social change in terms of the change of control over the means of production, that is to say, in terms of a particular theory of economic class development, is the key to this ideology.<sup>67</sup> The Communists believe that this *Diamat* provides not only an infallible insight into the working of social forces, but as a consequence of such “scientific” knowledge it offers a clear guide to the character of all social change, – a predetermined and hence inevitable progress toward the Communist millennium.<sup>68</sup> The goals of Communist propaganda, its aims and objectives, are therefore the logical derivatives of this scientific ideology, or rather they are pragmatic adaptations in terms of its inherent logic. The SZ exhibits no distinctive ideological features. Its leading writers have faithfully followed the general belief system, and their propaganda reiterates again

67 For the ideology of Marxism and its role in the context of Communist politics see Alfred G. Meyer, *Marxism. The Unity of Theory and Practice. A critical Essay* by Alfred G. Meyer, Cambridge, Mass. 1954, which provides a very able general analysis.

68 For the complex problems of “ideology” under totalitarianism, see Friedrich/Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship*, chs. II–V, where such writers as Mannheim are discussed.

and again the same phrases and slogans (1.11). The only significant break in this continuity occurred around 1949 when, after the defection of Tito, Moscow decided that there was going to be no more talk about different countries having different traditions and therefore progressing toward the communist goals along different roads (2.3). Very recently, this previous line has, however, been revived, and the 20th CPSU congress, vindicating the compromise of the Soviet and Yugoslav rulers, acclaimed once more the idea of such national differentiations. Presumably, the same notion will presently be confirmed by the impending party congress in the SZ. But the shifts concerning this particular issue, namely the extent of the differences between the several Soviet Communist regimes, have always been of a tactical nature and do not basically affect the pattern of the ideology as a whole. During its entire existence, Marxism in its Leninist form has acknowledged the co-existence of minimal and maximal potentials at different times and in different places. These are merely questions of expediency; virtually all propaganda is ultimately related to the maintenance in power of the Communist Party and more particularly of its leaders and to extend, if possible, the movement in countries where it has not yet succeeded. In this latter respect, the SED faces a task peculiar to itself and not to be found in other satellite regimes, namely that of extending the Soviet control overall of Germany. All propaganda in the SZ is vitally affected by this central aim which is, of course, also a central aim of the Soviet Union itself. It is frequently difficult to tell whether a particular propaganda statement, or even campaign, is directed toward that goal or toward internal problems. In view of the intrinsic hopelessness of this task, the SZ leadership is saddled with an enterprise which weakens its general propaganda effectiveness. There is the related issue of developing a continuing countercampaign to the propaganda emanating from the Federal Republic and its allies. Of course, the very existence of the Federal Republic presents a serious problem. But the numerous inroads which its propaganda makes, not to mention RIAS and related efforts (1.11), cannot but be disconcerting to the propagandists of the SZ.

The question of the effectiveness of SZ propaganda does not permit a scientifically satisfactory answer, even within the very limited scope within which such an answer is ever possible.<sup>69</sup> All that is said about it, is strictly speculative. Generally speaking, the effectiveness of propaganda under a totalitarian system varies in accordance with the ups and downs of the regime's general effectiveness. In periods of general improvement, such propaganda is likely to have a greater impact, than when general shortages and even starvation cause widespread suffering. There is a fairly general impression among relatively im-

69 In a strict sense, the effectiveness of propaganda has remained an unsolved problem, because of the multiplicity of factors which enter into a measurement of it.

partial observers that the propaganda has a considerable indirect effect, even though its direct results may be poor. That is to say, many East Germans do not believe the particular stories presented to them, whether pro-Russian or anti-Western in content. They are generally rather skeptical about the regime's explicit campaigns designed to sell them a new effort at production increase, or the need for arming against Western imperialists. But their modes of thought, the very words into which their thought is clothed is gradually being affected. Participants in discussions with younger people, in student gatherings and the like, have been struck with the difficulty of communicating effectively. Indeed, some West Germans have become deeply alarmed and have stated that the chances of reunification are gradually being jeopardized. The writer's own observations do not confirm such extreme views. But it is true that Marxist-Leninist jargon is increasingly becoming the verbal framework of East German thought (1.8 and 1.17).

The overall organization and functioning of SZ propaganda coincides with that of the control of public information and has been described before (1.11). It may be well to repeat here that its central control is, of course, tied to the operations of the Central Committee of the ruling party, the SED (2.3), which has developed a dual control, one operating directly, and the other through the office of the president. The control works both by actual directives, and an elaborate system of check-up. There is a system of manipulated popular participation through "correspondents" who are actually party hacks, performing a kind of cheering function through "letters to the editor" and the like. There are reported to be 10,000 such "correspondents" in operation; besides these pseudo-journalists, there are many more writers of letters to the editor who are actually controlled and instructed on how to give explanations of party and government directives. After it has been decided what is to be the "people's voice" in a certain matter, editors are instructed to look for persons who might be willing to give such an opinion. Presumably, all editors have a string of such stooges on hand who, in return for a small cash payment, or even just the applause they receive for their letters, will do the bidding of the editor. But even this elaborate system of camouflage seems not to be entirely dependable. According to the repeated testimony of editors who escaped to the West, such letters and communications of the "people's correspondents" are often fabricated and/or falsified. It is important to understand this particular form of "democratic" propaganda for two reasons: (1) the repeated claims of widespread popular support for the regime<sup>70</sup> cannot be accepted at face value,

70 Such reports have lately found their way into the reports of American correspondents; cf. e. g. a story by Jack Raymond, *Soviet Citizens Acclaim Regime*. In: *The New York Times* of March 4, 1956, p. 11.

and (2) the regime evidently has to play up to a persistent demand by the East German public for democratic legitimation of its activities.

It stands to reason that in a system thus extensively manipulated, genuine public criticism of the regime's policies is not tolerated, or only in so far as it can be strategically turned to account, or concerns irrelevancies. Matters of local or strictly personal concern, certain literary and musical issues, as well as critical commentary on matters of daily living not immediately relevant to major ideological doctrine or to campaigns in progress are among the subjects which are thus being utilized by the propaganda machine of the SZ in order to maintain an appearance of some freedom of the press.

It seems that those communications received from the public which are not considered suitable from a propagandistic viewpoint, whether spontaneous or of "people's correspondents", are turned over to the secret police (2.4) for further investigation, as well as to the SED for information. Clearly, a fairly widespread knowledge about such a procedure would not encourage many to express themselves freely on matters of even universal indignation!

As a result of the continuous elaborate directives, as well as the manipulation of popular reactions to the regime's activities, statements and campaigns, virtually the entire daily publicity output of the SZ presents SED opinion, or rather the opinion of the Central Committee. In spite of the existence of some "bourgeois" papers, themselves subject to tight control and direction (1.11), the press and the radio of the SZ present one grand chorus, chanting a single song. As a result, as far as general news and opinion is concerned, if one has read one paper, one has read them all. The "workers and peasants" of the DDR, to judge by this chorus, all think and feel alike. No alternatives of public policy have been tolerated since 1950. That the DDR is an active partner in the Soviet family of nations, that Germany must be united under the leadership of the SED, that the SZ is continually progressing toward the effective realization of the socialist economy, – these and other party lines described throughout our study are never discussed from a critical standpoint. One special student of these problems has grouped the various themes around the following five major ones: (1) insistence on the strength and the peaceful intentions of the Soviet bloc; (2) propagation of a unified Germany in accordance with SED "patriotism"; (3) encouragement of efforts to fulfill the planning goals; (4) emphasis on the "socialist character" of the DDR; and (5) "enlightenment" about American "barbarism" (*Unkultur*), and about the genocidal designs of Wall Street and its "Western European lackeys", more especially the Federal Republic. The points to be stressed within the general framework of these slogans vary with the special conditions of time and place of each particular paper or radio station. No definite information is available as to the extent to which these constantly repeated slogans are sinking into

the subconscious of the SZ population. There are indications that the regime is making some headway in spite of the accessibility of Western German information, but probably not nearly as much as in the more tightly sealed-off satellites to the east. The constant outpouring of factory and village publications, private reunions, the agitation campaigns in factory, workshop and office, the "Enlightenment Posters", – gaudy displays of current slogans, – all these and other imitations of Soviet Russian propaganda activities may each by itself have little impact, but their overall effect is notable, and implements the ideological message of press and radio. It has been pointed out that the real strength of this kind of propaganda lies in linking enforced patterns of behavior to general ideology repeated day after day. Hence, a great part of the population *acts* largely in accordance with the overall objectives of the regime and the party, even though it does not believe in them. It has been suggested that as a consequence, a considerable and mounting percentage of younger escapees (10 percent in 1953/54, 15 percent in 1954/55 – some figures even suggesting over 20 percent in the latter year) return to the SZ, because they find themselves alienated and lost, incapable of participating effectively in the life of a free and competitive society.

Of course, a very important role in this development is played by education. Actually, in a totalitarian society, education is properly speaking a part of propaganda and should be so considered (1.9). Since this subject has been fully treated in another section, however, attention is merely drawn to it here. Of course, not all education is propaganda, anyhow. More particularly all technical training to which a great deal of attention is given in the SZ as in other Soviet regimes, is a distinctly different thing. But for the rest, education must be classed with propaganda as a major device of the regime for achieving the total ideological integration of its populace. The aim unquestionably is that of producing a generation of true Communists, thinking and acting in disciplined unison, even while the enforced behavior and action patterns aid in accomplishing the day-to-day tasks of the regime, and more particularly its economic development drives. For these reasons, mass indoctrination and propaganda play an extraordinary role in the SZ, as in other Soviet regimes, to which nothing corresponds in older societies, whether free and democratic or traditional and authoritarian.

## 2.8 Biographies of Leading Personalities in the Soviet Zone of Germany [*Herbert J. Spiro*]

### A. Persons of Major Importance

A-1: Hilde Lange Benjamin

A-2: Friedrich Ebert

A-3: Otto Grotewohl

A-4: Erich Honecker

A-5: Hermann Matern

A-6: Fred Oelßner

A-7: Wilhelm Pieck

A-8: Heinrich Rau

A-9: Fritz Selbmann

A-10: Vladimir Semyënov

A-11: Willi Stoph

A-12: Walter Ulbricht

A-13: Ernst Wollweber

### B. Persons of Importance

B-1: Anton Ackermann

B-2: Johannes Becher

B-3: Lothar Bolz

B-4: Erich Correns

B-5: Franz Dahlem

B-6: Georg Dertinger

B-7: Johannes Dieckmann

B-8: Max Fechner

B-9: Adolf Hennecke

B-10: Rudolf Herrnstadt

B-11: Hans Jendretzky

B-12: Hermann Kastner

B-13: Wilhelm Koenen

B-14: Bruno Leuschner

B-15: Karl Maron

B-16: Ernst Melsheimer

B-17: Erich Mückenberger

B-18: Vincenz Müller

B-19: Otto Nuschke

B-20: Elli Schmidt

B-21: Paul Wandel

B-22: Herbert Warnke

B-23: Wilhelm Zaisser

### A. Persons of Major Importance

#### 1.) Hilde Lange Benjamin

Hilde Lange was born in Berlin on February 5, 1902. After graduation from a humanistic secondary school (Gymnasium), she studied law at the universities of Berlin, Hamburg, and Heidelberg. She was married to a Jewish physician,

Dr. Benjamin, and became a judge in the lower court of Wedding, a strongly Communist district of Berlin. She soon opened a law office of her own, and in 1924 became a member of the Communist Party. The Nazi government revoked her license and arrested her husband who died in the Mauthausen concentration camp in 1942. Mrs. Benjamin worked for a publishing house and in a textile business. Made a state attorney by the Soviet Military Administration in Berlin-Lichterfelde in 1945, she soon rose to the directorship of the personnel division of the SZ Administration of Justice in 1947. She guided the purge programs, the establishment of people's courts, and the half-year training program for people's attorneys. In 1952 she was able to report that only 2 percent of all state attorneys and a mere 12 percent of all SZ judges were professionally trained jurists. After a study trip to the Soviet Union, she was made Vice President of the SZ Supreme Court on December 7, 1949. In October 1950 she became a delegate to the People's Chamber (*Volkskammer*). Her conduct of trials in the Supreme Court, her perversions of justice, and the severity of her sentences earned her notoriety as the "red guillotine". She is fond of proclaiming the old Communist line that there can be no objective justice, that justice has to serve the dictates of the class struggle. On her birthday in 1952 she was given an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the Humboldt University in East Berlin. Her appointment as successor to the deposed Minister of Justice Fechner on July 16, 1953, made illusory the more liberal interpretation of law under the "new course". Mrs. Benjamin further tightened her grip on the courts of the SZ by her revision of the criminal law code in 1952 and by her introduction of a new code of family law in 1954. On April 6, 1954, she became a member of the SED Central Committee. Hilde Benjamin is one of the most devoted and hardened Communist doctrinaires. Her narrowness and dogmatism, her coldness to human emotions, her physical ugliness – her pale face, black hair, and unsymmetrical facial features remind East Germans of the proverbial bad witch – are accompanied by boundless arrogance and conceit. Ostentatiously wearing drab clothes while on duty, she is known to dress in extravagant colors for social affairs and state dinners. Proud of her humanistic schooling, she is contemptuous of her uneducated colleagues.<sup>71</sup>

71 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z. Ein Taschen- und Nachschlagebuch über die Sowjetische Besatzungszone Deutschlands*, 2. edition Bonn 1954; Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von 1945-1954. Die Sowjetische Besatzungszone Deutschlands in den Jahren 1945 bis 1954*, Bonn 1955; Harald Laeuen, Hilde Benjamin. In: *Die Zeit*, August 14, 1952; Bernd von Nottbeck, Neuer Kurs – wohin? In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 14 (July 20 1,953), p. 209; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Hilde Benjamin. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 3 (1952) 11 (June 5, 1952), pp. 167f. Editors' note: The life of Hilde Benjamin is summarised by Andrea Feth, Hilde Benjamin (1902-1989). In: *Neue Justiz*, 56 (2002) 2, pp. 64-67.



## A-2: Friedrich Ebert

Friedrich – also known as Fritz – Ebert was born on September 12, 1894, a son of the former Reichspräsident Friedrich Ebert. After having completed his primary school education, Fritz learned the printer's trade, and joined the Socialist Labor Youth and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in 1913. After his return from the war, he worked for the socialist paper *Vorwärts* and in 1925 became editor of the socialist press service. He was elected to the Brandenburg city council, became a delegate to the Reichstag in 1928, and state councilor in Prussia. The Nazis kept him in a concentration camp for eight months in 1933. After his release, Ebert claims to have been active in the antifascist underground. He served in the German army in 1939 and 1940 and later worked for the Reichs-Publishing House. After the war he promoted the fusion of SPD and KPD, was made a secretary of the SED state committee in Brandenburg in 1946 and was appointed president of the Brandenburg diet. On September 25, 1947, he was called to serve as member of the SED Central Secretariat, and on November 3, 1948, he was elected mayor of East-Berlin. His election having taken place in the temporary headquarters of the Berlin Opera House, Ebert quickly became known as the “opera mayor”, a wordplay on the German “Oberbürgermeister”. His importance to the SED lies in the influence he wields over former SPD members and in the prestige of his father's name. Ebert is not an intellectual giant. His faithfulness to the SED does not rest on solid and proven conviction. Rather he has been lured to the party through the attraction of office and honors. He does not wield extensive personal power. He was made a member of the SED politburo on January 28, 1949, a member of the *Volkskammer* on October 7, 1949, first chairman of the Society for German-Soviet Friendship on June 19, 1950, and a member of the SED Central Committee on July 24, 1950. He represented the DDR before the UN Political Committee at its Paris meeting in December 1951. In 1954 he was given the “Order of Merit of the Fatherland in Gold”. His career represents that of the political opportunist who, through intellectual laziness and lack of moral courage, chose the easiest and seemingly most rewarding path.<sup>72</sup>

72 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Fritz Ebert. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 9 (May 5, 1953), pp. 137f. Editors' note: Friedrich Ebert junior remained mayor of East Berlin until 1967. He died there on December 4, 1979.

## A-3: Otto Grotewohl

DDR Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl was born in Braunschweig on March 11, 1894. He was apprenticed in a printing house, attended the College of Political Science and the University in Berlin. Having been a member of the Socialist Labor Youth, he joined the SPD in 1912, and the Independent Socialist Party (USPD) for a few years, after 1918. He was employed by the State Health Insurance Agency in Braunschweig, was elected a delegate to the Braunschweig diet in 1920, and to the Reichstag in 1925. In 1921 he became Minister of the Interior and of Education in Braunschweig, in 1922 secretary of the Federation of German Trade Unions, in 1923 Minister of Justice, and in 1925 president of the Braunschweig State Agency of Insurance. Until 1933 he also was chairman of the Braunschweig state committee of the SPD. After a brief arrest in 1933, he held various jobs. At the end of the war in 1945, he was elected first chairman of the SPD in Berlin, he helped found the antifascist committees, and he soon became one of the foremost advocates of the SPD-KPD fusion. Together with Wilhelm Pieck (see biography) he presided over the first party meeting of the newly created SED on April 21, 1946, and together with Pieck he was made SED co-chairman. On January 28, 1948, he was chosen a member of the SED politburo, and on December 12, 1949, was elected Prime Minister of the SZ government. He is also a member of the SED Central Committee. On May 8, 1953, he received the Karl Marx medal and on March 11, 1954, he was made a "hero of labor". Grotewohl early recognized the intentions of the Soviet rulers of the SZ and threw in his lot and that of his SPD followers with the new communist regime. He made up for his SPD background by the most fanatical devotion to Soviet directives and SED policy. Grotewohl is divorced, and he lives rather ostentatiously in Berlin-Pankow, 19 Majakowskiring. His reputation among party friends is that of a ruthless opportunist, and of a loyal and reliable communist.<sup>73</sup>

73 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945-1954*; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Otto Grotewohl. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 16 (August 20, 1953), pp. 253f.; Carola Stern, *Die SED. Ein Handbuch über Aufbau, Organisation und Funktion des Parteiapparates*, Köln 1954, p. 67. Editors' note: In 1960, Grotewohl retired from political life due to a severe illness. De facto, his task was fulfilled by Willi Stoph. On September 21, 1964, Grotewohl died in East Berlin.

## A-4: Erich Honecker

Born on August 25, 1912, Erich Honecker joined the Communist Youth at the age of ten in his hometown, Neunkirchen/Saar. He went to grade school, learned the craft of roofing, and joined the KP in 1930. He was made executive secretary of the Communist Youth in the Saar in 1931 and was sent into Germany after 1933 to establish underground connections among communist youth groups. Arrested in 1935, he was sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary. Freed in 1945 by Soviet troops, Honecker joined the KPD-SED and organized the anti-fascist youth committees in the SBZ. He was a member of the provisional founding committee of the Free German Youth (FDJ) in the SZ and was made its first chairman in June 1946. In 1947 he married the FDJ second chairman, Edith Baumann. After Margot Feist, leader of the Young Pioneers, had borne him a child out of wedlock, the party insisted that Honecker obtain a divorce from Edith Baumann. This Honecker did and then married Margot Feist. Honecker became a member of the SED party presidium in April 1946. Having led the first FDJ delegation to the Soviet Union in 1947, he also obtained membership in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In September 1949 he was elected a member of the executive committee of the Red Youth International. He also obtained office in the SZ *Volksrat* and in May 1949 was made chairman of the *Volkskammer's* youth committee. In 1950 he became a member of the SED Central Committee and a candidate of the politburo. Honecker's chief contribution to FDJ policy has been its radicalization according to the "youth as elite guard of Communism" concept. In supporting this concept Honecker failed to build up the FDJ as a strong mass organization on a broad basis. He was therefore relieved from his duties as FDJ chief in May 1955. He was ordered to do "responsible work for the party at another place". It seems likely that his faithfulness and his advocacy of the "hard core" concept of Communist policy will bring Honecker back into the foreground when such policy will again appear desirable for the Communist hierarchy.<sup>74</sup>

74 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945-1954*; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Erich Honecker. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 10 (May 25, 1953), p. 155. Editors' note: As early as 1958, Honecker returned from the Soviet Union and became a member of politburo, assuming responsibility for military and security questions. In 1960, he became secretary of Nationaler Verteidigungsrat (National Security Council, NVR) of the GDR. In this capacity, he was instrumental in erecting the Berlin Wall in 1961. From May 1971 to October 1989, he held the most important offices in the GDR as Erster Sekretär (First Secretary) or Generalsekretär (General Secretary) of the ZK of the SED and Staatsratsvorsitzender (Chairman of the State Council). After a court case on his responsibility for human rights violations in the GDR was dismissed in 1992 due to an illness, he promptly left the country for Chile. He died there on May 29, 1994.

## A-5: Hermann Matern

Hermann Matern was born on June 17, 1893, in Burg near Magdeburg. After graduation from grade school, he became a tanner's apprentice, joined the Labor Youth in 1907, the Association of Leather Workers in 1910, and the SPD in 1911. He left the party in 1914, protesting its co-sponsorship of the issuance of war bonds. He was made a member of the workers' and soldiers' councils after the 1918 revolution, joined the KPD a year later, and rose to become the executive secretary of the KPD in East Prussia in 1931. He was also elected a delegate to the Prussian diet. In June 1933 he was arrested for having illegally re-organized the KPD of Pomerania. He escaped from prison in September and fled to Moscow via Prague and Paris. While living in the Soviet Union he took out Soviet citizenship and learned to speak Russian. After the German invasion in 1941, Matern participated in the indoctrination of German prisoners of war and helped organize the "National Committee of Free Germany", a Communist directed group of former German officers. Returning to Germany in 1945 he formed the anti-fascist committees and the KPD in Saxony. He became a city councilor in Dresden and, as KPD chief of Saxony, prepared the fusion with the SPD in that state. He then carried out the fusion in East Berlin, and in 1946 he became SED co-chairman in Berlin and a member of the party's central secretariat. Having been a convinced and loyal Communist since 1919 and having gained the confidence of the Soviets as well as of the German SED bosses, Matern was appointed co-chairman of the SED Central Control Commission in the fall of 1948. In this position he became known as the SED "Grand Inquisitor". His duties consist of keeping functionaries and party members under close surveillance, and of tracking down deviationists from the party line. His inquisitions have resulted either in orgies of self-criticism and self-accusation, or in expulsions from the party and from office. He first turned his scrutiny on former SPD members and then extended his purges to the general party membership. On October 7, 1949, he was made deputy chairman of the *Volkskammer*, and in July 1950 a member of the SED Central Committee and of the politburo. Having become the single chairman of the Control Commission in July 1950, he originated a clearance program for all party members, in the course of which 100,000 members were expelled from the party. In 1951 he stepped up the demand for continual internal self-criticism. In September 1952 he was appointed head of a *Volkskammer* delegation to negotiate with the Bundestag in Bonn on plans for future reunification of Germany. In June 1953 he was decorated with the Karl Marx medal, and on August 5 of the same year was made a member of the presidium of the Committee of Anti-Fascist Resistance Fighters. Although there have been rumors that Matern's position in the party hierarchy is not as secure as might appear from the record, he still derives considerable strength from his position at the

head of the Control Commission, from his long membership in the KPD and SED, and from his extended stay in the Soviet Union, which served to build up his reputation among Soviet party leaders. His wife, Jenny, is Under-Secretary in the DDR Ministry of Public Health.<sup>75</sup>

#### A-6: Fred Oelßner

Fred Oelßner is the SED's chief theoretician on dialectical materialism. In the past he has always managed to interpret the party line in the "right" fashion at each of the turning points in Soviet policy. Born in Weißenfels on February 27, 1903, his father made him join the USPD youth group in 1917, and, three years later, urged him to enroll in the KPD. His father's connections to leading communists opened the doors of Moscow's party academy to Fred in 1926. It was there that Fred Oelßner laid the ground for his studies in Communist philosophy. After his return to Germany, the advent of the Hitler regime forced him to emigrate to Prague and Paris in 1933. Two years later he was back in Moscow where he became an instructor of political economics. An ideological sidestep caused him to lose his position in 1937, and for a while he earned his living as a factory worker. He was soon readmitted to the ranks of the elect and, at the beginning of the German-Russian war, was made chief of the German division of Radio Moscow. His pseudonym was Larev. In 1945 he was sent back to Germany to take over the indoctrination apparatus of the KPD and SED in the SZ. He was made a secretary of the SED Control Committee and head of its Department for Agitation and Propaganda (*Agitprop*) and of the Department of Indoctrination (*Parteischulung*). He also became a member of the politburo in July 1950. He is the author of a great many pamphlets, articles, and essays, editor in chief of the SED ideological periodical *Die Einheit*, winner of the national prize, professor of political economics at the Institute for Social Sciences of the SED Central Committee, member of the Scientific Council of the Museum of German History, and a member of the German Academy of Sciences. His background in Moscow and his ability for quick adaptations to changing party directives have given him a secure position in the communist hierarchy. His ability to speak Russian may also contribute to this. On November 24, 1955, he was made the head of the "commission for questions concerning the production of consumer goods and their distribution to the people", and deputy president of the Council of Ministers. This position gives him the power to control the government ministry of supplies

75 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A-Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945-1954; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Hermann Matern. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 3 (February 5, 1953), p. 39. Editors' note: Matern died on January 24, 1971.

and consumer goods. Whether this appointment will serve to strengthen his position by consolidating further powers in his hand, or whether it is meant to prove his incompetency by assigning him tasks for which he is not qualified, remains to be seen. At the present time (December 1955), however, there are no indications that Fred Oelßner has suffered a weakening of his position. On the contrary, his position in the party and now in the government seems to have become firmer.<sup>76</sup>

#### A-7: Wilhelm Pieck

The President of the DDR was born in Guben, Silesia, on January 3, 1876. He graduated from grade school and became a carpenter's apprentice. He joined the German Wood Workers' Association and the SPD in 1894 and 1895 respectively. He became chairman of the wood workers in Bremen in 1904, delegate to the wood workers' convention in Cologne in 1905, and SPD secretary in Bremen in 1906. He attended the SPD training institute in Berlin and established contact with Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, and Franz Mehring. In 1910 he was made executive secretary of the party's central education committee and of the party training institute. He joined the Spartacus League during the war; was arrested for participation in peace demonstrations and drafted in 1915. Court-martialed for pacifist agitation he fled to the Netherlands in the fall of 1917 and worked as a journalist during his exile. After his return to Berlin in 1918 he was elected member of the KPD Central Committee. Arrested again in 1919, he was set free, whereas Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were subsequently executed. In 1926 a party investigative committee was appointed by Thälmann to probe into Pieck's quick release.<sup>77</sup> The

76 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Minister für Staatssicherheit: Wollweber. In: *Ost-Probleme*, 7 (1955) 49 (December 9, 1955), p. 1881; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Fred Oelßner. In: *PZ-Archiv*, 3 (1952) 5 (March 5, 1952), p. 73; anonymous author, *Die Einsetzung Fred Oelßners*. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 6 (1955) 22 (November 25, 1955), inside cover; Stern, *Die SED*, pp. 69f. Editors' note: While he continued to rank as SED's chief ideologist, he was removed from all offices and party functions in the same year in connection with the incident involving Karl Schirdewan and Ernst Wollweber. In 1959, he publicly offered self-criticism. From 1958 to 1969, he was director of the Institute for Economic Sciences of the German Academy of Sciences. In 1968, he received an honorary doctorate from HU Berlin. He died in East Berlin on November 7, 1977. (<https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/fred-larew-oelssner?ID=2558>; 26.5.2022).

77 Editors' note: The circumstances surrounding his release or escape on January 17, 1919 after the so-called Spartakusaufstand (Spartacist Uprising) remain unresolved to this day. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge->

results of the investigation have never been made public. Pieck, however, is said to have prevented Thälmann's exchange from a German concentration camp in 1939 by persuading Stalin not to ask for Thälmann's extradition. In 1921 he was elected a delegate to the Prussian diet, in 1928 to the Reichstag. In the same year he was made a member of the central office of the Communist International. In 1929 he was a city council member in Berlin, in 1930 a member of the Prussian State Council. In 1933 he emigrated to France, and in 1935 he was made secretary general of the exiled KPD by the Brussels KPD conference. Having gone to the Soviet Union in 1939, Pieck became a member of the "National Committee of Free Germany" in 1943, and of the League of German Officers. He returned to Germany in 1945 to head the KPD in the SZ. In 1946 he and Grotewohl were made co-chairmen of the newly founded SED. On October 11, 1949, he was chosen President of the DDR. He has been decorated with the Karl Marx medal, he speaks Russian and French, and he is also a Soviet citizen. Pieck's success as Communist functionary is due mainly to his ability for quick adaptations to changing demands, and for faithful and conscientious execution of orders from Moscow, rather than to outstanding qualifications for leadership. His value to the Soviets lies in this obedience which is coupled with a knack for representation, ostentation, and appearance of paternal benevolence. Observers have often remarked that the real power and initiative behind Pieck is held by Walter Ulbricht (see biography). Pieck is the show piece of the DDR. His eightieth birthday in 1956 was the occasion for lavish celebrations during which Pieck was acclaimed by all the leaders of international Communism. Having weathered all the innumerable purges of the Stalinist and post-Stalinist era, Pieck is likely to serve out his time in his high office, especially since he does not hold a position of decisive power within the hierarchy.<sup>78</sup>

datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/wilhelm-friedrich-wilhelm-reinhold-pieck (26.5.2022).

78 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A–Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Piet Lingbeek, Pieck in Holland. In: *Ost-Probleme*, 7 (1955) 25/26 (June 24, 1955), pp. 1010–1012; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Wilhelm Pieck. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 24 (December 20, 1953), pp. 379 f.; Wilhelm Pieck, *Ein Leben für Stalin*. In: *PZ-Archiv*, 2 (1951) 1 (January 1, 1951), pp. 8–10; Stern, *Die SED*, p. 66. Editors' note: From as early as March 1956, he only executed his office to a very limited extent due to his deteriorated health. On January 31, 1957, he took part in a session of the ZK for the last time. He merely opened the V Party Congress (V. Parteitag) of the SED on July 10, 1958 but otherwise did not participate. On September 7, 1960, Pieck died in East Berlin. The GDR was never to have another president. As early as on September 12, 1960, the Volkskammer (People's Parliament) formally decided to abolish the presidential office in favour of the concept of "collective head of state" ("kollektives Staatsoberhaupt"), consisting of the 24-headed Staatsrat (State Council), whose chair-

## A-8: Heinrich Rau

Heinrich Rau was born on April 2, 1899, near Stuttgart, son of a former farmer who had been forced to earn his living as a metal worker. His father's experience prompted Heinrich to join the Socialist Labor Youth in 1913 and the USPD in 1917. Rau was one of the founders of the Spartakus League and became a member of the KPD in 1919. As secretary and later as chairman of the Agricultural Policy Committee of the KPD Central Committee, Rau became editor of the periodical *Der Pflug* (The Plow), member of the presidium of the German Farmers League, delegate to the Prussian diet in 1928, and from 1931 to 1933 secretary of the European Farmers Committee and deputy director of the International Agricultural Institute. Arrested in 1933, he fled to Czechoslovakia and to Moscow. In 1936 he commanded the Eleventh International Brigade in Spain, fled to France in 1938, and was handed over to the Germans by the Vichy regime in 1942. In 1945 he was freed by American troops from the Mauthausen concentration camp. He was then made Minister for Economic Planning in the provincial administration of Brandenburg, and on December 6, 1945, Brandenburg Minister of Economics. In 1946 he also served as SED delegate to the Brandenburg diet. In March 1948 he was called to head the German Economic Commission (DWK) in the SZ. Appointed a member of the SED party presidium and a candidate of the politburo in July 1949, he was made Minister for Planning on October 12, 1949. In the following June he became a full member of both the SED Central Committee and the politburo. In November 1950 his ministry was changed into the State Planning Commission, and he was made a deputy prime minister. His organizing abilities could not stem the further deterioration of the economic situation in the SBZ, yet his willingness to comply to Soviet demands for German uranium and reparations protected him from being demoted. In May 1952 he was asked to coordinate the Departments of Industry and Traffic of the Council of Ministers. He accomplished this task satisfactorily and was then appointed Minister for the Building of Heavy Machinery on November 21, 1953. Rau is known as an old-guard Communist who combines a talent for organization in economic matters with an ability for keeping himself apart from ideological controversies and entanglements. He is a member of the *Volkskammer*, and he received the "Order of Merit of the Fatherland in Gold" on May 8, 1954.<sup>79</sup>

man Walter Ulbricht became. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/wilhelm-friedrich-wilhelm-reinhold-pieck> (20.5.2022).

79 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A-Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945-1954; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Heinrich Rau. In: PZ-Archiv, 3 (1952) 6



## A-9: Fritz Selbmann

After graduation from grade school Fritz Selbmann, born in Lauterbach, Hesse, on September 29, 1899, worked as a miner in the Ruhr and served in the armed forces from 1916 to 1918. In 1920 he joined the USPD and in 1922 the KPD. He helped organize resistance against the French Ruhr occupation of 1923, and in 1925 he replaced Thälmann as the head of the Red Veterans League in the Ruhr. After having been a member of the KPD Ruhr district presidium in 1925, he took over a similar office in Upper Silesia. After his return to the Ruhr, he was chosen a member of the diet of the Rhine Province in 1929 and of the Prussian diet in 1930. From 1931 to 1933 he was the head of the KPD in Saxony, and he was elected a delegate from Leipzig to the Reichstag in July 1932. In April 1933 Selbmann was arrested by the Nazis and sentenced to seven years in the penitentiary. In 1937 he was transferred to a concentration camp for having committed high treason while in prison. After the war he quickly rose in the state government of Saxony. In October 1945 he became director of the Office for Economics and Labor, in December 1945 he was appointed state Minister for Economic Affairs. In March 1948 the Soviet Military Administration designated Selbmann as deputy chairman of the German Economic Commission in the SZ government. Selbmann was instrumental in the expropriation of private business and in the establishment of the government-owned industries (VEB). Despite such achievements he was exposed to frequent criticism, and he never gained the confidence of Ulbricht, Grotewohl, and Pieck. On November 15, 1950, he was made Minister for Heavy Industry and on December 1, 1951, Minister of Mining. In January 1952 *Neues Deutschland* accused him of “narrow-minded practicisim”, and the politburo charged him with willful disregard for the party’s admonitions and advice. Selbmann saved himself through a confession of his sins and thorough self-criticism. When the demonstrating workers of East Berlin appeared before the government buildings on June 16, 1953, Selbmann attempted to pacify them but was shouted down and fled back into the building. On November 4, 1953, he was again appointed Minister for Heavy Industry and on April 6, 1954, he was finally chosen a member of the SED Central Committee. In November 1954 he became a member of the presidium of the Council of Ministers, and on November 24, 1955, he was made the deputy president of the Council. At the same time, he was relieved from his ministerial duties and was made chairman of the Commission for Industry and Traffic. Selbmann has proved himself a reliable and, at times, an efficient administrator who kept his loyalty

(March 20, 1952), p. 91; Stern, *Die SED*, pp. 70f. Editors’ note: From 1955 to 1961, he was Minister for Foreign Commerce and Inter-German Commerce. He died on March 23, 1961 in East Berlin.

to the Communist cause. He has never been able to overcome the distrust of the Ulbricht wing of the SED. He has long been kept away from responsible party office and has been restricted, in the main, to administrative work.<sup>80</sup>

#### A-10: Vladimir Semenovich Semjonov

This Soviet diplomat was born in 1902 and received his first diplomatic assignment in Kovno in 1939. He was instrumental in preparing the liquidation of the Lithuanian state. In 1940 he was appointed to the Soviet embassy in Berlin, and in 1941 to the embassy in Stockholm. Back in Berlin in 1945, Semjonov was made political adviser to the Soviet Control Commission. He kept this post until April 22, 1953. He became head of the Soviet Control Commission in Germany after Stalin's death, and on May 28, 1953, he was appointed Soviet High Commissioner in Germany. On September 29, 1953, this position was changed to that of Ambassador, a post which he held until July 18, 1954. Semyënov is thought to have represented the "soft" Soviet policy line in Germany. Reportedly he has been critical of Ulbricht and of the harsh measures of the SED which sought to push through rapidly the sovietization of Germany. His adversary within the Soviet administration in Germany has been Colonel Tulpanov, the Soviet backer of Ulbricht.<sup>81</sup>

80 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945-1954*; Minister für Staatssicherheit: Wollweber. In: *Ost-Probleme*, 7 (1955) 49 (December 9, 1955), p. 1881; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Fritz Selbmann. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 19 (October 5, 1953), pp. 297f. Editors' note: In February 1958, he was accused of "being a manager" and supporting the alleged Schirdewan Wollweber Faction, and removed from all political and state offices. In 1959, he publicly offered self-criticism. From 1964, he was a freelance novelist. Publication of his memories of the GDR's foundation years was not permitted in 1975 because of his remarks about June 17, they were only released posthumously in 1999. Fritz Selbmann died on January 26, 1975 in East Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/fritz-selbmann> (26.5.2022).

81 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945-1954*. Editors' note: German spelling of the name: Wladimir Semjonowitsch Semjonow. From 1954 to 1955, Semjonow was head of the III European Department in the Foreign Ministry of the Soviet Union (III. Europäische Abteilung) and from 1955 to 1978 acted as its deputy Foreign Minister. In 1978, he was appointed Soviet ambassador in the Federal Republic. He retired in 1986. Spending his twilight years in Cologne, he died there on December 18, 1992. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/wladimir-semjonowitsch-semjonow> (26.5.2022).

## A-11: Willi Stoph

Born on September 9, 1914, in Herne Willi Stoph, a bricklayer by training, claims to have joined the Communist Youth League in 1928 and the KPD in 1931. Until 1945 he worked in various positions in the building industry. He is supposed to have carried out illegal activities for the Communist Party and to have made several trips to the Soviet Union. He speaks Russian fluently. In 1945 he was made director of the Department of Economics in the Central Secretariat of the KPD, later SED. On July 24, 1950, he was chosen a member and secretary of the SED Central Committee and, several weeks later, a delegate to the *Volkskammer*. In March 1951 he became director of the “Bureau for Questions Concerning the Economy in the Office of the Prime Minister”. This was the central planning office for the preparation of the rearmament program in the SZ. On May 9, 1952, Stoph was promoted to the post of Minister of the Interior. In this office he exercised complete control over the steadily increasing armed forces of the SZ, the Militarized People’s Police (KVP). In July 1953 he also became a member of the SED politburo and, for a time, gained control over the State Security Service. Stoph holds the rank of a three-star general in the People’s Police. In November 1955, he was entrusted with the supervision of atomic research in the SZ, and in January 1956 he was appointed Minister of Defense. Having the complete confidence of Ulbricht (see biography) and having at his disposal the armed forces of the regime, Willi Stoph wields an influence out of all proportion to his few public appearances and his seclusion from the public view. He has frequently been called “the man in the shadow”, and he is likely to emerge eventually as the number one man in the SZ government. He also enjoys the confidence of the Russians.<sup>82</sup>

82 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; J. E. Williams, Bonn Army Countered by Pankow. In: The Christian Science Monitor, 48 (1956) (January 18, 1956), p. 1; Karl W. Fricke, Willi Stoph. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 21 (November 5, 1953), p. 327; Stern, Die SED, pp. 71 f. Editors’ note: Political activities during the time of National Socialism are difficult to reconstruct. Contrary to his self-presentation as an opponent of the NS regime, an old article appeared in the “Fachzeitschrift für Architektur” (“Trade Journal for Architecture”) in 1960. In it he praised the communitarian (“volksgemeinschaftlich”) character of military manoeuvres and enthused about Adolf Hitler’s birthday parade. In the GDR, this was interpreted as the disguise of a resistance fighter. Stoph remained Minister for Defense until 1960. From 1963 to 1989, he was a member of Nationaler Verteidigungsrat (National Defense Council) and from 1964 to 1989 (with a three-year hiatus, 1973–1976) Chairman of the Council of Ministers. In the years of 1973 to 1976, he was Chairman of the State Council. He had to hand over this office to Erich Honecker. On October 7, 1989, he resigned along with the whole government. After 1990, his lavish and luxurious lifestyle became public, which eventually ended with an investigation and pre-trial detention for abuse of office and corruption. In February 1990, he was released because of his state of health. After reunification, investiga-

## A-12: Walter Ulbricht

Secretary-General of the SED, deputy prime minister, member of the politburo and the secretariat of the SED Central Committee, hero of labor, winner of the Karl Marx medal, Soviet citizen, former staff officer of the Red Army, and member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; Walter Ulbricht is the most powerful man in the SZ today. Born on June 30, 1893, in Leipzig, he became a carpenter after graduation from grade school. In 1908 he joined the Labor Youth, in 1910 the Wood Workers' Association, and in 1912 the SPD. Having joined the Spartacus League in 1919, he was one of the co-founders of the KPD. He rose to the position of district secretary in Leipzig in 1922. A year later he became a member of the KPD Central Committee and a deputy in the diet of Saxony. He attended Lenin College in Moscow and upon his return to Germany in 1928, he became a delegate to the Reichstag from Potsdam. Wanted for having instigated the murder of two police captains in Berlin in 1931, Ulbricht emigrated to Prague in October of 1933. In 1934 he took over the direction of the Saar KPD in Paris, and then went to Moscow where he became a candidate of the executive committee of the Communist International. In 1936 he was appointed political commissary of the International Brigade in Spain. After the war he moved to France and in 1939/40 to Sweden where he took charge of the exiled KPD members. During this period, he became one of the most ardent advocates of the Hitler-Stalin pact. In Russia after 1941, he founded the "National Committee of Free Germany". He returned to Berlin in 1945. He rose quickly from membership in the KPD Central Committee in 1946 to become the chairman of the Committee on Economics in the Volksrat in 1948, deputy prime minister in October 1949, and SED Secretary-General in July 1950. Ulbricht's rise in the KPD and SED hierarchy has been of unparalleled steadiness. With instinctive sureness Ulbricht has avoided lasting entanglements with deviationists and has stuck to the Moscow party line. His ruthlessness – exhibited especially during the Spanish Civil War – and his destruction of enemies and competitors within the SED hierarchy and in the SZ generally have earned him the fear of his colleagues and the hatred of the people in the SZ and elsewhere. Ulbricht is by far the most unpopular SZ leader. His fanaticism is partly based on his desire to compensate for his past advocacy of now discarded policies, such as the German-Soviet friendship of

tions were conducted for the killings at the GDR border, which ended in 15 months of pre-trial custody. Another re-litigated case was dismissed in August 1993 due to him being unfit to stand trial. On April 13, 1999, Stoph died in Berlin. Cf. <http://ausstellung.geschichte-innenministerien.de/biografien/willi-stoph/>; <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/willi-stoph> (26.5.2022).

1939. Ulbricht succeeded in 1945 and in 1946 in overcoming the opposition of Marshall Zhukov who was then the head of the Soviet Military Administration in the SZ. With the support of his party friends in Moscow and of Colonel Tulpanov in Karlshorst, Ulbricht gained his hold in the SED. He is not likely to give it up voluntarily. Ulbricht was married to Lotte Kuhn in 1951 after having lived with her for fifteen years.<sup>83</sup>

#### A-13: Ernst Wollweber

SZ Minister for State Security Ernst Wollweber was born on October 28, 1898, in Hannoversch-Münden. He graduated from grade school and went to work on the Weser river barges. In 1915 he joined the Socialist Youth, participated as a sailor in the Battle of Jutland, and in 1918 helped prepare the navy mutiny in Kiel. He was expelled from the Socialist Youth for his radicalism, and he joined the Spartacus League and the KPD. As a dock worker he organized Communist cells and was made secretary of the International of Sailors and Dock Workers. The KPD had him elected to the Reichstag in 1923 to give him immunity from arrest. From 1928 to 1933 he also was a member of the Prussian diet. After 1933 he organized the underground organization of the KPD in Berlin. Sent to Copenhagen by the party late in 1933, Wollweber became the head of the West European Comintern Bureau. He specialized in the smuggling of arms and in sabotaging ships in the Baltic and in the North Sea. He had been sent to Moscow on several occasions for specialized training. His organization soon covered all the major ports of the Scandinavian countries. It has been estimated that Wollweber was responsible for the loss of about half a million tons of cargo space during these years. He was finally arrested in Sweden in 1940. Upon the request of the Soviet Union, Wollweber, a Soviet citizen, was handed over by Sweden to the Soviets who pretended to try him for the embezzlement of state funds. Wollweber reappeared in Berlin in April 1946 as deputy chief of the Director General in Charge of Shipping. In February 1947 Wollweber became the head of this office. In 1949 he was made

83 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A–Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Walter Ulbricht. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 13 (July 5, 1953), pp. 199f.; Die Götter dürsten. In: *Der Spiegel*, January 21, 1953, pp. 10–15. Editors' note: Online at: <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-25655648.html>; 25.6.2022; Stern, *Die SED*, pp. 67f. Editors' note: Until 1971, he was First Secretary of the ZK and Chairman of the National Defense Council, from March 3, 1971 Honorary Chairman of the SED. From September 12, 1960, until his death on August 1, 1973, he was Chairman of the State Council. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/walter-ernst-paul-ulbricht> (26.5.2022).

an under-secretary in the Ministry for Traffic, and in 1953 Under-Secretary for Traffic. Little was heard of Wollweber during these years, and it seems safe to assume that he spent most of his time in reorganizing his widespread system of naval and shipping sabotage. After the revolt of June 17, 1953, Wollweber replaced the deposed Minister for State Security Zaisser (see biography) and took over this office as Under-Secretary for State Security and Deputy Minister of the Interior. In April 1954 Wollweber was elected a member of the SED Central Committee. On November 24, 1955, his office was taken out of the Ministry of the Interior and Wollweber, now Minister for State Security, became a member of the Council of Ministers. With Wollweber the SED regime has put at the head of its secret police apparatus a man thoroughly trained in the techniques of undercover work and particularly well versed in the art of naval and shipping sabotage. Wollweber is one of the top sabotage specialists of our time. He is faithful to the Soviet regime, and he enjoys the support of the Kremlin. As head of the SZ security forces, Wollweber has become one of the most dangerous men for the security of the West.<sup>84</sup>

## B. Persons of Importance

### 1) Anton Ackermann

Anton Ackermann, alias Eugen Hanisch, was born on December 25, 1905. Having joined the KPD in 1926, he studied at the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow in 1928. In 1932 and 1933 he worked in the German division of the Comintern and then took over the leadership of the underground KPD in

84 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Minister für Staatssicherheit: Wollweber. In: *Ost-Probleme*, 7 (1955) 49 (December 9, 1955), p. 1881; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Ernst Wollweber. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 15 (August 5, 1953), p. 231; Stern, *Die SED*, pp. 36 f.; K. W., *Spezialist Wollweber*. In: *Die Zeit*, August 20, 1953, p. 2. Editors' note: Online at: <https://www.zeit.de/1953/34/spezialist-wollweber>; June 25, 2022. The author abbreviation K. W. could, even upon request to newspaper "Die Zeit", not be verified in the index of authors. Wollweber's assessment of the developments in Poland in 1956 and the measures taken by GDR security forces against oppositional groups in 1956 contradicted Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker. In 1957, he was retired due to illness and "at his personal request". In January 1958, an investigation was opened against him and in February, Wollweber was excluded from the ZK of the SED due to "Fraktionstätigkeit" ("factional activity"), along with Karl Schirdewan. A "strict party reprimand" ("strenge Parteirüge") followed and he had to give up his Volkskammer mandate. Thereafter, he lived reclusively and, despite illness, wrote his memoirs. On May 3, 1967, Wollweber died in East Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/ernst-wollweber>; 25.6.2022.

Berlin. In 1935 he was made a member of the KPD Central Committee and of the politburo. He advocated the anti-fascist front orientation of the exiled Communist youth movement and participated in the Spanish Civil War. Back in the Soviet Union he directed the radio station of the “National Committee of Free Germany”. Returning to Germany in 1945 he proposed the thesis of the “special German way towards socialism”, helped found the League for Culture, and was made a member of the SED Central Committee and a candidate of the politburo. The Tito crisis made him lose the confidence of Ulbricht for his advocacy of the “German way”. He was made the acting director of the Foreign Office in April 1951, and in April 1953 was appointed director of the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute in Berlin. After the June revolt in 1953 he was censored for his “conciliatory attitude” towards SED defeatists and was not reelected as candidate of the politburo. He lost his positions in the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute and in the Foreign Office. On January 23, 1954, Ackermann was expelled from the SED Central Committee. In January 1954 he was given the directorship of the film department in the Ministry of Culture. Ackermann is not likely to return to power as long as Ulbricht remains the party boss.<sup>85</sup>

## B-2: Johannes Becher

On January 7, 1954, Johannes R. Becher, official communist author and poet, was made Minister for Culture in the SZ government. Born on May 22, 1891, in Munich of bourgeois parents, Becher studied history and medicine and early developed a neurotic aversion against the society in which he lived. This aversion found expression in his refusal to serve in the armed forces during the war of 1914–1918 and in his expressionistic poetic outbursts in the twenties. He visited the Soviet Union in 1927, joined the KPD upon his return, and left Germany in the thirties for Austria, Switzerland, France, and the Soviet Union. In the latter he became editor of “International Literature – German Leaves” in 1935. Back in Germany after 1945 he was made president of the

85 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A–Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Anton Ackermann. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 17 (September 5, 1953), pp. 263 f.; Stern, *Die SED*, p. 52. Editors’ note: On July 29, 1956, Ackermann was rehabilitated. In 1958, he became member and department head, in 1960 deputy Chairman of the Staatliche Planungskommission (National Commission for Planning, SPK) for Education and Culture. In 1961, he became disabled. On May 4, 1973, due to terminal illness, he committed suicide in East Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/anton-ackermann/>; 25.6.2022.

League for Culture on August 8, 1945, vice-president and president of the German Academy of Arts in 1949 and 1952 respectively, delegate to the *Volkskammer*, and on July 24, 1950, was elected a member of the SED Central Committee. He is a member of the presidium of the East German PEN Club, he received the National Prize<sup>86</sup> and the 1952 Stalin Peace Prize, he wrote the text for the East German national anthem, and he was made an honorary Doctor of Philosophy. His chief function is to utilize his fame of having once belonged to the cultural *avant-garde* of Germany for the sovietization of German life in the SZ. He now produces profusely contributions to communist propaganda and cheap utilitarian poetry. His servility and his prostration of the poetic office have earned him the contempt of western poets and writers and the perfunctory applause of his SED cronies. Becher speaks Russian fluently.<sup>87</sup>

### B-3: Lothar Bolz

Born on September 3, 1903, in Gleiwitz, Dr. Lothar Bolz was barred from practicing law by the Nazis because of his membership in the KPD. He emigrated to Danzig in 1933 and to Moscow in 1939. He taught German language and literature in Kharkov and Novosibirsk and obtained Soviet citizenship. Under the pseudonym of Rudolf Germersheim, he edited newspapers for the German prisoners of war in the Soviet Union. He returned to Germany in 1945 and remained little known until 1948 when, upon order of the Soviet Military Administration, he founded the National Democratic Party to organize former National Socialists and professional soldiers. The NDP quickly became a subsidiary to the SED and an independent party in name only. Bolz was na-

86 Editors' note: The National Price was awarded to him for the lyrics of the GDR's national anthem.

87 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945-1954*; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Johannes R. Becher. In: *PZ-Archiv*, 2 (1951) 20 (October 20, 1951), pp. 9f.; K. W., *Der Barde von Pankow*. In: *Die Zeit*, January 14, 1954, p. 2. Editors' note: Online at: <https://www.zeit.de/1953/34/der-barde-von-pankow>; 25.6.2022. The author abbreviation K. W. could, even upon request to newspaper "Die Zeit", not be verified in the index of authors. His full name was Johannes Robert Becher. Becher remained Minister for Culture until 1958 but had lost all political influence by 1957 and only remained minister in a titular capacity. In 1957, he settled accounts with Socialism in his work "Das Poetische Prinzip". For reasons of health, he gave up all offices in September 1958. Becher died on October 11, 1958 in East Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/johannes-robert-becher>; 25.6.2022.



med its chairman in September 1948. On October 12, 1948, he was appointed Minister of Reconstruction and on November 15, 1950, a deputy prime minister. He also is a member of the National Council of the National Front and was sent as a delegate to the *Volkskammer* on October 15, 1950. In December 1951 he led the SZ delegation to the UN Political Committee in Paris, and on October 1, 1953, he was appointed Foreign Minister. Bolz's usefulness to the Soviets consists in his advocacy of German national ambitions and in the appeal he holds for German nationalists. His Moscow training has given him the confidence of the Soviet leadership, and he remains the trusted agent of the Kremlin. He speaks Russian fluently.<sup>88</sup>

#### B-4: Erich Correns

Professor Erich Correns was born in Tübingen on May 12, 1896. As a scientist he became known for his research in synthetic fibres and in the uses of cellulose. He is the director of the Institute for Fibre Research at Seehof near Teltow. Until 1952 he was said to have frequently toyed with the idea of leaving the SZ, but has always been swayed by offers of honors and material rewards to stay. In October 1949 he was given the National Prize, and in July 1951 he was made a member of the German Academy of Sciences. On October 7, 1949, he was elected president of the National Council which is the executive organ of the National Front. He has held this office ever since. In August 1953 he was a member of the German delegation to Moscow, on May 7, 1954, he received the "Order of Merit of the Fatherland in Gold", and on May 29, 1954, he was given the "Order of State Flag, First Class", of the North Korean republic. Professor Correns is not a party member and does not hold any government office. As a "patriotic scientist" he has become a tool of the regime.<sup>89</sup>

88 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A-Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945-1954; Karl W. Fricke, Lothar Bolz. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 20 (October 20, 1953), pp. 313f. K. W., „Außenminister“ Bolz. In: Die Zeit, October 22, 1953, 2. Editors' note: Online at: <https://www.zeit.de/1953/43/aussenminister-bolz>; 17.5.2022. The author abbreviation K. W. could, even upon request to newspaper "Die Zeit", not be verified in the index of authors. Lothar Bolz remained deputy Prime Minister until 1967 and Minister for Foreign Affairs until 1965. From 1968 to 1978, he was President of the Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft (Society for German-Soviet Friendship, DSF). On December 29, 1986, he died in East Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/lothar-bolz>; 25.6.2022.

## B-5: Franz Dahlem

Born on January 14, 1892, in Rohrbach, Lorraine, Dahlem joined the SPD in 1913. In 1918 he played a leading role in the Allenstein, East Prussia, mutiny of German soldiers. As a USPD functionary in Cologne he joined the KPD in 1920. He was deported from the Ruhr by the Interallied Commission in 1923. He then became a member of the Prussian diet, of the Reichstag, and of the KPD Central Committee. After 1933 he worked for the exiled politburo in Prague, joined the International Brigade in Spain in 1937/38, and was arrested in France in 1939. Handed over by the Vichy government to the Nazis, he was held in the Mauthausen concentration camp. In May 1945 he was sent to Moscow and upon his return to the SZ was put in charge of the KPD and SED cadre training. He was elected a member of both the SED Central Committee and the politburo. As cadre chief he was also responsible for the KPD espionage act in West Germany. Engaged in a struggle for power with Ulbricht, Dahlem was the loser. His enthusiastic advocacy of the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939, his connections with western agents, his acquaintance with Noel H. Field<sup>90</sup>, and his “complete blindness towards the attempts of western agents to infiltrate the party” were held against him in May 1953. Dahlem was expelled from both the Central Committee and the politburo. He was censored severely and barred from any party office on January 23, 1954. Nothing is known about his present whereabouts nor about his occupation.<sup>91</sup>

89 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Konrad Ostmann, Erich Correns. In: SBZ-Archiv, 5 (1954) 11 (June 5, 1954), p. 173. Editors’ note: Until 1981, Correns remained President of the National Council of the National Front. He died on May 18, 1981. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/erich-correns>; 25.6.2022.

90 Editors’ note: For the incident involving Noel Field, cf. Bernd-Rainer Barth/Werner Schweizer (ed.), *Der Fall Noel Field. Schlüsselfigur der Schauprozesse in Osteuropa*, Berlin 2004.

91 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Wolfgang Jacob, *Der Fall Dahlem*. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 10 (May 25, 1953), pp. 145–147; Oskar Pfefferkorn, *Franz Dahlem*. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 6 (March 20, 1953), pp. 85 f.; Stern, *Die SED*, p. 53. Editors’ note: Dahlem was politically rehabilitated in 1956. From 1957, he was Deputy State Secretary and from August 1967 first deputy of the Minister for Higher Education. On February 2, 1957, he became a coopted member of the ZK of the SED and member of the Research Council of the GDR. Additionally, he again became a member of Volkskammer in 1963. He died on December 17, 1981. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/franz-dahlem>; 26.6.2022.

## B-6: Georg Dertinger

A journalist by profession, Dertinger was born on December 25, 1902, in Berlin. Having studied law and economics, he also attended a military school and was active in nationalist politics. He was a leading member of the veteran's organization, the *Stahlhelm*. After 1945 he became press secretary and in June 1946 Secretary General of the CDU in the SZ. Blackmailed by the Soviets with a series of anti-communist articles he had written for the *Neue Wiener Tagblatt* in 1944, Dertinger sought to prove his loyalty to the Soviets by purging the CDU of its independent leadership and by making it wholly subservient to the SED. Dertinger was rewarded with an appointment as head of the SZ Foreign Office. However, he remained a mere figurehead. SED under-secretary Anton Ackermann (see biography) was the actual director of the Foreign Office. Dertinger officially handed over to Poland the German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line. For this action he received the "Commander's Cross with Star of the Medal 'Polonia Restituta'" on December 30, 1952. Only two weeks later, on January 1, 1953, Dertinger was arrested on charges of espionage. Dismissed from all party and state offices, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison on June 9, 1954. Dertinger's bourgeois background never enabled him to win the confidence of his Communist masters. He was utilized by the SED in order to win influence over nationalist and bourgeois elements. Once this had been achieved, Dertinger was dropped as unreliable.<sup>92</sup>

92 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Berend von Nottbeck, Der große Kehraus. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 2 (January 20, 1953), pp. 17f.; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Georg Dertinger. In: SBZ-Archiv, 3 (1952) 12 (June 20, 1952), p. 181; K. W., Georg Dertinger. In: Die Zeit, January 22, 1953, p. 2. Editors' note: Online under: <https://www.zeit.de/1953/04/georg-dertinger>; May 17, 2021. The author abbreviation K. W. could, even upon request to newspaper "Die Zeit", not be verified in the index of authors. Dertinger's conviction followed the extortion of a confession and torture. Along with him, both his wife and his son were sentenced to eight and three years in prison, respectively. From 1956, Dertinger was imprisoned in Bautzen II. In October 1963, he joined the Catholic Church. A year later he was pardoned. Until 1967, he was editor for the catholic St.-Benno-Verlag in Leipzig, from 1967 case worker for Caritas in Dresden. He died on January 21, 1968 in Leipzig. In September 1991, the Berlin Regional Court (Landgericht) overturned the 1954 sentence on charges of extortion of a testimony and perversion of justice. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/georg-dertinger>; 26.6.2022.

**B-7: Johannes Dieckmann**

President of the *Volkskammer* Johannes Dieckmann is one of the few remaining SZ functionaries whose political past shows an original opposition to Communism. Dieckmann was born on January 19, 1893, in Fischerhude near Bremen. He studied economics and modern languages. During the First World War he was made a captain in the army. After the war he joined Stresemann's German People's Party, and in 1928 obtained a seat in the diet of Saxony. Having been active in private business from 1933 to 1945, he became a member of the LDP in Saxony in 1945. He soon became instrumental in prostrating the LDP as an independent party and in making it an instrument of the SED. His reward came with his appointment as Minister of Justice in the Saxon state government. He excelled in his subservience to SED directives, when, e. g., on August 12, 1948, he prohibited the release of political prisoners from arrest for reasons of health. On October 7, 1949, he was elected president of the *Volkskammer*. He is co-chairman of the LDP and received an honorary Doctor of Law degree from the University of Leipzig in January 1953. Dieckmann presents the pitiful picture of the former non-Communist who is pressed for continual proof of his loyalty to the SED. Obviously not a Communist by conviction, Dieckmann has to be careful not to arouse the resentment of the SED hierarchy. He lives today by the good grace of the SED.<sup>93</sup>

**B-8: Max Fechner**

Max Fechner was born on July 27, 1892, near Berlin. He spent his early political career within the ranks of the SPD. Detention in Nazi concentration camps persuaded him of the necessity for a union of the SPD and the KPD after the war. With Pieck, Grotewohl, and Ulbricht (see biographies) he became the fourth leading figure in the SED. The Tito crisis made him want to compensate for his SPD background through increased faithfulness to SED demands. In October 1948 he was made president of the German Legal Administration, on October 12, 1949, Minister of Justice in the first Grotewohl government. On July 24, 1950, he was also elected a member of the SED Central Committee. As Minister of Justice, he became responsible for the complete surrender of the East German judicial system to the legal terror of the SED regime. Yet all these measures could not eradicate the liability of Fechner's SPD background. During the revolt

93 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.): *SBZ von 1945-1954*; Konrad Ostmann, Johannes Dieckmann. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 5 (1954) 9 (May 5, 1954), pp. 137f. Editors' note: From 1969, Dieckmann was one of the deputy Chairmen of the State Council. From 1963 to 1968, he was President of the Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft (DSF). He died on February 22, 1969 in East Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/johannes-dieckmann>; 26.6.2022.

of June 1953, Fechner insisted that DDR constitution guaranteed the workers the right to strike. One month later he was arrested by the State Security Service for “activities hostile to the republic”. He was accused of sheltering fascist provocateurs. He was subsequently excluded from the SED Central Committee and from party membership. Nothing has been heard of him since.<sup>94</sup>

#### B-9: Adolf Hennecke

Born on May 25, 1905, in Meggen, Westphalia, Adolf Hennecke worked as a payroll clerk and as a miner. Politically he was active in the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition. In 1947 he was sent to a SED training institute and graduated with a paper on “Stakhanov – A Russian Example for the German Worker”. Colonel Tulpanov of the Soviet Military Administration selected Hennecke to become the German Stakhanov. After careful preparation Hennecke succeeded on October 13, 1948, in mining 387 percent of his quota of bituminous coal. This feat was the signal for the beginning of the German Stakhanov movement which was to raise the work quotas in all branches of industry, business, and agriculture. Hennecke received the National Prize, was made department head for labor productivity in the Ministry for Heavy Industry and assistant in the State Secretariat for Coal and Energy. In May 1949 Hennecke was invited to the Soviet Union to visit comrade Stakhanov. Hennecke is now head of the Department for Rationalization, Suggestions, and Inventions in the Division of Research and Development in the Ministry for Heavy Industry. He was made a delegate to the *Volkskammer* and, on April 6, 1954, a member of the SED Central Committee.<sup>95</sup>

94 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A–Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Max Fechner. In: *PZ-Archiv*, 2 (1951) 24 (December 20, 1951), pp. 7f.; anonymous author, *Politische Dokumentation. Der neue Kurs und die Aufgaben der Partei*. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 15 (August 5, 1953), pp. 233–239, here 235 (on Max Fechner). Editors’ note: Fechner was arrested on July 15, 1955 and, on May 24, 1955, in the central detention centre of the MfS in Berlin-Hohenschönhausen, sentenced to eight years in prison by the First Criminal Division of the Supreme Court for “crimes against article 6 of the Constitution of the GDR in conjunction with Control Council Directive 38” (“Verbrechen gegen Artikel 6 der Verfassung der DDR in Verbindung mit der Kontrollratsdirektive 38”). On April 24, 1956, he was released early and granted amnesty two days later. In June 1958, his party membership was restored and he was recognised to have been persecuted by the Nazi regime (“Verfolgter des Naziregimes”, VdN). As a result, he received an honorary pension until his death on September 13, 1973, in Schöneiche near Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/max-fechner>; 26.6.2022.

95 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A–Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Stern, *Die SED*, p. 20. Editors’ note: Hennecke remained mem-

## B-10: Rudolf Herrstadt

Rudolf Herrstadt was born on March 17, 1903, in Gleiwitz. He joined the KPD in his twenties, was foreign correspondent for the *Berliner Tageblatt* in Warsaw and Moscow. In 1933 he headed the German desk in the West-European department of the intelligence service of the Red Army. He was also working for the Comintern. He became a Soviet citizen and editor-in-chief of the newspaper of the “National Committee of Free Germany”. In Germany after 1945 he headed the department of instruction in the SED Central Secretariat, built up the system of people’s correspondents in the SBZ, and was put at the head of the *Berliner Zeitung* on January 24, 1946. On May 1, 1949, he became editor-in-chief of the SED paper *Neues Deutschland*, and in July 1950 he was elected a member of the SED Central Committee and a candidate of the politburo. In July 1953 Ulbricht dismissed Herrstadt as editor of the *Neues Deutschland*. Herrstadt was also excluded from the SED Central Committee and from the politburo for having encouraged “defeatism and factionalism” within the SED. On January 23, 1954, he was also expelled from the party. Informed sources say that only his connections to the Soviet Union saved his life. As long as Ulbricht remains the leading man in the SED, Herrstadt is not likely to reappear in a responsible position. He is likely to be available, however, if a policy change should occur.<sup>96</sup>

## B-11: Hans Jendretzky

Born on July 20, 1897, in Berlin, Jendretzky joined the KPD in 1919, went underground in 1933, was imprisoned for seven years, and in 1945 was made city councilor in Berlin. He was the first chairman of the Federation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB) in the SBZ from April 1946 to October 1948. In March 1948 he was chosen a member of the German Economic Commission. In October 1948 he was elected the executive secretary of the SED state committee in Saxony. On July 24, 1950, he was chosen a member of the SED Cen-

ber of the ZK of the SED until 1975. He died on February 22, 1975, in Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/adolf-hennecke>; 26.6.2022.

96 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Rudolf Herrstadt. In: SBZ-Archiv, 3 (1952) 14 (July 20, 1952), p. 213; anonymous author, SBZ-Archiv, 5 (1954) 3 (February 5, 1954), inside cover, on Rudolf Herrstadt; Stern, Die SED, pp. 53 f. Editors’ note: Herrstadt (pseudonym R. E. Hardt) was employed by the German Central Archive (Deutsches Zentralarchiv), Merseburg department, from 1953 to 1966. He died on August 28, 1966, in Halle (Saale). On November 29, 1989, he was rehabilitated by the ZPKK of the SED. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/rudolf-herrstadt>; 26.6.2022.

tral Committee and a candidate of the politburo. He was not deemed worthy to be reelected to either of these offices in 1953 and was likewise dismissed from his post at the head of the Saxony SED state committee. He was then made chairman of the SED district council Neubrandenburg. In connection with the expulsion of Zaisser and Herrnsstadt (see biographies), Jendretzky was censored by the SED Central Committee. In November 1954 he was reelected to his post as chairman of the SED district council Neubrandenburg at Potsdam. Neither important nor influential enough to be reelected to the Central Committee and politburo, Jendretzky managed to avoid his expulsion from the party and is kept now in relatively minor offices.<sup>97</sup>

#### B-12: Hermann Kastner

Born on October 25, 1886, in Berlin, Kastner became a lawyer and a professor at the Leopold Academy in Berlin. He was elected a delegate of the German Democratic Party to the diet of Saxony in 1922. In 1933 he resumed his work as a lawyer. From December 1945 to March 1948, he was Minister of Justice and deputy prime minister in Saxony. In March 1948 he was made deputy chairman for financial affairs in the German Economic Commission. In 1948 he also acted as president of the German People's Council. On February 28, 1949, he was made co-chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party. On October 12, 1949, he received his appointment as one of the deputy prime ministers in the first Grotewohl government. Scandals brought about his expulsion from the LDP in July 1950 and his resignation from the Grotewohl cabinet in November 1950. In 1951 he was made chairman of the Committee for the Furtherance of the German Intelligentsia.<sup>98</sup>

97 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A–Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Stern, *Die SED*, p. 54. Editors' note: In July 1956, Jendretzky was rehabilitated and his party sentence overturned. From 1957 to 1989, he, again, was a member of the ZK of the SED. Between 1957 and 1959, he held the office of Deputy Interior Minister and State Secretary for Local Council Affairs. From 1960 to 1962, he was minister and head of the ZKSK after being head of the secretariat of the Council of Ministers for a short time. From 1958 to 1990, he was a Volkskammer member and official president by seniority. Between 1965 and 1990, he was the FDGB's parliamentary party leader. He retired in 1987. On July 2, 1992, Jendretzky died in Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/hans-jendretzky>; 26.6.2022.

98 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A–Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*. Editors' note: In September 1956, Kastner fled to the Federal Republic. Between 1949 and 1953, he worked for the organization "Gehlen", alternatively BND, under the alias "Hedwig". At last, he lived in Munich. On September 4, 1957, he died in Frankfurt on the Main. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/>

## B-13: Wilhelm Koenen

Wilhelm Koenen, born on January 7, 1886, in Hamburg, was a member of the SPD and USPD and joined the KPD in 1919. From 1919 to 1921 he organized strikes and riots in central Germany and came to be known as “barricade-Willy”. He was editor of the *Rote Fahne*, a member of the Reichstag and of the KPD Central Committee. Exiled in England during the war he was interned for advocating the Hitler-Stalin pact. He later organized the English branch of the “National Committee of Free Germany”. Back in Germany after 1945 he became chairman of the KPD and SED in Saxony, and from January 1950 to February 1953 was the chairman of the secretariat of the National Council of the National Front. He has been a member of the SED presidium since 1946, and on July 26, 1950, was elected a member of the SED Central Committee. In May 1953 he was censored by the SED for “insufficient political watchfulness”. He is now the director of the Bureau of the People’s and State’s Council, chairman of the *Volkskammer*’s standing committee on general affairs, and a member of the presidium of the National Council of the National Front. Koenen has not been able to gain the highest party offices despite his commendable Communist record before 1933. He does not enjoy the confidence of the Ulbricht clique, nor does he have the backing of the Soviet hierarchy in Moscow.<sup>99</sup>

## B-14: Bruno Leuschner

Born on August 12, 1910, in Berlin, retail-trade apprentice Leuschner joined the KPD in 1931. In 1936 he was sentenced to six years imprisonment for preparing to commit high treason. From 1924 to 1945 he was held in the Sachsenhausen and Mauthausen concentration camps. Freed in 1945 he was made director of the Department of Planning in the KPD, later SED party presidium. In 1947 he helped organize the German Economic Commission of the SZ, and he served as its deputy chairman in charge of economic problems and planning. In 1949 he became under-secretary in the Ministry of Planning. Elected a member of the SED Central Committee in July 1950, he became the director of the State Planning Commission in 1952. He was chosen a candidate of the po-

de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/hermann-kastner; 26.6.2022.

99 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Wilhelm Koenen. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 2 (January 20, 1953), pp. 27f.; Stern, Die SED, p. 23. Editors’ note: From 1959, Koenen was Chairman of the Commission for the Study of the Berlin Labour Movement (Kommission zur Erforschung der Berliner Arbeiterbewegung). He died in Berlin on October 19, 1963. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/wilhelm-koenen>; 26.6.2022.



litburo in July 1953, and he became a member of the presidium of the Council of Ministers on November 19, 1954. Leuschner's slow rise among the economic planners of the SZ is due to his insufficient training in economic affairs. The absence of political deviations before 1945 and his subsequent subordination to the Ulbricht course make his place in the SED hierarchy relatively secure. This was attested with his selection as politburo candidate at a time when old-time Communists – such as Herrnstadt, Fechner, Dahlem, and Ackermann (see biographies) – were expelled from the party and lost their offices.<sup>100</sup>

#### B-15: Karl Maron

Born on April 27, 1904, in Berlin, Maron was a plumber's apprentice, joined the KPD in 1925, and organized Communist sports clubs in Berlin. In 1934 he emigrated to Copenhagen and held office in the Communist Red Sports International. From there he went on to Moscow in 1935, and appeared in 1943 as deputy editor of *Freies Deutschland*, a newspaper for German prisoners of war. Back in Germany in 1945 he was made first deputy mayor of Berlin. In 1947 he was chairman of the SED delegation in the Berlin city council, in 1948 city councilor for economic affairs in East Berlin, and from 1949 to 1950 he was deputy editor-in-chief of *Neues Deutschland*. On August 31, 1950, he was appointed Chief of the Main Department of the People's Police, and as such had become the head of the nonmilitary branch of the People's Police. The state security service does not fall under his jurisdiction. In April 1954 he was elected a member of the SED Central Committee. Maron, who holds the rank of a Lieutenant General, is known as an obedient, unimaginative, and at times stupid and brutal administrator with little power of original thought. He is the ideal type of the "apparatschik", the unquestioning, machine-like functionary.<sup>101</sup>

100 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A–Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Karl W. Fricke, Bruno Leuschner. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 5 (1954) 4 (February 20, 1954), p. 57; Stern, *Die SED*, p. 73. Editors' note: Bruno Max Leuschner was member of the State Council from 1960 to 1963. Due to his activity as Permanent Plenipotentiary (representative) of the GDR in the newly established Executive Committee of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Rat für gegenseitige Wirtschaftshilfe, RGW), he resigned from the State Council of the GDR. Leuschner died on February 10, 1965 in Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/bruno-max-leuschner>; 26.6.2022.

101 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A–Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Karl W. Fricke, Karl Maron. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953), 22 (November 20, 1953), p. 347; Stern, *Die SED*, p. 26. Editors' note: On July 1, 1955, Maron succeeded Willi Stoph as Interior Minister. From 1958 to 1967, he was

**B-16: Ernst Melsheimer**

Ernst Melsheimer was born on April 9, 1897, in Neunkirchen in the Saar. A son of an industrialist, he received a Dr. jur. degree, and began his early legal career in Berlin. In 1928 he joined the SPD which he left again in 1932. He continued his career under the Nazi regime, was made a Kammergerichtsrat and was recommended for the position of Reichsgerichtsrat in 1944. He served as legal councilor to the National Socialist People's Welfare organization. In 1945 he was state attorney in Berlin. The SZ regime made him a vice president in the SZ Central Administration of Justice. He joined the KPD, later SED, and in 1950 was made State Attorney General of the SZ. He gained notoriety through his conduct of several exhibition trials in the SZ.<sup>102</sup>

**B-17: Erich Mückenberger**

Born on June 8, 1910, Erich Mückenberger, a plumber by training, joined the Socialist Labor Youth in 1924, the SPD in 1927, and the Reichsbanner in 1928. From 1933 to 1935 he went underground and spent several months in jail and in a concentration camp. From 1942 to 1945 he served in an army labor battalion. He rejoined the SPD in 1945, and after the fusion with the KPD was made SED county secretary in Chemnitz. In 1948 he became second chairman of the SED State Committee in Saxony. From December 1949 until the summer of 1952, he was the first secretary of the SED State Committee in Thuringia. On July 24, 1950, he became a member of the SED Central Committee and a candidate of the politburo. Since July 1953 he has been in charge of the farm collectivization program as Secretary for Agriculture of the SED Central Committee. He is a delegate to the Volkskammer and a member of the presidium of the National Council of the National Front. Mückenberger is known for his limited intellectual capacity, for his general unfamiliarity with the problems of agriculture, and for his quickly adopted faithfulness to the Ulbricht course. Despite his SPD background, he is likely to stay in office as long as Ulbricht rules the party.<sup>103</sup>

a Volkskammer member. From August 1961, he was a member of the staff of the National Defense Council of the GDR for closing the border in Berlin. For reasons of health, he resigned at his own request in 1963 with the rank of Colonel General (Generaloberst). In March 1974, he was retired as head of the Institute of Opinion Research at the ZK of the SED. Maron died on February 2, 1957 in East Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/karl-maron>; 26.6.2022.

102 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A-Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954.

103 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A-Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Karl W. Fricke, Erich Mückenberger was a Volkskammer

## B-18: Vincenz Müller

Vincenz Müller, born on November 5, 1894, began his career as a professional soldier in the Bavarian corps of engineers. He was trained in the school of the German General Staff under General Beck. In 1941 he was involved in the evacuation of Jews in the Donets Basin. Participation in this action was utilized by the Soviets after Müller's surrender as deputy commander of the Fourth German Army to pressure him into joining the "National Committee of Free Germany". Having become a willing tool of the Soviets he was sent back to Germany in 1947 to become inspector of the People's Police. In 1948 he was instrumental in founding the National Democratic Party and he became the party's business manager. In 1949 he was elected a delegate to the *Volkskammer*, and on November 8, 1950, was chosen its vice president. He remained in this office until December 1952. On October 1, 1952, he was made a three-star general in the People's Police and first deputy Minister of the Interior. Müller's qualification as a leader of soldiers lies in his talent for organization and planning. He has never been able to win the confidence of his subordinates and is known to be easily excitable and rash. In Müller the SED has found a soldier over whom it possesses full power and who is likely to serve the party in blind obedience.<sup>104</sup>

member until 1989, Chairman of the SED parliamentary party and member of the ZK and politburo (from 1958). On November 8, 1989, he resigned along with the politburo of the ZK of the SED. In January 1990, he was expelled from the SED/PDS (Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus, Democratic Socialist Party). As a retiree, he was charged with "manslaughter and joint responsibility for the border regime of the GDR" before the Berlin Regional Court in November 1995. Because he was unfit to stand trial, the proceedings were severed in August 1996 and provisionally discontinued. On February 10, 1998, Mückenberger died in Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/erich-mueckenberger>; 26.6.2022.

104 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945-1954*; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Vincenz Müller. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 3 (1952) 22 (November 20, 1952), p. 347. Editors' note: From 1953 to 1955, Müller was Chief of the main staff of KVP and Chief of Staff. In 1956, he became deputy of the Minister for National Defense and Chief of the main staff of NVA. In 1955/56, on behalf of the government, he held secret talks with Federal Minister Fritz Schäffer about a German confederation. From 1958 onwards, Müller was retired due to a politburo decision to gradually dismiss all former Wehrmacht officers from NVA by the end of the 1950s. Temporarily, he worked as a consultant in the Ministry. On May 12, 1961, Müller committed suicide in Berlin-Schmöckwitz. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/vincenz-mueller>; 26.6.2022.

## B-19: Otto Nuschke

Otto Nuschke is the most conspicuous non-Communist member of the SZ government. As Deputy Prime Minister – appointed by Grotewohl on October 12, 1949 – and as first chairman of the East CDU he serves Communist propaganda purposes by representing an “independent party” in the cabinet. Born on February 23, 1883, in Frohburg near Leipzig, Nuschke became a printer and a journalist. In 1910 he was made parliamentary reporter for the *Berliner Tageblatt*, in 1915 editor-in-chief of the *Berliner Volkszeitung*. He served as delegate of the German Democratic Party to the Weimar National Convention, and to the Prussian diet from 1921 to 1923. In 1933 he withdrew from public life to live on his farm. In 1945 he was a co-founder of the CDU in the SZ. He soon became the business manager of the CDU paper *Neue Zeit* and a delegate to the diets of Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt. He cultivated his friendship with Soviet Colonel Tulpanov and succeeded in having Jakob Kaiser – the present Minister for All-German Affairs in the Bonn government – expelled from his post in the East-CDU presidium by the Soviets. In March 1948 Nuschke was made chairman of the Plebiscite for Unity and Just Peace, and on September 19, 1948, he became the first chairman of the CDU in the SZ. His obedience to the Soviets and to the SED has been rewarded by appointment to high government office. Nuschke pays for this privilege with his periodic expressions of loyalty and devotion to the Soviets and the SED regime.<sup>105</sup>

## B-20: Elli Schmidt

Elli Schmidt was born in Berlin on August 9, 1908. A dressmaker by profession she joined the KPD in 1927 and was in charge of the Women’s Department of the KPD district Berlin-Brandenburg. After 1933 she was active in underground KPD agitation in Wuppertal, and then emigrated to Prague, Paris, and Moscow. She attended the Lenin Academy, and, under the name of Irene Gärtner, she directed propaganda broadcasts to Germany over Station “Free Germany” during the war. In 1945 she was put in charge of the women’s division of the KPD, later SED Berlin, and was instrumental in founding the antifascist women’s committees. This led to her election as chairman of the Democratic Women’s League in May 1949. In October 1949 she was made a member of the presidium of the Provisional German People’s Council. On July 24, 1950, she

105 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Karl W. Fricke, Otto Nuschke. In: SBZ-Archiv, 4 (1953) 18 (September 20, 1953), pp. 281f. Editors’ note: Nuschke died on December 27, 1957 in Henningsdorf near Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/otto-nuschke>; 26.6.2022.

was chosen a member of the SED Central Committee and a candidate of the politburo. On February 2, 1953, she was put in charge of the State Commission for Trade and Supplies. This appointment, however, marked the beginning of her decline in power. She was not reelected to either the Central Committee or the politburo, she lost her position as chairman of the Women's League in the summer of 1953, and she was censored by the Central Committee in January 1954 for having shown "tendencies to capitulate". She is now the director of the Institute of Sartorial Culture (*Bekleidungskultur*). Elli Schmidt had been married to Anton Ackermann (see biography). They now are divorced.<sup>106</sup>

#### B-21: Paul Wandel

Paul Wandel was born on February 16, 1905, in Mannheim. He joined the KPD in 1923, emigrated to the Soviet Union ten years later, studied at the Marx-Engels Institute, became head of the German division and instructor at the Comintern Training Institute from 1941 to 1943. He then was active as the political secretary for Wilhelm Pieck. In 1945 he was made editor-in-chief of the *Deutsche Volkszeitung* in Berlin. From 1945 to 1949 he was president of the Central Administration for Public Instruction, from 1949 to 1952 Minister for Public Instruction in the Grotewohl cabinet, then head of the Office for Coordination and Control of Education, Science, and the Arts in the Council of Ministers. He was given an honorary Dr. Phil. degree from the University of Wittenberg in 1952, and was elected a secretary of the SED Central Committee in July 1953. In January 1954 he was discharged upon his own request from his government duties "in order to devote his time exclusively to the party." On July 29, 1954, he appeared again as a member of the presidium of the (East) German League for the United Nations. He is also a delegate to the *Volkskammer* and a member of the presiding council of the League for Culture. Wandel is primarily responsible for the sovietization of the East German school system and of the universities in the SZ. He is the Communist intellectual par excellence and is thoroughly devoted to Leninist theory.<sup>107</sup>

106 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Elli Schmidt. In: SBZ-Archiv, 3 (1952) 7 (April 5, 1952), p. 105; Stern, Die SED, p. 55. Editors' note: Schmidt remained Director of the Institute for Dress Culture (Institut für Bekleidungskultur, later Deutsches Modeinstitut [German Fashion Institute]) until 1967. She died on July 30, 1980 in Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/elli-schmidt/>; 26.6.2022.

107 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), SBZ von A–Z; id. (ed.), SBZ von 1945–1954; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Paul Wandel. In: SBZ-Archiv, 3 (1952) 8 (April 20, 1952), p. 121; Stern, Die SED, pp. 33f. Editors' note: In October 1957, he was "sternly reprimanded" ("strenge Rüge") for not being sufficiently rigorous

## B-22: Herbert Warnke

Born on February 24, 1902, in Hamburg, Herbert Warnke became a bank messenger and a riveter. He joined the KPD in 1923. From 1929 to 1931 he was a union representative on the plant council of Blohm and Voss. Expelled from office for overstepping his jurisdiction, Warnke moved to Bremen and in 1923 became a delegate to the Reichstag. From 1933 to 1936 he was busy organizing underground Communist unions, in 1936 he fled to Denmark and in 1938 to Sweden. He continued to organize sailors and cooperated with the sabotage network of Wollweber (see biography). Interned in Sweden from 1939 to 1943, he returned to Germany in 1945. He was made first chairman of the Federation of Free German Trade Unions in Mecklenburg, and on October 1, 1948, first chairman of the Federation in the SZ. He is a delegate to the *Volkskammer*, a member of the executive committee of the World Trade Union Federation, a member of the SED Central Committee, and a candidate of the politburo. Warnke has always been a faithful follower of his masters in Moscow and Pankow.<sup>108</sup>

## B-23: Wilhelm Zaisser

Wilhelm Zaisser was born in Dortmund on January 19, 1893. In 1918 he established contact with Red Army officers in the Ukraine. Back in Germany he joined the KPD in 1919, organized a secret red army in the Ruhr in 1920, and then became a communist trade union functionary. He continued his activities as Red Army agent in 1923. Condemned to death in absentia by a German court, he was sent to China by the Comintern to continue his conspiratory activities. He reappeared in Germany in 1930, then went to Spain where he

in enforcing the SED leadership's cultural policy line. Between April 1958 and February 1961, he served as the GDR's ambassador in the People's Republic of China. After this, he was deputy Foreign Minister for three years. Subsequently, from 1964 to 1975, he was President of the League for the Friendship among Nations (Liga für Völkerfreundschaft). In 1985, Humboldt University Berlin awarded him an honorary doctorate. In 1990, he joined the PDS. He died on June 3, 1995 in Berlin. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/paul-wandel/>; 26.6.2022.

108 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945–1954*; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Herbert Warnke. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 3 (1952) 23/24 (December 25, 1952), pp. 367 f.; Stern, *Die SED*, pp. 73 f. Editors' note: Until his death in 1975, Warnke remained a member of the SED's party executive and the ZK and, additionally, a *Volkskammer* member. Between 1971 and 1975, he was a State Council member. He died in Berlin on March 26, 1975. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/herbert-warnke/>; June 26, 2022.

became known as General Gomez, commander of the Thirteenth International Brigade and Chief of Staff of the international forces of the red command. For his defeat he went to jail for two years and then was appointed to a Moscow foreign language publishing firm. His ability to speak German, Russian, French, English, and Spanish qualified him for this job. During the Second World War he became director of the Antifascist School at Kranij Gorsk. In 1945 he was made chief of police in Saxony-Anhalt, in August 1948 Saxony Minister of the Interior, in June 1949 vice president of the Central Administration of the Interior in the SBZ, instructor-in-chief of the People's Police, and finally, on February 17, 1950, SZ Minister for State Security. As such he was responsible for the organization of the State Security Service. Having been elected to the SED Central Committee and the politburo in July 1950, he was expelled from both bodies in July 1953, dismissed from his post as minister, and excluded from the party in January 1954. His downfall came as a result of his opposition to the Ulbricht course. His Soviet citizenship, his membership in the CPSU, and his ties to Moscow saved him from being executed. He is married to Else Zaisser who lived in the Soviet Union from 1932 to 1945. His daughter is married to a Soviet officer.<sup>109</sup>

109 Sources: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *SBZ von A-Z*; id. (ed.), *SBZ von 1945-1954*; Oskar Pfefferkorn, Wilhelm Zaisser. In: *SBZ-Archiv*, 4 (1953) 8 (April 20, 1953), pp. 123 f.; Stern, *Die SED*, pp. 55 f. Editors' note: Until his death, Zaisser worked as a translator. He died on March 3, 1958, in Berlin. The PDS rehabilitated Zaisser on April 25, 1993. His wife, Elisabeth Zaisser (born Knipp), was Minister for Public Education between July 1952 and October 1953. At her own request, she resigned from this position after the episode surrounding her husband. She was a freelance translator until her death on December 15, 1983. Cf. <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/wilhelm-zaisser>; <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/de/recherche/kataloge-datenbanken/biographische-datenbanken/elisabeth-zaisser>; 26.6.2022.





### 3. Economic Background

#### 3.1 The Overall Plan [*Horst Mendershausen/Karl C. Thalheim*]

The economy of the Soviet Zone is an instrument of the Communist state. It is run according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism (1.1 and 2.1).

The observer of the Soviet Zone economy must keep these principles in mind. Not only do they explain the organization of the planned economy and the economic policies of the regime; they also help to understand the meaning of success and failure in that economy. Whatever material benefits the rulers may hold out to workers, peasants and consumers, for tomorrow or in the distant future, success or failure do not depend directly on whether the economy generates instruments of power, factories, weapons and control over people. Welfare enters the picture only indirectly. Too great a failure on this score could disturb the acquiescence of the people in the regime and weaken its power. In a crisis, "concessions" are likely to be made. Apart from this, the regime tends to look at increases of welfare as something that limits the creation of instruments of power. The formula "to each according to his needs" to which the rulers pay homage means "to each according to the dicta of the party". The party alone is supposed to know what the people really need.

The organization of the economy is patterned on that of the Soviet Union. The most important, and in some fields all, enterprises are nationalized, that is they are the property of the government. This is considered the highest form of socialist property. So-called cooperative enterprises play a significant role in agriculture and retail trade; but they are not free producers or consumers cooperatives in the Western sense; their property rights are limited, and their managements are in large measure directed by government and party. Private enterprise, in so far as it still exists, is intended to wither away. It is taxed and burdened heavily, and it is often the butt of official criticism and persecution; yet it is used and even slightly revived at times to make up for failures in the nationalized sector of the economy.

The nationalized sector, and indirectly all parts of the economy, are run by command from the center. But since a modern industrial system is too complex to permit enforcement of this principle to its logical end, the Soviet Zone like the USSR relies on separate enterprises, market institutions, money and credit to carry out the plan. It would be a mistake, however, to look at these institutions as if they were simply counterparts of Western enterprises, markets, money, etc. The differences are at least as great as the similarities, and the observer accustomed to Western economic thought and practice should keep this well in mind. For instance, the freedom of enterprise managements to enter into sales and purchase contracts with each other is bounded by the

instructions of the plan. It resembles more the way in which the various divisions of a large Western corporation deal with each other, than dealings between separate businesses. Or, banking in the Soviet Zone is above all a control instrument of the plan. The business of lending, borrowing and transferring money is subordinate to the banks' role as supervisors of the execution of the plan by the enterprises. Or, for a third example, the pricing of goods is to a very high degree a fiscal matter. That is to say, some prices charged include high turnover taxes, others are held down by means of subsidies. Prices in the Soviet Zone therefore reflect in large part planning decisions regarding what is and what is not "needed", and they are a major tool of collecting revenue and redistributing income in the society. They are not terms bargained out in a market between buyers and sellers. In all these arrangements, Communist doctrine and practice as developed in the Soviet Union have provided the model.

Besides following the Soviet Communist principles, the regime is guided by the material interests of the Soviet Union. These interests occupy a high place in its economic policies. The Soviet Union, as we shall see, has drawn great wealth from the Soviet Zone of Germany, and is still doing so. The USSR is of course the creator of Communist Germany, and it has lent essential support to its existence, in military, political and economic form. This support has increased the flexibility and tenacity of the satellite regime, as the events of the critical year 1953 have shown so clearly. No wonder then that Soviet interests have been playing an important role in zonal economic planning from the beginning. In recent years, these interests also have drawn the SZ into an increasingly close economic collaboration with other countries of the Soviet bloc (see chapter on Trade), and the second five-year plan, on which the Zone is starting in 1956 simultaneously with other Soviet Bloc countries, projects an even greater interdependence of its economy with the bloc. It would not be true to say, however, that this cooperation is taking the form of either a single plan or a uniform system of markets. Although the interests that it serves are partly foreign, the planned economy of the Soviet Zone is a separate, national economy.

### 3.1.1 Toward the First Five-year Plan

Immediately following upon the creation of *Land* and zonal administrations in the summer of 1945, the Soviet Military Government ordered the setting up of central economic offices for industry and agriculture. In October 1945 these offices were ordered to draw up production plans for enterprises, and to organize special offices for planning, statistics and raw materials supply for this purpose. In late 1946, all enterprises regardless of ownership were ordered to report to the Central Statistical Office their stocks of equipment and

materials as well as their production capacities. These were the beginnings of a command-and-control mechanism that was to perpetuate, in the Soviet Zone, the centrally controlled economy that Nazi Germany had developed at the height of the war.

But it was only after the effective separation of the East Zone from the rest of Germany, in the summer of 1948, that economic planning began in earnest. Up to that time, planning largely stood for the organization of reparations deliveries to Soviet Russia. Now planning committees were set up in all nationalized enterprises to prepare detailed production plans for each enterprise, including requirements for materials and labor. Staffed largely with communist party (SED) and trade union (FDGB) functionaries, these committees became agents of the Ministry of Planning once this had been established in 1949. Besides the planning committees, the managements of the nationalized enterprises were drawn into the planning business. Beginning with 1949, they had to work out financial plans, covering income and outgo, credit and subsidy requirements, investments and depreciation. In March 1950, finally, an executive order about planning by the enterprises regulated the relations between management and planning committees and expanded the range of planning to cover production costs and sales estimates as well as welfare activities of the enterprises.<sup>1</sup>

The first executive order dealing with a national economic two-year plan was published in March 1949. Previously, an annual planning outline for 1948 had merely been announced by the SED (2.3). The first attempt at nation-wide planning, for the year 1949, still took the form of a rough and ready compilation of the plans of the enterprises, together with general instructions to the enterprises regarding increases of production and productivity. Only for the year 1950 did the new Ministry of Planning emerge with a comprehensive network of plans encompassing specific and legally binding instructions for the individual enterprises. On the basis of experience with these short-term planning ventures and the increasingly close supervision of their execution, the first five-year plan was drawn up. Proclaimed by the party in late 1950, it became law, after some changes, in November 1951. It covered the years 1951 through 1955.

With the initiation of the five-year plan, the Ministry was rebaptized into State Planning Commission and attached to the office of the prime minister; but in late 1954 the Commission was raised once more to the ministerial level and its chairman was made a member of the “inner cabinet” (*Präsidium*) of the

1 Editors' note: Cf. Verordnung über die Einführung von Betriebsplänen für die volkseigene Industrie (March 16, 1950). In: Gesetzblatt der DDR 1950, Nr. 30 (March 27, 1950), p. 200.

Council of Ministers. In its present status, the Commission can issue orders that have the force of law. It gives direct instructions to the various ministries and to the planning offices on the district and local levels. It is obviously a high-ranking agency in the Zonal government.

The internal organization of the Planning Commission comprises 15 major divisions, including overall plan coordination, industry, agriculture, trade, finance and planning controls. The divisions are subdivided into a large and growing number of branches which employ a sizable bureaucracy and provide room for representatives of the various political leaders. Among the divisions, those for overall coordination and for planning controls are of strategic importance since they are expected to make the plan as a whole work. The other divisions have more limited functions.

The Planning Commission also controls a number of special state offices outside its own domain, in particular the Central Administration for Statistics, the Central Bureau for Research and Technology, the Materials Supply Administration, and the State Geological Commission.

### 3.1.2 Formulation of the Plan

Economic planning in the Soviet Zone means in the first place that each producing enterprise receives instructions from the government about what to produce and at what cost to produce it. In accordance with these commands, the planning system aims to provide each enterprise with the required raw materials and labor force, at prices corresponding to the planned production costs. Secondly, the system devises plans for the distribution of products, for consumption and investment and thus draws all enterprises into a network of instructions and obligations. Beginning with production and investment, the five-year plan extends to many aspects of social life, as can be seen from the 13 functional plans into which it is subdivided:

1. Industry
2. Transportation
3. Agriculture
4. Investment
5. Internal and external trade
6. Materials supply
7. Finance
8. Labor
9. Health and social security
10. "Culture" (arts, recreation, etc.)

11. Labor productivity and production costs
12. Standard of living
13. Research activity

The planning instructions to the enterprises are the result of a process that goes through four major phases: (a) control figures, (b) requirement plans, (c) plan proposals and (d) the plan law which brings the final instructions.

- a. The process starts out each year with the announcement of the so-called control figures (*Kontrollziffern*). These are drawn up six months in advance of each planning year and fix targets of production for the various commodities. For the most important commodities the targets are set in terms of quantities. For others the targets are expressed in monetary values which apply to whole groups of goods, e.g. leather shoes without distinction according to size, style, etc. The control figures are calculated by the Planning Commission on the basis of past production, information on requirements which is derived from international trade agreements and internal "market research", availability of raw materials and other data. They usually show a tendency to demand more than can reasonably be expected.

The control figures are communicated to the planning divisions of the various functional ministries<sup>2</sup> where they are made more detailed and subdivided regionally. The ministries may raise the overall requirements set forth by the Planning Commission, but they are not allowed to lower them. From the ministries, the elaborated control figures go to the major nationalized enterprises directly, and to the lesser ones via the planning divisions of the district and local administrations.

- b. The planning divisions of the nationalized enterprises then proceed to draw up requirements plans (*Bedarfspläne*), which define the amount of materials, labor, credits, investment funds and subsidies which seem needed in order to meet the control figures. These requirements plans return to the Planning Commission via the ministries; but in the process the items in the plans are combined and integrated, so that the Commission receives only a general picture of requirements. (For some critical requirements the reporting is done in detail.) The Planning Commission then has the task of reconciling requirements and available resources and of working

2 E.g. the ministries for mining and smelting, chemical industry, coal and energy, light industry, and machine building. For a complete list, see 3.3.

out the so-called plan proposals for production, as well as the related plan proposals for investment, finance, exports, imports, materials and labor.

In attempting to reconcile requirements and available resources of goods, manpower, etc. the Planning Commission used to proceed quite arbitrarily; but today it can draw on a certain amount of practical experience. Usually, it is able to gain a fairly good general picture of what is available and possible as well as of the bottlenecks that limit production. The requirements plans often point to the bottlenecks and generally register where overly optimistic demands from the top conflict with realities at the bottom. At this stage, the Commission turns its attention to measures designed to break the bottlenecks. It initiates scrap collection drives or save materials campaigns (2.7), raises productivity requirements or calls for local drives to “overfulfill” the plan. It initiates action to bolster these moves by premiums and propaganda. These efforts aim to keep the plan as close as possible to the control figures; but sometimes the plan has to step back a little.

- c. The plan proposals are chiefly the work of the Commission’s division for overall coordination and its agents at lower levels. As the proposals emerge from the Planning Commission they are of a summary and pretty general nature, similar to the control figures in the first stage. Once again the overall positions are broken down, allocated to enterprises and modified in the ministries. In the end they emerge in the form of detailed plans for the enterprises, by year, by quarter and even by month.

The plan proposals for production thus developed are supplemented by plan proposals for finance, investment, research, health, etc.; but the Planning Commission does not serve as the originator of these plans. They are prepared in the various ministries and sent on to the Commission for coordination and reconciliation. It is true that the Commission makes general estimates for these fields too and hands them to the ministries in the form of “control figures”. But it leaves to the ministries the main responsibility for the elaboration of plans in these fields, and for their enforcement.

- d. After the final checking of the plan proposals, the Planning Commission submits the comprehensive plan to the central committee of the SED (2.3) and to the Council of Ministers for approval. Then the People’s Chamber has to proclaim it law. Once more the ministerial bureaucracy goes to work breaking down the comprehensive plan into detail and communicating the now binding orders of the plan to the enterprises. As a rule, the final orders do not differ much from the plan proposals, and since these usually have been known to the enterprises some months in advance, the

final plan generally brings little surprise. If it were not for that, production would have run into more serious difficulties; for up to now the plan was only once, in 1953, proclaimed officially on time. In cases where the final plan does bring major revisions, or where more or less arbitrary revisions are made subsequently, even the most docile management may find itself out of step with its planning superiors.

### 3.1.3 Enforcement and Control

The law about the national economic plan and the instructions to the nationalized enterprises that are derived from it fix targets of performance. They do not tell the enterprises exactly how to proceed in order to meet these targets. In particular the plans do not prescribe from whom the enterprises are to acquire their materials and to whom they are to sell their products. It is the task of the enterprises to make these arrangements, and this task is carried out through a system of contracts.

As soon as the plans are fixed, each enterprise must enter into contracts with its suppliers and customers covering, if possible, the entire planning period. These contracts aim to fix the specifications for the goods to be bought or sold and the delivery dates. The network of contracts completes the planning system for the nationalized enterprises. It also serves to draw the private firms, which do not operate under planning instructions, into the planning system. The activities of the private firms are estimated in the national economic plan. They have to adapt themselves to the requirements of the nationalized sector and to make contracts with its enterprises if they want to share in the available raw materials supplies.

The main contract partners of the nationalized producers are the state wholesale trade enterprises (DZH). These enterprises are organized by economic branch and have regional and local subdivisions (3.4). Like the producers they operate under planning instructions from above which determine aggregate purchases and sales, but leave the detail of the transactions to contractual arrangements. Direct delivery contracts between producers were discouraged for a while but are now admitted again in some fields. Private wholesalers, finally, are restricted to dealings with private producers, and they can trade with them only to the extent that these producers have not been drawn into the planning system via contracts with nationalized firms. These restrictions have eliminated private wholesalers from all but a few branches of consumer goods trade.

The execution of the planning instructions and the contracts between the enterprises are subject to a vast amount of statistical reporting. The enter-

prises have to report their output, costs of production, sales, etc. frequently and in considerable detail to their superiors in the various functional ministries, who in turn combine and condense the data into reports submitted to the State Planning Commission. The ministerial bureaucracy inspects and controls the producing and trading enterprises; but apart from that the enterprises are continually supervised by the banks, which function as a prime instrument of plan enforcement in the Soviet Zone (3.5).

After concluding the purchase and sales contracts, the producing firms secure the credits which are due them under the finance plan. They apply to the banks to which they have been assigned and submit the provisions of their contracts, as well as their plan instructions concerning production and costs. With each utilization or repayment of bank credit, the firms must inform the banks of the progress of their execution of the plan. This enables the branches of the State Bank (DNB), which play the dominant role in the field of short-term credit, to check on the operations of the enterprises and to hold them within the plan. They can order special investigations of enterprises, impose penalty interest charges, block accounts and so forth to bring managements to heel.

In addition to these routine controls by the ministries and the banks, the enterprises are subject to the watchdog activities of the party (SED) and trade union (FDGB). These political agencies, for instance, interfere extensively in the planning of retail trade.

Inventories constitute an important problem of the planned economy. As in any modern economic system inventories of materials, semi-finished and finished products are necessary to fill the pipelines of distribution and to keep up the flow of production and consumption. In particular, the building up and drawing down of inventories help to cushion fluctuations in production and consumption. But apart from these functions, changes in inventories may serve as danger signals indicating shortages or surpluses. Since the planned economy boasts of superior efficiency in avoiding shortages and surpluses, its masters are afraid of these danger signals; and since the signals keep flashing, they seek to suppress them.

In fact, inventory accumulation and depletion are a persistent plague of the planning system and an index of its inefficiency. The producing enterprises are forbidden to hold larger than minimum stocks of materials and products. Likewise, the trading enterprises are not allowed to hold large inventories. The purpose in each case is to tie the flow of goods closely to the plan and to keep it under central control. The effect, however, is frequently a breakdown of the plan.

For example, some enterprises produce less than they are committed to. Unable to supply from stock, they cause a shortage to appear with their customers, and these in turn often have no sufficient inventory to tide them over.



Or, a stoppage of production of one thing leads to some ingredient or material piling up with some suppliers. Or, the production of the wrong kind of article, a shoddy product or the like leads to the accumulation of unsold stock.

Statistics of inventories are not being published in the Zone; but official criticism and countermeasures bespeak frequent troubles on the inventory front. Enterprises laying in ampler stocks of materials or products are reprimanded and often forced to disgorge them. Others are blamed for having bare shelves. Frequently the private firms are made the goat for these clashes between the plan and reality. The authorities prefer to think that it is the remaining freedom of consumers choice and managerial decision, rather than the rigidities of the planning system, that are the cause of the troubles.

#### 3.1.4 Plan Fulfillment

The performance of the planned economy can be illustrated by the experience of 1954, the fourth year of the first five-year plan. Around the middle of 1953, the planning system had undergone a major crisis. The expansion of heavy industry had been pushed far ahead of fuel and energy supplies; rising money incomes were facing a static supply of consumers goods; and in the countryside the persecution of the peasants and forced farm collectivization were cutting into food production. When the regime attempted to reduce the severe imbalance in the economy by raising work norms and cutting wages the workers revolted. The regime then hastened to proclaim a “new course” which cancelled the new work norms, raised wages, especially of the lower paid workers, and projected a higher rate of growth for consumer goods production and a lower one for producer goods. The reduction of reparations payments to Russia and imports from Russia on credit brought immediate relief (2.5).

The “new course” lowered the plan for industrial investments. It fixed their value at 2 1/2 billion DM-O for 1954 (which was still in excess of the 1953 plan level of 1.9 billion); but, of this amount of investment, only 2 billion was actually realized and that had to be carried out at so greatly increased costs that it amounted to hardly more than 1.6 billion DM worth of installations at 1953 prices. In real terms, therefore, the investment plan was fulfilled by only about 60 percent. A number of expansion projects in the machinery and light industries were interrupted. Investments in energy production and food industries, measured in real terms, increased over 1953, but those in the light industries did not, owing to the increasing construction costs.<sup>3</sup> The increase

3 Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im vierten Jahre*, p. 160.

of investment in the consumers goods industries certainly was but a fraction of the curtailment of investment in the producer goods industries.

In housing construction, the “new course” did relatively better. In 1954, housing absorbed about 19 percent of state investment, against 17 percent in 1953 and 12 percent in 1952. About 86 percent of the dwelling units planned for the year 1954 were finished, and the (cumulative) fulfillment rate of the whole five-year plan in this field was pushed up from 29 to 42 percent. This left, of course, as much as 58 percent of the plan to be fulfilled in the last year, 1955, which will be impossible to achieve.<sup>4</sup>

The national economic plan for industry in 1954 provided originally that gross industrial production should increase by 12.6 percent over 1953. As the year 1954 went on, this turned out to be far too optimistic. The plan goal thereupon was lowered to an increase of 7.4 percent, and at that level it was “fulfilled to 100.2 percent”.<sup>5</sup> For consumers goods, the originally scheduled rise had been 23.5 percent, but the actual rise was 16 percent. The production of lignite, motor fuel and synthetic rubber again proved to be bottlenecks; and lags in shipbuilding held back the planned increase in fishing. But quite apart from these specific bottlenecks, the 1954 plan failed to materialize its general objectives for industrial productivity and production costs. Output per man had been scheduled to increase by 6.8 percent. It reportedly did increase by 4.1 percent. The nationalized industrial enterprises were supposed to raise average wages by 5 percent; they reportedly raised them by 9.2 percent. As a result of these two developments production costs failed to decline by the scheduled 3.9 percent; they declined by only 1.5 percent, i. e. less than half. Consequently, many enterprises ran into deficits.<sup>6</sup>

For some specific industries, the degree of plan fulfillment in 1954 was reported as follows:

4 Editors' note: Cf. Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im vierten Jahre*, p. 160f.

5 Editors' note: Cf. *ibid.*, p. 167.

6 Editors' note: Cf. *ibid.*, p. 169.

Table I: Reported Plan Fulfillment in 1954 in Selected Industries

Products	Plan Fulfillment in Percent
Chemicals	104
Rolled steel	102
Coal	101
Cement	100
Building materials	100
Lignite	96
Raw iron	96
Consumer goods (total)	94
Shipbuilding	89
Electrical power	86

Source: Hellmut Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft der sowjetischen Besatzungszone im vierten Jahre des Fünfjahrplanes*. In: *Vierteljahrshefte zur Wirtschaftsforschung*, (1955) 2, p. 168.

During 1954, after the strengthening of its grip on the population, the regime returned to the policy of pushing up the work norms in industry and emphasizing the expansion of heavy industries. But as far as can now be seen, circumstances compelled a scaling down of expansion plans for 1955 similar to that which occurred in 1954. The draft of the plan for 1955, which was announced by the SED in the fall of 1954, called for an increase in industrial production of 10 percent over 1954. The plan law, which was passed in May 1955, cut that figure to 5.1 percent; but in the fall of 1955, the government set “supplementary tasks” which raised the “planned” increase post factum to 6.5 percent, i. e. two-thirds of the original rate. The experience of 1954 and 1955 suggests that the final “plan”, which is being fulfilled or “over-fulfilled” almost as a matter of course, has a way of becoming a retrospective thing, a goal that takes shape only after most of the actual production figures are known.

The measurement of plan fulfillment raises the question of Soviet Zone statistics. A few words on this subject are now in order. The production and plan fulfillment figures which the regime publishes usually serve propaganda purposes. They are usually not presented in a fashion that invites or facilitates unfavorable comparison; as a rule only close analysis can bring out the failures. The deception, however, is usually not achieved by the free invention of figures. As in the Soviet Union, the intent to deceive rather manifests itself in (a) tricky concepts and units of measurement, (b) changes of concepts that are only vaguely alluded to or that are reported in relatively inaccessible sources,

(c) publication of percentage changes without quantitative definition of the bases from which the changes are measured, and (d) such elementary catches as the use of one term for two things, or of two terms for one thing. Announcements of plan fulfillment by x or y percent in a certain industry therefore do not necessarily convey the information that the reader expects to get from them. The "industry" may have been redefined along the way, the "plan" may have been revised, the "base" may refer to an actual or a planned magnitude, and it may have been recalculated since its last previous use.

To illustrate, the reporting on plan fulfillment usually rests on the measure of "gross production value".<sup>7</sup> Gross production counts the output of products leaving the enterprise as well as that of intermediary products that are subject to further work in the enterprise. For instance, in a textile mill, yarn output is added to fabric output even though the yarn will turn up again in tomorrow's output of fabrics. Thus, there is much duplication, which tends to inflate the postwar production volume of the SZ compared with prewar figures. A similar effect is produced by the lumping of handicraft production with industry. These practices probably also give an upward bias to the year-to-year changes in production after 1945, but the effect is likely to have declined as the proportions between intermediate and final output returned to normal. In the second five-year plan, gross production in various industries will be defined differently; reports say that intermediate products will no longer be included.

The term "value" furthermore has a special meaning. Under the first five-year plan, gross production was valued in terms of fixed prices according to a grand schedule of prices established in 1950. These prices were fairly close to those of the last war year, 1944, and they were of course often different from actual sales prices. In the second five-year plan, production will be valued according to a new list of fixed prices which supposedly will represent actual delivery prices as of January 1, 1955. It is not clear, however, whether these prices will include the turnover taxes which are levied on manufacturers' sales.

### 3.1.5 Economic Development under the Plan

The frictions and obscurities in the planned economy of the Soviet Zone are undoubtedly of major order. They belie the boasting about the efficient organization and the superior social achievements of the regime; but they should not lead the observer into believing that the economy is paralyzed by its internal

7 Besides gross production, Soviet Zone statisticians have the concept of "commodity-production", which is supposed to cover saleable merchandise only. It is used in the plan instructions to enterprises, but no performance is reported on this basis.

contradictions, and that the planning business is of no consequence. Jerky and exploitative as it is, the economy of the SZ is producing. It is not continually threatened by general breakdown. Its weaknesses cause dissatisfaction and may force the regime to maneuver, but they will not force it to abdicate unless powerful external pressures appear in combination with internal difficulties.

In the meantime, the plan is shaping the economy into a system of nationalized production with the emphasis on the capital goods, particularly the metal fabricating industries. The following Table II suggests the extent to which it accomplished such a transformation between 1950 and 1953. The private sector in industry was reduced to negligible proportions in the basic materials and metal fabricating industries. It also declined greatly in the other industries, but there at least still remained above 20 percent. In industry as a whole, privately owned enterprises supplied 15 percent of output in 1953.

Considering the relative importance of the four groups of industries we find that the metal fabricating industries increased their share in total industrial output and surpassed their prewar (1936) share substantially (22 percent). The dropping percentage for the basic materials industries expresses their lag in the period from 1950 to 1953; but even at 31 percent the share of this group in total output remained well above the prewar level (27 percent). Differently with the food industries; the rise in their share from 15 to 17 percent failed to reach the prewar level of 21 percent. And the light industries, which had produced as much as 30 percent of the area's industrial output in 1936, fell farther behind. Their share declined from 28 to 25 percent.<sup>8</sup>

The shift toward the metal fabricating industries included among other things a massive increase of the production of rolled steel products. In 1950, this output had nearly reached the prewar (1936) production of the area (898,000 tons). In 1953, it climbed to 1,485,000 tons (165 percent of prewar); and in 1954 it supposedly reached 1,720,000 tons (192 percent of prewar). This rise in rolled steel output was well ahead of that of overall industrial production.<sup>9</sup>

8 It should be noted that the structural change from the light and food industries to the metal fabricating industries did not begin under the Communist regime. It began under the Nazis and went even farther during World War II than during the postwar period. At the height of the war economy, in 1944, the metal fabricating industries supplied about 45 percent of the Zone's gross industrial output. Editors' note: Cf. for the numbers Kolbe/Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im dritten Jahre*, p. 151.

9 Overall industrial production in the Soviet Zone for 1953 has been estimated at 135 percent of 1936, and for 1954 at 149 percent.

Table II: Gross Industrial Production by Major Groups, and the Share of the Private Sector, 1950 to 1953

	Gross Production Value				Share of the Private Sector	
	1950	1953	1950	1953	1950	1953
Industry Groups	Billion DM-O		Percent		% of Production	
Basic materials <sup>1</sup>	7.7	11.5	33	31	9	6
Metal fabricating <sup>2</sup>	5.7	10.1	24	27	17	9
Light industries <sup>3</sup>	6.5	9.1	28	25	41	28
Food and beverage	3.5	6.5	15	17	33	22
All industry groups	23.0	37.2	100	100	24	15

Sources: Hans Kolbe/Hellmut Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft der sowjetischen Besatzungszone im dritten Jahre des Fünfjahrplanes*. In: *Vierteljahrshefte zur Wirtschaftsforschung*, (1954) 2, pp. 140–166, here 151, and Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im vierten Jahre*, p. 170. Editors' note: A small number of details have been corrected according to the sources.

<sup>1</sup> Power, mining, metallurgy, chemicals, building materials.

<sup>2</sup> Machinery, transportation equipment, electrical, mechanical and optical goods.

<sup>3</sup> Wood products, textiles, clothing, leather and shoes, tobacco goods, cellulose and paper, printing.

The reshaping of the Soviet Zone economy is also evident from the national economic accounts. Published Western estimates of the SZ's gross national product only go as far as 1952; but they show characteristic changes since 1936 and 1948. Compared with the prewar period, the economy of the area produces less for current consumption, but more for government, investment, and for foreign beneficiaries (see Table III).<sup>10</sup> It is more industrial in character, and it has neglected construction, especially housing, and agriculture (see Table IV). The rise in the estimated real gross national product at market prices from 20.1 billion in 1936 to 23.2 billion in 1952 benefited foreign interests, government consumption and investment, in that order, and left private consumption below the prewar level. On a per-capita basis, private consumption stood in 1952 at about 81 percent of prewar.

10 Regarding the "foreign beneficiaries", we shall gain a more detailed picture in section 3.6 of how the USSR has exploited and is exploiting its German satellite.

Some broad estimates may be made of how the national accounts developed between 1952 and 1955. In 1955, real gross national product at market prices may have reached 27.3 billion DM-O, with private consumption recovering to 13.4 billion (95 percent of prewar, on a per-capita basis), government consumption rising to 5.9 billion, gross investment to 4.5 billion and the net contribution to foreign account remaining about the same as in 1952, i. e. 3.5 billion. The increase resulted largely from the rise of the product of industry, from 10.6 billion in 1952 to say, 13.8 billion in 1955, while the real product of agriculture remained about the same as in 1952. These estimates are offered here for general orientation and should be considered as very tentative.

The economic performance of the SZ under Communist planning has been less vigorous than that of the Federal Republic under its social market economy. The gross investment rate of 15 percent in 1952 (about 17 percent in 1955) was less than in the Federal Republic, largely because of the high levels of government consumption and transfers abroad. In 1954, the SZ's index of industrial production, which as we have noted exaggerates the rise of output since prewar, stood at 149 percent of 1936 but was still well behind that of the Federal Republic, which by then had reached 176 percent of 1936 (see Table V).<sup>11</sup> Even in the capital goods (metal fabricating) industries the expansion of Soviet Zone production was lagging behind the Federal Republic.

Moreover, the rate of increase of industrial production in the SZ has been slackening. As Table VI shows, industrial production as measured by gross production value rose by 22.6 percent in 1951; but in each of the following years the rate of increase was smaller. This slowing down of the rate of increase contrasts with the development of industrial production in West Germany, which showed a remarkable rate of growth in 1954 and 1955 and suggests that industrial expansion in the SZ is encountering serious obstacles.<sup>12</sup> Apart from the burdens of rearmament and unrequited services to the Soviet Union, the limitations of the SZ's raw materials base and the shortage of labor have begun to count. These factors will be examined in section 3.3.

11 The production indexes for the two areas are not strictly comparable. In all probability that for the Soviet Zone would be lower if Western statistical methods were applied in its construction.

12 It should not be overlooked that the reported slackening of the rate of industrial growth in the SZ may, in part, be due to statistical reasons. As we have noted above, production increases were exaggerated in the early years by faulty statistical methods, in particular, double counting. As time went on, the upward bias probably wore off, and this alone may account for some slackening of the rate of growth. To the extent that this is so, the deception practiced by Soviet Zone statisticians in the earlier years returned like a boomerang.

Table III: Soviet Zone Gross National Product by End Use Billions of 1936 Mark

End Use	1936	1948	1952
Private consumption	12.8	9.5	11.6
Government consumption <sup>1</sup>	4.0	3.5	4.7
Net contribution to foreign account <sup>2</sup>	.2	3.2	3.5
Gross investment	3.1	1.1	3.4
Total, GNP at market prices	20.1	17.3	23.2
Less indirect taxes	2.6	4.7	4.6
GNP at factor cost	17.5	12.6	18.6

Source: The Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress (ed.), Trends in Economic Growth. A Comparison of the Western Powers and the Soviet Bloc. A Study prepared for the Joint Committee on the Economic Report, 83d Congress, 2nd Session, Washington D. C. 1955, p. 292.

<sup>1</sup> Excluding occupation costs, but including military and paramilitary expenditures.

<sup>2</sup> For 1946 and 1952: reparations to USSR, occupation costs, cost of uranium mining and foreign trade subsidies.

Table IV: Soviet Zone Gross National Product at Factor Cost, by Industrial Origin, Billions of 1936 Mark

Industry of Origin	1936	1948	1952
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	3.1	2.1	3.0
Industry and handicrafts	9.9	6.3	10.6
Mining, manufacturing, utilities	7.4	4.5	8.1
Construction	1.2	.4	1.0
Handicrafts	1.3	1.4	1.5
Transportation, communication, services	4.5	4.2	5.0
Total, GNP at factor cost	17.5	12.6	18.6

Source: The Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress (ed.), Trends in Economic Growth, p. 292.



Table V: Index of Gross Industrial Production for Soviet Zone, compared with Industrial Production Index for Federal Republic, Year 1954

Industry Groups	Soviet Zone <sup>1</sup> 1936-100	Federal Republic
Basic material industries	157	176 <sup>2</sup>
Metal fabricating industries	171	207 <sup>3</sup>
Light industries	130	167 <sup>4</sup>
Food and beverage industries	133	154
All industries	149	176

<sup>1</sup> For description of industry groups, see Table II. Editors' note: The references for this overview („Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung“) were inconclusive and the source could not be identified.

<sup>2</sup> Excluding mining, the index for which was 136, and chemicals (210). West German figure refers to “industries producing basic materials and producers' goods” and covers also wood and paper production.

<sup>3</sup> “Industries producing capital goods”.

<sup>4</sup> Excluding wood and paper.

Table VI: Annual Rates of Increase of Industrial Production in the Soviet Zone and the Federal Republic, Percent of increase over the preceding year

Year	Soviet Zone <sup>1</sup>	Federal Republic <sup>3</sup>
1951	22.6	18.6
1952	16.1	7.5
1953	12.2	9.0
1954	10.2	12.1
1955	6.5 <sup>2</sup>	13.6 <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to announcement by Vice-Premier Ulbricht before the central committee of the SED, in October 1955. The figures of the early years are likely to be exaggerated by the peculiarities of the SZ's gross production index. Editors' note: Cf. also Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik (ed.), Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1955, p. 154. The values can easily be calculated based on the data in the source.

<sup>2</sup> Planned increase, including “supplementary tasks”.

<sup>3</sup> Wirtschaft und Statistik. Editors' note: A precise reference is missing here. The mentioned journal “Wirtschaft und Statistik” contains, in a chart, the following numbers for the development of the growth rate in industrial production: 1951 = 19.4; 1952 = 7.2; 1953 = 8.5; 1954 = 12.3; 1955 (preliminary results) = 15.9. Cf. Wirtschaft und Statistik, 8 (1956) 1, Stuttgart, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Provisional figure.

It is apparent that even in its chosen field of industrial expansion the regime so far compares unfavorably with the free West. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that the regime has made headway in strengthening the industrial apparatus of the SZ, and in increasing its contribution to the economic power of the Soviet Bloc.

The nature of the SZ's economic contribution to the Soviet bloc will occupy us later on (3.6). It is rendered through the exportation of goods and technical services to the other communist countries, especially of course the Soviet Union. In so far as these exports permit these countries to obtain things that they otherwise could not, or only with greater cost, produce themselves or get elsewhere, and in so far as the SZ obtains in return products of similar utility, we have here a division of labor between the planned economies. This division of labor is taken into account in the various national plans through the export and import plans. The interesting question arises whether the planned economies are showing themselves capable of organizing the international division of labor in a fair and reliable manner. The question is important; for the viability of economic systems in our time depends in part on whether they are capable of doing that. Since the various communist regimes are all offshoots of the same plant and supposedly living in a natural state of harmony, one might think that the development of an international division of labor among them would come easy.

This, however, is not so. The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, which the Soviet Union established in 1949 and of which the SZ forms a part, has been advertised as an agency for the coordination of the planned economies. It was Russia's answer to one of the greatest postwar measures of economic cooperation in the Western world, the Marshall Plan. The Council seems to have played a part in the elaboration of bilateral trade programs between the partners and in the drawing up of a few specific plans to coordinate steel production and to allocate the production of certain types of tractors to several countries (medium-sized ones to Poland, heavier and light ones to Soviet Russia and the SZ). But its function has been limited to that of a go-between, and there is no indication that it is becoming the head of a unified economic system. It is doubtful indeed that it could develop in that direction.

Such a development could follow in two ways: 1. The communist countries might aim to create a single market system, in which each product is supplied by the cheapest, most efficient source and in which each resource, regardless of political location, is used in the most profitable way. 2. The communist countries might adopt a single economic plan which would seek to implement the same principles by command from the center. Both developments face characteristic difficulties.

First, the Soviet Union is quite eager to draw on the supplies of the satellites and is ready to trade with them, but it shows no willingness to depend on them to any greater extent than is necessary, particularly in products of military significance. It insists on playing the role of the most valuable and the most deserving member of the communist family. Soviet Russia has shown itself reluctant to permit too intimate a coordination between the heavy industries of her satellites, apparently for fear that this might lead to an uncomfortable concentration of economic power outside her boundaries. The Czechoslovak-Polish industrial combine in Upper Silesia seems to have fallen victim to this fear. Second, while there is a preference for producing goods in the most advantageous location and at the least cost, the communist rulers reject "a lopsided specialization of national economies in a few products" and desire that each economy develop "on the firm foundation of the production of means of production".<sup>13</sup> Each member country of the bloc, for instance, should have some heavy industry of its own, if at all possible. Third, the artificial price system of the communist economies makes it difficult to find out what the cheapest source for products is. This poses some difficulties for their internal purposes, but it is a practical impossibility in their external dealings because of the lack of meaningful exchange rates between their currencies.

For these reasons economic planning in the Soviet Zone, as in the other satellites, is following the path of national planning. Subservient as it is to the interests of Soviet Russia, the economic plan for the Soviet Zone is a national plan and is concerned with national economic development. The contacts between the economies of the SZ and the other communist countries are organized through the rather cumbersome instrument of bilateral agreements, and not through a single plan or a single market system.

## 3.2 Agricultural Potential [*Fritz Baade*]

### 3.2.1 Climate, Soil and Produce

The climatic conditions of the Soviet Zone of Germany are shaped by maritime and continental influences. Toward the Northwest the climate is relatively even and permits a fairly long growing season. Toward the Southeast, the increasing continental influence produces warmer summers, longer and colder winters and a shorter growing season. This pattern is modified by bodies of water, mountains and forests which create a variety of local climates.

13 Gunther Kohlmey, *Der demokratische Weltmarkt. Entstehung, Merkmale und Bedeutung für den sozialistischen Aufbau*, Berlin (East) 1955, p. 176.

Average annual precipitation amounts to about 600 mm in Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt and parts of Thuringia are generally dryer (less than 500 mm), and the mountain areas of Saxony and Thuringia, wetter (more than 800 mm).

The Zone has a great variety of soils. If we grade soil qualities from A (very good) to F (poor) we have the following distribution of soil qualities.

Mecklenburg: C, in the center; D, along the coast and in the South; E and F, in the West.

Brandenburg: B, in the Uckermark; C, in the Oder basin; D, along the Havel and Priegnitz rivers; and E and F in the remainder of the land.

Saxony-Anhalt: A, in the fertile "Börde" area, largely in the triangle formed by Magdeburg, Quedlinburg and Halle; C, in the Elbe Basin and along the edge of the Harz mountains; D, South of the line Dessau-Wittenberg toward Saxony; and E and F, in the area adjacent to Brandenburg.

Saxony: B, in the extension of the "Börde" area, which runs from Saxony-Anhalt across Saxony; C, in the Eastern parts of the land; E, in the Southern and mountainous region; and F, toward Brandenburg in the North.

Thuringia: A, in the central plain; D and E, in most of the rest.

The good soils of the "Börde" and the Thuringia plain provide a consistent, deep, well-drained and easily worked tillage bed which, combined with warm summers and moderate rainfall offers favorable conditions for wheat and sugar beets. Frequently wheat, sugar beets and barley are rotated in a three-year cycle. In many cases, sugar beet is the crop around which the farm economy is organized. The refuse from sugar beets, together with fodder crops, provides a basis for cattle raising in the area.<sup>14</sup>

The poorer soils East of the Elbe river are sandy and porous, favoring rye and potato crops. They are generally too poor for wheat. In these parts the three-year rotation system often involves rye, potatoes and oats. As good grain land is rare, the livestock depends mainly on fodder crops. Some of the potato harvest is fed to pigs, some turned into alcohol.

Throughout the Soviet Zone, meadows form a relatively small proportion of the arable area, about 20 percent, and this proportion seems to have declined further since the war.

14 Robert E. Dickinson, *Germany. A General and Regional Geography*, New York 1953, p. 633.

### 3.2.2 The Revolution in Farm Ownership

The pattern of farm ownership in the Soviet Zone is the result of traditional factors and of new agrarian policies adopted under Soviet military occupation. The traditional factors reflect both soil and crop conditions and the economic and political circumstances during the time of the Hohenzollern Empire, the Weimar Republic and the Nazi Reich. The new agrarian policies have sought to remodel the agrarian structure of the Soviet Zone in the image of Soviet Russia, by means of expropriation of large estates, strangulation of medium farmers (“Kulaks”), collectivization and state farming. As in Russia, these policies have run into social and economic obstacles, and they have not yet achieved a stable new pattern.

A brief word about the traditional factors is needed to understand what has been happening since 1945. The area of what is now the Soviet Zone is commonly thought of as a traditional area of large estates raising grains, especially rye, potatoes or sugar beets. This picture is substantially correct for Mecklenburg, Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt. In these lands, farms of more than 100 ha<sup>15</sup> constituted 48, 30 and 27 percent of all farmland in 1939; and farms of more than 20 ha, about 2/3 of all farmland. In Saxony and Thuringia, however, the large estate was never predominant. There, farms of more than 100 ha constituted about 10 percent of the land in 1939, and relatively small farms, from 5 to 20 ha, had the dominant share of all farmland. In these two districts the size distribution of farms resembled that of the Western areas, now comprised in the Federal Republic.

Land reform policies under the Weimar Republic aimed to turn some of the unprofitable large eastern estates into smaller and medium-sized farms; but the political strength of the large estate owners and their influence on economic, in particular tariff policy, frustrated land reform. The eastern parts, reaching out beyond the present Oder-Neisse line, remained areas of large “*Junker*” (1.6) estates and staple crops. Only in industrial Saxony and Thuringia, by and large, did pig raising, dairying and vegetable gardening, typical small-farm activities, play a significant role along with the growing of potatoes, grains and sugar beets.

Since 1945, the property structure has been revolutionized. The primary political objective of this revolution was the “liquidation” of the large estates and the social power of their owners. Accordingly, all owners of farms larger than 100 ha were expropriated without compensation. In addition, several thousand farms of less than 100 ha were expropriated because their owners had been declared “war and Nazi criminals”. The total area of the expropriat-

15 1 hectare = 2,471 acres.

ed lands was about 3 million ha comprising, besides forests, about 1/3 of the farmland in the SZ. More than half of this total was allotted to 209,000 new peasant farms, averaging 8 ha a piece; about one-third was taken over by administrative and political organizations, and the remainder added to existing small holdings. Table I shows the impact of this revolution through a comparison of the property structure in 1939 and 1946.

Table I: Classification of farmland in the Soviet Zone Germany, according to farm size and ownership, 1,000 ha

	1939	1946	1953
Farms with arable area of			
.5 to 5 ha	574	587	649
5 to 20 ha	2,025	3,242	3,013
20 to 50 ha	1,431	1,460	850
50 to 100 ha	534	469	99
more than 100 ha	1,806	313	56
Unallocated arable areas	–	–	29
Sub-Total private farms	6,370	6,071	(4,549) <sup>1</sup> (+ 147) <sup>2</sup>
State (People's) farms	(252) <sup>5</sup>	n. a.	255
Collective farms	–	–	900 <sup>3</sup>
Farms owned by counties and municipalities	n. a.	n. a.	509 <sup>4</sup>
Sub-total, socialized farms	n. a.	n. a.	1,664
Total, all farms	6,370	6,071	6,213

Source: Veränderungen der landwirtschaftlichen Betriebsstruktur. In: Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (ed.), Wochenbericht, 21 (1954) 45, Berlin (West), 5 November 1954, p. 178.

<sup>1</sup> Private farms.

<sup>2</sup> County and municipal farms included in the classification by size, chiefly in the larger size brackets.

<sup>3</sup> Including individual plots (74,300 ha).

<sup>4</sup> Including the 147,000 ha referred to in footnote 2.

<sup>5</sup> State-owned farms ("Domänen") in the area in 1933, included in the classification of farms by size (Statistisches Reichamt (ed.), Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich, Band 1937, Berlin 1938, p. 83.)

n. a. = not available

While the revolution purported “to found rural property on strong and productive peasant farms owned privately by their occupants”<sup>16</sup>, it was actually designed to produce a mass of small uneconomical units. The average size of the new farms certainly was inadequate for efficient production of the standard crops of the area. Moreover, distribution of the land was not accompanied by the provision of living quarters and farm buildings, sufficient equipment or livestock. In 1947, the Soviet authorities ordered more than 10,000 farm buildings, manor houses, barns and stables torn down as “symbols of a feudal age”. The building material recovered was to be used for the construction of small farmhouses. But the provisioning of the new farms with necessities was so slow, and many of the new settlers were so little prepared for farm life and management, that the settlement frequently failed. There developed an exodus from the new farms which reached large proportions in 1950/51.

While this failure became apparent, the regime prepared the second phase of the revolution: the strangulation of the middle peasants, i. e. farmers with more than 20 ha and usually employing laborers for wages. Beginning in 1948, these farmers, dubbed “Kulaks” in imitation of the Russian model, were subjected to increasing discrimination and chicanery. They had to meet disproportionately large delivery obligations for crops and animal products and many other kinds of burdens. Many of these farmers abandoned their farms and fled to Berlin and West Germany (1.5). Others subdivided their lands among their children and thus escaped the onerous obligations attached to larger holdings. In any event the area cultivated by private middle-sized farms shrank greatly. As Table I shows, between 1946 and 1953, the area under farms between 20 and 50 ha declined by about 42 percent, that under farms between 50 and 100 ha, by 79 percent.

The catastrophic consequences of the campaign against the most productive type of farmers and their mass flight led to some relaxation after the revolt in 1953 (2.6).

The third phase of the agrarian revolution, collectivization, began in 1952. The second party conference of the SED (2.3) resolved to “build socialism systematically” and for that purpose, to combine the smaller farms (up to 20 ha) in agricultural production cooperatives or rather collectives (LPG). As in Russia this was a result of political design and belied the earlier declamations in favor of strong private farms. It also was a result of economic necessity; the small peasant properties did not produce, and in any event did not deliver, enough food to the cities.

16 Art. I of the Land Reform Ordinance for Thuringia. Editors' note: Cf. Gesetz über die Bodenreform im Lande Thüringen. Vom 10. September 1945, Art. 1. In: Regierungsblatt für das Land Thüringen, hg. von der Präsidialkanzlei des Präsidenten des Landes Thüringen, Teil I: Gesetzsammlung, Nr. 5, Weimar, 22 September 1945, p. 5.

The government offered the farmers three types of collective organizations:

- Type 1: Arable land is collectivized; everything else, such as buildings, cattle, meadows, remains private property. The product, after deductions for deliveries to the state, payments for individually owned draft animals and machinery, and payments to a reserve fund, is to be divided among the farmers: up to 40 percent according to the farmland which was contributed, at least 60 percent according to labor-days performed.
- Type 2: Arable land, draft animals and machinery are collectivized; buildings, meadows and non-draft animals remain private property. Unused buildings are rented or sold to the collective. The product, after similar deductions, is to be divided: up to 30 percent according to the farmland which was contributed, at least 70 percent according to labor-days performed. All members must guarantee the deliveries of animal products from the collective as a whole, although their production remains under private management.
- Type 3: All land (incl. meadows, forests) and all cattle and machinery are collectivized, only a fixed minimum of non-draft animals remaining in private ownership. Buildings are offered to the collective for rent or sale. The product, after the usual deductions, is to be distributed: up to 20 percent according to the farmland which was contributed, at least 80 percent according to labor-days performed.

While offering the farmers an allegedly free choice between the three types, the regime obviously favors Type 3, the full-blown “Kolkhoz”, where all work is done in “work brigades” and nearly all income is earned according to the performance norms set by the government. Some collectives of this type have been formed out of state land and land abandoned by middle-sized farmers, with former farm laborers as the main cooperators. In order to overcome the reluctance of the peasants to join the collectives, they have been offered tax reductions, cheap credit, lower delivery norms, priority supplies of seeds and fertilizer, construction materials and technical assistance; the peasants have been promised the right to withdraw from the collective, and in that eventuality to receive land “equivalent” to that which they brought in; and they have been permitted to continue individual gardening and other individual operations depending on the form of the collective they are in. Peasants with more than 20 ha of land were originally barred from the collective farms, but the prohibition has been gradually abandoned. By the end of 1955, almost 20 percent of the total farmland had reportedly been collectivized, three quarters of it in farms of the third type. The development of the LPG program is shown in Table II.



Table II: Collective Farms (LPG) in the Soviet Zone

Date	Number of LPG	Share of the LPG in total farmland, percent
December, 1952	1,815	2.6
March, 1953	3,789	7.6
August, 1953	4,800	11.8
February, 1954	4,655	11.0
December, 1954	5,108	14.2
June, 1955	5,925	18.0
November, 1955	6,047	almost 20.0

Sources: Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im vierten Jahre*, p. 176. For November 1955, see Walter Sullivan, *Collectives Rise in East Germany*. In: *The New York Times* of December 30, 1955, p. 2.

In judging the economic impact of collectivization, one must allow for some increase in efficiency where the collectives replaced small farms with scattered holdings. The regime expects, of course, to have the peasants under stricter control than before and to gain output from large-scale operations. The peasants' resistance to collectivization is likely to be strongest in areas with a tradition of small independent farming, and less strong in the areas operated formerly by large estates and subject to the uneconomical settlement measures of 1945/46. In many instances, the opposition is likely to be directed against the centralistic and oppressive forms of the collectivization and its almost exclusive direction by city people, rather than against cooperation per se. There is a cooperative tradition among German farmers which goes back to the cooperative dairies and similar organizations.

In 1953, resistance against collectivization, the persecution of the "Kulaks" and a drought combined to produce such a serious crop failure as to compel the regime to order a temporary letup of the rural revolution. It was at that time that the delivery norms for private middle-sized farms were lowered somewhat, about 300 LPG mostly of Type 1 dissolved, and certain supply shortages mitigated. In this manner the communists succeeded in appeasing the grumbling villagers; and the improved performance of agriculture, in turn, helped them to appease the rebellious city workers. But the "new course" of rural appeasement has meanwhile given way to a renewed tightening of the reins and another increase in the number of LPG (see Table II). In the "workers' and peasants' state", the private farm is under a death sentence, even though execution may be delayed. The peasants are helpless against the determination of their rulers to proceed with the execution.

The size distribution of farm property in the SZ, incidentally, seems to be reverting to the old pattern. In 1953, the 1,664,000 ha in socialized farms, of one type or another, averaging more than 100 ha per farm, formed 27 percent of the total farm area. In 1939, the 1,806,000 ha in large estates had formed 28 percent of the total area (see Table I). At that time, of course, the large farms were mostly private property, while now they are all socialized.

### 3.2.3 Production and Delivery Planning, Price System

The planning of agricultural production in the Soviet Zone consists of a heavy-handed system of government instructions to farmers which regulate types of crops and methods of work and set delivery norms with little regard to the farmers' preferences or circumstances. Observers believe that the system is more authoritarian than the Nazi war economy. With its detailed production orders and penalties for non-performance it is the very opposite to farm planning in a market economy.

As long as delivery norms were moderate and the authorities permitted surpluses of one crop to make up for shortages of another, farmers pretty much followed their custom or judgment in selecting crops. But the increasingly rigid enforcement of the governmental plan has made this impossible. Any deviation from the plan requires express permission. The difficulties of running agriculture in this way are so great, however, that the regime has felt compelled to make concessions from time to time. Small farmers, for instance, have been allowed to follow programs suggested by themselves, and the central planners have tried to fit these "wish plans" into the state plan. The effect was twofold. On the one hand, the peasants abandoned labor intensive crops such as sugar beets and emphasized feed crops for their animals. On the other hand, the planners had to impose higher norms on "larger" farms to make up for the deficiencies resulting from the "wish plans". One of the major concessions in this field was made in the summer of 1953, following the uprisings. Its incidence is shown in Table III, for three agricultural products.

Besides the enforcement of crop deliveries, the state has given much attention to the rebuilding of the greatly depleted livestock of the SZ. As in the case of crops the farmer has to fulfill a plan, the so-called "livestock multiplication plan". At the end of each year farmers must show a certain increase in their livestock. The effects of this plan will be discussed below.

Table III: Delivery Norms Before and After 1953 Uprisings

Farm Size	Grain dz per ha		Potatoes dz per ha		Meat (on the hoof) kg per ha	
	before	after	before	after	before	after
up to 5 ha	5.2	5.0	38.4	38.4	84.9	77.8
5 to 10 ha	8.5	8.2	54.5	54.5	104.5	96.1
10 to 20 ha	12.5	12.0	79.3	74.5	119.1	100.7
20 to 30 ha	16.5	15.4	98.5	86.5	126.7	102.1
over 50 ha	18.7	16.1	104.7	89.0	130.6	104.5

Source: Kolbe/Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im dritten Jahre*, p. 162.

The system of compulsory deliveries merits some comment. The state fixes delivery norms according to region and size of farm, separately for practically all crops. The norms are established on the basis of the ordered, not the actual, area under a certain crop, and they are set well before the crop prospects become discernible. Regardless of weather, the deliveries have to be made by a certain date, and the villages are encouraged to pass "spontaneous" resolutions to beat these dates. Farmers who do not meet the dates are subject to prosecution under penal law.

As a rule, farmers are not allowed to retain any produce for use on their farms, in their households or for free sale before they have fulfilled the delivery norms. The "People's Crop Collection Agencies" (VEAB) buy the compulsory deliveries at fixed collection prices. The two-price system, a low price for the compulsory deliveries and a higher one for extra production ("*Spitzen*") is used for practically all crops. Its intent is obvious.

Prices for compulsory deliveries have been held extremely low for grains, 4 to 5 percent above the prewar level, and raised somewhat, about 40 percent above prewar, for slaughter animals. The incentive prices vary between time-and-a-half to twice the collection prices for crops and are as high as four times the collection prices for animal products. Since only 60 to 80 percent of animal products (1951) were sold at collection prices, while 90 to 100 percent of crop deliveries were so sold, it is apparent that the system has been used to stimulate the supply of animal products.<sup>17</sup>

17 The plan for 1954 expected the VEAB to buy compulsory deliveries at the rate of 1,890 million DM-O, and extra production at the rate of 3,040 million DM-O. Since the latter figure included incentive price additions of 2,185 million, it may be said that it was equivalent of 855 million worth of compulsory deliveries. In other words, weighted at compulsory delivery prices, the purchases of extra production amounted to 31 percent of the total acquisitions by the VEAB.

In conjunction with the crop and delivery plans, machine-tractor stations receive work plans of their own. These are established on the basis of Russian and SZ yardsticks for the work capacity of machinery. The norms are expressed in "units of average plowing". In 1954, the economic plan set the norm for a tractor at 300 ha of average plowing. In accordance with the plan the MTS conclude annual work contracts with the farms in their area, first with the collective farms, then the dwarf farms and finally, if at all, with private farms larger than 20 ha.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.2.4 Provisioning Agriculture with Fertilizer, Seed and Equipment

The provisioning of agriculture with the essential means of production is subject to elaborate government management in the Soviet Zone. Fertilizers, apart from potash, which is sold freely, are allotted to farms according to a distribution plan of the German Central Trade Bureau for Chemicals. The bulk of seed production and distribution is nationalized. Farm machinery has been concentrated in large measure in government-owned and managed machine-tractor stations (MTS).

Fertilizer application suffered greatly from the wartime conversion of the chemical industry to munitions production, and from plant dismantling and production difficulties in the early postwar years. Since then, supplies have increased; but the recovery has lacked balance. Potash, of which there is substantial production in the Soviet Zone, was applied in 1950/51 at a rate 20 percent above the prewar level; nitrogen, however, at a rate 13 percent below prewar; and phosphorus at less than half the prewar rate (47 percent of 1938/39). In the case of nitrogen, the great production capacity of the Leuna works was used in large part for reparations deliveries and export orders. Phosphorus remained scarce because of insufficient imports.<sup>19</sup> By 1953/54, however, owing to the curtailment of reparations deliveries, nitrogen application had risen to 94 percent of prewar. Phosphates were being imported from the USSR and the West, but phosphorus application still remained at 74 percent of prewar.

The fertilizer supply has been criticized for the lack of suitable chemical compositions, and for crude and wasteful forms of transport and storage. Owing to shortages of sacking and storage space a substantial part of the deliver-

18 Editors' note: Cf. anonymus author, *Die Maschinen-Traktoren-Stationen (MTS) in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, Materialien zur Wirtschaftslage in der sowjetischen Zone, hg. vom Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn n. d., pp. 13 f.

19 Matthias Kramer, *Die Landwirtschaft in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, 2. ed. Bonn 1953, p. 29.

ies come in open freight cars and are stored in the open upon arrival in the village, where they are of course likely to deteriorate. The bureaucrats seem to pay little attention to the requirements of the farmers. The state farms are reportedly better supplied.

Fertilizer prices are relatively high. Compared with the farmer in the Federal Republic, the SZ farmer has to deliver 56 percent more rye, or 65 percent more potatoes, or 20 percent more sugar beets to buy a unit of ammonium sulfate.<sup>20</sup>

The provisioning of the SZ's agriculture with seed material is largely the task of the nationalized "people's farms". The seed development work on these farms is supported by high budgetary allowances and excellent facilities. Other farms also participate in this work, but as we shall see, they face certain handicaps. The entire program is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The State Sales Office for Seeds allots seed to the farmers.

Despite the qualitatively high performance of most of the nationalized seed farms, the farmers often complain about irregular and inferior seed supplies. The main reason for this is that the seed allowances for private and collective farms out of their own production, which are supposed to have priority over outside deliveries, are frequently discarded in favor of the deliveries to the government. The developing shortages of seed material on the farm are met, typically, first by public appeals for mutual help, and then by reallocations to the farms of some of the delivered crops. These return shipments are often of indifferent quality. The farmers' repeated demands for an effective exemption of farm-grown seed material from the compulsory deliveries to the state have not been heeded, partly because of the separation of the responsibilities for "agriculture" and "food" in two ministries with conflicting interests. Bad organization is the sole reason for seed shortages in the Soviet Zone.

The machine-tractor stations, called MTS as in Russia or MAS (*Maschinenausleihstationen*: machine lending stations), are a typical feature of Soviet-type agriculture. They are the offspring of economic necessity and political design. The mechanical equipment of the former large estates and their central repair shops was unsuitable for distribution to the new small farms, and machinery suitable to the needs of these farms was unavailable. The facilities of the expropriated estates were turned over first to "mutual help associations" and then, in 1948, to the state administration for MAS. In 1954, more than 600 stations in the 14 districts of the Zone were reported to have 34,000 trac-

20 Kramer, *Die Landwirtschaft*, p. 75. Figures for 1951/52. The exchange relations between farm produce and farm requirements were even less favorable in the case of hardware and motor fuel. They may have improved somewhat since that time.

tors.<sup>21</sup> The number of tractors had risen to that amount from 8,600 in 1949, and it was expected to reach 37,500 in 1955, to be organized in 750 stations. These tractors and other machinery are made available to farms for rental.<sup>22</sup> In 1953, the MAS may have harvested half of the area under grain in the Zone.

The political design behind the MAS is to organize, “educate” and control the small peasants and to discriminate against the middle peasants and in favor of the collective farms. The small peasants depend of course greatly on these stations; for they have hardly any machinery of their own. Discrimination against the middle peasants has taken the form of higher rentals; in 1954, a farm of 20 to 50 ha paid three times as much rental, per ha, for plowing and most other types of machine work, than a farm of less than 10 ha. Often there is outright exclusion of the private middle-sized farm from MAS services. The collective farms enjoy priority treatment by the MAS and pay lesser rentals per ha than the smallest private farms.<sup>23</sup>

The MAS serve as centers of propaganda and education. They maintain “houses of culture” with libraries and are replete with red flags and posters. But to judge from the criticisms leveled against their performance in this field, the stations have not been too successful in indoctrinating the rural population. Meetings tend to have low attendance and the libraries, which are heavily stocked with Marxist literature, few readers. The MAS stations, especially those located close to important traffic arteries, also have some strategic significance for motorized warfare. They provide a system of arsenals and fuel dumps.

The performance of the MAS has given rise to many complaints. Super-annuated and badly maintained equipment has meant a large percentage of unusable machines. In 1951, 28 percent of the tractors and 45 percent of the threshing machines were reported unusable. There was a shortage of parts and specialized machinery to go with the tractors and, above all, a continuing shortage of skilled “tractorists”. Mechanics found better pay and more agreeable work in industry. The MAS frequently defaulted on their contracts, sending their equipment to a farm “when its turn had come” rather than when weather and crop conditions were most favorable. They operated uneconomically and required state subsidies.<sup>24</sup>

21 I. e. 34,000 units calculated on the basis of 30 HP per unit. Editors’ note: Cf. anonymous author, *Die Maschinen-Traktoren-Stationen (MTS)*, pp. 6f., as well as Albert Kindelberger, *Zahlen zeigen den Aufstieg der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Berlin (East) 1955, pp. 31–33.

22 Anonymous author, *Die Maschinen-Traktoren-Stationen (MTS)*, pp. 26f.

23 Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 15, 50–53.

24 All MAS revenues go into the zonal budget via the Deutsche Notenbank, and all expenditures are financed from there. In 1952, according to Soviet Zone press reports, expenditures exceeded revenue by 200 million DM-O. Of this deficit, 124 million were justified by investment. Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 6f.

In recent years, conditions have improved somewhat. The development of the MAS is receiving strong support from the government. The stations are receiving more equipment, thanks to larger production in the SZ and to imports from Russia. Still, quite apart from the purposely discriminatory functions of the system, it is a source of much annoyance to the farmers who depend on it. The inefficiency of centralized planning with its bottlenecks and its jerkiness, and the indifferent handling of equipment by the crews, reduce and perhaps overbalance the economies of large-scale operations which the system makes possible.

In 1953/54, the Soviet Zone regime was compelled by acute food shortages to plan for increased deliveries of farm machinery, fertilizer and feed to the farms. Interestingly enough, there was no reference in the plan then to the expansion of collective farming. The authorities were reducing their political ambitions and relaxing their pressure on private farms in order to raise production. This was not without precedent in Soviet experience. Since the days of Lenin's new Economic Policy (NEP) in Russia, communist economics has often regarded a temporary return to capitalistic incentives as a safety valve against underproduction, particularly in agriculture. But the cautious "new course" in the SZ was far less a retreat than the NEP in Russia.

### 3.2.5 Performance of Agriculture

The revolution in farm ownership and the violent manipulation of the rural economy by the regime do not seem to have led to a decline in soil cultivation. As Table I above shows, the reduction of the cultivated area, which occurred after the war, was arrested. By 1953, the area had recovered to 6,213,000 ha, or 98 percent of 1939. Practically all arable land is now being cultivated. The remaining decline of the cultivated area must be ascribed to the gradual shifting of farmland to industrial and other nonagricultural uses, which is proceeding in the Soviet Zone as elsewhere.

Notable changes, however, have occurred in the use of farmland. The proportion of meadowland, which had been relatively low in the Soviet Zone to begin with, declined further. About 80,000 ha of such land were transferred to crops. Among the various crops, grains lost in area and most of the other crops gained (see Table IV).

Table IV: Area under Various Crops in the Soviet Zone of Germany, 1000 ha

	Average 1935/39	1948	1954	1954 as percent of 1935/39
Food grains	1,824	1,769	1,640	90
Feed grains	1,285	966	977	76
Grains, Total	3,109	2,735	2,617	84
Legumes	84	148	129	154
Oilseeds } Fibers }		116	143	n. a.
	34	23	44	n. a.
Potatoes	795	804	834	105
Sugar beets	197	200	221	112
Misc. feed crops (turnips, etc.)	226	233	323	143

Source: Editors' note: The reference for this overview („Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung“) was inconclusive and the source could not be identified. Cf., however, Kolbe/Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im dritten Jahre*, p. 159; Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im vierten Jahre*, p. 174; Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1955, Erster Jahrgang*, Berlin (East) 1956, pp. 204 f.; Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1956*, p. 540.

n. a. = not available

The reduction in the food-grain area occurred entirely in wheat. The area under rye increased somewhat. While there probably was little direct substitution, with wheat land going to sugar beets rather than rye, and rye gaining at the expense of feed grains, this suggests a retrograde shift in the bread grain mixture of the SZ toward the coarser type of bread. There were substantial increases in the areas planted to industrial crops, legumes and non-grain feedstuffs.

It is difficult to obtain reliable information on the development of crop yields. Data published by the SZ authorities suggest substantial increases for all grains up to 1953 (see Table V), and for potatoes and sugar beets up to 1954; but some Western observers consider this information unreliable and incompatible with the known supply shortages in the Zone. Partly on the basis of a special study<sup>25</sup> the German Institute for Economic Research in West Berlin estimated that grain yields per ha in 1953 amounted to only about 85 percent for grain, about 75 percent for potatoes and sugar beets. According to the Institute, aggregate yields were about as follows in the postwar years.

25 Kramer, *Die Landwirtschaft*, pp. 47 ff.



Table V: Yields per ha in the Soviet Zone, according to Soviet Zone data and an outside estimate<sup>1</sup>

Year	Wheat	Rye	Feed grain	Grains Total	Oil Seeds	Potatoes	Sugar Beets
	Metric tons per ha						
Average 1934/38	2.5	1.7	2.2	2.1	1.5	17.3	29.1
1946 SZ Source	1.8	1.3	1.6	1.5	.6	13.5	20.3
1951 " "	3.2	2.3	2.8	2.6	1.4	17.9	27.9
1953 " "	2.8	1.9	2.6	2.3	1.1	16.8	29.1
1953 Outside Estimate	2.1	1.4	1.9	1.8	n. a.	13.0	21.8

Source: Kolbe/Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im dritten Jahre*, p. 159.

<sup>1</sup> Estimated by Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung at about 85 percent of prewar for grains, about 75 percent potatoes and sugar beets. Editors' note: For this estimation, no source could be identified. The values can easily be calculated oneself, though.

n. a. = not available

In the light of the relatively high estimates of livestock holdings for recent years, which are widely accepted (see below), it seems doubtful, however, that crop yields should still lag far behind prewar levels. While it is true that imbalance in the fertilizer supply, with too little phosphorus, imposes a limitation, this should perhaps not be overrated. Some observers feel that crop yields may have regained a level of approximately 95 percent of prewar in 1954.

Soviet Zone sources indicate a sizable increase of the livestock population, and in this case, Western authorities are inclined to believe that they are substantially correct. At least it must be presumed that the peasants had no interest in showing larger cattle holdings than they actually had; on the contrary, the compulsory delivery system would make them lean the other way. Unless the peasant reports were inflated by the statisticians, there are substantially more hogs in the Soviet Zone today than there were before the war, and somewhat more beef cattle and sheep (see Table VII). This is not to say that all cattle increased in line with the "livestock multiplication plan". According to that plan there should have been more than 9 million hogs in 1953. Actually, disease reduced the number to about 8.3 million. Similarly, the results for beef cattle and sheep fell short of the plan.

Table VI: Aggregate Yields of Important Crops in the Soviet Zone, 1935/39 to 1953

Year	Grain		Potatoes		Sugar Beets	
	Million tons	Percent of 1935/39	Million tons	Percent of 1935/39	Million tons	Percent of 1935/39
Average 1935/39	6.8	100	14.4	100	6.1	100
1946	3.6	53	9.3	67	4.0	64
1947	3.7	54	8.1	61	3.1	50
1948	4.4	65	12.4	85	4.6	74
1949	4.6	68	9.9	69	3.9	64
1950	5.3	78	13.0	90	5.5	90
1951	5.8	85	12.0	83	5.4	89
1952	5.6	82	11.5	80	5.0	82
1953	5.0	74	10.5	73	5.2	85

Source: Kolbe/Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im dritten Jahre*, p. 159, on the basis of Soviet Zone information. Editors' note: The source does not provide evidence for the years 1946, 1947 and 1949.

Table VII: Livestock Population in the Soviet Zone (1000 heads)

Year	Beef Cattle		Hogs		Sheep	
	Total	Cows	Total	Sows	Total	Ewes
1936	3,604.6	1,960.4 <sup>1</sup>	5,706.9 <sup>1</sup>	412 <sup>2</sup>	1,693 <sup>2</sup>	954 <sup>2</sup>
1946	2,767.3	1,368.5	1,967.0	247	748	n. a.
1950	3,614.7	1,616.4	5,704.8	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.
1952	3,915.0	1,982.0	9,047.0	810	1,421	715
1953	3,876.7	1,976.7	8,283.2	n. a.	1,549	n. a.
1954 <sup>3</sup>	3,793.0	2,056.0	8,367.0	766	1,712	822

Source: Kolbe/Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im dritten Jahre*, p. 160; Hellmut Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft der Sowjetzone Deutschlands im Jahre 1955, dem letzten Jahre des 1. Fünfjahrplanes*. In: *Vierteljahrshäfte zur Wirtschaftsforschung*, (1956) 2, p. 146-170, here 167.

<sup>1</sup> 1938

<sup>2</sup> 1936/38

<sup>3</sup> Census of December 3, 1954

n. a. = not available

The increase in livestock holdings, however, did not result in a significant improvement in the supply of meat and dairy products to the population. These foodstuffs continue to be strictly rationed. Under prewar conditions of animal feeding and meat output, one should have expected the livestock of 1951 to produce more than 40 kg of meat per year per head of human population. The supply plan for 1952 provided for only about 27 kg.<sup>26</sup> What can be said of the expected meat supplies is probably just as true for actual deliveries. They have not increased in step with cattle numbers.

The chief explanation of this discrepancy seems to be that meat output per hog and milk output per cow are significantly lower than they were before the war, or than they are today in West Germany. No data are available to prove the point for meat; but in the case of milk, zonal statistics indicate that in 1952 milk production per cow per year had not yet recovered to the prewar level (2,600 kg); it stood at 2,532 kg after having dropped as low as 1,741 kg in 1948.<sup>27</sup> This is above all the result of unsatisfactory feeding, and to some extent also of the concealment of animal products and their diversion to the black market. The fodder deficiency, specially in protein-rich feedstuffs, can be traced back to planning mistakes in the domestic economy and to the insufficient imports. One expert estimated that the deficiency, expressed in grain value, amounted to 1.4 to 1.75 million tons in 1951. Under these conditions the boosting of livestock numbers was accompanied by a drop in the quality of the animals.

It should not be assumed, however, that this discrepancy must continue indefinitely. If feed supplies are improved in the future, a considerable rise in the production of meat and dairy products seems possible. The SZ has a potential capacity to overcome the shortages which so far have kept all animal products scarce and under rationing controls. In order to utilize this capacity, however, the regime may have to restrain its inclination to squeeze and exploit the peasantry by economic and political means.

### 3.2.6 Nutrition

In the absence of published data, the state of nutrition in the Soviet Zone cannot be judged with precision; but a few general observations can be made. Prior to the relaxation of farm policy in 1953, production and distribution difficulties led to a critical situation. While there are no indications of mass malnutrition now, rationing of meat, dairy products and sugar subsists, and it is reported that the rations are now always delivered in full. Table VIII shows

26 Kramer, *Die Landwirtschaft*, p. 66.

27 Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1954*, p. 543.

Table VIII: Thirty-day Rations in the Soviet Zone at the beginning of 1954, Grams

	Meat	Fat <sup>6</sup>	Sugar	Milk <sup>7</sup>	Potatoes
Basic Ration	1,350	900	1,200	–	10–12 kg
Card E <sup>1</sup>	1,450	930	1,350	–	" "
Card D <sup>2</sup>	1,950	1,300	1,500	–	" "
Card C <sup>3</sup>	1,950	1,450	1,800	–	" "
Card B <sup>4</sup>	1,950	1,650	1,800	–	" "
Card A <sup>5</sup>	2,550	1,800	1,800	–	" "
Children (under 5)	900	900	1,600	500/day	" "

Source: Editors' note: The reference for this overview („Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung“) was inconclusive and the source could not be identified despite extensive research.

<sup>1</sup> Ordinary factory workers.

<sup>2</sup> Workers, craftsmen, white-collar workers.

<sup>3</sup> Heavy workers, teachers, doctors, students, supervisors.

<sup>4</sup> Miners (above surface), some very heavy workers, minor officials.

<sup>5</sup> Miners, heaviest workers, high party and state officials.

<sup>6</sup> In early 1955, the fat ration consisted of two thirds oleomargarine and lard. Only children and holders of the top-level ration cards received half or more in the form of butter.

<sup>7</sup> Skimmed milk.

the rations which were in force in the Soviet Zone at the beginning of 1954 for ordinary citizens and certain preferred groups.

As a rule, there seems to be a fairly ample supply of rationed foodstuffs in the so-called “HO” stores (3.6), where the surplus deliveries of the farmers find an outlet, but the prices there are substantially higher than those charged for rationed goods (see Table IX). Vegetables and fruits on the other hand, which before the war used to be brought into the area from other parts of Germany or abroad, are often short now; but in 1954 there was some increase in these imports from the Federal Republic and other Western countries. At present, the SZ is the only country in Europe still rationing foodstuffs. There still exists a black market in foodstuffs.

Gross national product estimates for the Soviet Zone provide a tentative over-all picture of the state of food supplies. For 1952, the contribution of agriculture to the gross national product of the SZ has been estimated at 3 billion marks in 1936 prices, as compared with 3.1 billion marks in 1936.<sup>28</sup> This

28 The Legislative Reference Service of the Library of Congress (ed.), *Trends in Economic Growth*, p. 292. Estimates prepared by Mr. Fred H. Sanderson of the Department of State.

Table IX: Prices of Selected Foodstuffs, Rationed, and in HO Stores December 1953

Articles	Ration Price	HO (free) price
	DM-O per unit	
Sugar, 1 kg.	1.12	3.-
Oleomargarine, 1 kg	2.16	6.-
Butter, 1 kg	4.20	20.-
Whole milk, 1 ltr	.32	1.60
Eggs, a piece	.12	.45
Beef (Soup Meat), 1 kg	2.10	6.60
Pork (Chops), 1 kg	2.40	11.20

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1954*, pp. 552 f.

would indicate a gross agricultural production in recent years about as large as that before the war. Per head of population, however, the supply must have remained a good deal smaller than before the war; for the population of the SZ increased by more than 12 percent (1.3) and available supplies have had to be shared with several hundred thousand Russian soldiers who are stationed in East Germany. SZ sources bear out that per capita consumption of meat, meat products and milk remained well below prewar levels as late as the second half of 1953. These sources state, however, that consumption of potatoes, bread and sugar was then a good deal higher than in 1936.<sup>29</sup> These cheap foods permitted people to survive the food crisis of 1953. Since that time the availability of foodstuffs must have improved; but it is difficult to say to what extent.

### 3.3 Industrial Potential [*Horst Mendershhausen/Karl C. Thalheim*]

The part of Germany that fell to the Soviet Union in 1945 as a zone of military occupation was part of a highly developed and highly integrated national economy. In 1936, it produced on the average about 26 percent of the Reich's industrial output. It contained important elements of Germany's manufacturing industries. But these elements were interlaced with industries in the Western part of the country and did not form a separate and largely self-contained system. The decision of the Soviet authorities to develop such a system in the

<sup>29</sup> Economic Commission for Europe, *Economic Survey of Europe in 1954*, Geneva 1955, p. 49.

SZ as the industrial base of a satellite state therefore opened up serious problems. The regime had to grapple with striking disproportions in the industrial apparatus, too little of one industry and too much of another; and these disproportions were often enlarged by the effects of wartime destruction and postwar dismantling and removal of plant capacity. The story of the five-year plan in the SZ is to some extent a story of the efforts to overcome these difficulties and to shape an integrated industrial system out of over- and undersized pieces. At the same time, of course, it is the record of the politically inspired endeavors of the regime to nationalize the major part of industry, to use resources for the development of the producer goods industries rather than consumption, and to spur the workers on to heavy exertions through monetary and other incentives.

### 3.3.1 The Structure of Industry

The SZ inherited a large variety of industrial resources and enterprises. From the start, it was by no means a one-industry economy. But its share in the heritage was very uneven.

In mining, the SZ had an insignificant share of Germany's rich hard coal deposits, but it contained the bulk of her lignite, potassium and copper ore (see Table I). It also had a major part of Germany's oil refining facilities, in particular synthetic gasoline production, which had of course suffered much from Allied bombing during the war. In the important field of metallurgy, the SZ had very limited iron and steel producing facilities but a good-sized share of aluminum, magnesium and zinc production. The metal, and particularly steel, fabricating industries were highly developed, and the SZ's share was particularly large in machine tool building, textile, leather and office machinery, bicycles, motorcycles and optical equipment. But it was relatively small in the building of heavy industrial equipment, motors and, considering the Zone proper, electrical machinery.<sup>30</sup> In chemicals, the industry of the SZ was most prominent in the heavy materials, such as sulphuric acid, soda and ammonium, and it had acquired a substantial share in Germany's production of synthetic rubber. But in the lighter chemicals, e.g. pharmaceutical supplies and pigments, the area played a rather small role. Soviet Zone industry was relatively weak in building materials but strong in a variety of light industries, notably textiles.

Altogether, the chief points of strength of the industrial apparatus of the SZ lay in lignite and in the power, chemical and synthetic industries which were based on this inferior type of coal, important segments of the machinery

30 Note, however, that East Berlin contained a substantial electrical equipment industry. In 1936, Berlin as a whole produced almost half (49 percent) of Germany's electrical equipment, its eastern sector alone perhaps 12 percent.

industry and the textile industry. Its chief deficiencies were in hard coal, iron and steel, certain other segments of machinery, light chemicals and building materials industries.

Table I: Percentage Share of the Soviet Zone in All-German Industrial Production 1936 (Overall Average: 26 percent)

Industries with less than average share of Soviet Zone		Industries with more than average share of Soviet Zone	
	Percent		Percent
<b>Mining</b>			
Iron Ore	3.4	Lignite	61.3
Coal	2.3	Lignite "Briketts"	66.2
Petroleum	0.2	Potassium	58.7
		Copper	100.0
<b>Power</b>			
Manufactured gas	4.2	Electric power	29.7
<b>Motor Fuel</b>			
		Gasoline, total	55,0
		Synthetic gasoline	96,2 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Metallurgy</b>			
Pig iron	1.3	Aluminum	50.3
Crude steel	6.4	Magnesium	91.0
Rolled steel	5.1	Zinc	27.6
Iron and steel castings	18.0		
Lead	7.2		
Nickel	18.3		
Tin	3.1		
<b>Machinery</b>			
Agricult. machinery	17.9	Machine tools	32.4
Combustion engines	6.2	Textile, leather machinery	57.7
Turbines	9.1	Office machines	57.4
Compressed air eng.	13.4	Bicycles	31.6
Mining and rolling mill equipment	7.2	Motorcycles	35.5
		Trailers	51.2

Electrical, mechanical and optical machines			
Electric motors	7.4	Cameras	31.9
Batteries	7.7		
Watches	11.5		
Chemical Industry			
Coal-tar pigments	14.8	Sulphuric acid	20.0 <sup>2</sup>
Pharmaceutical	4.6	Calcined soda	47.1
Photographic supplies	18.9	Synthetic ammonium	55.5
		Chlorine	48.5
Paints	16.7	Nitrog. fertilizer	61.1
Tires	0.0	Carbide	29.4
		Methanol	78.9
		Buna <sup>4</sup>	0.0 <sup>3</sup>
Building Materials			
Cement	14.4	Asbestos	41.1
Window glass	8.7		
Light industries			
Cellulose	17.1	Paper, cardboard	37.2
Leather shoes	19.6	Non-leather shoes	41.0
Rayon	24.4	“Zellwolle”	38.2
		Yarns	29.0
		Cloth	28.4
		Stockings, socks	86.5
		Knit goods	42.0
Food and beverage industries			
Meat products	13.5	Starch and products	43.0
Potable alcohol	13.2	Sugar	46.8

Source: Bruno Gleitze, *Stand der Entwicklung im mitteldeutschen Wirtschaftsraum*. In: Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (ed.), *Vierteljahrshefte für Wirtschaftsforschung*, (1952) 1, p. 60. Data refer to Soviet Zone proper, excluding East Berlin.

<sup>1</sup> In 1943, only 38.5, owing to development of industry in the West.

<sup>2</sup> In 1944, 28.1

<sup>3</sup> In 1943, 59.6

<sup>4</sup> Editors' note: Synthetic rubber.



### 3.3.2 Fuel and Energy

Lignite is the most important single industrial resource of the Zone. Developed largely since World War I, the deposits of central Germany furnished 123 million tons of lignite in 1938, and 164 million tons in 1943. They formed the base of the area's chemical and electrical power production as well as the main source of household fuel. The main deposits occur in the neighborhoods of Halle-Leipzig-Bitterfeld, Calbe-Oschersleben, Frankfurt-Eberswalde and Cottbus-Senftenberg. Four fifths of the total estimated deposits of about 20 billion tons are being mined on the surface, the rest underground.

While the area covered its lignite requirements from local resources, it was heavily dependent on Silesia and the Ruhr for hard coal. In 1938, it produced only 3.5 million tons of the latter in Saxony and imported four times that amount. Despite great efforts it proved impossible to raise domestic hard coal production over the prewar level; the first five-year plan had to content itself with a target of about 3.5 million tons. Imports from Poland and to a lesser extent from West Germany meanwhile came to supply an amount of similar magnitude, thus leaving the SZ with a serious fuel deficiency.

Consequently, the expansion of lignite mining and the substitution of lignite for coal became a problem of the first order. The regime devoted itself to this task with great energy and succeeded in reaching the peak wartime production in 1951. In 1953, lignite output was pushed to 178 million tons, and the plan goal for 1955 is 199 million tons (see Table II). But this program was beset with enormous difficulties, and its execution was costly.

The expansion of lignite mining itself would not have been too difficult, had it not been for substantial losses of capacity through Soviet dismantling, amounting to about 37 percent, besides some small war damage. To make up for these losses and to expand capacity, the machinery industry had to turn out a large amount of mining equipment, and the labor force had to be increased. But the greatest problems arose on the demand side. First of all, the volume of demand for coal was enormously increased by the expansion programs for electric power and the steel and steel-using industries.

The discrepancy between that demand and the available supply was such that the SZ had to maintain a strict allocation system for coal and lignite. Allocations to household consumption were curtailed, and only inferior grades of lignite were allotted to this use. Secondly, the substitution of lignite for coal presented technical problems. The low thermal value of lignite and its high ash content lowered the efficiency of steam plants and locomotives and required mechanical adaptations. Thirdly, special difficulties accompanied the attempt to use lignite in place of coal for coking and steel making purposes. In view of

Table II: Production of Lignite and Electric Power in the Soviet Zone

Year	Lignite Million tons	Electric Power Billion kWh
1936	101.1	12.7
1943	165.1	25.2
1946	109.8	11.1
1947	101.7	13.3
1948	110.8	15.4
1949	124.0	17.3
1950	137.2	18.9
1951	158.6	21.4
1952	172.9	23.1
1953	178.3	24.2
1955 (revised plan)	198.7	29.5

Source: Kolbe/Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im dritten Jahre*, p. 153. Editors' note: Cf. also Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *Die Kraftwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone. Ihre Quellen und Reserven, Materialien zur Wirtschaftslage in der sowjetischen Zone*, Bonn, n. d., pp. 35, 39, as well as Eduard Kinzel, *Die Elektrizitätswirtschaft in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone, Materialien zur Wirtschaftslage in der sowjetischen Zone*, Bonn, n. d. Not all numbers are verifiable.

these difficulties, the expansion of lignite production and its use represents an achievement of the planned economy. It was a tour de force made necessary by the decision to develop a high degree of fuel autarky and executed through a ruthless shifting of material and human resources to this purpose.

But even this did not keep fuel from remaining a bottleneck in the economy of the SZ. The ambitious expansion plan for lignite was not sufficient to meet the even more ambitious plans for the metallurgical and machinery industries, and the deficiency was made more painful by the lagging of output behind the plan and the necessity to lower the plan goal. Originally, the five-year plan had set the goal at 225 million tons of output in 1955; this had to be lowered to 199 million tons.

The story of electric power is a similar one. Here too, dismantling had reduced production capacity substantially, i. e. by about one-third of the wartime peak. Large new investments were needed. Existing equipment was strained to the utmost, which led to frequent breakdowns of production and greater replacement needs. Civilian use was curtailed by daily shutoffs of current; even factories were ordered, as late as 1952, to take 50 percent of their power requirements at night, which necessitated a greater reliance on night shifts. So far, the expansion of capacity has been accomplished mainly through the

Table III: Annual Rates of Increase of Electric Power Production in the Soviet Zone and the Federal Republic of Germany

Year	Soviet Zone percent increase	Federal Republic percent increase
1951	13.2	16.4
1952	7.9	9.8
1953	4.8	7.6
1954	7.0	12.1

Source: Editors' note: The reference for this overview („Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung“) was inconclusive. The source could not be identified despite extensive research and the numbers could not be verified.

enlarging of existing thermal plants, but the Ministry for Heavy Machinery Construction has several new plants under construction.

By 1953, power production had not yet reached the wartime peak of 25.2 billion kWh, and lagging plan fulfillment by the power plants was a cause of much trouble in other industries. The growth of power output was substantial, but it is interesting to note that it has been smaller in recent years than in the Federal Republic (see Table III). In 1955, the Zone hopes to reach an output of 29.5 billion kWh.

### 3.3.3 Metallurgy

If the expansion of domestic fuel and energy was a tour de force, the creation of a *steel industry* was an even greater one. The SZ had practically none of the requirements, neither good coking coal, nor iron ore, nor plant capacity built up in the framework of the old German economy. The decision of the regime to build a steel industry was entirely political and clearly reflected the concept of economic development on a national base of heavy industry, “national” that is, in the sense of the politically controlled area.

A new steel industry is being developed in two centers, at Calbe near Magdeburg and at Stalinstadt near Frankfurt-on-Oder. The Stalinstadt enterprise is located at the entry of the Oder-Spree canal in the Oder river. It receives its coke mainly from Poland, iron ore from Sweden and Russia. Four blast furnaces are installed, a rolling mill is under construction, and a new city is growing up near the site which is expected to have 50,000 inhabitants someday.

The Calbe combine is located on the Saale river, in a location without any industrial past but with good railroad connections. It is the more autarkic of the two centers, drawing iron ores from Saalfeld (said to average 30 percent of

iron content) and from the newer and poorer exploitations of the Harz and Erzgebirge (15 to 20 percent). Coke comes to Calbe from the hard coal area of Zwickau and from the Lauchhammer works, which produce “brown coke” from lignite. The poverty of the iron ore tends to raise fuel requirements, and the poverty of the “brown coke” (sulphur content) enhances the difficulties of this experiment in “poor metallurgy”; but the regime hopes to overcome the difficulties through new technological processes.

Besides the new Stalinstadt and Calbe works, the Zone has older mills at Groeditz and Unterwellenborn, a mill for special steels at Doehlen, rolling mills at Riesa, Brandenburg, Hennigsdorf, Ilsenburg and Kirchmoeser. These ten enterprises, which are called S-5B<sup>31</sup>, form the steel industry of Communist Germany.

For a while, ample resources of war scrap helped to round out the iron base of the new steel industry, but these have now largely been used up, and further development depends on imports and on the exploitation of ordinary local resources. As can be seen from Table IV, the expansion of iron and steel production has been of no mean proportions; but it still leaves the steel using industries of the SZ dependent on imports for a substantial part of their requirements.

Table IV: Iron and Steel Production in the Soviet Zone

Year	Pig Iron		Steel Ingots		Rolled Steel	
	1000 t	1936 = 100	1000 t	1936 = 100	1000 t	1936 = 100
1936	201	100	1200	100	898	100
1946	123	61	97	8	76	8
1947	132	66	108	9	92	10
1948	274	136	398	33	192	21
1949	313	156	643	54	468	52
1950	348	173	963	80	872	97
1951	402	200	1537	128	1084	121
1952	573	285	1808	151	1323	147
1953	1174	584	1911	160	1485	165
1954	1320	657	2340	195	n. a.	n. a.

Source: Editors' note: The reference for this overview („Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung“) was inconclusive and the source could not be identified. Cf. for some data, however, Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), Statistisches Jahrbuch 1955, p. 533.

n. a. = not available

31 S-5B stands for “Schwerpunkt-Fünfjahrplan-Betriebe”, or hardcore enterprises of the five-year plan.

### 3.3.4 Machinery Industries

In the metal fabricating industries, the endowment of the SZ with production facilities was a good deal more favorable. This holds true for plant capacity as well as the skilled labor force domiciled in the area. It is true that the first was hit by dismantling and war damage, amounting to perhaps as much as 70 percent of capacity, and the second by the emigration of managers, engineers and workers to the West. But this still leaves the fact that the SZ fell heir to large and highly developed machine building enterprises in East Berlin, Magdeburg, Suhl and other places, the optical and precision mechanical works of Jena, Berlin, Dresden, Rathenow and various other cities of Saxony and Thuringia, and so forth. These enterprises were promptly nationalized, either directly or via sequestration by the Russians,<sup>32</sup> and ultimate transfer to the government of the DDR. To them fell the tasks of equipping the new basic industries, enlarging their own capacities, providing a major part of the SZ's exports on reparations and commercial accounts, and lastly furnishing military equipment. These industries, therefore, have played and are playing a crucial role in the economic development of the area.

But, as we have noted above, the machinery industry inherited by the SZ was itself subject to considerable disproportionalities. By and large it was strongest in the production of light equipment and relatively weak in the production of heavy factory installations (see Table I, above). Dismantling and the temporary separation of the SAGs from the German industrial complex often tended to make things worse. The dismantling program removed the bulk of the machine tool, boiler and turbine building capacity. The production facilities for mining and rolling mill equipment were largely saved from this fate because they came under SAG enterprises; but by the same token they were reserved largely for the reparations program. Consequently, the regime had to expand the heavy machinery industry substantially.

This became in fact the most pressing objective of the first five-year plan. The leading enterprises of the industry were placed under the direct supervision of the Ministry for Heavy Machinery (*Direkt-Betriebe*). In early 1953, their number was 34, and it has since increased.<sup>33</sup> They have been favored in all possible ways. Substantial sums were made available for investment in the

32 The so-called Soviet companies, or SAGs (Editors' note: Sowjetische Aktiengesellschaft).

33 A listing of the D-Betriebe as well as of other important works of the machinery industry, together with their main lines of production, can be found in Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (eds): *Der Schwermaschinenbau in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, 2. edition Bonn 1953.

heavy machinery industry to finance construction at home as well as imports of equipment: 156 million DM-O in 1951, 233 million in 1952; and for 1953 the national economic plan provided for investments of no less than 422 million DM-O. At this point, however, the screw was turned too much. Lagging plan fulfillment and the cutback of the investment program following the revolts of the summer of 1953 reduced the pace of expansion. Nevertheless, the gross production value of heavy machinery building was boosted according to SZ reports, from 537 million DM-O in 1948 to 1,562 million in 1952 and continued at approximately that level in 1953. In 1948, perhaps as much as 85 percent of the output went into reparations deliveries; but by 1952 this diversion had fallen to about one third of total output.

This development undoubtedly strengthened the industry, but it has not yet eliminated its disproportions. The industry is still weak in the production of heavy mining and steel mill equipment and has bottlenecks in machine tools, boilers and instruments, which inconvenience the industrial expansion program.

One of the most rapidly expanding sectors of the industry, incidentally, has been shipbuilding. As early as 1948, the Russian military authorities secretly ordered a vast expansion of the rather small shipbuilding facilities of the SZ in order to supply naval and commercial vessels to the Soviet Union. Four large shipyards came into existence at Warnemünde, Rostock, Wismar and Stralsund, which today employ 7 to 9,000 workers each, besides a number of smaller enterprises. As a result of the difficulties of building up the industry from scratch, the output of these yards has not yet become conspicuous; it consisted chiefly of 3,000-ton freighters. But larger ships are to be built.

The story of the light machinery industry is a rather different one. The ample capacity of the textile, office and light transport equipment industries was hard hit by dismantling. The Russian army encouraged the use of what remained for export production; but when the SZ authorities assumed control they began by starving these industries. Under the first two-year plan the government went as far as to transfer equipment from them to the factories serving the construction of heavy industry. Since the lighter types of machinery serve consumers goods production their producers suffered from the low priorities reserved for this sector under the plan. In later years, they recovered some of the ground lost, particularly in building and glass making machinery; and the making of agricultural machinery and of pumps and compressors was positively stimulated. Still these industries are contributing far less to the economy than they would have under policies more friendly to the consumer and to an international division of labor. This is particularly true for passenger car production, which has remained at a pitifully low level.

By way of contrast, the optics and precision-mechanics industries developed quite favorably from the low point reached after war and dismantling. Watches, calculators, cameras and movie equipment proved to be advantageous export articles, first on reparations account and then commercially; and the relatively low steel requirements of these industries together with the impossibility of using much of their equipment in the heavy machinery industry saved them from the curtailment imposed on other light machinery branches. Probably as much as two thirds of their production is still being exported. Considerable efforts go into maintaining these industries at a high technical level.

### 3.3.5 Chemical Industries

In conjunction with lignite, the rich deposits of salt, potash and gypsum provide a solid base for the SZ's heavy chemical industry. Salt and potash are mined near Stassfurt in Anhalt and Mühlhausen in Thuringia and furnish materials for the important soda works near Bernburg, Anhalt, formerly part of the Solvay concern, as well as other enterprises. The gypsum of Wolfen, near Bitterfeld, together with the pyrites of Elbingerode and Mansfeld serve as raw materials for the sulphuric acid industry. Above all, the central German lignite deposits are exploited by the great Leuna plant (now Ulbricht Works with 26,000 employees) near Merseburg, the former I. G. Farben (Dye Trust) works at Bitterfeld, the Buna rubber works at Schkopau and the synthetic oil plants of Böhlen, Tröglitz and Piesteritz, for the production of synthetic ammonia, fertilizers and other heavy chemicals, besides synthetic rubber and gasoline. The Lauchhammer plant produces various chemicals and by-products in conjunction with its coking operations.

These industries were highly developed at the end of the war and included some of Germany's greatest chemical plants, e. g. Leuna and Solvay. War damage and dismantling caused the loss of about half of the maximum capacity that had been attained, and the remainder of the industry fell largely under the SAG regime and was reserved consequently for reparations business; but beginning with 1948, the industry was rebuilt and integrated in the economy of the SZ. By 1953, both sulphuric acid and synthetic gasoline output were back at prewar (1938) levels, and that of synthetic diesel fuel was well in excess of prewar production (see Table V.) The Buna works hope to reach the wartime (1943) maximum output of synthetic rubber of about 70,000 tons in 1955. In 1953, they produced 67,000 tons. But with about half of the production reserved for export, the domestic economy remains very short of rubber. This applies particularly to such consumer supplies as tires and shoe soles. It must be noted that, in contrast to the Federal Republic, the synthetic rubber and

gasoline factories of the SZ were never fully shut down after the war. The Soviet authorities chose to ignore the Potsdam and subsequent four-power agreements calling for the termination of these industries.

The light chemicals industries of the SZ were less important to begin with. While some of them, such as pharmaceuticals, suffered little from adverse war and postwar developments, others, such as photo-chemicals, were heavily hit, and the overall supply situation of these products, as well as of pigments, lacquers, soaps, etc. has remained unsatisfactory to date. These industries carried relatively low priorities in the first five-year plan and received small investment funds. But one exception worth mentioning is the construction of a major new pharmaceutical plant at Jena, called *Jenapharm*.

Table V: Soviet Zone Production of Selected Articles 1953

Product	Unit of measurement	Production of Units	
		Planned	Actual
Gas	Mill. cubic meters	1,870	1,928
Electricity	Mill. kWh	25,740	24,204
Coal	1000 tons	3,870	3,148
Lignite	"	186,320	178,266
Lignite "Briketts"	"	67,250	56,318
Coke	"	2,000	2,306
Iron ore	"	1,080	1,218
Copper ore	"	1,365	1,407
Potassium	"	1,910	1,803
Pig iron	"	800	1,174
Raw steel (ingots)	"	1,940	1,911
Rolled steel	"	1,560	1,485
El. power equipment	1000 DM-O	60,230	56,763
Machine tools	"	714,540	653,812
Mining and metallurgic machinery	"	708,610	620,547
Agricultural machinery	"	95,812	98,854
Shipbuilding	"	284,600	315,518 <sup>1</sup>
Railroad rolling stock	"	366,277	352,477 <sup>1</sup>
Automobiles	units	28,680	29,084
Trucks	"	13,270	14,135



Electrical equipment	Mill. DM-O	1,724	1,887
Fine mechanical and optical equipment	"	729	782
Sulphuric acid	1000 tons	385	408
Calcined soda	"	203	240
Caustic soda	"	247	231
Calcium carbide	"	672	683
Nitrogenous fertilizer	"	290	272
Phosphorous fertilizer	"	110	93
Gasoline	"	736	762
Diesel fuel	"	612	630
Buna rubber	"	n. a.	67
Cement	"	2,155	2,372
Bricks	Million pieces	2,081	2,044
Window glass	1000 square meters	18,775	18,012
Furniture	Mill. DM-O	388	456
Rayon	Tons	20,130	23,405
“Zellwolle”	"	94,360	103,566
Yarns	"	246,310	247,100
Cloth	1000 square meters	284,770	314,800
Stockings, socks	Million pairs	192	184
Knitwear	Million pieces	96	114
Hard leather	Tons	9,220	9,372
Soft leather	1000 square meters	5,465	5,386

Source: Kolbe/Meier, Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im dritten Jahre, p. 152.  
 Editors' note: The data for „buna rubber“ are not included in the listed source.

<sup>1</sup> Including repairs and production of parts.

n. a. = not available

### 3.3.6 Other Industries

The Soviet Union's interest in fissionable materials led to a very large development of pitchblende mining in the vicinity of the towns of Aue and Annaberg in Southern Saxony. It began in the summer of 1946 and soon became a major claimant on the scarce resources of the Zone. The Soviet AG Wismut, now reportedly a joint German-Russian enterprise, commandeered the services

of up to 250,000 laborers, which had to be paid by German authorities and whose product went to Russia without any evidence of payment. Working and living conditions were particularly miserable, and the area was sealed off and administered like a slave labor camp (1.13) to prevent a wholesale flight of the workers.<sup>34</sup>

Despite extensive explorations, however, the output of uranium ores in the area is now declining, and the latest estimates put the number of workers employed at less than 150,000. The deposits of pitchblende never seemed large to German geologists, and they are now apparently approaching exhaustion. The freeing of labor from this onerous task should be highly welcome to the DDR authorities; for apart from the unpopularity of the whole operation, workers are sorely needed elsewhere to relieve the labor shortage in the economy of the SZ. Some recent reports even allege that the Soviet Union is intending to withdraw from the mining project.

The Soviet Zone used to have a flourishing textile industry in Saxony as well as a large textile machinery industry which supplied a major part of the German market as well as exports. Berlin, moreover, was the center of Germany's clothing and garment industry. The textile industry of the Zone produced as much as 39 percent of Germany's textile output in 1936, and the Berlin clothing industry, located chiefly in what is now the Eastern sector of the city, 38 percent of Germany's output of clothing. These industries were little affected by war damage and plant dismantling; yet they suffered a severe decline as a result of the government's discrimination against consumer goods and the correlated curtailment of cotton and wool imports. Gradually, a recovery came about in connection with the expansion of synthetic textiles production, export assignments to the industry and arrangements for the importation of raw cotton from the Soviet Union, Egypt and other countries. Today the output of yarns is reported to have returned to prewar (1936) levels, and cloth production may have recovered similarly. But many entrepreneurs and skilled workers in these branches have left, and the quality of the products is generally below prewar standards. This holds particularly for textile goods that go into domestic consumption. They are often made from waste materials and lack good wearing qualities.

The textile and clothing industries of the SZ still contain a relatively large number of private enterprises. In 1954, these produced 43 percent of clothing output and 23 percent of the textiles. Under the "new course", the private enterprises received some encouragement, and in 1954 they succeeded in raising

34 A study of the enterprise has been published by Nikolai Grishin, *The Saxony Uranium Mining Operation ("Vismut")*. In: Robert M. Slusser (ed.): *Soviet economic policy in postwar Germany*, New York 1953, pp. 127–153.

the output of wearing apparel substantially. But by 1955, this growth of light industry seemed excessive to the DDR authorities, in view of the great difficulties they experienced in developing the heavy industries. In October 1955, Vice-Premier Ulbricht reasserted the priority of the heavy industries and foreshadowed a renewed policy of retarding the light industries, of which textiles and clothing are a major part.

### 3.3.7 Regional Structure of Industry

The economic policies of the regime have gone far in dissolving the division of labor between the Soviet Zone and West Germany. The recent rise of interzonal trade notwithstanding the SZ is well on its way to replace West German industrial supplies by local production or imports from the Soviet bloc, or to dispense with them at the cost of the local consumer. The Federal Republic, on the other hand, has found substitutes for goods that used to come from central Germany, on the world market and more notable through the relocation in the West of fugitive Soviet Zone industries. Besides textiles, textile machinery and clothing, which have already been mentioned in this connection, electrical machinery, optical and printing equipment are notable cases in point. The economies of the Federal Republic and the DDR are growing apart.

Inside the Soviet Zone, economic development is producing notable changes. The new shipyards in the coastal cities of Mecklenburg, the new steel combines of Calbe and Stalinstadt, the uranium mining project at the Czech frontier, and other enterprises have already changed the economic landscape of the area. Nevertheless, a good part of the old structure subsists. The composition of the industrial apparatus of the 14 districts of the SZ and East Berlin, which is shown in Table VI, indicates the mixture of the old and new elements as it existed in 1952.<sup>35</sup>

The basic materials industries play the relatively greatest role in the lignite mining districts of Halle, Frankfurt and Cottbus. They are insignificant in the North of the SZ. The metal fabricating industries are dominant in Rostock (shipyards), Magdeburg (general machinery), Berlin (electrical and other machinery), and Suhl (a traditional armaments center). The light industries (textiles) dominate in Chemnitz and Gera, and the food and beverage industries in Neubrandenburg and Schwerin.

35 The uranium project is apparently not covered by the data.

Table VI: Industrial Structure of the Districts of the Soviet Zone, 1952  
Percentage of Gross Industrial Production

District	Basic Materials industries	Metal fabricating industries	Light industries	Food and beverage industries	Total
Rostock	6	44	9	41	100
Schwerin	10	10	27	53	100
Neubrandenburg	7	11	21	61	100
Potsdam	25	24	21	30	100
Frankfurt	54	10	14	22	100
Cottbus	44	15	29	12	100
Magdeburg	19	41	10	30	100
Halle	68	12	7	13	100
Erfurt	17	39	24	20	100
Gera	29	18	41	12	100
Suhl	33	39	20	8	100
Dresden	21	27	32	20	100
Leipzig	39	27	21	13	100
Chemnitz	10	24	58	8	100
East Berlin	20	40	17	23	100

Source: Editors' note: The reference for this overview („Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung“) was inconclusive and the source could not be identified despite extensive research.

### 3.3.8 Nationalization and Organization of Industry

We shall now turn to the ways in which industry has been taken from its private owners, appropriated by the government and organized as nationalized property.

### 3.3.9 Expropriation and Nationalization

According to Lenin, large-scale and middle-sized industries constitute commanding positions in the economy which must be seized by the state during the transformation to socialism. Accordingly, the Soviet occupation authorities eliminated from the start private property in those industries and replaced

private firms by nationalized enterprises (*Volkseigene Betriebe*, (VEB) originally, *Landeseigene Betriebe*). Only in the case of natural resources and mining enterprises did they bother to proceed on the basis of general socialization laws, which were passed in the five original *Länder* of the SZ in May and June 1947. The bulk of the expropriations were carried out by sequestration through the Red Army, and then legalized by laws and ordinances expropriating “Nazi and war criminals”. The legalization took the form of Soviet military government (SMA) orders No. 124 and 126 of October 30 and 31, 1945, and subsequent laws and ordinances in the *Länder*, including a “plebiscite” in Saxony. SMA Order No. 64 of April 17, 1948, finally confirmed all the previous expropriation actions.<sup>36</sup>

The chosen criterion of expropriation was pure window dressing. The Russians and the SED picked out the enterprises that seemed important to them and had no difficulty in proving that the firms had supplied goods to the German army in the past or that they had had some Nazi party members on the management. The last-mentioned Soviet order prohibited any legal action against the expropriation measures.

An important group of industrial enterprises, however, did not immediately come under the control of the regime. About 200 large factories were claimed by the Soviet Union as Soviet property. They included all the major works of the I. G. Farben (Dye Trust) concern, numerous mining enterprises and the best steel, machinery, power and other plants, but no plants of the consumers goods industries. Soviet corporations (SAG) were formed to administer these enterprises.<sup>37</sup>

Since the SAG plants suffered relatively little from dismantling and enjoyed preferences in their access to raw materials, labor and supplies of equipment, their relative importance in industrial production was enhanced. In 1947, they supplied about 30 percent of the gross industrial production of the area. Today, however, this form of organization is a matter of history; for beginning in 1947, the Russians turned the SAG plants over to the German communist authorities. This transfer was completed at the end of 1953, except for the uranium project in Saxony; and it is estimated that the Soviet Zone government paid the Russians 2.6 billion D-Mark to get the plants back from them (3.6, Table X).

36 Editors' note: Cf. Befehl Nr. 64 (17. April 1948) über die Beendigung der Sequesterverfahren in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands. In: Zentralverordnungsblatt. Amtliches Organ der Deutschen Wirtschaftskommission und ihrer Hauptverwaltungen sowie der Deutschen Verwaltungen für Gesundheitswesen, Inneres, Justiz und Volksbildung, hg. von der Deutschen Justizverwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland, Nr. 15, 21 May 1948, Berlin 1948, pp. 140 f.

37 John Peter Nettl, *The Eastern Zone and Soviet Policy in Germany 1945–1950*, London 1951.

SMA Order No. 64 terminated the first phase of the expropriations. Subsequently only a few properties were taken away on the basis of the “Nazi and war criminal” formula. With the formation of the DDR, some articles of its constitution (2.1) were applied to nationalization. The elastic language of this so-called constitution indicates the length to which the Communists have gone to provide legalistic respectability for the revolutionary confiscations. Since their promulgation, however, these articles have been of no practical importance for expropriations and nationalizations. In particular, not a single case is known in which private property was compensated for. In reality, the regime has followed different ways in pursuing the nationalization of industry. From the spring of 1948 to the proclamation of the “new course” on June 11, 1953, the following methods were used.

First, enterprises were expropriated as a penalty for “economic crimes” committed under the Economic Penal Code.<sup>38</sup> The code puts this penalty on a variety of derelicts. The provisions are so comprehensive and stringent that it has never been difficult for the regime to discover punishable acts. Where they have not done so, it was simply because the regime preferred not to expropriate. It is not interested, as Ulbricht put it, “in burdening the state with the functions of small enterprise”.

Secondly, private enterprises are subject to draconic taxation and to high fines for breaches of tax and price control rules (3.4). In a number of cases, these taxes and fines have driven proprietors into bankruptcy and flight from the SZ. The ordinance concerning the Safeguarding of Capital Values of July 17, 1952, determines that all persons leaving the SZ without police permission, or preparing for such a departure, forfeit their property rights.

Thirdly, the high tax burden and the administrative discrimination against the private firms have reduced their capacity to undertake new investments, or even replacements. It goes without saying that all of the state’s investment funds go into nationalized enterprises, thus shifting the weight further over in the direction of the nationalized sector.

The second party congress of the SED in July 1952 decreed an intensified expropriation campaign against private firms. It was at that meeting that Ulbricht proclaimed the “systematic construction of socialism”. Established

38 Ordinance concerning the Punishment of Delicts against the Economic Order, of 1948. Editors’ note: Cf. Verordnung über die Bestrafung von Verstößen gegen die Wirtschaftsordnung (23. 9. 1948). In: Zentralverordnungsblatt. Amtliches Organ der Deutschen Wirtschaftskommission und ihrer Hauptverwaltungen sowie der Deutschen Verwaltungen für Gesundheitswesen, Inneres, Justiz und Volksbildung, hg. von der Deutschen Justizverwaltung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in Deutschland, Nr. 41, 6 October 1948, Berlin 1948, pp. 439–443.

methods of expropriation were then applied with greater force, and the end of all private industry seemed to be imminent. Then came the crisis of the summer of 1953. The “new course” conceded that “mistakes” had been made in the treatment of private firms, and the council of ministers hurriedly ordered the cancellation of back taxes and fees and the granting of short-term credits to small and medium-sized firms. The ability of those firms to step up the production of sorely needed consumers goods was the strategic reason behind the greater leniency of the regime.

The “new course” arrested the decline of the private industry sector, which had been going on steadily since 1945 and had reduced its share to 28 percent for the light industries, 22 percent for the food and beverage industries and 15 percent for industry as a whole (see 3.1, Table II).<sup>39</sup> The proportions remained virtually the same in 1954; but in 1955, the end of the “new course” led to a renewed decline of private industry. The continued existence of a sector of private industry conflicts with the objectives of the DDR regime.

### 3.3.10 Organization of Industry

During the 10 years of its existence, the overall structure of nationalized industry has undergone various changes. The major phases of this evolution will be briefly reviewed. In the beginning, the expropriated enterprises became property of the five Land governments, unless they were turned into SAGs; but the coming into existence of an East German economic administration, the German Economic Commission (DWK), in the fall of 1947 created the framework for further centralization. In May 1948, practically all of the large nationalized enterprises were put under that Commission. The *Länder* retained administrative responsibility mainly for factories of regional and local significance.

The enterprises that thus came under the control of the zone-wide commission were first organized in “groupings of nationalized enterprises” (*Vereinigungen Volkseigener Betriebe*, or VVB). On June 15, 1949, there existed 75 such groupings, comprising a total of 1,764 enterprises in the SZ proper plus 288 in East Berlin. Centralized administration of the factories through these groupings, however, proved too cumbersome and inefficient; and the regime veered in the direction of a decentralization of responsibilities. The “groupings” were reorganized as “administrations” with a much reduced competence, and part of their executive power was transferred to the managements of the larger indi-

39 In 1953, the gross production value of industry in the SZ originated to 82 percent in nationalized industry, 3 percent in cooperative industry and 15 percent in private industry. Private industry may then have employed 20 percent of all industrial employees.

vidual enterprises. On the other hand, when in 1952 the five *Länder* were dissolved (2.3), the larger enterprises were brought under zonal administration, while the smaller ones were constituted as “nationalized local industries and communal enterprises”. At the present time, the organization of nationalized industry is as follows:

1. Centrally controlled industry, consisting of
  - a. “Direkt-Betriebe”, i. e. the major enterprises which are supervised directly by the ministry in charge of their industry, including the S-5B enterprises discussed above;
  - b. large enterprises of secondary priority, which are administered by one of the “administrations of nationalized enterprises”;
  - c. enterprises administered by subdivisions of the ministry for light industry;
2. local industry, i. e. enterprises of local significance which are administered by city or county councils.

The ministries in charge of this industrial complex have also been reorganized at various times (2.1). At the end of 1955, their list was as follows:

1. Ministry for Mining and Smelting
2. Ministry for Coal and Energy
3. Ministry for Chemical Industry
4. Ministry for General Machinery Construction
5. Ministry for Heavy Machinery Construction
6. Ministry for Light Industry
7. Ministry for Food Industry
8. Ministry for Construction
9. State Secretariat for Local Industry

The organization of private industry is of little significance. On the one hand, private firms are not permitted to combine in any kind of voluntary groupings, be they employers’ associations, trade associations or cartels. In the course of the accentuated campaign against private industry prior to 1953, the last private industrial organizations, the chambers of industry and commerce were dissolved; but the “new course” led to their reconstitution, at least for the time being. The chamber of industry and commerce for the DDR, and the separate chamber for East Berlin, however, are now fully controlled by the government. Although all of their members are private firms, the organizations are headed by boards consisting to one-third of government representatives, one-third of trade union (FDGB) representatives, and only to one-third of representatives of the private firms.



### 3.4 Taxation [*Horst Mendershausen*]

#### 3.4.1 The Role of the Fiscal Apparatus

The finances of the government of the SZ are an essential part of the planned economy. Their direction is in the hands of the Ministry of Finance, which heads the fiscal administration proper, and as we shall see, the banking system as well (3.5). The fiscal apparatus participates in the drawing up of the plan and plays an important role in its implementation. In addition, it has the important functions of channeling revenue to the state, redistributing the national income and destroying or exploiting the non-nationalized elements of the economy. In the pursuit of these tasks the fiscal system of the SZ, like that of Soviet Russia<sup>40</sup> extends far beyond the realms of taxation and public budgeting as they are understood in Western countries.

While the fiscal system of the SZ was set in motion by the Soviet occupation authorities in imitation of the USSR model, it started out from the separate unity of the old fiscal, banking, and insurance system and developed more or less gradually toward a unified fiscal control. This development has been practically completed. In the field of taxation proper, the evolution started out from the traditional German and Western system of multiple taxation (income, capital, sales, excise taxes, etc.) and proceeded in the direction of a greatly simplified arrangement of drawing the bulk of the revenue from the activities of nationalized enterprises, the so-called "two-channel" system. In the course of this process, most if not all of the traditional taxes have lost in importance; and if the decline of non-nationalized enterprise continues, they may become quite insignificant. In the meantime, however, the traditional types of taxes serve to squeeze and curtail private business.

In the nationalized sector, the fiscal apparatus is charged with the preparation of the finance plans that accompany the national economic plan. The Ministry of Finance prepares a state budget plan, an investment plan, a credit plan and a plan for money (cash) circulation. When it comes to the execution of the national economic plan, the Ministry operates a variety of controls such as the "funds system" and the credit system, which together seek to enforce economical management ("the thrift principle"); it controls wages and prices and manipulates their effects on economic activity through the premium system, fiscal subsidies ("price adjustments") and fiscal withdrawals (turnover tax). These controls channel, and to some extent replace, the managerial initiative of the enterprises.

40 Franklyn D. Holzmann, *Soviet taxation. The fiscal and monetary problems of a planned economy*, Cambridge, Mass 1955.

The “funds” and credit system, in particular, plays an important role in forcing enterprises to follow the plan. State funds have replaced the working capital of the enterprises. According to the “thrift principle” these funds are rather tightly limited and cover as a rule only 40 to 60 percent of the enterprises’ capital requirements. The financial tightness is increased furthermore by the earmarking for specific purposes of the state funds allotted to firms. Thus, enterprises are forced to rely on bank credit to cover their full requirements of working capital. As we shall see (3.5) they use credits allotted to them under the plan; and they often find that they have to borrow more than the allotments provide. The State Bank (DNB) fulfills the double function of collecting the planned revenue from the turnover and the profits of the enterprises and of manipulating their credit supply. It holds the enterprises under constant pressure to fulfill the plans for production and production costs.

### 3.4.2 The Budget

With the inception of the first five-year plan on January 1, 1951, the budget of the Soviet Zone departed from the traditional German budget system and became the central lever for the control and redistribution of the national income. It is called the “unified” budget because, apart from the financing of the usual administrative tasks of the state, it encompasses the financing of the nationalized sector of the economy. It is also “unified” in the sense that it consolidates and integrates the budgets of the districts, the municipalities, the social insurance system and of other public corporate bodies with the budget for the DDR as a whole. In this form the budget is the financial counterpart to the national economic plan and follows it into the fields of economics, administration, health, social affairs and “culture”. The preamble to the budget law for 1951 sums up this relationship as follows:

“The national economic plan for 1951 is the basic law for the development of the entire economic life of the German Democratic Republic. The State budget plan for 1951 finances the new construction of our peace economy in accordance with the national economic plan. It provides the means necessary to execute the tasks of the state, to expand the economy and to raise social and cultural performance. Simultaneously, the state budget plan controls through financial means the execution of the national economic plan and the proper and economical utilization of all public funds.”<sup>41</sup>

41 Editors’ note: Gesetz über den Staatshaushaltsplan 1951. In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1951, Nr. 45 (April 20, 1951), p. 283.

While various executive agencies participate in the drawing up of the budget plan, the People's Chamber (2.2) and the general public are told precious little about its content. The budget that the Chamber approves by its vote states merely the total of all revenues, all expenditures and the surplus for the consolidated budget, and similarly for the separate budgets of the DDC, the districts, the nationalized economy, and the social insurance system. For instance, the law of May 21, 1955, which enacted the consolidated state budget gave only the following information:<sup>42</sup>

Table I: The State Budget of the Soviet Zone, 1955, Million DM-O

Revenues	38,167
Expenditures	38,138
Surplus, 1955	29
Surplus, 1955	1,109
Cumulative surplus as per end of 1955	1,138

It goes without saying that this scrap of information does not tell much about the financial operations of the DDR. Thanks, however, to painstaking research conducted by a group of Western experts a fuller picture is available. It is presented in Tables II and III.

Considering revenues first (Table II), we find that "consumption taxes" provide by far the largest single source of revenue. They amount to 13.3 billion DM-O in the 1955 budget plan, or about 35 percent of all revenue in the consolidated budget. These taxes include, besides the conventional revenues from excises on sugar, tobacco, alcohol, etc., together, about one fourth of the sum, the so-called "withdrawals" from production or services. These "withdrawals" are the Soviet Zone equivalent to what is called "differentiated turnover tax" in the budget of Soviet Russia, and we are referring to them frequently as turnover tax. They are the differences between planned production costs and planned prices, which are fixed by the Ministry of Finance for each producer and product, and which have to be paid over to the government. As in Soviet Russia, turnover taxation is the most important pillar of the communist fiscal system.

Next in importance are the revenues derived from the profits of the nationalized enterprises: 9 billion DM-O for 1955. Prior to 1955 – and in some fields, prior to 1954 – these revenues came largely from conventional income and property taxes levied on nationalized enterprises. Since that time, however, the

42 Editors' note: Gesetz über den Staatshaushaltsplan 1955. In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1955, Teil 1, Nr. 42 (May 31, 1955), p. 345.

Table II: Revenues in the Consolidated State Budget of the Soviet Zone (incl. East Berlin), Billion DM-O

Revenues	1951 actual	1953 actual	1954 actual	1955 planned
Taxes				
Consumption taxes <sup>1</sup>	8.3	12.2	12.7	13.3
State's share in nationalized industry profits <sup>2</sup>	5.4	8.7	9.8	9.0
Taxes on Cooperatives	.2	.3	.3	.4
Taxes on private enterprise	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.5
Taxes on labor income	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.3
Municipal taxes <sup>3</sup>	.8	.8	.8	.8
All taxes (sub-total)	(18.3)	(25.8)	(27.1)	(27.4)
Social insurance	4.6	5.4	5.7	6.0
Financing from social insurance funds <sup>4</sup>	.2	1.0	1.0	1.1
State's reserve <sup>5</sup>	–	.2	.2	–
Other revenues <sup>6</sup>	1.7	1.7	1.4	2.2
Transfers from districts	3.7	.7	.7	1.5
Total revenues	28.5	34.7	36.1	38.1

Source: Investigating Committee of Free Jurists, West Berlin. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Editors' note: The indicated source could not be identified and therefore not be reviewed. Cf., however, Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), *Statistisches Jahrbuch 1956*, p. 548. The total amounts have been corrected.

<sup>1</sup> Including excise and special consumption taxes levied by HO and elsewhere, and since 1955 (in some fields, 1954) turnover taxes (Produktions- und Dienstleistungsabgabe) For detail see table IV below.

<sup>2</sup> Prior to 1954/55, conventional corporate income, franchise and property taxes.

<sup>3</sup> Land tax, automobile tax, amusement and movie taxes, dog tax.

<sup>4</sup> Funds transferred from social insurance to cover social and health expenditures made by the state.

<sup>5</sup> Unexplained item, possibly sale receipts from government stockpiles.

<sup>6</sup> Customs, rentals, etc.

scope of those taxes has been much diminished, and the sums shown in the second line of Table II are now mainly the state share in the profits of the nationalized enterprises. The profits, of course, are the differences between sales revenue on the one hand, production costs and turnover tax on the other hand.

This item too has its parallel in the budget of Soviet Russia. In recent years, the state's share in the profits of nationalized enterprises amounted in Russia

to about 15 percent of all revenue. In the budget of the Soviet Zone for 1954 it provided as much as 27 percent of total revenue, but more than half of that amount was still being raised via the traditional types of taxes. In the 1955 budget, the state's share in nationalized profits levied by the new method may constitute close to 20 percent of total revenue.

The two important sources of revenue, which have been discussed so far, form the "two-channel" system of public finance toward which the Soviet Zone is moving. Turnover tax and profits of nationalized enterprise are the two channels on which the regime is relying increasingly for the collection of revenue. They will be discussed in greater detail later on. Meanwhile, the role of other sources must be briefly noted.

The taxation of personal income plays a minor role in the collection of revenue. Taxes on labor income furnish no more than 3.4 percent of total (1955) revenues, and no more than 4.8 percent of aggregate tax revenue proper. Even the punitive taxes on private enterprise do not contribute more than 6.5 percent of the total budget sum, and 9.2 percent of tax revenue proper. Direct taxation of personal income, whether from wages or profits, is of relatively small importance in the communist system: 15 percent of all tax revenue compared with about 35 percent in the Federal Republic.<sup>43</sup> And its importance has been declining: in 1951, these taxes still furnished close to 20 percent of the total tax revenue of the Soviet Zone. The regime obviously prefers to tap the incomes of nationalized enterprises before they have a chance to turn into personal incomes, and to siphon off personal incomes not when they are earned but when they come to be spent. Besides the convenience of collection, the relative obscurity of the "two-channel" system undoubtedly explains the preference. The citizen who pays the bills of the state is encouraged in the illusion that he is but lightly taxed.

On the expenditure side of the SZ budget, the two largest single items are price adjustment subsidies, in 1955: 9.6 billion, and military expenditures, 8.9 billion. The price adjustment subsidies, which have been discussed in the chapter on internal and external trade and elsewhere, are the direct outgrowth of the system of planned prices. Since these prices are fixed on the basis of "social costs" and "social needs" as seen by the planning authorities, they may or may not coincide with prices which would cover actual costs of production and at which buyers would take the product off the market. Where the planned prices fall short of such equilibrium prices, the disequilibrium becomes manifest in the inability of enterprises to cover costs and turnover tax; and unless

43 In the Federal Republic, personal and corporate income taxes supply about 35 percent of tax revenue collected at all levels of government. In the United States, these taxes contribute as much as 2/3 of all tax revenue.

the government wants to see them go broke it has to cover the shortage with subsidies. To some extent, of course, all modern governments are engaged in price fixing and use subsidies to solve the problems arising therefrom, witness the American system of agricultural price supports. But the scope of the subsidy system is unusually large in an economy in which practically all prices are fixed. To straighten out its price system, the Soviet Zone, in 1954, used 28 percent of its total consolidated budget, a budget that is inflated in comparison with that of Western countries by its coverage of nationalized industry and the social security system.

In 1955, the SZ government hopes to get along using only 25 percent for this purpose. Subsidies to the nationalized industries are scheduled to decline from 4.4 to 2.8 billion DM-O as a result of various important price increases, e. g. for coal and steel. But subsidies to the state institutions trading in agricultural commodities (VEAB) are expected to rise from 2.2 to 3.8 billion, and those to the foreign trade organization (DIA) from 3.5 to 3.8 billion DM-O. The total subsidy bill will be only half a billion DM-O smaller than in 1954, if it can be held to that.

Military expenditures, it will be seen, have increased noticeably since 1953, by 1.2 billion in 1954 and by 2.3 billion in 1955, not counting certain sums for essentially military purposes that are carried in the budget for education. This reflects of course the buildup of the DDR's armed forces. In the 1955 budget, military expenditures, at 8.9 billion DM-O, are nearly three times as large as the investments in the economy, on which the regime lays so great a stress in its propaganda. The decline in the amount set aside for investments indicates that the regime has felt the need to slow down industrial development, at least temporarily, in order to finance its military program. This program has now become a serious competitor for the SZ's resources, absorbing 23 percent of the budget. It remains to be seen how the government of the DDR will explain this fact to the people to whom it has promised a "peace economy", or how it will veil it from them.

The large social insurance expenditures shown in the budget are financed from member contributions of the social insurance system, as reference to Table II will show. Very little general tax revenue is used in the Soviet Zone to finance social expenditures of any sort.

## 3.4.3 Revenues from the Nationalized Sector

Turning now to a closer examination of the revenue system, we must note that in 1954/55 the transformation of the system in the direction of the “two channels” made significant progress. Beginning in 1954 and continuing in 1955, the revenue system underwent a reform which is about to eliminate the traditional multiple tax pattern for the nationalized economy, and to replace it with differentiated turnover taxation and profit sharing. These forms of revenue collection are new, and peculiar to the regime of nationalized enterprise. They can no longer be classified in traditional terms, e.g. income tax or property tax, direct or indirect tax. Even the concept of turnover (or transactions) taxation, which forms part of the fiscal system of the Federal Republic and other Western countries, does not really fit the differentiated imposts on turnover which the SZ Ministry of Finance includes in the fixed prices for various commodities, and which it withdraws from the accounts of producers or sellers.

Table III: Expenditures in the Consolidated State Budget of the Soviet Zone (incl. East Berlin), Billion DM-O

Expenditures	1951 actual	1953 actual	1954 actual	1955 actual
Investment	2.6	4.3	3.7	3.0
Stockpiling	.5	.2	-	.1
Price adjustment subsidies	4.1	7.8	10.1	9.6
Foreign trade	1.5	2.0	3.5	3.8
Trade in agricultural products (VEAB)	.7	1.8	2.2	3.0
Nationalized enterprise	1.9	4.0	4.4	2.8
Education <sup>1</sup>	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.6
Social Insurance expenditures	4.5	5.5	5.8	5.9
Social Insurance financed state exp.	.2	1.0	1.0	1.1
Other social and health expenditures	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.3
Administration	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.7
Payments to Banking system	.8	1.3	.5	.1

Repayment of Länder debts	.1	.1	.1	.1
Interest on "very old accounts"	-	0	0	.2
Interest on "national reconstruction loan"	0	0	0	.0
Reparations payment <sup>2</sup>	1.2	1.5	-	-
Other expenditures (People's Police and other military organs)	4.7	5.4	6.6	8.9
Transfers to districts	3.7	.7	.7	1.5
Budget surplus	.2	0	.1	0
Total Expenditures	28.6	34.7	36.1	38.1

Source: see Table II. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Editors' note: The indicated source could not be identified and therefore not be reviewed. Cf., however, Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), Statistisches Jahrbuch 1956, p. 548. The total amounts have been adjusted.

<sup>1</sup> Including youth and sports programs, and payments to the society "Sport und Technik", a pre-military training organization.

<sup>2</sup> Excluding reparations from current output, SAG profits, price subsidies, etc.

The turnover tax (called *Produktionsabgabe* or *Dienstleistungsabgabe*, depending on whether it is levied on a producing or a service enterprise) is defined in the Soviet Zone as "the essential part of State revenue from nationalized enterprises. It is withdrawn from the sales proceeds of the enterprises and transferred to the State budget. This revenue is used by the State of Workers and Peasants for the satisfaction of the needs of the entire people. It is an inseparable component part of the prices at which products are being sold."<sup>44</sup> The tax has been introduced gradually in the nationalized industries, and it applies now to the entire nationalized food and beverage industry, the building materials industry and the transportation system, as well as to a large part of the heavy and light industries, altogether about two-thirds of the entire production

44 Ordinance about the *Produktionsabgabe* and *Dienstleistungsabgabe* of nationalized industries and nationalized service enterprises, of January 6, 1955. Editors' note: Cf. Verordnung über die Produktionsabgabe und die Dienstleistungsabgabe der volkseigenen Industrie und der volkseigenen Dienstleistungsbetriebe (PDAVO). In: Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 1955, Teil 1, Nr. 8 (January 28, 1955), p. 37.



volume of the Zone. Since it has been introduced, the old transactions taxes, corporate income and franchise, transportation and sales taxes have gradually been eliminated.

The rates of the new turnover tax are neither uniform in amount nor in type. They are fixed at the discretion of the Ministry of Finance. While no schedule of taxation has been published, it is known that for the various products the tax takes the form of percentages of sales revenue or fixed amounts, and in some instances one on top of the other. The amounts due have to be paid to the Ministry daily, once every five days, or every ten days, depending on their magnitude. The tax follows the general principle of heavy tax burdens on consumer goods, and lighter charges, if any, on the basic materials and producer goods. In large measure, therefore, the tax falls on the goods bought by the final consumer and rests only lightly on the raw materials and capital goods which are bought by state enterprises. Obviously, the state aims not to cause large deficits in the basic industries, which it then has to cover with subsidies. The consumer households have no claim to such subsidies and must therefore carry the burden of the tax, a tax which is about 3 1/2 times as burdensome on the average Soviet Zone consumer as consumption taxes in the Federal Republic per head of population. This is an important way in which individual income is appropriated by the parliament for its purposes.

In effect, the new turnover tax is a substitute for the consumption taxes which used to be levied prior to 1954, in part through the HO shops (3.6). The amounts budgeted for the new tax in 1954 and 1955 (see Table II) are commensurate with the revenues raised in earlier years from the taxation of the various types of consumer goods (see also Table IV). Thus, the transformation of the overt consumption taxes into turnover taxes on the producers of goods and services did not change the incidence of the taxes on the consumer.

The "second channel" of the new tax system consists of transfers of part of the profits of the nationalized enterprises to the state. The state's profit share increases with the size of the profit. It amounts to at least 20 percent of net profits.

It is interesting to consider the rationale of the "two-channel" system. Although both turnover tax and profit-sharing form part of the profit accumulation of the socialized enterprises, or in Marxian terminology, of the "surplus value" collected by them, they have different causes in the planned economy. The accumulation via turnover tax results from causes lying outside the individual nationalized enterprise; they result from the price fixing by the Ministry of Finance. All the enterprise has to do is to turn out the planned volume of production, whatever the cost may be, and the state will get its revenue. The enterprise's net profit, on the other hand, in which the government shares, results from the managerial success of the enterprise itself. The profit appears

Table IV: Consumption Taxes prior to the new Turnover Tax; Billion DM-O

	1951	1953
Foodstuffs	1.2	1.4
Tobacco, alcohol etc.	2.6	3.2
Textiles and shoes	1.2	2.2
Other industrial products	.4	.6
HO levies	2.9	4.1
Consumption taxes levied on export articles	-	.6
Total	8.3	12.1

Source: Editors' note: The reference for this overview („Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung“) was inconclusive and the source could not be identified despite extensive research.

only when the management succeeds in keeping production costs down, and it increases mainly when costs are being cut. Since part of the profit remains with the enterprise, where it can be used for expansion, bonus payments etc., management is induced to raise its profits (i. e. lower costs) while it produces revenue for the state. Thus, the “two-channel” system harnesses both the quantitative and the qualitative fulfillment of the plan to the state budget and makes the fiscal machinery in turn an instrument of plan fulfillment.

It appears, however, that the second channel, which is predicated on the efficiency of enterprise management, is a less reliable source of revenue than the first. Not only is the withdrawal of profit from nationalized industries smaller than the revenue from the turnover tax (in 1955, was two-thirds) but the realized profit share has in the past usually been smaller than the amount budgeted for it.

As Table II shows, the abolition of the old income and capital taxes on nationalized production did not result in a significant change of the government's share in the profits of these industries.

#### 3.4.4 Revenues from the Non-nationalized Economy

The taxation of non-nationalized economic activities aims partly at the destruction of such activities and partly at their continued exploitation. As we have seen from Table II, this taxation contributes 5.1 billion DM-O to total tax revenue in the 1955 budget, or about 18 percent.

### 3.4.5 Taxation of Private Enterprise

The taxation of private enterprise employing wage labor is part of the “class struggle” in the SZ. Characteristically, the compendium of tax ordinances for the SZ declares that “the tax policy of the DDR is not based on abstract theories of justice [...], it is based on the constitution and the national economic plans which chart the direction in which social life is to develop.”<sup>45</sup> Since there is no future for private industry and trade in that “direction”, the dominant tax principle is that of maximum taxation. The only consideration which has put a limit on the maximum and turned it into some sort of an “optimum” is that private firms are still essential for light-industry production, retail trade and some service functions. It is this fact which compelled the regime in 1953 to ease somewhat the tax burden on private enterprise. There is no reason to believe, however, that the “new course” in this field is any more durable than in others. In fact, some of the tax concessions that were made in 1953 have already been rescinded.

Since the rules of equal and objective taxation have been abandoned, a description of the taxation of private enterprise would require a long and detailed catalogue of activities and corresponding taxes. This is impossible here, and unnecessary. Four important facts should be noted, however, (1) very little publicity is given to the tax provisions governing private firms, (2) the range of cost items that are deductible in computing the firms’ net income has been severely limited, (3) a rigorous examination of accounts accompanies the fixing of taxes for private firms, (4) incomes from “capitalistic activity” are taxed at substantially higher rates than labor incomes (see below, Table V).

In principle, the remaining proprietorships and corporations are taxed under the traditional German system of income tax, capital tax and transactions tax, but various ordinances of the regime have altered the substance of those taxes very greatly. They reached their most drastic form in the income tax revision of March 1953, just prior to the uprisings and the concessions.

Despite the high tax rates and the draconic penalties with which tax payments are enforced, the state’s revenue from this source is budgeted in 1955 at only 9 percent of total tax revenue and 6.5 percent of total revenue from all sources. In 1951, it still amounted to 13 percent. The decline is largely indicative of the reduction of private enterprise.

45 Ministerium der Finanzen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (ed.), *Sammlung von Anordnungen und Rundverfügungen auf dem Gebiete des Abgabenrechts*, Berlin (East) 1951, p. 7 (Vorwort). Editors’ note: Ellipses were added by the editors.

### 3.4.6 Taxation of Cooperatives

In form, the taxation of cooperatives also follows the multiple tax system, but the tax laws have in fact been much changed in this field as well. The regime distinguishes between cooperatives of “socialist character” deserving favorable treatment, and the old free cooperatives which are mere “apologies for the bourgeois system” and therefore less deserving. The latter include the purchasing cooperatives of retail traders and the rural purchasing and sales unions (Raiffeisen cooperatives), or what remains of them. Among the “deserving” cooperatives, which are looked at as stepping-stones toward nationalization, we have the member cooperatives of the Peasant Union for Mutual Aid, the collective farms (LPG), the Producers’ Cooperatives of Toiling Fishermen, the Purchasing and Sales Cooperatives of Craftsmen and the Consumers’ Cooperatives.

The cooperatives organized in the Peasant Union for Mutual Aid pay no corporate income tax and only reduced transactions taxes, except when their income is derived from mills, stills or other small industrial enterprises attached to them.

The LPG’s and the Toiling Fishermen’s Coops are freed from practically all taxes during the first two years after their establishment. Their individual members, moreover, pay lower personal income tax. The Craftsmen’s Coops pay no capital tax and benefit from reduced transactions taxes; and insofar as they are producers’ cooperatives, they benefit in addition from a 10 percent reduction of corporate income tax.

The Consumers Cooperatives, finally, pay no capital tax, much lower transactions taxes and have their profits computed for tax purposes under very lenient rules.

Since the cooperative sector plays, as we have seen, a large role in agricultural and retail trade, its small contribution to the tax revenue, 1.5 percent in 1955, reflects the substantial tax concessions.

### 3.4.7 Taxation of Handicrafts and Individual Farmers

Handicraft shops are a form of private enterprise, but since they engage in “simple commodity production”<sup>46</sup> they are subject to more lenient taxation than capitalistic enterprise. Similar considerations apply to private farms,

46 “Simple commodity production” in Marxist terminology is carried on by private owner-producers who employ no wage laborers. For practical purposes, firms employing no more than 10 workers are so classified in the Soviet Zone.

which nowadays are mostly small farms. Still the tax system is drawn up in such a way as to force these small producers into producer cooperatives.

Since the beginning of 1950, craftsmen are taxed according to a unified standard or norm tax of peculiar construction. In the place of the several traditional taxes the Ministry of Finance computes the norm tax as follows: A normal output is postulated which a reasonably diligent craftsman ought to be able to reach; the output is priced at performance prices which have been fixed for craftsmen; and the sales income thus calculated is taxed at approximately the total rate that would have applied to it under all the old taxes combined. To this basic tax for shops without employees are added supplements, which increase progressively with the number of workers employed and approach in severity the taxes on capitalistic enterprise.

This tax arrangement is quite economical for the state since it dispenses with the need to assess various taxes on a host of small enterprises. But it is of course also quite summary, paying little regard to a man's ability to pay. The individual craftsman can lighten his relative tax burden by producing a larger output than the one on which the tax is based, and quite a few do so; but unlucky is the man who fails to reach the norm, regardless of whether this is because he does not work hard or because he cannot get his materials or is otherwise handicapped by economic regimentation.

A similar norm tax is in preparation for individual farms; but for some time now the regime has hesitated to put it in effect, perhaps for fear that the reform might become a new source of peasant discontent and lower agricultural output. In the meantime, farmers continue to be taxed under the old system. When the norm tax is introduced, it will probably tax the farmer on the basis of some "objectively attainable output" and, as with craftsmen, make it expensive for him to employ wage laborers.

Tax revenue from craftsmen and individual farmers is not shown separately in the budget but is lumped together with revenue from private enterprise.

### 3.4.8 Taxation of Labor Income

The heavy tax levies on consumer expenditures permit the SZ regime somewhat more liberal in the taxation of labor income, but this liberality benefits mainly the recipients of high incomes, managers and high officials. The principle of progressive income taxation has been, if not abandoned, at least so limited in its application that it hardly serves to reduce inequality in the distribution of income by size. In the taxation of wages and salaries, the communist regime is anything but equalitarian.

Table V: Income Taxation in the Soviet Zone and the Federal Republic, 1955,  
Tax liability of an unmarried person<sup>1</sup>

Annual income	Soviet Zone		Federal Republic
	Labor income (Tariff G) DM-O	Capitalistic in- come (Tariff F) DM-O	DM-West
2,400	36	214	169
3,600	216	502	364
4,800	456	862	592
6,000	744	1,282	845
9,000	1,647	2,446	1,558
12,000	2,322	3,826	2,365
18,000	3,600	7,156	4,183
24,000	4,800	11,176	6,243
30,000	6,000	15,676/16,426	8,502
60,000	12,000	39,336	21,123

Sources: Ministerium der Finanzen der DDR (ed.), *Das Abgabenrecht der DDR. Eine Loseblattsammlung des geltenden Abgabenrechts*, Berlin (East) 1954, Part Ca/2, pp. 20 ff. and part E 1a/2, pp. 18 ff.; and tax table for the Federal Republic (missing information requested from Thalheim.) Editors' note: The indicated source was not accessible for review. Cf., however, *Verordnung zur Änderung der Besteuerung und zur Senkung des Einkommensteuertarifes* (23.7.1953). In: *Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* 1953, Nr. 89 (July 30, 1953, p. 891; *Verordnung zur Änderung der Besteuerung des Arbeitseinkommens* (2. AStVO, 15. 10. 53). In: *Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* 1963, Nr. 108 (October 19, 1953), p. 1033; Erdmann Frenkel, *Steuerverwaltung und Steuerrecht der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, Bonn 1954, pp. 129, 131.

<sup>1</sup> After consideration of normal deductions.

To begin with, tax-exempt labor income is fairly ample for single persons, about 2,200 DM-O per year. For married persons at 2,800 and for married persons with one child at 3,400, the tax-exempt amount is about as large as in the Federal Republic, disregarding the differences between DM-O and DM-West; but for large families it is much smaller than in the Federal Republic.

The policy to reward performance through relatively low taxation also extends to workers who manage to produce above the norm. Premiums and other incentive payments for extra production, which are an integral part of the SZ wage system, are taxed at the flat rate of only 5 percent. An "activist" earning most of his income in this fashion can keep the tax rate on even a high income

well below 20 percent. This naturally adds to the incentive the premiums aim to provide for greater work efforts.

The regime also shows some solicitude for what it calls the “working intelligentsia”. The incomes of writers, artists and scientific workers are counted as labor income, and so are under certain conditions those of doctors, dentists, veterinarians, midwives, engineers, architects and inventors. (Individual lawyers and tax consultants, however, are taxed as private entrepreneurs.) The income of the “working intelligentsia” is taxed at a flat rate of 14 percent, which corresponds to the tax rate for incomes in the 6,000 to 9,000 marks bracket (see Table V). The flat rate is likely to be higher than the ordinary rate for the small man, but less for the top man. The tax is withheld at the source, and the individual is spared the unpleasantness of contacts with the tax authorities. Perhaps this offers some compensation for the rather intimate relations he has to maintain with the ministerial bureaucracy in charge of his field. From a tax point of view the member of the “working intelligentsia” may consider himself privileged, – if he belongs to the higher strata of his group.

A married person with 5 children, for instance, has a tax-free limit of only 5,800 DM-O in the Soviet Zone, against one of 10,000 DM-West in West Germany.

The effective tax rate progresses from something like 6 percent for wages or salaries of about 3600 DM-O to only 20 percent for incomes of 12,000 and over (single persons). That means that in the lower brackets the Soviet Zone wage earner pays a somewhat lower tax than the worker in the Federal Republic. But as Table V shows, this advantage vanishes in the middle brackets. Skilled machinists, building foremen, welders, accountants or middle officials who may earn 9,000 DM-O a year, actually pay more tax on their basic wages than they would in the West. In the higher brackets, however, the difference appears again and becomes very large in the top brackets. The Soviet Zone tax on labor income never exceeds 20 percent; and the factory manager or high government and party official is taxed at only  $\frac{3}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the rate prevailing in the Federal Republic.

In sum, the construction of the Soviet Zone tax on labor income has little regard for social equity. Compared with the Federal Republic, it penalizes large families. While it shows leniency toward the bottom wage groups, it bestows far greater advantages on the high salary groups. It reveals a design to emphasize the financial rewards that go with the highest functions. If it were not their own, the SED undoubtedly would call this tax structure a typically “capitalistic” one.

### 3.4.9 Conclusion

As we have seen, tax revenue from income contributes only a minor share to the total tax revenue, less than 5 percent in the 1955 budget, while taxes levied on consumers expenditures and profits from nationalized enterprises contribute by far the major share, and the punitive taxes on private enterprises occupy some intermediate position (see Table II). The regime prefers to show some liberality in the income tax, which is the most visible form of taxation, and to tap the citizen heavily in less visible ways. It also prefers to leave the inequality of earned incomes pretty much untouched and to enhance the attractiveness of income incentives, particularly at the top of the ladder.

As members of the FDGB, wage and salary earners have to pay contributions amounting to 1 to 2 percent of their gross incomes. Membership in this trade union is compulsory in most occupations, and the organization claimed 5.4 million members in 1955 out of the total number of 7.1 million wage and salary earners (1.14). Payment of the contributions is enforced through the periodic control of membership books, since there is no automatic checkoff; but it seems that number of people manage to slip through the controls and avoid the levy. Still the FDGB collected about 240 million DM-O in contributions during 1954. It did not publish a budget; but from available information it appeared that perhaps as much as a fifth of this sum went into the financing of communist activity in the Federal Republic.

## 3.5 Banking and Currency System [*Gerhard Abeken/Heinrich Rittershausen*]

The monetary system of the SZ and its banking form an integral part of the country's planned economy. Monetary and credit policy flow from the government's decisions about the national economic plan. The central bank merely implements these decisions. The banks play a major role in controlling the execution of the plan by the nationalized enterprises. This police function is intertwined with the banks' service function.

### 3.5.1 Reorganization of Money and Banking

Immediately following upon the occupation by the Red Army in 1945, all public and private credit institutions in the Soviet Zone were ordered closed. Bank vaults were sealed, accounts blocked, and bank claims ceded to the government. In Saxony and Thuringia, which were temporarily occupied by the



U.S. Army, banks had reopened by the time the Soviets took over. They were closed again, and all bank accounts had to be brought back to their level as of May 8, 1945.

The closing of the banks had two objectives: namely, to effect a partial currency reform through the blocking of deposits, and to prepare for the adaptation of the banking system to the requirements of a Soviet-type planned economy. When banks were permitted to reopen, they were not allowed to handle transactions in the old accounts. The only activity permitted to them was in new accounts.

Agricultural and trading cooperatives were the first to receive permission to open new accounts, in November 1945 and January 1946, respectively. Small private banks were allowed to petition for reopening, but few petitions were granted. Among the reopened banks there was the *Garantie- und Kreditbank* of 1923. This became the bank of the Soviet occupation authorities.

Besides the reopened banks a system of new banks was created. Above all, a new central bank system was developed. It began with the foundation of 5 land credit banks and a number of city and county banks in 1945. Each of the 5 original *Länder* was given an *Emissions- und Girobank*, with branches, in 1947; and in 1948 the *Deutsche Emissions- und Girobank* was established.

After the second currency reform of June 1948, the central bank was renamed German Currency Bank (*Deutsche Notenbank*). In 1950, all the Land, City and county banks were transformed into branches of the *Deutsche Notenbank*, which thus emerged as a replica, in form, of the old *Reichsbank*. It has at present 14 district (*Bezirk*), 154 county (*Kreis*) and 85 local (*Gemeinde*) branches.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, two specialized bank organizations came into existence, the German Investment Bank in 1948, and the German Peasant Bank in 1950. The first is a general-purpose investment bank, the second an agricultural investment bank. Both have numerous branches.

Monetary reform in the Soviet Zone came in two instalments, the first upon occupation by the Red Army and the second in 1948, immediately following the monetary reform in the West.

In the beginning all assets and liabilities of banks were vested in the new Land governments and transferred to the new credit institutions in the government's behalf. Gradually, a large part of the assets was liquidated (2.3 billion RM up to the time of the second reform), and from the proceeds payments

47 Editors' note: Cf. Gerhard Abeken, *Das Geld- und Bankwesen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone und im Sowjetsektor Berlins von 1945 bis 1954*, *Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland*, ed. by Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1955, p. 65.

were made to foreign creditors and small savers. On June 30, 1948, assets of 3.7 billion RM were still unliquidated. They were converted into *Deutsche Mark* (DM-O) at the rate of 1:1 and transferred to the German Investment Bank (1.5 billion) and the *Deutsche Notenbank* (2.2 billion), respectively.

The liabilities of the old banks amounted to about 37 billion RM. Up to the second reform, 2 billion of this amount were paid out to allied nationals and small savings-account holders. The remainder of these “very old accounts” was depreciated in that reform of September 23, 1948, at the rate of 10:1 and consolidated in the form of a 3-percent debt, repayable after 1959 over 25 years. But a variety of old accounts, such as “iron savings”, accounts of “Nazi activists” and “war criminals”, as well as accounts of business enterprises, were cancelled entirely.

One purpose of the first reform was to eliminate the inflated bank money (*Giralgeld*), leaving only cash for the later conversion. Since 3 years went by before that happened, a good deal of the excess supply of cash found its way into inflated bank accounts so that the latter had to be depreciated once more in the second reform.

The sudden proclamation of the currency reform by the Paris Western Occupation Powers on June 18, 1948, which had become necessary in view of the impossibility of obtaining Soviet agreement to an all-German reform, threatened the SZ with a large influx of the new D-Mark in exchange for goods moving West. In great haste, the old *Reichsmark* notes were converted into provisionally stamped notes (*Kuponmark*) and the second reform of Soviet Zone money was decreed as follows: Bank notes up to 70 RM were converted into *Kuponmark* at the rate of 1:1. On July 24, 1948, the notes and coins were exchanged for money in DM-O denominations at the rate of 1:1. As for Bank accounts, all accounts owned by governmental units, nationalized enterprises, the SED and Soviet agencies were converted 1:1. All other accounts, except for some savings accounts, were converted at the rate of 10:1.

### 3.5.2 Tasks of Money and Banking in the Soviet Zone Economy

Like the Soviets, the SZ uses money and credit to implement the plan. As a rule, enterprises do not obtain the means of production required by direct assignment or dispose of their products according to further assignments. They borrow money, and they buy and sell for money. Therefore, the economy requires a banking system. The banking system has two further tasks, namely to cooperate in the drawing up of the central economic plan, and to supervise its execution. In the first of these two roles, the banking system of the planned economy usually is a passive agent. Monetary considerations tend to be subor-

dinated in the designing of the plan. The banking system simply translates the commodity and service flow plans into quarterly credit and money turnover plans. There is no room for independent monetary policy by the central bank.

In their second function, “the control of the plan through the D-Mark”, the banks play a far more active role. They supervise all financial transactions of the enterprises which, in order to make that control effective, have been put into a veritable procrustean bed of government regulations. Enterprises are obliged to maintain accounts with one bank only. All their transactions go through a single bank. All payments in excess of DM 50.- to other enterprises or governmental institutions must be made through that bank. Cash payments are illegal. All enterprises and government institutions, as well as all recipients of rentals larger than DM. 260.- per month and all employers of more than three workers, are obliged to deposit their cash receipts immediately in bank accounts. Retailers must do so up to three times daily. Cash holdings are prohibited, except for minimal amounts, and balances in postal checking amounts must not exceed DM 300.

Cash may be used only for salary and wage payments. It must be withdrawn from the bank, and the banks will check the requests against the wage payment plans of the enterprises. Cash receipts from sales must not be used for cash payments.

This system of regulation applies to government agencies as well as business enterprises. It is buttressed by frequent spot checks and high penalties. It leaves only the recipients of incomes free to choose their ways of making payments.

There are a number of banks for various purposes, of which the central directing apex is the *Deutsche Notenbank* (DNB). It is part of the government, and its president is a member of the council of ministers of the DDR. While the central bank rules supreme over all the credit institutions of the Soviet Zone, with the possible exception of the investment bank, it is subject in turn to directives of the state planning commission and the Ministry of Finance. The DNB directs all business in short term credit and grants 80–90 percent of all non-agricultural short-term credits directly. It is the main agent of internal monetary transfers and the exclusive agent of international transfers. For this purpose, the DNB maintains 14 district, 154 county and 85 local branches and is represented in other localities by local branches of the savings banks, of which there is a total of 2,500. The *Berliner Stadtkontor* and its branches are in effect branches of the DNB.<sup>48</sup> The DNB services all government agencies and nationalized enterprises including state farms and MTS stations, and private wholesale trade and all other private non-agricultural enterprises employing more than ten workers.

48 Editors' note: Cf. Abeken, *Das Geld- und Bankwesen von 1945 bis 1954*, p. 65.

The German Investment Bank (DIB) is in charge of long-term investment in all nationalized enterprises and other non-agricultural pursuits. It can issue securities. It also has its own network of branches. The DIB provides credit and other services for all building and construction enterprises.

The German Peasant Bank (DBB), the third major bank of the SZ is in charge of agricultural credit, both long and short term, which it grants within the framework of directives of the DNB and DIB. It also issues securities. Through its numerous branches, the DBB directs and coordinates the 3,100 peasants' cooperatives. The DBB services collective farms and peasants' credit cooperatives; while the peasants' credit cooperatives service individual peasants. The president of the DNB is a member of the boards of directors of both the DIB and the DBB.

The savings banks with their local branches are agencies for the collection of private savings (and in some localities, agencies of the DNB). The savings they collect are largely invested through the DNB, the DIB and the DBB. The savings banks service DNB clientele in localities that have no DNB branch, as well as other private non-agricultural enterprises and income recipients.

The local banks for commerce and crafts, which are a kind of cooperative, are to satisfy the banking requirements of small private enterprises. The craft and trade credit cooperatives are reserved for private enterprises that are not obliged to bank with the DNB unless they deal with savings banks.

Peasants' credit cooperatives are not voluntary associations. They are compulsory village associations which conduct banking as well as commercial business operations for the farmer. The two types of business are supposed to be strictly separate.

Besides these publicly owned banks there is an unknown number of private banks. They are of little significance today.

Finally, the *Garantie- und Kredit-Bank* (Garkreba) must be noted. It is in a class by itself, as the financial agency of the former occupation authorities. Until 1949 this bank conducted all financial operations linked to foreign trade. As long as the Soviet-owned industrial and commercial companies (SAG) existed in the Soviet Zone, the Garkreba was their bank. It is in the nature of things that this bank enjoyed virtual independence from the German financial authorities in the Soviet Zone.

The banks are not expected to compete for customers. As has been noted above, each bank services a certain clientele. Legal provisions determine what banks are "appropriate" for the transactions of certain enterprises, government offices and private business.<sup>49</sup>

49 Editors' note: Cf. for this subchapter *ibid.*, pp. 18–25.

## 3.5.3 Money Circulation and Monetary Transactions

At the time of the second monetary reform, a fixed amount of notes and coin, totaling 4,170 million DM-O was put at the disposal of the DNB (see Table I).

Table I: Balance Sheet of the Deutsche Notenbank

Assets				
	December 31, 1949		November 30, 1951	
	Mill. DM-O	Percent	Mill. DM-O	Percent
Cash	830	7.0	680	5.8
Foreign exchange	390	3.3	350	3.0
Securities	270	2.3	255	2.2
Bills and lombard	210	1.7	-	-
Short-term credits	1,760	14.9	4,025	34.5
Government bills	(2,070)	(17.4)	(270)	(2.2)
Pre-currency reform claims	(920)	(7.7)	(790)	(6.8)
Claims related to note cover	(4,170)	(35.2)	(4,170)	(35.7)
Sub-Total, government paper	(7,160)	(60.3)	(5,230)	(44.7)
Claims on the DIB	1,100	9.3	790	6.8
Miscellaneous assets	140	1.2	350	3.0
Total Assets	11,860	100.0	11,680	100.0
Liabilities				
Notes and coin outstanding	4,170	35.2	4,170	35.7
Bankers deposits	3,400	28.7	2,815	24.1
Other sight deposits	3,293	27.8	3,270	28.0
Savings deposits	170	1.5	-	-
Foreign exchange liabilities	390	3.3	710	6.1
Capital, surplus and reserves	405	3.4	465	4.0
Miscellaneous liabilities	30	.1	250	2.1
Total Liabilities	11,860	100.0	11,680	100.0

Sources: Gerhard Abeken, Geld- und Bankwesen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone seit der Währungsreform, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, hg. vom Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1951, pp. 33 f.; id., Das Geld- und Bankwesen in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone und im Sowjetsektor Berlins von 1945 bis 1954, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, hg. vom Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1955, p. 27, 57. Editors' note: This chart uses rounded values and in some cases combines or omits individual items listed in the sources.

This amount, minus the cash holdings of the *DNB*, is in circulation outside the central bank. It is covered by claims on the state, of equal amount. Legal provisions about the note cover state simply that new emissions of notes require the approval of the ministerial council of the DDR. Gold and foreign exchange play no role in the note cover. No gold holdings have been reported. Foreign exchange obligations exceed foreign exchange assets.

Bank deposit money (*Giralgeld*) was originally covered in a similar fiduciary fashion, i. e. by claims on the Land governments. In the course of time, however, these claims were largely liquidated and replaced by the new bank's own short-term credit (see Table II). At the time of the reform, the claims on public authorities had amounted to the equivalent of 72 percent of money in circulation. By August 30, 1953, they constituted only 36 percent of the money volume, while short-term credits of the central bank had risen to 57 percent.

Table II: Monetary Circulation and Main Elements of its Backing

	June 24, 1948	June 30, 1949	August 31, 1951	August 31, 1953
Volume of Money in Circulation <sup>1</sup>	10,792	11,930	11,049	14,200
Claims on public Authorities (percent)	7,769 (72)	7,792 (65)	5,222 (47)	5,119 (36)
Short-term credits of DNB (percent)	1,269 (12)	1,958 (16)	4,747 (43)	8,029 (57)

Sources: Abeken, Geld- und Bankwesen seit der Währungsreform, p. 35; id., Das Geld- und Bankwesen von 1945 bis 1954, pp. 61 f. Editors' note: The category „Claims on public Authorities“ in the chart could not be reconstructed on the basis of the references.

<sup>1</sup> Cash outside the banking system plus bank deposits, excluding interbank deposits.

The total volume of money in circulation in the SZ is relatively high in comparison with the Federal Republic. Cash outside the banks and customers' sight deposits, together, amounted in 1953 to 14.2 billion DM-O in the SZ, and to 26.5 billion DM in the Federal Republic (see Table III). That is to say, the relation between the national incomes of the two areas, however, was probably 10 to 40, or more.

This relative surfeit of money in the SZ is likely to be balanced by a relatively low velocity of money circulation. The average DM-O circulates more sluggishly than the average D-Mark in West Germany. This is largely explained by the crudeness of the SZ financial system. Enterprises have no opportunity to employ their bank balances in purchases of short-term securities. They have to hold idle bank balances over long stretches of time between receipts and

expenditures. Similarly, as we shall presently see, the circulation of cash is slowed down by shortages of goods and the reluctance of people to put the idle money into the savings banks.

Regarding the volume of cash in circulation, it is obvious from the previously described legal provisions about payments that the regime is trying to keep it to a minimum. The object of this policy is to minimize uncontrollable money transactions. Cash payments obviously are far less controllable than payments through transfers of bank deposits by check or *Giro* assignment. The policy has succeeded in producing a significantly lower proportion of cash to bank money in the SZ than in West Germany (see Table III).

Table III: Cash Circulation and Bank Deposits, Soviet Zone and Federal Republic, August 31, 1953

	Soviet Zone		Federal Republic	
	Million DM-O	Percent	Million DM	Percent
Cash outside banks	3,494	25	10,859	41
Sight deposits <sup>1</sup>	10,706	75	15,649	59
Total volume of money	14,200	100	26,508	100

Sources: Abeken, *Das Geld- und Bankwesen von 1945 bis 1954*, p. 61; Bank Deutscher Länder (ed.), *Monatsberichte der Bank Deutscher Länder*, Dezember 1953, Frankfurt a. M. 1953, p. 66. Editors' note: The monthly reports can be found at [www.bundesbank.de](http://www.bundesbank.de) in the category „Publikationen“, beginning in year 1949.

<sup>1</sup> Excluding interbank deposits.

This does not mean, however, that in proportion to national income the Soviet Zone has less cash in circulation than the Federal Republic. In 1950/51, the volume of cash in circulation amounted to perhaps about 1/6 of national income in the SZ as against about 1/10 in the Federal Republic and other Western countries. In relation to national income therefore, the cash circulation in the SZ seems quite high. The main explanation is that a considerable amount of cash outside the banking system is hoarded in a more or less involuntary manner; consumers goods are in short supply, and people hold on to money because they cannot find goods that are worth spending money on. The reluctance to entrust such “savings” to savings banks is only slowly disappearing. In addition, it is possible that from time to time East marks are being hoarded by speculators in Berlin and West Germany (see below).

Turning now to the use of bank money (*bargeldloser Verkehr*) we note first that bank checks play a very small role. They are used for hardly any other purpose than the withdrawal of payroll money by the enterprises. The account execution system, which will be described below, serves as the main substitute.

It receives preference over the check system because the latter lends itself to "unplanned" extensions of credit, i. e. by the claimant holding on to a check for a while before presenting it for payment, which are unpopular with the planning authorities.

How then are bank deposits used? There are three important procedures: *Giro* assignment, account execution and central clearing. In the case of *Giro* assignments, deposit holders instruct their banks to make payments to certain claimants. The *DNB* with its network of branches and savings banks is the main agency for these transfers. Payments within the area of competence of local branches or savings banks proceed directly, while those beyond that area go via the district, or district and central, offices of the *DNB*. All inter-county and inter-district payments have to go via the *DNB* network. Special regulations apply to *Giro* payments by peasants' credit cooperatives. These cooperatives are not allowed to have direct contact with branches of the *DNB*. They make transfers through the appropriate branch of the Peasants Bank (*DBB*), within their local area or beyond. In the latter case, the *DBB* branch utilizes the *DNB* network. All these provisions are designed to make *Giro* payments easily controllable.

The account execution system (*Bankeninkasso*, or *Rechnungs-Einzugs-(RE) Verfahren*) is a rather drastic device with the same purpose plus a special emphasis on the control of short-term credit. It is obligatory for all nationalized enterprises, the rural cooperatives and government offices, and it is optional for private enterprises. (Private firms have to use the system, however, when they sell something to firms or offices of the public sector.) After dispatching his merchandise, the seller has to hand over to his bank a copy of his bill. The bank transmits the bill to the buyer's bank, and unless the buyer protests within 4 days his bank will charge his account with the amount of the bill. The seller's bank account is automatically credited.

This system seeks to make sure that sellers do not extend short-term credit to buyers, thus keeping the credit needs of the latter under official surveillance. It does not eliminate, however, the necessity for the banks to extend unplanned credits. If there is no sufficient balance in the buyer's account his bank will ordinarily grant him an overdraft credit to make up the shortage. Such emergency credits, as we shall see, play a major role.

Central clearing (*Forderungsverrechnung* or *FV-Verfahren*), finally, is the third system of deposit utilization. It operates through a central clearing office in East Berlin and 14 district clearing offices and is available to all enterprises, except government offices, for the settlement of mutual obligations. The participants in the system are listed in a published index. Under this arrangement, the seller sends the buyer a bill with a note that payment will be requested through the clearing office. He instructs the clearing office accordingly,



and the office executes the order. Settlements between the clearing offices are made twice a week, and the accounts of the participants then receive the net credits or net debits arising from the transactions.

Of course, the clearing system also runs into situations where balances do not suffice to meet bills. Provision is made for the clearing offices to cover such shortages with credit up to 10 days. If the debtor has not paid up by that time, he is excluded from the clearing and the amount due is taken over by his bank as an overdraft credit.

Incidentally, the police function of the banking system in the field of payments extends to all offices of the government. The offices prepare monthly budgets. These have to be approved by the Ministry of Finance, or its district or local subdivisions, and are then communicated to the appropriate branch of the DNB. The DNB watches out that payments are made only within the framework of the approved budget.

#### 3.5.4 Credit System

This section will survey first the short-term, then the long-term credit arrangements, and finally the security issues in the Soviet Zone.

#### 3.5.5 Short-term Credit

Economic enterprises are expected to submit to their banks, once every quarter, estimates of their credit needs, and these estimates are collected and examined by the bank. The banks in turn prepare proposals for the credit plan, and these plan proposals are passed on, with comment, from the local to the district offices of the *DNB* and finally converge on the central office of the *DNB*. There the plans are integrated. After the final over-all credit plan has been worked out and approved by the council of ministers of the DDR, the central bank informs every bank in the Zone of its credit target. Banks are supposed to meet these targets, neither to exceed them nor to fall short of them.

Credit rules announced by the DNB at the end of April 1955 provide that nationalized enterprises must be in good standing with the planning authorities in order to be eligible for credit. Moreover, credits granted to enterprises working under plans have to be secured with merchandise or other assets. The enterprises are also expected to prove their general credit as well as the need for funds additional to their own. In practice, however, this control seems to be rather perfunctory; for as long as productive tasks are assigned to an enterprise under the plan its credit is largely prejudged. The firms which are part of the

private sector, operating outside the plan, however, have to furnish solid proof of their financial soundness before they can expect to be granted bank credits.

Credit grants are usually coordinated with production and sales programs; they are expected to be co-extensive in time. Interest is charged at the rate of 6 percent; but this is often found insufficient to enforce a limitation on the firms' demand for credit. The banks rely instead on their control of the flow of payments (see above). They stop credits, block accounts or penalize management by fines when they find that the money is being used for other than the planned purposes, and they impose overdraft charges. Still, with all the cumbersome checks and controls, deviations from the plans are unavoidable. Lack of materials, delays in production, hoarding of products and organizational difficulties of various sorts lead to defaults on credit repayments as also to non-utilization of credits and as a result there is a large volume of overdraft credit outstanding. In August 1953, for instance, such overdrafts amounted to at least 22 percent of the total volume of short-term credit (see Table IV) and perhaps a good deal more.<sup>50</sup>

Four ordinary types of credit are being distinguished: (1) plan credits, granted in accordance with the national economic plan; (2) seasonal credits, related to seasonal fluctuation in sales and storage of merchandise; (3) special credits, designed to take care of belated changes in the national plan by some enterprises. (As elsewhere in the Soviet sphere, this kind of economic imbalance is considered meritorious). The fourth type are clearing credits, ordinarily of very short duration, which arise in the course of the RE and VF payments system. All other short-term obligations to banks are called "overdrafts". The overdrafts are more costly than ordinary credit, penalty interest being charged at 2 percent, and then put firms into a bad light. It is no compliment to the SZ's planned economy that their volume is so large; but it may also be argued that the overdraft system is as efficient a way as any to cope with planning failures in the planned economy.

Table IV shows the distribution of short-term credits by grantors. It reveals the preponderance of credit grants of the DNB to the nationalized sector and the smallness of credit grants to other users. The credit facilities of savings banks and credit cooperatives, it should be noted, are severely restricted by provisions compelling these institutions to maintain very large deposits under the head of "liquidity reserves" with the DNB. For savings banks, these "reserves" amount to 20 to 30 percent of their deposits.

50 The figure depends on how one wants to regard the volume of credit outstanding under the account execution system. Part of it certainly represents overdue payments.

Table IV: Composition of Short-Term Credit Volume

	August 31, 1951	August 31, 1953
Total volume, Million DM-O	4,747	8,029
Granted by	Percent	Percent
DNB and <i>Berlin Stadtkontor</i>	80.8	87.6
<i>Garkreba</i> (Russian)	5.4	4.4
Peasants' Bank	4.2	6.0
Peasants' Crafts and Trade Credit Co-operatives	8.0	1.4
Saving Banks	1.6	.6
Total	100.0	100.0
By type		
Planned (incl. seasonal and special) Credits	84.6	58.6
RE-credits	-	19.7
Overdrafts	15.4	21.7
Total	100.0	100.0

Sources: Abeken, *Das Geld- und Bankwesen von 1945 bis 1954*, p. 25, 44.

In the field of long-term credit, we find once more a strictly defined division of labor between the banking institutions. The Investment Bank and the Peasants' Bank carry the chief responsibility, the first for investments in nationalized enterprises and for amounts in excess of 20,000 DM-O in private enterprises, the second for all agricultural investments except in state farms and MTS stations which are in the jurisdiction of the first. In addition, the DNB seems to grant long-term credits for major repair operations in nationalized industry; and the savings banks and crafts and trade cooperatives handle smaller credits to private firms as well as building credits that are financed from private savings. The peasants' credit cooperatives are forbidden to engage in any long-term financing.

All long-term investments except the small ones in private enterprises must be either listed in the national economic plan or specially approved. Credits given to nationalized enterprises run up to the time when the projects for which they are earmarked are concluded. At that time, the credits are transformed into part of the capital of the enterprises. They need not be repaid. Private firms, of course, must repay credits granted to them. As in the case of short-term credit, the banks supervise closely the financial transactions related to credit grants and stop credits when they are used for unplanned purposes.

The savings that find their way into investments come from public and private sources, chiefly from the first.<sup>51</sup> Substantial amounts for new investment go from the budget to the DIB, where until recently they used to be joined by the depreciation funds accumulated in the nationalized enterprises. Prior to January 1955, enterprises were not permitted to engage in self-financing, i. e. the financing of their investment projects out of their own means; they had to turn over their entire depreciation reserves and nearly all of their profits to the Investment Bank.

In January 1955, the legal provisions governing depreciation reserves and the profits of nationalized enterprises were changed. From then on, the enterprises have had to hold depreciation reserves in their own name and to apply them, at a rate prescribed by the plan, to investment expenditures. Simultaneously, the ban against self-financing was lifted. Of an enterprise's total profit, about 20 percent may be transferred to the budget, presumably in the form of the new "*Produktionsabgabe*" (3.4), 37 percent to the funds of the ministry in charge of the enterprise (for redistribution among enterprises of this category), 3 percent to the management's own special fund (for premium payments, etc.); and 40 percent may be reserved for reinvestment in the enterprise (self-financing).<sup>52</sup> The purpose of this reform seems to be to put a greater part of the responsibility for the creation of industrial investment funds on industry itself and to establish a closer relation between fulfillment of the financial plan and the facilities for expanding the particular enterprise.

The savings banks are the main instruments of collecting savings from income recipients. The regime is much interested in drawing savings from private incomes and pursues this objective with intensive propaganda and social pressure. Savings plans and savings for specific purposes, e. g. building, are specially encouraged. To this effect the savings banks maintain branches in large industrial plants, department stores and other agencies. They induce deposits by offering interest, premiums and tax exemptions as well as such conveniences as the right to withdraw money from a savings account anywhere in the SZ upon presentation of the savings book and the owner's identity card. Savings books made out to bearer are offered to attract black market money. These efforts have helped increase the volume of savings deposits in the SZ from about 1.5 billion DM-O in 1951 to about 3.8 billion in 1954, or from 80 marks to 208 marks per capita.

51 In addition to these two sources, the DIB obtains investment funds from the sale of its own obligations and of mortgage obligations of the cooperative building societies.

52 Friedrich Engel, *Das Dilemma der ‚volkseigenen‘ Wirtschaft*. In: SBZ-Archiv, 6 (1955) 20 (October 25, 1955), pp. 315 f. – The figures are offered as an example; and for particular enterprises the plan may presumably fix different allotments.

In principle, the savings banks are permitted to use about 70 percent of their deposits for long-term credits of their own. The rest must be held in *Giro* accounts with the DNB or in Land obligations of 1946. In effect, however, the new credit grants by the savings banks are limited by their indebtedness to old creditors and above all by the fact that they are called upon repeatedly to subscribe to DIB securities.

The Peasants' Bank, finally, issues securities and collects about 2/3 of the savings deposits in the Peasants' Credit Cooperatives. At times it is permitted to draw on the funds of the DIB.

From a statistical point of view, information on long-term credits is unsatisfactory. At the end of August 1953, the savings banks together with the credit cooperatives held deposits of 2.1 billion DM-O (68 percent more than in mid-1950); they had loans outstanding of a total amount of 1.7 billion; but it is not clear what borrowers were included in that total. The DIB and DBB were indebted to the extent of 700 million DM-O, and the *Länder* for 360 million (see Table V); the long-term credits granted from these resources were shown as 3,270 million DM-O; but this figure did not include the credits to nationalized enterprises that had been converted into capital of these enterprises by that time.

Table V: Sources and Uses of Long-Term Funds, Status of August 31, 1953, Million DM-O

Sources:	Savings Deposits	2,100
	Obligations of DIB and DBB	700
	Obligations of the Länder	360
	Total	3,160
Uses:	Long and medium term lending of savings banks and credit cooperatives	1,700
	Long-term lendings of DIB <sup>1</sup>	1,570
	Total	3,270

Source: Abeken, *Das Geld- und Bankwesen von 1945 bis 1954*, pp. 61 f. Editors' note: Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 42 f. The value for „Long-term lendings of DIB”, however, could not be verified.

<sup>1</sup> Not transformed into borrowers' capital.

Table VI gives a picture of the order of magnitude of the flow of planned investments in the year 1951. It suggests that the bulk of funds for planned investments flowed through the government's treasury.

The securities now in circulation in the DDR fall into two classes, those issued after 1945 and those of earlier vintage.

Table VI: Financing of Planned Investments in 1951, Million DM-O

Treasury	2,356
Depreciation Funds	522
Long-term Bank Credits	390
Private Funds	322
Total	3,590

Source: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (ed.), *Die Investitionen in der sowjetischen Zone 1951 und 1952 nach den staatlichen Plänen*, Materialien zur Wirtschaftslage in der sowjetischen Zone, n. d., p. 22.

Among the new securities that have been issued we have first the various state loans and obligations. In 1946, the *Länder* floated 600 million marks of 4-percent loans, redeemable upon request. At the time of the second monetary reform these securities were transformed into DM-obligations of equal nominal value. About 250 million of the original amount were then in private possession. In 1949, an attempt was made in Saxony-Anhalt to float a further state loan of 100 million at 4 percent; but subscriptions were so meager that no further attempts were made in this direction. As has been mentioned above, the owners of "very old accounts" received in settlement of their claims 3-percent obligations, repayable after 1959 in 25 instalments.

Of the two banks which, besides the state, have the monopoly of floating security, the DIB issued a loan in 1949/50 of 700 million, of which 100 million were earmarked for public subscription. In 1952, the DIB distributed several hundred million marks of a 3-percent premium loan of the National Reconstruction Program. In March 1954, it offered 5-percent mortgage bonds; and in June 1955 it was empowered to float 700 million DM debentures for residential construction and possibly other uses, designed chiefly for purchase by savings banks and insurance institutions. The mortgage bonds of 1954 were the first securities offered to individual investors. They could be bought at bank windows, for cash and without presentation of personal identity cards (an invitation to black-market money). Income from the bonds is tax free. The Peasants' Bank (DBB) so far has floated only one batch of securities, amounting to 500 million marks.

Securities of pre-1945 origin are of no practical significance in the SZ today. All the securities of enterprises located in other parts of Germany were sequestered by the Russians in 1945 and are now presumed to be in the possession of the DNB. It is doubtful that they will ever be recognized. On their part the SZ authorities repudiated the pre-1945 public debt and declared all prior claims on nationalized enterprises void. The only old securities remaining of some

value in the SZ are those of some small corporations which were not expropriated. The number of such corporations is shrinking; many of them have been transformed into personal enterprises.

There is no market for securities, either old or new. Stock exchanges were never reopened after the occupation. Some Soviet Zone securities, however, are traded in a small way on West German exchanges.

### 3.5.6 International Transactions

The DNB has the monopoly of all financial transactions with other currency areas, including foreign trade. The Ministry for Foreign and Interzonal Trade is the SZ's sole exporter and importer. It operates its foreign trade monopoly through the DIA agency (*Deutscher Innen-und Außenhandel*), which is part of the Ministry (3.6). In accordance with the plans for commodity movements into and out of the SZ, which are laid down by the State planning commission, the DIA commissions various enterprises to produce goods for export and allots imports to other firms. Twice a year, these enterprises report their expected receipts or requirements of foreign exchange, and on this basis the Ministry prepares a foreign exchange plan. This is transmitted to the DNB. The DNB supervises the execution of the plan, receives foreign payments and makes payments to foreigners.

The conversion of earnings and payments from foreign into domestic currency, and vice versa, constitutes a problem since the price system of the SZ is isolated from foreign markets and its exchange rate arbitrary. The DIA pays domestic prices to exporters and charges domestic prices to importers, but these prices bear no uniform relation to the foreign exchange receipts from exports and the foreign exchange costs of imports. In trade with free-world countries, the foreign exchange receipts and outlays are determined by free-world prices. If export prices were computed with the help of the official gold value of the East mark (1 DM-O = .39902 gram of gold), applied to internal prices, SZ exports generally could not be sold in the West. They would cost too much. In trade with the Soviet bloc, export proceeds and import payments of the Ministry are regulated by ruble prices, which are fixed through bargaining, usually for a period of one year, and which are supposed to reflect "world market prices". Again, the DIA pays, and is paid by, domestic enterprises according to internal prices; and the official ruble exchange rate (1 DM-O = rubles<sup>53</sup>) is only used for accounting between the DNB and the DIA.

53 Editors' note: No exchange rates are indicated in the original manuscript since, as explained in the text, the exchange rate was re-negotiated annually.

This system is of course capable of generating foreign exchange deficits or surpluses quite independent of the balance of trade as computed in internal prices. In particular, it has led to export proceeds smaller, and import costs higher, than the internal value of the goods in the Zone. The SZ's foreign exchange system works as an instrument of economic exploitation of the DDR by Soviet Russia and other trade partners. The internal financial effect of this situation is that the DIA is usually incapable of realizing from the importing firms the D-Mark amounts for which it is being charged by the DNB; and of paying the D-Mark bills of domestic exporting firms, which are of course drawn up in (higher) internal prices, from the D-Mark amounts with which it is being credited by DNB. Consequently, the DIA runs large deficits with the DNB. The DNB usually covers these deficits by short-term credit; and when they are not offset by gains over a certain period of time the credits are written off at the expense of the treasury.

All trade agreements of the Soviet Zone aim at a bilateral balancing of exports and imports with the trade partners and seek to avoid net foreign exchange transfers. This is done through clearing and in some cases swing credit provisions. In trade with the Federal Republic, for instance, West German exporters are paid by the *Bank Deutscher Länder* (BDL) and the BDL in turn is paid by West German importers of goods from the SZ. The DNB does the same on its side. Table VII shows how the clearing between the two countries has been going. There were Eastern clearing surpluses in 1951 and 1953, and there was a Western clearing surplus in 1952. By the end of 1953 the account was in balance.

Table VII: Claims and Liabilities of the Soviet Zone in Interzonal Trade with the Federal Republic (Million DM-West)

	Soviet Zone Liabilities (Imports)	Soviet Zone Claims (Exports)	Annual	
			Clearing by BDL	Credits by DNB
May 1949– March 1950	298	298	–	–
1951	178	186	–	8
1952	165	127	38	–
1953	254	284	–	30
Total	895	895		

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), Statistisches Jahrbuch 1954, p. 278.



Table VIII: Exchange Rate Fluctuations of DM-O at Berlin Exchange Houses, Price of 1 DM-West in DM-O

	Monthly Average	Highest	Lowest
		Monthly Rate	
1948 (2d half)	3.33	2.-	4.15
1949	5.06	3.45	6.30
1950	6.15	4.95	7.50
1951	4.61	3.80	5.70
1952	4.33	3.89	5.26
1953	5.22	4.35	6.13
1954	4.52	4.17	4.85

Source: Annual Reports of the Berliner Zentralbank. Editors' note: These sources were not accessible for review. Cf., however, from 1949 Statistisches Bundesamt (ed.), Statistisches Jahrbuch 1955, p. 538.

Payments to and from other Western countries are often settled by similar procedures; but in a number of cases, they do involve direct foreign exchange payments. To this effect the DNB maintains foreign exchange accounts in Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Canada. Its account in the United States was blocked in 1952.

In dealings with the other Soviet bloc countries, finally, an "account execution" system is applied which is similar to the internal system discussed above. Favorable or unfavorable balances are supposedly met by adjustments in trade agreements.

Like the currencies of other Soviet bloc countries, the D-Mark-Ost is not meant for circulation outside the national territory; but unlike the USSR and her other satellites the DDR is incapable of preventing a substantial traffic in the currency outside her borders. The simple reason is that despite all efforts her territory cannot be sealed off hermetically. Traffic in and through Berlin and interzonal travel provide opportunities for the movement of substantial amounts of currency over the border which even the most obnoxious controls cannot suppress. There is a free market for Eastmarks in West Berlin, and the currency is even accepted there as a means of ordinary payments, at the prevailing daily quotation. Eastmarks flow to Berlin through the earnings of West Berliners who work in the Eastern part of the city, and through the purchases of Western goods by East Berliners and Soviet Russians. The demand for Eastmark is fed by West Berliners who find certain purchases attractive on the other side of *Potsdamer Platz*. The number of travelers from West to East,

however, tends to be smaller than that of people going the other way. The market is completely free. There is no official agency for exchange equalization.

The exchange rate which prevails in this free currency market (see Table VIII) does not reflect simply the purchasing power parity of the East and West marks. The Eastmark rate tends to be depressed occasionally by capital flight from the Soviet Zone, which results from emigration as well as from the more or less secret accumulation of Western assets by East German and other Soviet bloc interests. These transactions have helped to move some unknown amount of Eastmark currency from circulation in the Soviet Zone into Western hands.

### 3.6 Domestic and Foreign Trade [*Horst Mendershausen/Gerhard Abeken/ Karl C. Thalheim*]

A centrally controlled planned economy draws a sharp division between domestic and foreign trade. Domestic trade is commanded by the regime. It has institutions, prices and procedural rules all of its own, separate from those in the field of foreign trade where the local regime meets and bargains with outsiders. Therefore, this chapter falls into two distinct and almost independent parts, internal and external trade. The only link between the two fields, which was formed for a time by the direct intervention of Soviet Russian authorities in the economic affairs of the SZ, through military government and Soviet-owned enterprises, has been nearly eliminated. Even the increasingly close dependence of the SZ's economy with the Soviet bloc does not mean that the frontiers are open or opening in that direction. The division between internal and external trade is strict, and only certain central government organs act as valves between the two systems.

#### 3.6.1 Internal Trade

The present-day organization of trade in the SZ consists largely of state and state-controlled ("cooperative") enterprises, almost exclusively so in the wholesale branch. Planning and nationalization have gone hand in hand. But shortcomings and failures of the system have led to repeated reorganizations, and the pattern that has emerged by now is probably not a final one.

The planning system obviates the function of commercial enterprise to form markets, bargain out prices, build up or reduce inventories and act as a stimulant or check on production. The function of the trader in the Soviet system is limited to the implementation of production planning. The contracts of the trading organs with producing enterprises merely specify commodities and

set delivery dates. All prices and margins are fixed by the authorities; competition is virtually eliminated through regulations which declare only one trading enterprise competent to deal in a certain commodity at a certain place; the keeping of inventories of merchandise beyond an absolute minimum is forbidden. The only financial inducements to which the trade organizations are subject result from opportunities for their managers to earn premiums for large turnover at low cost, and they are supplemented by the deterrents of financial penalties, demotions, etc. In some situations where statutory responsibilities overlap, this leads to a modicum of competition between firms.

### 3.6.2 Distribution, Prices and Consumption Taxes

In the beginning, the Soviet Zone authorities envisaged a completely centralized distribution system. The "distribution ordinance" of December 1948 provided for the drawing up of a distribution plan in accordance with the production plan (3.1). The central administration for materials supply was then supposed to allot quotas of specific products produced in one place to specific users in another place. More precisely, the functional ministries and Länder administrations were to be given quotas of supply and demand, which they were to parcel out among the enterprises subservient to them. A central trading institute was set up to serve as an accounting office for the transactions, and all trading enterprises were to be eliminated. This system was so rigid and unwieldy that it soon had to be abandoned. In its place, a network of nationalized but decentralized trading enterprises has come into existence. The enterprises enter into contracts with producers and users.

The contract system was a concession to the market principle. Still the concession was quite narrowly limited. The trading enterprises did not gain control over the formation of prices. Prices remained fixed by the planning authorities. Under this regime, which has continued to the present, prices are kept from fluctuating in response to short-term demand and supply conditions; but they are occasionally adjusted to help implement the objectives of the plan. The present price structure builds on the Nazi price controls prevailed in 1944, but many changes have been made to adjust to new conditions. The prices for the most important basic materials were held down initially, partly with the help of subsidies. Coal and lignite prices were raised in 1953 and now correspond roughly to actual production costs. At the end of 1954, the previously subsidized prices for crude iron and steel were raised by about 100 percent and thus adjusted to the actual production costs at the mills, but the iron using industries still receive subsidies to keep price increases from raising their costs. The prices of most building materials rose very little from

1950 to 1953; lumber prices have hardly been increased at all and barely cover the costs of the nationalized forestry enterprises. The prices of basic agricultural crops likewise have been held down (3.2). Most of the imported raw materials are passed on to fabricators at prices below world market levels, and the importing agencies have to be subsidized accordingly (see below).

On the basis of the relatively low and uniform raw materials prices, the manufacturing firms figure their costs following uniform costing principles. Nevertheless, their sale prices differ greatly from enterprise to enterprise; and up to the end of 1954 these price differences were passed on to the trading enterprises and consumers. Since that time, however, a differentiated turnover tax has been imposed on the producers which aims to even out their prices by taxing the cheapest producer heavily, the most costly one, lightly.

A particular double price system applies to agriculture, and to sales to the consumer. Farms have to deliver the quantities fixed by delivery norms at prices that differ little from those of 1944, except for slaughter animals, the prices of which have been raised. But for deliveries over and above the norm, prices are being paid that are about 70 percent higher for grain, 160 to 300 percent higher for meat and fat. It is believed that for farms that succeed in surpassing the norm substantially the aggregate receipts about equal aggregate production costs. Others take a loss. The foodstuffs delivered under the norm are sold cheaply to the population on the rations, those delivered outside the norm are sold at disproportionately higher prices, with a consumption (sales) tax added to the higher costs at which the state acquires the goods.

The system of double prices, which applies to various industrial consumer goods besides foods, furnishes a substantial amount of tax revenue. This revenue is used to cover the subsidies which the regime pays to various domestic producers as well as to importers and exporters. The emphasis on taxes on consumption articles was one of the motivations for the development of state-owned retail shops; for up to the end of 1954, at least, the retail shops had to collect the consumption tax and pay it over to the state. Since that time, however, the consumption tax on most industrial consumers goods is being levied on the producer and combined with the differentiated turnover tax mentioned above.

For 1954, the total revenue from those supplementary consumption taxes has been estimated at upwards of 9 billion DM-O (3.4). This was in addition to the basic excise taxes on sugar, tobacco, alcohol, etc. which supplied about 3 billion DM-O. Of the total revenue of 12.7 billion from consumption taxes, the state spent about 6.6 billion on "price-equalization" subsidies within the domestic price system (2.2 billion in agriculture alone) and more than 3 billion on subsidies connected with foreign trade, retaining 3 billion or less for other purposes. The consumption tax system is a powerful instrument for making the consumer subsidize domestic industry and foreign trade.

The double pricing for consumer goods finds a parallel in the pattern of wages. The legally fixed basic wages average about 5 to 10 percent below those of West Germany; in some branches of industry, they are even lower. The range between the highest and lowest wage class in each industry, however, is very considerable in the Soviet Zone (3.3), and the real value of the higher wages is, of course, enhanced by the fact that they give access to the higher priced unrationed goods. More will be said about living costs below.

### 3.6.3 Wholesale Trade

The nationalization of wholesale trade enterprises in Soviet Germany is virtually complete. In 1953, 92 percent of all wholesale trade transactions were carried out by state organizations, 2 percent by consumers and handicraft co-operatives,<sup>54</sup> and only 6 percent by private firms. The degree of nationalization of this branch is greater than that of industry, where 15 percent of production is still supplied by private enterprises. This is of course due to the fact that the state trading organizations have been given the monopoly of all transactions between nationalized enterprises, and between nationalized and private enterprises, as well as the monopoly of all trade in products that are subject to distribution quotas. By the end of 1953 there were only 9,400 private wholesale traders left in the Soviet Zone, all of them small firms, as against 28,500 in 1939.

The developments leading to this state of affairs need not detain us long; but a brief review will show the fluidity and difficulties of the situation. In a first period, up to 1948, mixed state and private organizations, the Industrial and Trade Bureaus were set up to act as intermediaries between producers and private traders of industrial products, while agricultural cooperatives took over the wholesale trade in agricultural products. This was admittedly a provisional arrangement.

In a second period, lasting approximately from 1949 to 1951, an extreme centralization of wholesale trade was attempted. It aimed at a reduction of this function to mere bookkeeping by a central trading institute and, as has been pointed out above, proved far too unwieldy an arrangement to last. Already in 1949, the regime began to organize the first trade centers or firms (*Deutsche Handelszentralen*, DHZ), genuine state trading enterprises for specific commodities and industries, which were to replace the overcentralized system.

54 The consumer and handicraft cooperatives enter into wholesale trade partly as subsidiaries of the state trading organizations, partly to procure supplies for handicrafts and retail stores from private producers.

At the same time, wholesale trade in agriculture was completely reorganized. Trade in industrial supplies to farms remained under the rural cooperatives, working in conjunction with the DHZ. But trade in agricultural products came under two new central collection agencies (*Vereinigungen Volkseigener Erfassungs- und Aufkaufbetriebe* VEAB), one responsible for crops and the other for animal products.

In the third period, beginning at the end of 1951 and lasting to the present, the system of the DHZ enterprises has been consolidated, half abolished and then reaffirmed. Following a spate of sharp official criticism that was directed at the lack of coordination between production and trade, the DHZ were reorganized. Their number was increased from 14 to 22; their management was made more independent and more responsible for the conduct of business; the "contract system" was introduced, under which the DHZ have to implement the production plan by contracting with the producing enterprises for deliveries of specific products (3.1). Each DHZ was subordinated to two masters, to the state secretariat for material supply as far as the planning of distribution is concerned, and to the ministry responsible for the particular industry as far as the execution of the plans is concerned.

But while the state consolidated the DHZ organization and leaned more heavily on a distribution system operated by decentralized trading enterprises, it reverted to the system of direct dealings between producers which it had found so unprofitable in the second period. This time, however, the direct dealings were not part of an overcentralized trading institute system, and they were readmitted only with discrimination. In August 1952, such direct dealings were approved for all but those in which assortment of merchandise and stock keeping are essential. For these the DHZ remained the sole traders. For other goods, presumably bulk materials and specialized machinery, producers may contract among themselves, provided they report these deals to the proper DHZ and its superior functional ministry. This arrangement turned some of the DHZ into part-operating, part-administrative organs.

In the agricultural sector, the third period brought the elimination of the local cooperatives from wholesale trade. In their place stepped a series of local state bureaus for farm requirements. The two VEAB's were merged, and their local agencies turned into separate enterprises. A DHZ for seed distribution was set up.

These incessant reshufflings reflect the difficulties of running a complex economy by command from the center. The regime has been experimenting to find the best combination of central control and decentralized responsibility; of distribution activities by traders, by central planners and by the producers themselves. This experimentation has not come to an end. It is kept alive among other things by party line changes.

In September 1954, the entire wholesale trade in consumers goods was taken out of the various functional (production) ministries and brought under a single ministry for trade and supply. The DHZ's in the affected fields were dissolved and replaced by wholesale trade bureaus (*Großhandelskontore*). This innovation, together with the formation of an intermediary agency for consumers goods distribution was designed to improve the consumers' goods supply, to which the regime had begun to pay more attention after Stalin's death, the uprising in central Germany (2, f), and the adoption of the Malenkov line in Russia. The intermediary agency in particular, with local branches and all, was set up as a trouble shooter to still the unending complaints about shoddy, expensive or simply unavailable merchandise. The more-attention-to-consumers-goods policy found its reflection in the administrative shift from the DHZ, operating under production ministries, to the Trade Bureaus under a "consumers' ministry".

Quite characteristically, however, the most recent reorganization suggests a reversal of this course. In July 1955, the trade in wood products was reassigned to the production ministry (wood industries). In Moscow, Malenkov's solicitude for the consumers has given way to Khrushchev's heavy industry program, and in the Soviet Zone, control over wholesale trade in consumers goods now seems to be tied again more closely to the producers' interests.

### 3.6.4 Retail Trade

In the field of retail trade, nationalization has not progressed as far as in wholesale trade. In 1954, the state shops (see next paragraph) handled about 35 percent of total transactions amounting to 29.6 billion DM-O, while the consumer cooperatives distributed 27 percent, other public organs 3 percent, and private shops 31 percent.<sup>55</sup> Still private retail trade is on its way out. Private trade did not share in the rise of retail trade transactions. Its share shrank from 86 percent of total retail transactions before the war, to 57 percent in 1950 and to 31 percent in 1954. Of the 153,000 retail shops proper of 1939, only 82,000 remained in existence in 1954, and they are the smallest ones. Among the restaurants, and pubs, the decline of the private element was more moderate, from 48,000 to 34,500 in the same period; but here too all larger businesses have been nationalized.

55 Retail trade, in Soviet Zone terminology, includes the business of restaurants and hotels as well as of handicraft shops. The total transactions of 29.6 billion DM include about 9 billion of special consumption taxes.

Table I: Nationalization of Wholesale and Retail Trade Percentage Shares in Total Transactions

	Nationalized	Cooperatives and other public distributors	Private Enterprises	Total
Wholesale Trade (1953)	92	2	6	100
Retail trade, incl. restaurants, etc. (1954)	39	30 <sup>1</sup>	31	100

Source: Statistische Praxis. Monatszeitschrift für theoretische und angewandte Forschungs-, Verwaltungs- und Betriebsstatistik, 9 (1954) 5, Karteiblatt „DDR: Neue Daten über den Handel, die Versorgung und den Lebensstandard der Bevölkerung“.

<sup>1</sup> Consumers cooperatives: 27 percent, other public retail distributors: 3 percent.

The state shops (*Staatliche Handelsorganisation*, or *HO*) originated as a centralized chain in 1949. Subsequently the system was decentralized, and greater responsibility was given to shop managers. At the end of 1952, the HO comprised 14,642 grocery stores, 4,716 stores for industrial goods, hard and soft, 73 specialty stores, 18 department stores and 2,035 restaurants, pubs etc.; altogether 21,484 establishments. The number of stores has not changed much since then; but more than 500 restaurants have been added.

The original task of the HO stores to compete with the black market has lost much of its importance with the derationing of industrial consumer goods and some foodstuffs. Unrationed supplies of meat, fats, sugar and eggs are being distributed by the HO and by private stores acting as their subcontractors. The main business of the HO stores today, however, is in clothing, hardware and such foodstuffs as are no longer rationed. The HO stores enjoy a considerable advantage over other retail outlets in that they get preferential treatment (better qualities, more regular supplies) from the nationalized wholesalers.

The consumer cooperatives occupy an intermediate position between the nationalized HO stores and the private shops. They have been “synchronized” politically by the appointment of SED managers. Their chain stores are subject to the directives of the ministry for trade and supply, and they receive second-best treatment in supplies. The number of cooperative stores has increased a good deal and amounts now to about 29,000. Beside the larger towns, they can be found in small towns, and they even send mobile units into the villages. Consequently, their share in aggregate retail trade has gone up, from 15 percent of transactions in 1950 to 28 percent in 1954.



As an outlet for production, retail trade plays a Cinderella role in the Soviet Zone economy. It tends to get supplies only after the priority claims of exports and investment have been met. There is a constant neglect of consumers' interests in the communist economy, which even occasional shifts in the party line cannot quite alter. Many of the factories producing consumers goods are still in private hands and suffer some discrimination for that reason. But more important than that, planning only estimates consumers' demand for all but the bare necessities. This together with the discouragement of reasonably ample inventory holdings in the trade (they might disturb the plan) leads to periodic shop shortages. Shortages of certain goods (and corresponding accumulations of unspent cash) have been running like waves through the economy, and the planning bureaucracy is usually several steps behind the development of consumer demand.

In the last few years, the planners have even failed to estimate properly the aggregate income receipts of the masses, which should be a cardinal sin by communist standards. This has been an additional cause for consumer goods supplies to limp behind demand. When shortages become apparent, the regime has not shied away from pressing its enterprises to cut "unproductive wages" and setting higher "work norms". When the planners miscalculate, the workers have to make up for it. Their wages are cut, or their "work norms" raised, to bring buying power into balance with smaller-than-planned supply. Such is the economics of the "workers' state".

### 3.6.5 Living Costs

As a result of the double price system, living costs in the Soviet Zone are not easy to measure. This is particularly true for the cost of food since part of the food supply is still distributed on rations at relatively low prices, while another is sold through the HO shops at higher prices, and still another part is black-marketed. An index of the retail prices of rationed foodstuffs, which has been computed up to January 1951, indicates that at that time rationed foods averaged about 50 percent higher than in 1938. Compared with the rise of retail food prices in the Federal Republic during the same period (by about 80 percent), this price rise seems modest; but the data for the Federal Republic cover the entire food supply, the Soviet Zone index only the rationed element.

The prices of foodstuffs in the HO shops tell another story. These started out in 1949 at the black-market level of 1,800 percent of 1938. Subsequent price reductions lowered the level to 685 percent, by January 1951. Inhabitants of the Soviet Zone must supplement their rations at HO prices, and once that is taken into account their lot is less favorable than that of the people

Table II: Retail Trade Transactions in the Soviet Zone and East Berlin<sup>1</sup>

Year	Transactions at current prices <sup>2</sup>		Transactions at constant prices	Implicit retail price index <sup>3</sup>
	Billion DM-O	1949=100	1949=100	1949=100
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1949	13.8	100	100	100
1950	17.3	125	130	96
1951	21.4	155	155	100
1952	25.0	181	200	91
1953	27.4	198	220	90
1954	29.6	214	250	86

Source: Editors' note: The reference for this overview („Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung“) was inconclusive and the source could not be identified. Cf., however, Meier, *Die Erzeugungs- und die Geldwirtschaft im vierten Jahre*, p. 173.

<sup>1</sup> Including transactions of handicraft firms, restaurants, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Including consumption taxes

<sup>3</sup> Obtained by dividing col. 3 into col. 2.

of West Germany, not to mention the difference in the quality of goods. Although there have been further and much advertised price reductions in the HO shops since 1951, foodstuffs in these shops cost, in late 1953, about twice as much in DM-O as similar goods cost in West German stores in DM-West.

For other goods than food the relation was even less favorable. Textiles averaged four times their price in the West (work shirts, twice; nylon stockings, five times), and metal goods such as radios, watches, cameras, two to three times. But forgetting about the West and considering the internal development in the Soviet Zone by itself, the price reductions have of course had some effect on improving the lot of the Soviet Zone consumer. This is illustrated by Table II.

From 1949 to 1954, retail trade turnover at current prices increased by 114 percent. If prices had remained constant, the increase would have been by 150 percent. The relation between the two figures brings out the net effect of price reductions, a 14 percent price decline on the average. Some stress must be put on the word “net”. During this span of time, the Soviet Zone authorities raised the aggregate amount of the special consumption levies from 5.5 to about 9 billion DM-O. These are of course included in the value of retail transactions. While the proportion of the levies in total retail transactions declined from the exorbitant percentage of 40 in 1949, it still remained at 30 percent in 1954. If the Soviet Zone had refrained from squeezing a greater amount of consumption taxes out of the population than it levied in 1949, it could have lowered

the price level of retail goods by 40 percent instead of the 14 percent by which they have supposedly been reduced.

The impact of the consumption taxes on the buying power of the Soviet Zone population has also been measured as follows: If a West German family of four with a net monthly income of 536 DM-West were to spend this income in the Soviet Zone, it could obtain only 359 DM-West worth of goods, for 177 DM would go for special consumption taxes.<sup>56</sup> This comparison was made in early 1954. Unfavorable as it was, it constituted some improvement over 1950 and 1951.

Regarding the Zone's rationing and two price system, we should note that in 1953 the authorities hoped to abolish it and thus escape the onus of being the only country in Europe still rationing consumers goods. Up to 1953, they had let rationed and unrationed prices drift toward each other by raising the first and lowering the second; and they had managed indeed to halve the spread between the two from an average of 1:4 in mid-1950 to 1:2 at the beginning of 1953, thus incidentally giving some advantage to higher over lower income people. In April of that year, they derationed textiles and shoes and unified the prices of these goods at levels above the former rationed prices. From that point on, they hoped to do the rest of the job by pushing for higher work norms, lowering wage payments and forcing consumers to draw on their relatively large cash holdings (3.5). This policy was defeated by the uprisings of June 1953. The concessions which the regime then found politic to make to the populace, such as wage increases, higher prices to farmers, increases in social security benefits and lower taxes on private enterprise, made the "new course" of increasing the output of consumer goods a compelling choice. Otherwise, inflation and renewed popular discontent would have been inevitable. But the "new course" was not generous enough, and in any event not of sufficient duration, to permit the abolition of rationing and of the double price system. Premier Grotewohl's promise to proceed with the abolition of the system in 1954 was still unfulfilled by the end of 1955; and it remains to be seen whether the regime will get around to it in 1956.

### 3.6.6 The External Trade of the Soviet Zone

Before the division of Germany, the area which now constitutes the Soviet Zone was linked with the other parts of the country in an intimate division of labor. The volume of goods going back and forth was large. In 1937, the

56 Estimate by Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung. An allowance of 20 percent for lower quality of consumers goods would reduce the equivalent amount to 287 DM-West. Editors' note: These numbers could not be verified.

railroads and internal waterways carried about 28 million tons of goods to other parts of Germany and returned 50 million tons. The preponderance of imports by weight indicates that the economy was on balance a manufacturing one, receiving bulky materials, especially coal and iron, and delivering fabricated products, such as machinery and textiles, apart from such agricultural products as grain and sugar. Contrary to a widespread belief the SZ was not Germany's breadbasket. It had a grain surplus, but this surplus was much smaller than that of Germany east of the Oder and Neisse rivers.

The area of what is now the Soviet Zone also participated in prewar Germany's foreign trade. In 1936, it supplied about 24 percent of the exports and imports, each, of the total area, by value. This percentage was slightly higher than the share of the area in Germany's total population (22 percent).

The partition of Germany and the establishment of a communist regime changed this picture radically. What used to be intra-German trade became interzonal trade. From the beginning, and particularly after 1948, the external trade of the SZ was oriented in the direction of Soviet Russia and the satellites. Foreign trade became a state monopoly and an adjunct to the planned economy. Until the end of 1953, furthermore, large amounts of reparations were taken out of the SZ. There gradually emerged a geographic pattern of foreign trade quite distinct from that of present-day West Germany, or from that of Germany in the past. But the new picture also contains elements of continuity. The economy of the SZ still is predominantly manufacturing. Manufactured goods constitute an even higher proportion of its exports (81 percent in 1954) than they do in the exports of the Federal Republic (77 percent). The natural and human resources of the area, and its deficiencies of resources, did not change radically. The new pattern of trade, especially with regard to its composition by commodities, developed on an economic foundation which is largely the same as before.

In what follows, we shall present first the system according to which foreign trade is now being conducted, secondly the pricing of goods in foreign trade and its economic implications, and then examine the trade of the SZ with the Soviet bloc, the Federal Republic and other Western countries. In the end, we shall consider the reparations payments to Soviet Russia and what has remained of them.

### 3.6.7 Organization of Foreign Trade

In the early postwar years, the external trade of the Soviet Zone was managed directly by the Russian occupation authorities. It was dominated by the reparation requirements of the Soviet Union. In 1948 a new trade organization was

developed. It began in 1948 with the creation of the German Trading Company as an executive organ of the Central Administration of Internal and External Trade. The Company mainly supervised international transactions undertaken by nationalized or private enterprises and prepared trade agreements. It conducted little trade of its own. In 1949, the Trading Company was replaced by the Bureau for German Foreign Trade, which was designed to conduct foreign trade directly; and in 1951 this bureau gave way to the more elaborate foreign trade monopoly called "German Internal and External Trade" (*Deutscher Innen- und Außenhandel*, or DIA). Operating as part of the Ministry for Internal and External Trade, the DIA has 17 branches which conduct foreign trade for the various sectors of the economy. Its monopolistic prerogative was slightly restricted in 1953 when enterprises were permitted to conduct some limited foreign trade directly; but for all practical purposes the DIA is the sole foreign trade operator in the SZ. In particular, it is in full control of the "price adjustment mechanism" (see below) which has become necessary because of the discrepancy between foreign trade prices and the internal price structure of the SZ.

The Ministry for Internal and External Trade controls all international forwarding enterprises. It maintains official representatives in all Soviet bloc countries as well as in some non-communist countries, e. g. Finland, Egypt, India and Burma, and unofficial middlemen elsewhere. The Ministry also controls the Leipzig Fair and the Chamber for Foreign Trade, a display window and market research organization, respectively, for foreign trade in general and for trade with Western countries in particular. The Chamber has offices in Austria, Holland, Belgium, Greece, Indonesia and other countries.

As a matter of principle, foreign trade is planned, with the long-range (5-year) national economic plan forming the point of departure, and long-term trade agreements with the Soviet bloc countries the first step of implementation. The long-term trade agreements fix broad targets for imports and exports over the whole period. They are supplemented by annual bilateral trade agreements with the various partners, which fix trade targets for a list of commodities over a year. As the last step the DIA enters into contracts for specific transactions with the foreign trade organs of the other bloc countries.

In practice, the long-term trade agreement with the USSR seems to be the pivot of planning. In view of the dominant role of that country in the foreign trade of the SZ, this is understandable. The SZ concluded this agreement before announcing the final version of its own 5-year plan. Long-term agreements with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Hungary were concluded subsequently in 1951 and 1952, followed later by those with China and Bulgaria.

Even between planned economies, foreign trade does not always go according to plan. The execution of the broad agreements through specific trade con-

tracts often deviates greatly from the original targets; and the annual agreements often limp behind actual transactions and simply legalize what has already been done. The bilateral balance of imports and exports, which the trade agreements aim to accomplish, often fails to materialize, and surpluses or deficits have to be settled in some fashion. One way of doing this is to transfer credits or debits to next year's exercise, i. e. to export or import on credit. Transfers of convertible (Western) currencies between Soviet bloc countries do not seem to be used for this purpose but may be arranged independently.

The SZ also enters into trade agreements with Western countries, but most of these have been over short-term (1 year) periods. A few are as long as three years, e. g. the agreement with Norway. The one-year agreement on interzonal trade with the Federal Republic is of major importance. Besides this, the SZ concluded in 1955 about twenty agreements of smaller scope with European, Latin American, African and Asian countries. It is trying hard to develop direct trade with underdeveloped countries.

The agreements with non-communist countries also aim at balancing commodity flows so that no net foreign exchange payments have to be made one way or the other; and some provide for small swing credits. But in practice, foreign exchange payments cannot always be avoided. They are then made or received through the foreign exchange accounts of the SZ's central bank, the DNB, abroad (3.5).

### 3.6.8 Pricing and the Terms of Trade

The foreign trade of the Soviet Zone is not conducted in the Zone's currency, the D-Mark-Ost. All transactions with Soviet bloc countries are expressed in Russian rubles, and all transactions with non-communist countries in their currencies or in dollars and pounds sterling. The official ruble rate is now  $1 \text{ DM-O} = 1.80 \text{ ruble}$ , and the official parities toward the West rest on the relation  $1 \text{ DM-O} = .39902 \text{ grams of gold}$ . But the first of these equivalencies is solely an accounting rule, and the second is entirely meaningless. The pricing of the SZ's foreign trade has nothing to do with internal prices and exchange rates.

The prices that are actually paid in trade between the SZ and the outside world are of two kinds. For purposes of Soviet bloc trade, ruble prices are fixed, usually for a period of one year, through bargaining. These fixed prices are supposed to be related to world market prices, but the relation is not a close one, partly because world market prices usually do not hold still during the year, partly because in the bargaining the stronger partner usually gets away with what he says the fair price ought to be. The role of the stronger partner is customarily played by the Soviet Union, which understands to translate its

“leadership of the camp of socialist countries” into commercial advantage. In fact, faithful Communist officials of the satellite countries are not expected to try to drive hard bargains with their Soviet counterparts, witness the conviction of two victims in satellite purge trials (Kostov in Bulgaria and Löbl in Czechoslovakia) partly on the charge that they attempted to bargain with the USSR on prices in bilateral trade agreements. There are strong indications that in dealings with the Soviet Union, the SZ often has to buy high and sell low. Less is known about the extent to which it can turn tables on the other satellites (see below). The rate at which the DDR earns and spends ruble balances depends on these fixed prices.

The situation is different in dealings with the non-communist world. Here the SZ pays prevailing market prices for imports and realizes market prices for exports. It earns and spends convertible currencies (more precisely: earns clearing credits and incurs clearing debts) in accordance with the prices achieved in market transactions.

While these agreements determine the “foreign exchange flow” incident to foreign trade they do not determine the prices received by SZ exporters and paid by importers. These prices are internal DM-O prices. The DIA operates the transmission belt between external and internal pricing. The technical procedure is of course a simple one. External and internal prices and payments are kept completely separate; the first apply to dealings with foreigners, the second to dealings with nationals. The economics of the matter is more interesting, and its nature is best illustrated by what happened in 1954.

In 1954, the aggregate exports of the SZ in all directions were computed at about 2.6 billion DM-O, the aggregate imports at about 2.5 billion DM-O. (These are the DM-O equivalents of 4.7 billion rubles of export earnings and 4.5 billion rubles of import spending). Toward the outside, exports were 4 percent larger than imports and the DIA realized an export surplus of about 100 million DM-O (or 200 million rubles). In internal prices, however, the exports amounted to about 5.6 billion DM-O, the imports to only 1.9 billion DM-O. On the inside, therefore, the SZ showed exports 195 percent larger than imports; it had an export surplus of 3.7 billion DM-O. Consequently, the DIA had to pay the exporting enterprises of the SZ 3 billion DM more than it realized from sales abroad, and it had to pay for imports 600 million DM more abroad than it could realize from domestic importing enterprises. Through this “price equalization process” the DIA subsidized both exports and imports. In 1954, it cost the treasury of the Soviet Zone, and ultimately its people, 3.6 billion DM-O in subsidies to conduct foreign trade.<sup>57</sup> The gain from this deal accrued largely to the Soviet Union, the SZ’s main foreign trade partner.

57 See below for a qualification of this statement.

The estimates in Table III show that the Soviet Zone has been subsidizing its foreign trade for years. Over the five years from 1950 to 1954 it spent about 9.3 billion DM-O for this purpose. It seems of particular interest that the subsidies increased notably in 1954, the first year after the end of overt reparations payments to the Soviet Union. Their amount in that year, 3.6 billion, was of the order of magnitude of the budgeted reparations payments in each of the three preceding years (3.3 to 3.5 billion, see Table X below). This suggests that the Soviet Union succeeded by price manipulation in trade with the Soviet Zone in reimposing a good part of the reparations burden which it had so graciously lifted from its German satellite in 1953. One of the devices used to this effect was the jacking up of the ruble "exchange rate" for the D-Mark-Ost from 1.20 in 1953 to 1.80. This automatically increased the D-Mark value of imports and reduced the D-Mark value of exports.

Table III: Aggregate Foreign Trade of the Soviet Zone and Price Adjustment (Subsidies) 1950-1954

		Between DIA and foreign countries:		Between DIA and domestic enterprises:	
		Transactions in billion rubles	Transactions in billion DM-O <sup>1</sup>	Transactions in billion DM-O	Price adjustment (Subsidies by DIA) in billion DM-O
		(external prices)		(internal prices)	
1950	imports	1.9	1.6	1.3	.3
	exports	1.8	1.5	2.1	.6
1951	imports	2.2	1.9	1.4	.5
	exports	2.9	2.4	3.3	.9
1952	imports	3.0	2.5	1.7	.8
	exports	2.8	2.3	2.9	.6
1953	imports	4.0	3.3	1.9	1.4
	exports	3.5	2.9	3.5	.6
1954	imports	4.5	2.5	1.9	.6
	exports	4.7	2.6	5.6	3.0

Source: Estimates by Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung. Editors' note: This reference is overly general and the source could not be identified despite extensive research.

<sup>1</sup> Derived from ruble figures: 1950-53, 1 DM - 1.20 ruble; 1954, 1 DM - 1.80 ruble.



Up to now we have assumed implicitly that the internal prices of the SZ are by and large fair, and that the need to subsidize foreign trade results from the manipulation of external prices. But this assumption is not quite correct. There are strong indications that the internal price structure has been biased in a way that boosts the prices of certain export goods and depresses the price of imports. For instance, the prices of coal and iron, two imported basic materials, were fixed for some time well below world market prices. (Internal coal prices have been raised in 1953, and iron prices in 1954, and this probably accounts for the drop in import subsidies from 1953 to 1954, see Table III). Moreover, in 1952 the internal prices of industrial products were very high relative to West Germany, and also relative to agricultural prices in the SZ.<sup>58</sup> Identifying in a rough and ready fashion industrial product prices with exports, and raw material and agricultural prices with imports, we should say, therefore, that the need to subsidize results, at least in part, from bias in the internal price structure.

For the economic evaluation of the subsidies, however, it makes little difference whether they arise chiefly from the external underpricing or the internal overpricing of export goods, relative to import goods. In either case the domestic economy is burdened to the advantage of foreigners. The only difference is that in the first case the loss arises *prima facie* from bad bargaining with the outside, particularly the USSR, in the second case from economic exploitation on the inside.<sup>59</sup> The Soviet Zone regime practices both.

Two further factors must be recognized, which modify somewhat the evaluation of the subsidy system. First, quite apart from the peculiar economic orientation of the Soviet Zone, a country of its economic structure would have suffered in all probability a certain deterioration of its terms of trade during the postwar years. This "excusable" circumstance may account for a fraction of the subsidy payments, perhaps as much as 10 percent in some years. Second, it is likely that in 1953, and particularly in 1954, part of the increase of the subsidies was purely an accounting matter without economic significance. This is due to the shift in the system of internal taxation. The shift consisted in the "pushing back" of consumption taxes from the trade level to the producer's level, i. e. their transformation from sales taxes into turnover taxes. This implied a raising of the delivery prices of industrial products at the producer's level, for domestic consumption as well as for exports; and as far as the latter are concerned it meant that the state was now spending with one hand, in the

58 Kramer, *Die Landwirtschaft*, p. 74.

59 In the first case, the Soviet Zone taxpayer subsidizes Russia directly; in the second case, he subsidizes the native communist regime so that it can bid away, on behalf of Russia, exportable goods from would-be domestic buyers.

form of subsidies, what it was taking in with the other hand, in the form of turnover taxes on export goods.

It appears that in 1953 the new tax procedure was applied chiefly to textile goods. In that year, the export subsidies may simply have offset the turnover tax receipts on export goods. In 1954, the new tax procedure was applied to a variety of other industrial articles, and this probably explains part of the rise in the internal prices of exports from 1953 to 1954 (see Table III), and therefore part of the rise in the subsidies. Unfortunately, it is not possible at this time to estimate the quantitative importance of this factor.

### 3.6.9 Trade with the Soviet Bloc

The major part of the trade of Soviet Germany is with the countries of the Soviet bloc. In 1953, these countries accounted for about 1.3 billion dollars of imports and exports, or 73 percent of SZ foreign trade (see Table IV). The Soviet Union alone accounted for 45 percent, followed by Poland (12 percent), Czechoslovakia (7 percent), etc. Trade with Communist Asia (China and North Korea) was 8 percent, but its share has grown since that time. Altogether, the Communist part of the world provided 81 percent of SZ trade in 1953, and the free world, including West Germany, the remaining 19 percent. This pattern is radically different from that of the prewar Reich. In 1930/32, when the East loomed large in Germany's foreign trade, the same countries accounted for only 18 percent, the Soviet Union alone for 7 percent of transactions.

As the second largest trading country in the Soviet bloc, the SZ is an important supplier of machinery and various other manufactures to other communist countries, and it depends in turn on supplies of raw materials and grain from these sources. Its trade with the USSR alone may have amounted to 14 percent of the latter's foreign trade in 1953. In 1954, practically all iron ore, copper, rubber and cotton imports into the SZ came from the Soviet Union, the bulk of hard coal from Poland. The Soviet bloc also supplied most of the SZ's imports of iron and steel, non-ferrous metals and wool, and practically all imported grain. Characteristically, the SZ's imports from the USSR consisted mainly of raw materials and semi-manufactured products (1954: 60 percent) and agricultural products (38 percent). Finished manufactures were only 2 percent. Foodstuffs and industrial materials also dominated in the imports from other communist countries. Even from industrial Czechoslovakia the SZ imported a relatively small proportion of finished products (20 percent).<sup>60</sup>

60 This included, however, significant supplies of rolling mill products and tires. Editors' note: Cf. also Conrad, *Der Außenhandel*, pp. 262 f., 267.

Table IV: Soviet Zone Trade Transactions<sup>1</sup> with all foreign areas (Million Dollars)

	Soviet bloc of which, USSR		Communist Asia	Non-communist world of which West Germany <sup>2</sup>		Total
1948	187	95	–	63 <sup>3</sup>	n. a.	250 <sup>4</sup>
1950	609	321	6	266	167	881
1951	944	553	33	264	87	1,241
1952	1,037	590	65	313	73	1,415
1953	1,331	823	141	361	118	1,833
1954	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	n. a.	187	2,242

Source: Gisela Conrad, *Der Außenhandel der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands als Bestandteil des Ostblockaußenhandels*. In: *Vierteljahrshefte zur Wirtschaftsforschung*, (1955) 3, p. 252–272, here 254f. (Soviet Zone data). Editors' note: Not all numbers could be verified on the basis of this source.

<sup>1</sup> Exports added to imports.

<sup>2</sup> Soviet Zone data for interzonal trade, showing some discrepancies with West German data (see Table IX).

<sup>3</sup> 63, excluding interzonal trade.

<sup>4</sup> 250, excluding interzonal trade.

n. a. = not available

In stark contrast, the SZ's exports to the Soviet bloc are almost entirely finished manufactures. Exports of machinery and electrical equipment alone formed 80 percent of the SZ's exports to Russia in 1954 and they played a similarly great role in exports to the satellites. Mining, textile and printing machinery, machine tools, pumps, compressors and instruments, railroad equipment and ships go to the East in large and increasing volume and contribute powerfully to the industrialization of the communist countries. To Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, Soviet Zone enterprises supply entire chemical, electrical and textile factories; to China sugar, cement and textile factories and small power plants. North Korea is getting a diesel factory and communications equipment.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, the Soviet Zone of Germany plays a significant role as a manufacturing agent in the Soviet bloc, turning Russian iron ore, Polish coal, Hungarian bauxite, Chinese wolfram and antimony into industrial equipment. Its machinery and technicians are employed in the industrial development of Communist Europe and Asia. Of course, it must be fed and supplied for its services. Minor credits apart, it has only once been called upon to extend "foreign aid" to other satellites, i. e. in the form of free supplies to North Korea to the extent of 115 million dollars that are to be delivered over the years from 1955 to 1964. But as we have seen the SZ provides its own peculiar form of "foreign

61 Editors' note: Cf. *ibid.*, p. 263.

aid” in the form of uneconomically priced trade with the Soviet Union, and it consents occasionally to imports (e. g. art objects and mother-of-pearl buttons from China) that it really does not want, in order to get paid at all.<sup>62</sup>

This economic role of the Soviet Zone in the communist world is not only a result of its resource endowment. Since 1953, at least, it has been deliberately fostered by the USSR as part of its program of regional integration which began with the formation of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid in Moscow in January 1949. The Soviet Zone forms part of a growing network of cooperation and specialization agreements with the other satellites and the USSR, which reach from agreements about the coordination of particular industries to efforts to coordinate investment plans. In 1955, agreements were reportedly concluded coordinating production and distribution programs for ball bearings, dividing aggregate tractor production and a rolling-mill products program between countries, and linking up the national power grids. It is to be expected that this integration of the Soviet bloc will be of increased importance in the next five-year plan period which will begin in 1956, in the SZ as well as in the USSR, Poland and elsewhere.

Some observers maintain, however, that except for the noted multilateral agreements on certain programs, ball bearings, rolling mill products and tractors, which were sponsored by the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the economic integration of the Soviet bloc still relies primarily on the cumbersome instrument of bilateral trade agreements, and that the USSR finds it difficult to go beyond such agreements and develop a unified system of planning for itself and the “people’s democracies”. In addition to various general observations that are made in support of this point of view (3.1), it may be noted that the communist countries have been holding on to rudimentary balance of payments procedures which obstruct multilateral economic relations. In general, it is not possible for one bloc country to apply surplus earnings from a second bloc country to the settlement of a deficit with a third. Each of the bilateral agreements among bloc countries is planned to balance over the period of usually one year; and if surpluses or deficits arise because of deviations from the plans they are supposed to be made up between the partners.<sup>63</sup> This may of course take time and lead to attempts by one partner to unload shoddy goods or “white elephants” on the other; but the communists seem to prefer this to a multilateral trade system, in which partners could choose more freely and shop around for the best quality or the lowest price. Bilateralism is more congenial to the bureaucratic conduct of international economic relations.

62 Editors’ note: Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 266–269.

63 See Alfred Siebeneichen, *Die zwischenstaatliche Verrechnung im Sozialismus*. In: *Deutsche Finanzwirtschaft*, 7 (1953) 3, p. 119.

## 3.6.10 Trade with the West

Trade with the West, as we have seen, plays only the second string in the SZ's foreign trade; but it is of special significance. Summarily described, and allowing for exceptions to the rule, the SZ's trade with the West is a gap filler on the import side, and on the export side a means to employ nonessential productive capacity. From the West, including West Germany, the SZ obtains the raw materials and foodstuffs, in particular the good qualities, that it cannot get from the communist countries, either because they do not have them or because they default on their promises to delivery. It also gets some machinery and chemicals like phosphate that it cannot get elsewhere, and it bargains for cheap raw materials in underdeveloped countries. Table V, which shows the main imports of the SZ from Western Europe, excluding the Federal Republic, illustrates this situation.

Table V: Major Import Commodities of the Soviet Zone from Western Europe<sup>1</sup> in 1954

Commodities in order of value	Value of soviet Zone imports <sup>2</sup> from Western Europe <sup>1</sup>
	(million dollars)
Butter and oleomargarine	25.4
Fish	13.1
Fruits and vegetables	12.3
Meat	11.1
Tobacco, raw	10.4
Chemicals	8.6
Other dairy products	7.4
Iron and steel	6.7
Wood and manufactures	6.1

Source: United Nations (ed.), *Economic Bulletin for Europe*, 7 (August 1955) 2, Geneva 1955, p. 69.

<sup>1</sup> Excluding Federal Republic of Germany.

<sup>2</sup> F.O.B. exports of Western countries.

In exchange, the SZ sells to the West nitrogenous fertilizer and other chemicals, machinery, lignite and consumers goods (see Table VI). In the main, these are not "economic development goods", the supply of which is preempted by the Eastern customers.

Table VI: Major Export Commodities of the Soviet Zone to Western Europe in 1954

Commodities in order of value	Value of Soviet Zone exports <sup>2</sup> to Western Europe <sup>1</sup> (million dollars)
Fertilizer	22.6
Machinery	15.7
Transport equipment	11.4
Other chemicals	10.4
Lignite	8.2
Textiles	6.7
Glass, glassware, pottery	6.6
Instruments and watches	5.5

Source: United Nations (ed.), *Economic Bulletin*, 7 (August 1955) 2, p. 57.

<sup>1</sup> Excluding Federal Republic of Germany.

<sup>2</sup> C.I.F. imports of Western countries. Editors' note: C.I.F. = cost, insurance, freight; an Incoterm.

The Federal Republic of Germany is the most important of the Western trade partners. On the import side, its shipments to the SZ of iron and steel, textiles, chemicals, foodstuffs and machinery lead by far the imports from the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, etc. (see Table VII).

On the export side, the Federal Republic's takings of textiles, lignite, chemicals, sugar etc. have a similarly commanding lead over the Zone's exports to northern and central European countries (see Table VIII).

Table VII: Major Soviet Zone Imports from West Germany and Western Europe by country of origin, in 1954

Country of origin	Value of total Soviet Zone Imports Million Dollars	Major commodities imported, in order of value
Federal Republic of Germany	102.3	Iron and steel, textiles, chemicals, foodstuffs, machinery
Netherlands	25.4	Butter and oleomargarine, fruits and vegetables, textile waste, yarn
Denmark	23.9	Meat, butter and oleomargarine, dairy products, fruits and vegetables
Sweden	17.9	Butter and oleomargarine, fish, iron and steel
Finland	11.8	Dairy products, wood (sawn and pit props), paper and cardboard
Austria	10.0	Iron and steel, machinery
Switzerland	9.0	Chemicals, watches
Turkey	8.1	Tobacco
Norway	7.9	Fish, crude minerals
Belgium-Luxembourg	6.7	Fertilizer (phosphates), iron and steel
Italy	6.0	Fruits and vegetables
France	5.8	Meat
United Kingdom	4.6	Yarn and thread
Other Western European countries	4.4	-
Total, West Germany and Western Europe	243.8	-

Sources: United Nations (ed.), *Economic Bulletin*, 7 (August 1955) 2, pp. 62-69; for the Federal Republic: Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung. Editors' note: Some data has been corrected according to the sources and the sum has been recalculated. The data for the Federal Republic could not be verified due to the reference being overly imprecise.

Table VIII: Major Soviet Zone Exports to West Germany and Western Europe by country of destination, in 1954

Country of Destination	Value of total Soviet Zone Imports, Million Dollars	Major commodities imported, in order of value
Federal Republic of Germany	101.6	Textiles, lignite, chemicals, motor fuel, sugar, machinery
Finland	19.9	Transport equipment, fertilizers, machinery, chemicals, textiles
Sweden	14.4	Fertilizers, transportation equipment, lignite, chemicals
Denmark	13.5	Lignite, glass and pottery, fertilizer
Netherlands	11.8	Fertilizer, machinery, chemicals
Norway	11.1	Sugar, fertilizer, machinery, instruments
Switzerland	8.6	Motor fuel, chemicals, glass and pottery
Austria	7.4	Lignite, fertilizer, machinery
Belgium-Luxemburg	5.8	Fertilizer
Turkey	5.3	Machinery
United Kingdom	4.8	Fertilizer
Other Western European Countries	10.9	-
Total, West Germany and West Europe	215.1	-

Sources: United Nations (ed.), *Economic Bulletin*, 7 (August 1955) 2, p. 56 and for the Federal Republic: Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung. Editors' note: Some data has been corrected according to the sources and the sum has been recalculated. The data for the Federal Republic could not be verified due to the reference being overly imprecise.

Still trade with West Germany now represents only about one-third of all trade with the Western world (see Table IV), and only 8 percent of the SZ's total foreign trade. This is undoubtedly much less than what it used to be before the partition of the country.<sup>64</sup> But while the trade with West Germany, and

<sup>64</sup> According to estimates of the U. N. Economic Commission for Europe, the commodity trade between the area of the Federal Republic and that of the DDR, in both directions, amounted in 1936 to about 4.6 billion Reichsmark. Calculated at current prices, this amounts to about 9 billion DM-West. In 1954, the transactions between the Soviet



Table IX: Soviet Zone Trade with Western Europe<sup>1</sup> and the Federal Republic of Germany, Millions of Dollars

Soviet Zone Imports <sup>2</sup>			
Year	From Federal Republic	From Other Western Europe	Total
1950	79.1	34.7	113.8
1951	35.4	64.6	100.0
1952	39.5	77.9	117.4
1953	60.7	93.0	153.7
1954	102.3	142.5	244.8
Soviet Zone Exports <sup>3</sup>			
Year	To Federal Republic	To Other Western Europe	Total
1950	101.8	49.9	151.7
1951	34.5	81.9	116.4
1952	30.3	92.5	122.8
1953	67.6	84.3	151.9
1954	101.6	113.7	215.3

Source: United Nations (ed.), *Economic Bulletin*, 7 (August 1955) 2, pp. 52 f.

<sup>1</sup> Excluding Federal Republic of Germany.

<sup>2</sup> From export statistics (f.o.b.) of non-Soviet bloc countries. Editors' note: f.o.b. = free on board; an Incoterm.

<sup>3</sup> From import statistics (c.i.f.) of non-Soviet bloc countries. Editors' note: c.i.f. = cost, insurance, freight; an Incoterm.

with Western Europe for that matter, is nowadays small compared with Eastern trade, it is not shrinking in absolute amount. On the contrary, the dollar volume of Western trade has been growing since 1950/51, and particularly from 1953 to 1954 (see Table IX). Since the acute political troubles in the SZ in 1953, the regime has found it advisable to ease the supply situation, particularly of foodstuffs, by trading more with the West. In 1954, for the first time since 1950, it imported somewhat more from the West than it exported in that direction. Export interests in the West, looking for new markets, have of course been receptive to the policy of the Soviet Zone to open the spigot of trade a little more. It also seems that in 1954 the SZ disposed in Western markets of some machinery, which had originally been contracted for by communist

Zone and the Federal Republic amounted to 860 million DM-West, and in 1955 they were expected to rise to 1 billion DM-West. Even at the latter rate, interzonal trade would be only one-ninth, or 11 percent, of the prewar trade between the two areas.

countries, but which was not bought because of plan changes. There are no indications, however, that the SZ's trade with the West has changed its role as a stop gap device on the import side, and as a means to employ nonessential productive capacity on the export side. And there are no indications that the current, and somewhat half-hearted, efforts to make the regime internationally respectable and to demonstrate the possibilities of profitable trade with the area to Western countries will alter the statistical picture significantly, not to mention the basic orientation. As far as dispositions for a substantial and lasting international division of labor are concerned the SZ looks East.

### 3.6.11 Reparations to Soviet Russia

At the end of World War II, it was the manifest desire of the Soviet Union to employ reparations from Germany as a device to siphon resources from the United States. This scheme proved unrealizable, but in its place the Soviet Union established a regime of reparations from the East Zone which succeeded in squeezing more out of the 18 million people of the SZ than Russia had proposed to get through its abortive all-German reparations scheme.

The way in which the squeeze was to be applied formed an object of contention among the Soviet leaders.<sup>65</sup> From the beginning of the Russian occupation, Malenkov, who was in charge of the program of dismantling German factories and shipping them to Russia, emphasized "economic disarmament" of the SZ as the way to gain reparations. Mikoyan, the Minister of Foreign Trade, however, sought to secure products, not dismantled plants; and as the chief of the Russian reparations program proper he worked to reopen and even to expand synthetic fuel plants, shipyards and other factories. His agents and Malenkov's often fought over whether a factory was to be torn down or put back in production, a struggle that produced in many cases a lively sequence of orders and counterorders. Mikoyan, it seems, often had the support of Zhdanov, the protagonist of the Cominform and rival of Malenkov, and of Beria, the secret police chief, who aside from domestic political considerations had a special interest in the German scene because he was in charge of the exploitation of the uranium mines in Saxony. In his search for mining equipment and other supplies for the *Wismut A. G.* (see below), Beria had usually more sympathy for Mikoyan's policy than for Malenkov's, although here again the agents clashed occasionally over whether a certain batch of pumps should

65 See Vladimir Rudolph, *The Administrative Organization of Soviet Control, 1945-1948*. In: Robert M. Slusser (ed.), *Soviet economic policy in postwar Germany*, New York 1953, pp. 18-86.

go to Saxony or to Russia. In the main, as the following Table X will show, Mikoyan's views won out. This was especially true after 1946. Beria's operation was second in profitability, and Malenkov's third.

From 1945 to 1953, according to a well-informed German source, the Soviet Zone paid in reparations of one form or another about 37 billion DM-West, not counting occupation costs of about 16 billion, or about 12 billion dollars (see Table X).<sup>66</sup>

These massive payments by the SZ to the USSR exceeded the total exports of the SZ over the years. While they are excluded from foreign trade statistics, they nonetheless must be considered in conjunction with the SZ's foreign trade if we wish to gain a proper perspective of the area's economic relations with the outside.

Since on August 22, 1953, Russia renounced all reparations claims on the SZ effective January 1, 1954, the whole matter might be considered of purely historical interest. But this would not be quite correct. In the first place, the occupation of the country by Russian troops continues. While the size of the occupation forces has been reduced, the SZ has to continue to provide for their feeding, housing, transportation, etc. For the year 1954, the occupation costs were reduced to 1.6 billion marks, 350 million less than in 1953; but this amount was still equivalent to 29 percent of the SZ's entire export volume when expressed in internal prices. Figures for later years are not yet available.<sup>67</sup>

Secondly there remains some uncertainty about the economics of uranium mining. The so-called *Wismut A. G.*, which operates this large mining enterprise under the direction of the Ministry for Geology and Mineral Resources in Moscow, was not returned by the Soviets to the SZ government. What was announced was that this company would henceforth be a joint Soviet-German undertaking, on a 50-50 basis. This leaves open first, whether the Soviet Zone has to buy shares of the company from the USSR, and second, how the Russians are going to pay for the ore, all of which is being shipped to the Soviet Union. Up to the end of 1953, these shipments were recorded neither in the foreign trade statistics nor in the reparations account.

These factors, besides the peculiarities of foreign trade pricing, provide opportunities for the Soviet Union to extend the economic exploitation of the SZ beyond the time of overt reparations payments.

66 Editors' note: Cf. Anonymous author, Die Reparationen der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in den Jahren 1945 bis Ende 1953. Eine Fortführung der Untersuchungen von Dr. Franz Rupp über die Reparationsleistungen der sowjetischen Besatzungszone, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, ed. by Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1954, pp. 15-17.

67 Editors' note: Cf. Anonymous author, Die Reparationen in den Jahren 1954 bis Ende 1953, pp. 18-20.

Table X: Balance Sheet of Reparations and Occupation Costs, 1945–1953

Payments to Soviet Authorities	Billion DM-West
Currency issued 1945/46	4.2
Payments out of the budget	
1946–1950	27.8
1951–1953	10.1
Profits of sequestered enterprises (SAG)	
1947–1950	1.7
1951–1953	1.8
Sale of the SAG enterprises to the Soviet Zone	
1951–1953	2.6
Total	48.2
Goods and Services bought by the Soviet Authorities	
Commodities	
1945–1950	24.5
1951–1953	10.2
Services and subsidies	
1945–1950	2.6
1951–1953	1.0
Cost of uranium mining	
1947–1950	3.0
1951–1953	4.8
Consumption of stocks and equipment of the SAG	1.0
Unspent accounts	1.1
Total	48.2
Minus: occupation costs proper	-12.0
Plus: transfers of dismantled plants and equipment	5.0
Total reparations received by USSR	37.2

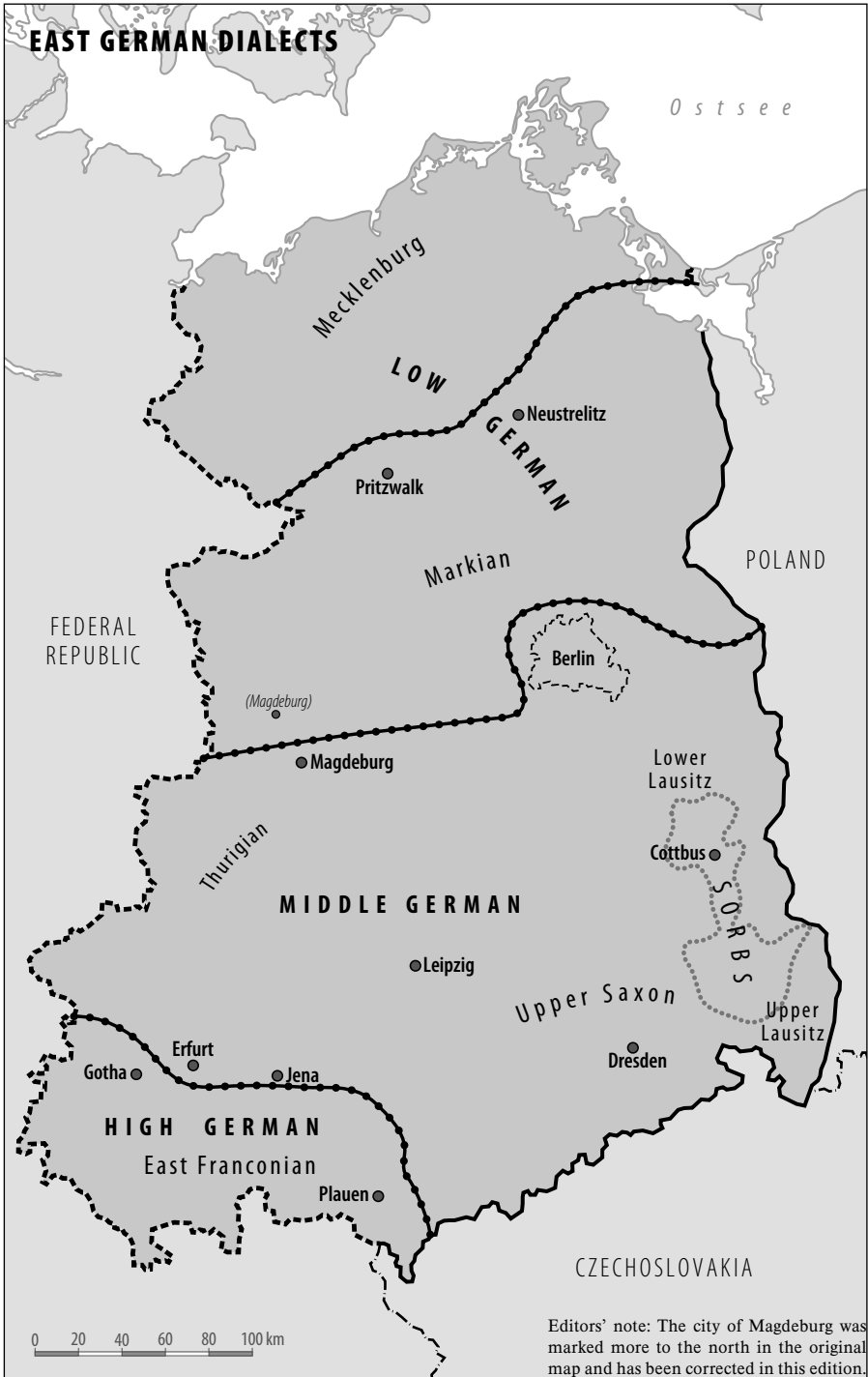
Source: Anonymus author, *Die Reparationen der sowjetischen Besatzungszone in den Jahren 1945 bis Ende 1953. Eine Fortführung der Untersuchungen von Dr. Franz Rupp über die Reparationsleistungen der sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, Bonner Berichte aus Mittel- und Ostdeutschland, hg. vom Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Bonn 1954, pp. 15–18, and at the outside back cover of the book.

## Appendices

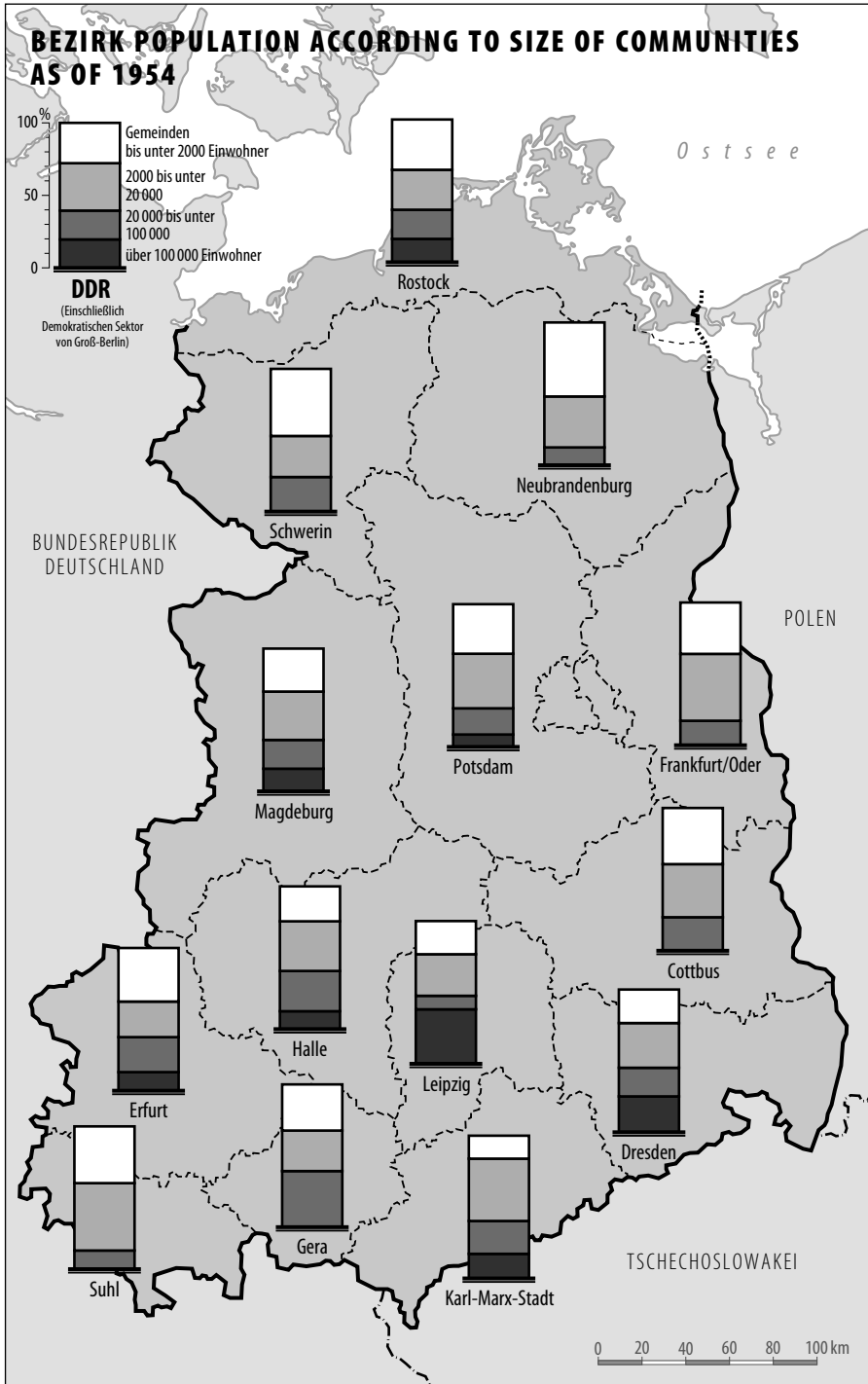


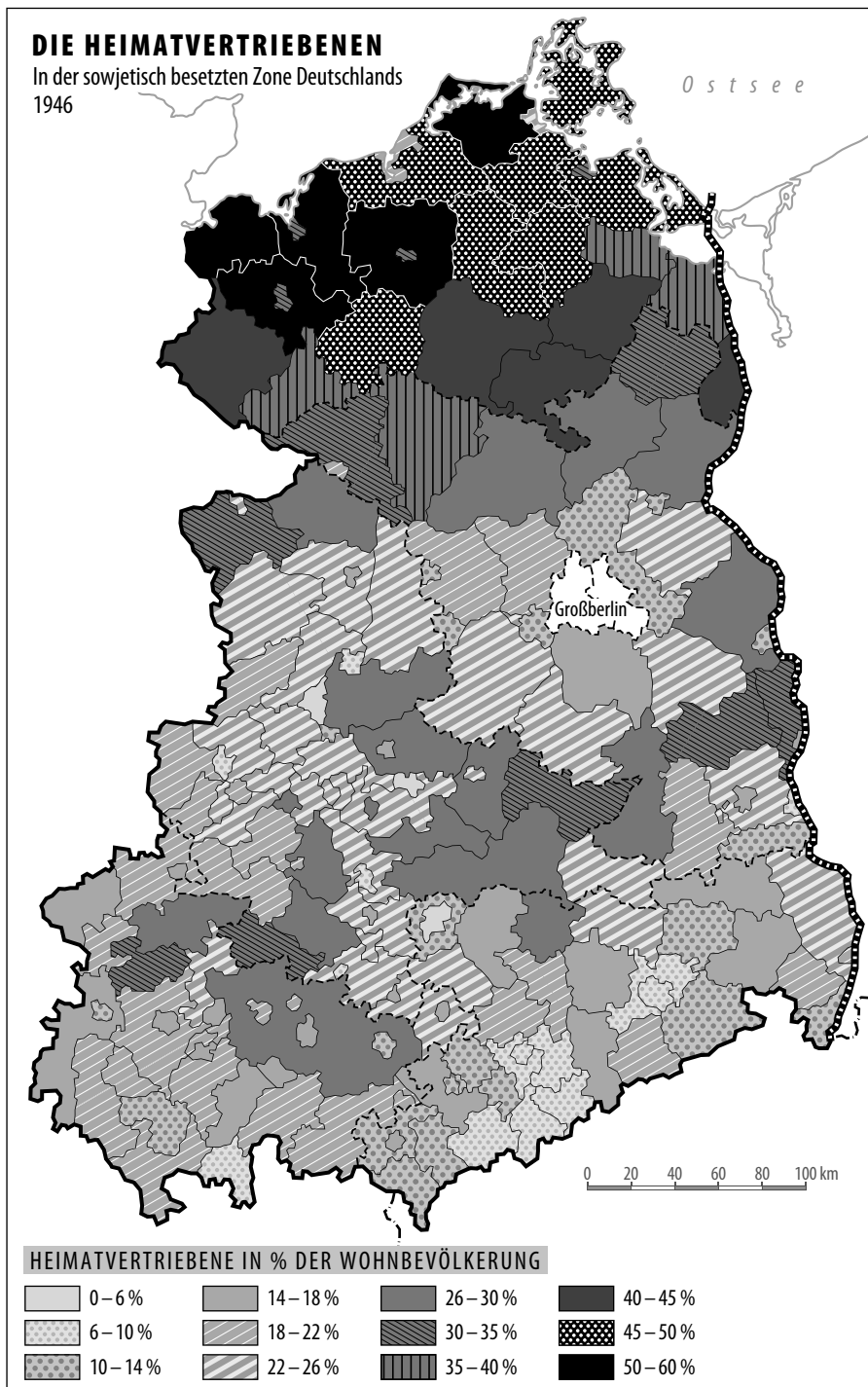
# POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES OF THE DDR





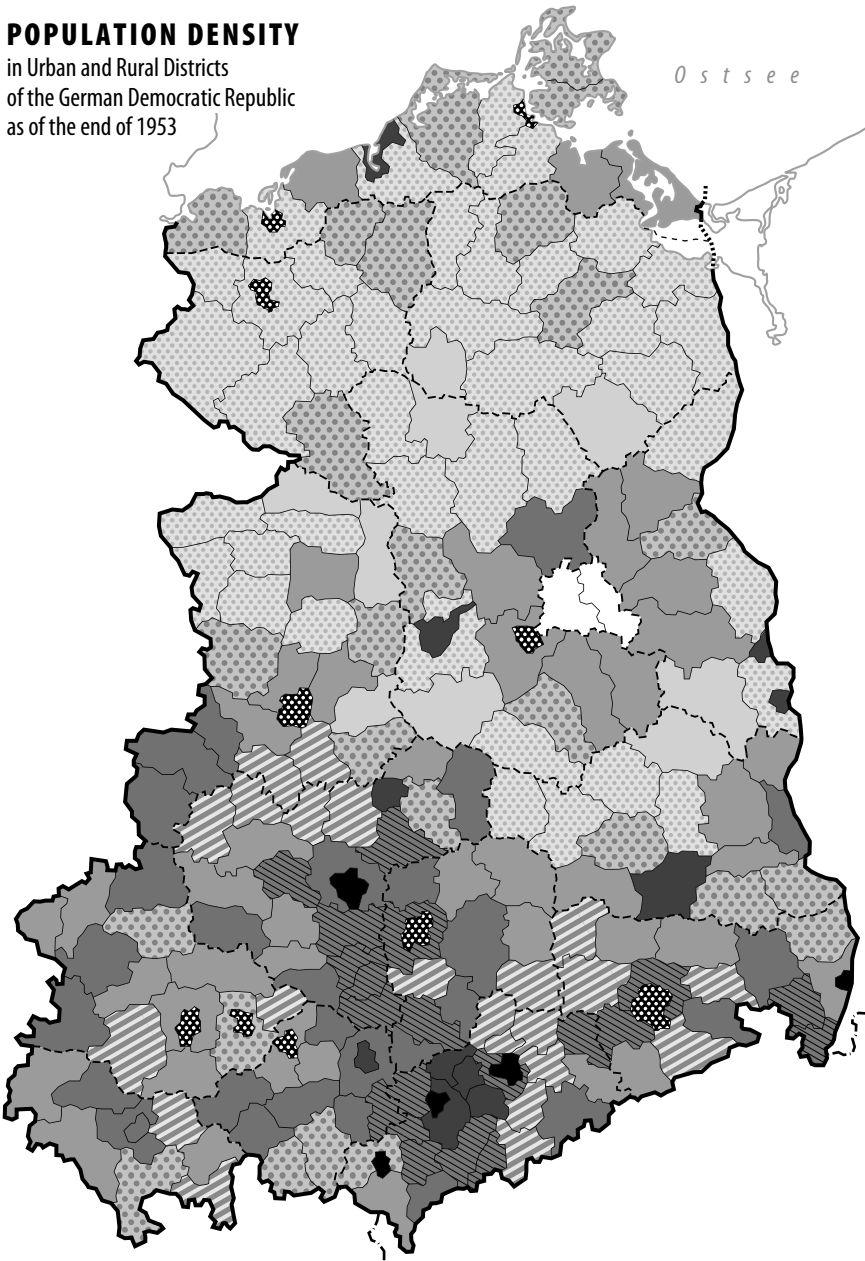




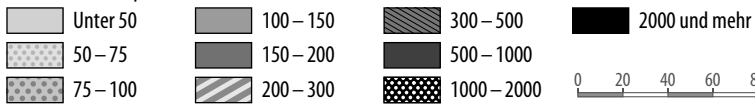


### POPULATION DENSITY

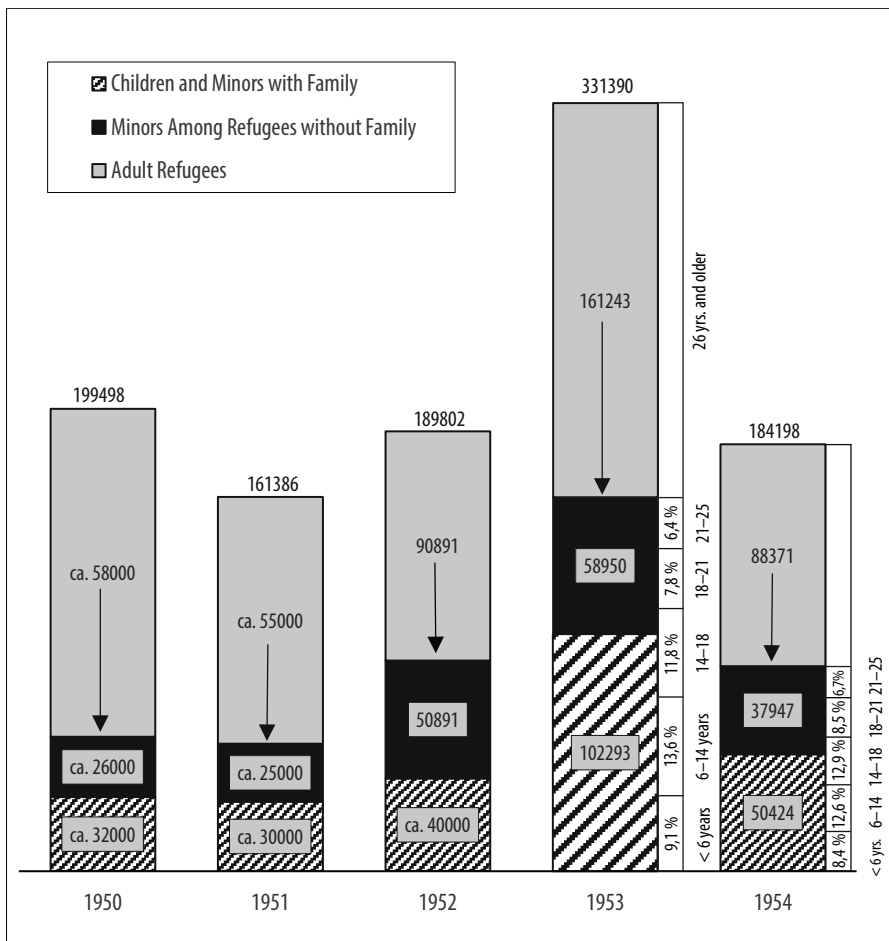
in Urban and Rural Districts  
of the German Democratic Republic  
as of the end of 1953



Einwohner auf 1 qkm



Population Loss of the Soviet Zone and the Educational Responsibility of Western Germany (Minors Among Refugees from the Soviet Zone)



Children and Minors Constitute 37.6 percent of the Soviet Zone Population

Children and Minors Among Refugees Constituted

47.1 percent in 1952

48.7 percent in 1953

49.1 percent in 1954

## Abbreviations

ABV	Section Chief (of the People's Police) (Abschnittsbevollmächtigter)
ADN	General German News Service (Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst)
AG	(see SAG) Incorporated Enterprise (inc.) (Aktiengesellschaft)
APU	Old Prussian Union (Altpreußische Union)
BDA	Confederation of German Employers (Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände)
BDM	League of German Girls (Bund Deutscher Mädel)
BRD	Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesrepublik Deutschland)
CIC	Counter Intelligence Corps (Spionageabwehrkorps)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Kommunistische Partei der Sowjetunion, KPdSU)
CSSR	Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Tschechoslowakische Sozialistische Republik)
DBB	German Peasant Bank (Deutsche Bauernbank)
DBD	Democratic Peasants' Party (Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands)
DDR/GDR	German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik)
DEFA	German Film Agency (Deutsche Film AG)
DFD	Democratic Women's League (Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands)
DFG	German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft)
DHZ	Central Trade Organization (Deutsche Handelszentrale)
DIA	German Internal and External Trade Organization (Deutscher Innen- und Außenhandel)
DIB	German Investment Bank (Deutsche Investitionsbank)
DNB	Central Bank (Deutsche Notenbank)
DM-O	East German Mark (Deutsche Mark - Ost)
DM-W	West German Mark (Deutsche Mark - West)
DSA	German Sports Committee (Deutscher Sportausschuss)
DVP	German People's Police (Deutsche Volkspolizei)
DWK	German Economic Commission (Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission)
EKU	Evangelical Church Union (Evangelische Kirche der Union)

EK/EKD	Evangelical Church (Evangelische Kirche (Deutschlands))
ERP	European Recovery Program (Europäisches Wiederaufbauprogramm/„Marshallplan“)
FDGB	Free German Trade Unions (Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund)
FDJ	Free German Youth (Freie Deutsche Jugend)
FDP	Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei)
FU Berlin	Free University of Berlin (Freie Universität Berlin)
FUI	International University Federation for the League of Nations (Fédération Universitaire Internationale pour la Société des Nations/Internationale Universitätsföderation für den Völkerbund)
FV	Central Clearing Operation (Forderungsverrechnung)
GDSF/DSF	Society for German-Soviet Friendship (Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft)
GM	secret employee (Geheimer Mitarbeiter)
GmbH	Limited (Ltd.) (Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung)
GST	Society for Sport and Technology (Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik)
HO	Trade Organization (Handelsorganisation)
HRAF	Human Relations Area Files
HVDGP	Main Administration of the Border Police (Hauptverwaltung Deutsche Grenzpolizei)
HVDVP	Main Administration of the People's Police (Hauptverwaltung Deutsche Volkspolizei)
IGW	Institute for Society and Science (Institut für Gesellschaft und Wissenschaft)
IM	unofficial employee (Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter)
KB	Culture League (Kulturbund)
KGB	Committee for State Security (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti/Komitee für Staatssicherheit)
KgU	Fighting Group Against Inhumanity (West Berlin) (Kampfgruppe gegen Unmenschlichkeit)
KJVD	Communist Youth League of Germany (Kommunistischer Jugendverband Deutschlands)
KPD	Communist Party of Germany (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands)
KVP	Militarized/Garrisoned People's Police (Kasernierte Volkspolizei)
KZ	Concentration camp (Konzentrationslager)
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party (Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands)
LOPM	Leading Organs of Party and Mass Organizations

LPG	Agricultural Production Cooperation (i. e. Collective Farm) (Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft)
MAS	Machine Lending Station (Maschinen-Ausleihstation)
MdI	Ministry of the Interior (Ministerium des Innern)
MfS	Ministry for State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit)
MTS	Machine Tractor Station (Maschinen-Traktoren-Station)
MVD	USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nordatlantikpakt-Organisation)
NDP	National Democratic Party (Nationaldemokratische Partei)
NEP	New Economic Policy (Russian)
NKFD	National Committee for a Free Germany (Nat[ional]komitee Freies Deutschland)
NSDAP	National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei)
NSLB	National Socialist Teachers League (Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund)
NSRB	National Socialist Association of Legal Professionals (Nationalsozialistischer Rechtswahrerbund)
NSV	National Socialist People's Welfare (Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt)
PVZ	Central Postal Administration (Pressevertriebszentrale)
RE	Account Execution System (Rechnungseinzug(sverfahren))
RIAS	Radio in the American Sector (Berlin) (Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor)
RLB	National Air Raid Protection League (Reichluftschutzbund)
RM	Reichsmark
SA	Storm Detachment (Sturmabteilung)
SAG	Soviet Enterprise (Sowjetische Aktiengesellschaft)
SBZ	Soviet Zone of Occupation (Sowjetische Besatzungszone)
SD	Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst)
SED	Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands)
SFS	Secretariat for Security (Staatssekretariat für Staatssicherheit)
SKK	Soviet Control Commission (Sowjetische Kontrollkommission)
SMA	Soviet Military Administration (Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland)

SPD	Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
SS	Protection Squadron (Schutzstaffel)
SSD	State Security Service (Staatssicherheitsdienst)
SV	Main Department of Penal Execution (Strafvollzug)
SZ	Soviet Zone (Sowjetische Zone)
TAN	Technically Fixed Norm (Technisch begründete Arbeitsnorm)
USA	United States of America (Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika)
USPD	Independent Social Democratic Party (Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
VDGB	Peasant Aid Association (Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe)
VE/VEB	Government-owned Industries (Volkseigener Betrieb)
VEAB	State Crop Collection and Purchase Agency (Volkseigener Erfassungs- und Aufkaufbetrieb)
VELKD	Evangelical-Lutheran Church Association (Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands)
VDP	German Press Association (Verband der Deutschen Presse)
VOB	Union of Organization-owned Enterprises (Vereinigung organisationseigener Betriebe)
VP/VoPo	People's Police (Volkspolizei)
VPKA	Criminal Division of the People's Police (Volkspolizeikreisamt)
VPP	Praesidium of the People's Police (Präsidium der Volkspolizei)
VVB	Union of Government-owned Industries (Vereinigung Volkseigener Betriebe)
VVN	Association of the Victims of Nazism (Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes)
ZK	Central Committee (Zentralkomitee)
ZPKK	Central Party Control Commission (Zentrale Parteikontrollkommission)
ZRK	Central Commission for Revision (Zentrale Revisionskommission)
ZS	Central Secretariat (Zentralsekretariat)



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