

THE WEST BERLIN ISSUE IN THE ERA OF SUPERPOWER DETENTE:
EAST GERMANY AND THE POLITICS OF WEST BERLIN,
1968-1974

A Dissertation
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Stephen Reed Bowers

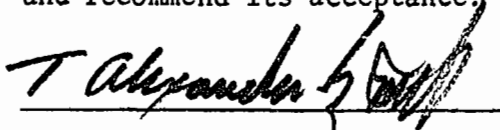
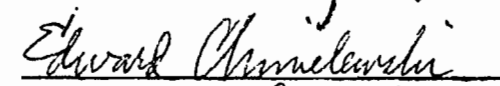
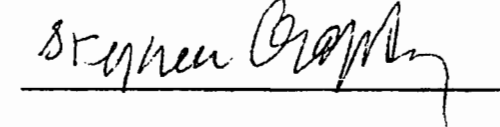
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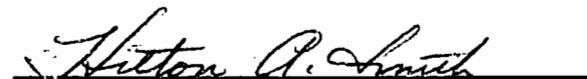
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Stephen Reed Bowers entitled "The West Berlin Issue in the Era of Superpower Detente: East Germany and the Politics of West Berlin, 1968-1974." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Political Science.


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ABSTRACT

While East Germany has been regarded since 1949 as the most subservient of the USSR's allies, developments in the latter part of the last decade, especially with regard to the West Berlin question, worked in such a way as to impel the GDR's leadership to attempt to assume a more important position within the Bloc. The intention of the Ulbricht government was not to achieve independence from the USSR, but rather to elevate itself to a status from which it could exercise a veto over certain elements of Soviet policy. The area of greatest concern to Ulbricht was the Soviet policy toward the West. The USSR's pursuit of a policy of detente with the West, which required a demonstration of Communist "goodwill" on the West Berlin problem, was viewed by the Ulbricht regime as a threat to the vital interests of the GDR.

In the years after 1968, the West Berlin issue came to represent an increasingly divisive matter in relations between the GDR and the USSR. Ulbricht's reluctance to allow a demonstration of Soviet good intentions in West Berlin ultimately led to his removal as First Secretary of the SED in 1971. He was replaced by Erich Honecker, a man who has consistently exhibited his desire to bring the GDR to a position of more thorough compliance with Soviet wishes. In this effort, Honecker has demonstrated, as Ulbricht also did, the close relationship between foreign policy questions such as West Berlin and domestic considerations.

The GDR's efforts to develop a sense of national consciousness in recent years illustrates the impact that foreign and domestic matters have upon each other.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the West Berlin issue from the East German point of view during the so-called era of super-power detente. The significance of this issue is derived from its importance in international policies since World War Two, an importance that has been attested to by the frequent major power confrontations in Berlin in the years after 1945. It is appropriate that this issue be examined during the era of detente because for many years it represented one of the major stumbling blocks to a relaxation of tensions in Europe.

Additional significance is derived from the fact that the West Berlin issue has had an especially important effect on East German-Soviet relations during the years in which the USSR has sought a relaxation of tensions between East and West. Therefore, the West Berlin dispute is examined here in terms of its bearing on the GDR's status within the Soviet Bloc. While the GDR has long been regarded as one of the most obedient of the Soviet allies, the GDR's interest, as interpreted by SED First Secretary Walter Ulbricht, required it to endeavor to exercise a veto over the policies of its Soviet patron. Accordingly, what one sees during this time is an effort by Ulbricht to pursue a more independent East German policy regarding certain foreign policy questions related to the Berlin dispute. This is not to argue that Ulbricht sought to make the GDR an independent Communist

state but that he intended to have it occupy a position of greater importance within the Bloc than in the past. Accordingly, the GDR was seen by Ulbricht as having the authority to "lecture" its allies, including the Soviet Union, on their various policies. Ulbricht seemed to feel especially qualified by virtue of his seniority within the hierarchy of Communist leaders and his long experience in managing the affairs of a state on the "front line" of socialism.

The foreign policy dimension of Ulbricht's independence was the most significant aspect of his "rebellion." This concern with foreign policy provides the justification for selecting 1968 as the starting point for this analysis. This was the year in which Ulbricht became most prominent as a would-be advisor to his allies. The August invasion of Czechoslovakia undoubtedly appeared to Ulbricht as a vindication of his views of the GDR's role as the USSR's closest and most valuable partner. The Czech invasion is also significant because it marked the beginning of a serious Soviet effort to reconsolidate its hegemony in Eastern Europe. This effort soon required the USSR to overcome East German resistance to Soviet initiatives toward the West, initiatives that called for a show of Communist goodwill in Berlin, Ulbricht seemed determined to resist this policy and, as a result, in 1971 he was replaced by Erich Honecker. Honecker returned the GDR to a position of greater compliance with Soviet wishes and began to emphasize ties with the USSR more than ever before. The change in the GDR's orientation was almost immediately reflected in the articles in the SED's official newspaper, Neues Deutschland. Whereas the last Ulbricht years has seen

the paper's preoccupation with hostile stories about West Germany and West Berlin, under Honecker it began to stress more coverage of every aspect of Soviet affairs.

This analysis considers the West Berlin problem in terms of the challenge that it poses for the GDR as well as in terms of the function that it serves for the SED's leadership. West Berlin is seen as presenting the GDR with both a threat and an opportunity. As a threat, it has political, military, and economic aspects. Therefore, part of this dissertation is devoted to an examination of the fundamental nature of the West Berlin problem. As an opportunity, it provides the SED with an element of tension and confrontation needed to compensate for the lack of a complete popular identification with the GDR as an entity. Because of this consideration, an effort is made to evaluate the problem of an East German sense of national consciousness and its effect on the West Berlin issue.

In the concluding chapter, an effort is made to develop various scenarios for a possible resolution of the West Berlin issue. The purpose of this is to illustrate the persistence of the problem and to show how East German-Soviet relations will be affected by the various options for settlement of this matter. This effort should also demonstrate how closely the West Berlin issue is linked with the question of reunification of the two Germanies.

The year 1974 is selected as the cutoff date, not simply for convenience, but because of its possible significance as a turning point and as a time for reflection on the GDR's position. The

resignation of Willy Brandt in the spring of 1974 following the exposure of one of his closest aides as an East German spy is important because it reveals something of the nature of the SED's view of detente.

Brandt's replacement by Helmut Schmidt could well mark a turn toward a more cautious detente policy by the FRG in a time when there would seem to be greater distrust of the GDR. This year is also important since it is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the GDR. As such, it has provided an opportunity for East Germany to make a special effort to evaluate itself and its progress. This process brought a revision of the GDR Constitution which involved a rejection of the idea of reunification of Germany, even after a possible Communist revolution. This revision represents a further departure from Ulbricht's policies which had stressed the responsibility of the SED for the entire German nation and facilitates the drawing of the GDR even closer to the USSR. The revision has even raised the possibility of changing the name of the SED by dropping "Germany" and replacing it with "German Democratic Republic."

The methodology used in this analysis is traditional. It has involved a concentration on examinations of the major East German publications dealing with the questions being considered. The principal sources were the SED's official daily, Neues Deutschland, the SED's theoretical monthly journal, Einheit, and the foreign affairs weekly, Horizont. For Soviet views, the Current Digest of the Soviet Press has been most frequently relied upon. In addition, it has considered Western publications dealing with East European affairs and numerous

Western studies of the West Berlin issue and related matters. The purpose of this approach was to gain an understanding of the views of the major East German figures on issues relevant to this inquiry and, at the same time, an appreciation of current Western analyses of developments.

The principal advantage of this approach is that it facilitated the accumulation of information regarding the public views of the figures involved and, simultaneously, aided an effort to examine implicit motives for certain policies. This frequently required that certain elements of public statements be discounted in favor of other analyses that seem to more adequately explain motives or meanings of particular decisions. Matters such as the timing of East German statements compared with Soviet statements are especially important in making such determinations. The absence of Soviet or East German statements has also been significant in certain cases and has been seen as an indication of unstated opposition to certain policies. This approach also permits an effort to examine the nuances of various statements in these endeavors to understand the meanings of actions by the GDR and Soviet governments.

Other methodologies might be considered for their applicability to the problem of this dissertation, but none would adequately substitute for the traditional approach used here. One might consider an approach such as decision-making analysis for this topic. However, the first problem encountered in an effort to apply this method is the nature of the East German system. Here, the researcher is dealing with a closed system. In effect, he can usually know only what he reads in the SED

newspapers or journals. There would be no possibility of constructing meticulous narratives of steps in the decision-making process as has been done regarding such matters as the United States' entry into the Korean conflict. Generally, all the researcher sees in this type of system is the end product. The decision-making process itself is totally closed thus creating a serious problem in data collection. The same difficulty would also serve as a decisive barrier to the application of such methodologies as game theory and bargaining to a problem such as this.

Given the fact that the researcher on East German affairs has little more than the public media to rely upon, the most promising of the nontraditional methodologies would be content analysis. This would enable one to carefully and systematically weigh various statements in terms of their minor variations and to chart numerous curves on graphs to illustrate shifts in policy. However, you would still face the problem of how to consider other important elements such as the absence of a public statement on a particular policy. Also, there is the question of how to weigh actions such as Ulbricht's failure to appear at the Hungarian Communist Party Congress in 1970, the increase in the delays of traffic at checkpoints, or the opening of new telephone lines between East and West Berlin.

Considering the numerous problems of data collection and evaluation associated with research about the policies of a Communist state, the traditional approach seems to be the most flexible and useful. While it, too, suffers from certain defects, when all other factors are taken into consideration, it is still the most appropriate.

CHAPTER I .

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEST BERLIN AS AN ISSUE OF EAST GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY

I. THE FALL AND OCCUPATION OF BERLIN

The "crowning achievement" of the Soviet Union's efforts in World War Two came on the eve of May 1, 1945 when two Soviet soldiers hoisted the Red Banner of Victory on the Reichstag building in Berlin. This is the claim advanced by the anniversary issue of the USSR military journal, the Soviet Military Review.¹ While this event signaled the end of almost five years of fighting by the Soviet troops, it also marked the beginning of a problem which has plagued Europe as well as the world for more than a quarter of a century now.

As an American war correspondent flew into Berlin in the spring of 1945, he described the city as a "great wilderness of debris dotted with roofless burnt out buildings that look like little mouse traps with low autumn sun shining through the spaces where windows had been."² This hardly conveys the impression of Berlin as a tremendous war prize. Yet, for years Berlin had been the symbol of Nazi Germany and the capital of

¹Soviet Military Review, No. 4, 1973, pp. 8-10.

²John Man, Berlin Blockade (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), p. 9.

Hitler's Third Reich. During the last weeks of the war, Berlin became the central objective of the Soviet military efforts.

On April 16, 1945 the Soviet troops under the leadership of Marshall Zhukov crossed the Oder River and by the afternoon of April 21st they were just outside Berlin. At the same time, elements of the U.S. 69th Infantry Division were linking up with Soviet troops on the Elbe River. Meanwhile, the American advance was halted 60 miles from Berlin in order to allow the Russians to take the capital city.³

Had the Americans desired to take part in the capture of Berlin, they could have done so. Yet they did not. Several considerations played a part in this decision. One of the most important reasons was that the occupation zones of Germany had already been agreed upon so further advances would not mean more territory to be held by the American occupation authorities after the war.⁴ U.S. troops had advanced fifty miles into the area which was to have been liberated by the Russian forces by this time. A second consideration was an increasing American concern for maximizing its forces in Bavaria instead of the Berlin area. There was a preoccupation in the U.S. command for the need to occupy the birthplace of the Nazi ideology and an area which was seen as the likely last stronghold of the Nazi command. American tactical thinking in the last weeks of the war was shaped by the Goebbels

³William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 1106.

⁴Herbert Feis, Between War and Peace: The Potsdam Conference (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 142.

threat, which turned out to be lacking in substance, that the Nazis would use Bavaria as the "National Redoubt" of the Third Reich.⁵ And, finally, some U.S. military leaders saw Berlin as nothing more than a prestige objective which was hardly worth the lives that would be lost in the effort to take the city.⁶

In spite of the apparent willingness of the Western Allied powers to hold back while the Russians took Berlin, some Soviet accounts insist that the Americans and British were in a race with the Soviet troops to enter the German capital city. The disposition of American troops by the second week of April certainly did raise the possibility of an American entry into Berlin prior to the Russians. After covering up to thirty miles a day, on April 11, the U.S. Ninth Army reached the Elbe River near Magdeburg and on the next day crossed it. The Americans were within sixty miles of Berlin with only a few scattered and disorganized German units blocking their way four days before the Russians had crossed the Oder River.⁷ The Russians undoubtedly felt that their fears might be justified. According to an account by Soviet Marshall Ivan Konev who participated with Zhukov in the Berlin operation, on April 1, 1945, Stalin informed him and Zhukov that the U.S.-British command was staging an operation to capture Berlin with the intention of depriving the Soviet forces of the opportunity to occupy the Nazi capital. Konev

⁵General Omar Bradley, A Soldier's Story (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951), p. 536.

⁶Man, pp. 11-14.

⁷Stephen Ambrose, Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945 (New York: Norton and Company, 1967), pp. 90-92.

writes that Stalin asked them, "Who is going to take Berlin, we or the Allies?" Their response, of course, was that the Soviet forces were going to take the city. Konev says that plans were immediately made for an operation which he put fully into effect on April 16.⁸ The completion of this plan came within two weeks when the Soviet troops did in fact occupy Berlin.

Thus, from the very first, Western-Soviet relations on the question of Berlin were characterized by a certain degree of suspicion. The first meetings between Marshall Konev and the American General Omar Bradley at the time of the Berlin campaign were, in the Konev account, tinged with distrust on even the smallest and most seemingly trivial matters. Konev, for example, insists that General Bradley tried to pass off a world-famous violinist as an American soldier during a Soviet-American party. On another occasion Konev charges that Bradley did not believe his explanation about how a troupe of Russian dancers happened to be at the front.⁹ This mistrust on minor matters was to be extended to much more important issues in the coming weeks.

The primary concern of the Western allies after the fall of Germany was to establish an Allied Control Council which would be responsible for matters affecting Germany as a whole and for each of the occupying powers to assume responsibility for his own zone of occupation. In order to carry out these plans, a meeting was scheduled for June 5, 1945

⁸V. Sevruck, editor, How Wars End (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), pp. 9-11.

⁹Ibid., pp. 121-124.

in Berlin between the three Western commanders and the Soviet commander, Marshall Zhukov. Three documents were signed at this meeting. One dealt with the assumption of supreme authority in Germany by the Allies, the second with the division of Germany into four occupation zones with Berlin under joint occupation, and the third with the establishment of occupation control machinery. After these documents were finally signed, General Eisenhower suggested that they begin steps to install the Control Council in Berlin. Zhukov insisted that this issue could not even be discussed until all troops in Germany had returned to their proper zones. His main intention, of course, was that the American and British troops be ordered to withdraw from Saxony and Thuringia, those areas of the Soviet zone which they had occupied in the last days of combat.¹⁰

On June 15, despite Churchill's strong objections, the American and British commands jointly informed Stalin of their intention to withdraw their troops from Saxony and Thuringia on June 21st. Stalin replied that they would still not be able to come to Berlin for establishment of the Control Council even though Zhukov had implied that such a move would be possible. Stalin's explanation was that Berlin had still not been completely cleared of land mines and that Zhukov was going to have to be in Moscow for a parade and, therefore, be unable to return to Berlin before the end of June. Thus, July 1 was set as the date to begin joint occupation. However, another possible explanation for the Soviets desire for delay could have been their

¹⁰Jean Edward Smith, The Defense of Berlin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), pp. 75-76.

determination to allow sufficient time for the establishment of a city government in Berlin which would be amenable to Communist control. This suspicion is supported by accounts of Walter Ulbricht's activities in Berlin shortly after his return from the USSR with the so-called "Ulbricht Group." During this time the members of the group were at work finding suitable people to serve in the new Berlin borough administrations. The goal of this talent search was to establish administrations sympathetic to the Communists while giving the appearance of being democratic in their orientations.¹¹ The ten day delay in beginning joint occupation would have been an extremely valuable extension of time for the Ulbricht Group. Still another possible reason for the Soviet delay might have been that the Russians wanted more time to remove "war booty" from Berlin.¹² This would have been consistent with Soviet behavior throughout the other regions of Germany that they occupied.

Prior to the actual withdrawal of British and American troops from the Soviet zone, the Americans insisted that some provisions be made regarding access rights to Berlin by the Western powers. However, since the British and American commands had already announced their intention of withdrawing from Saxony and Thuringia, their bargaining position with the Russians was weakened. This weakness was reflected in the difficulty of the negotiations. In spite of the Western demand for several air,

¹¹Carola Stern, Ulbricht (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965), pp. 98-100.

¹²Feis, p. 144.

road, and rail corridors for use by the Western forces, the Russians agreed to only one of each. The Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn was to be the highway for the Western allies and the rail connections which ran roughly parallel to it were to serve as their rail link with Berlin. The air corridor would be on the same route as far as Magdeburg where it divided into two routes, one to Hanover and one to Frankfurt/Main. This agreement was verbal and never recorded in an official document. The reason, according to the U.S. negotiator General Clay, was that they feared the incorporation of the agreement into an official document might be interpreted as a denial of Western access over all other routes to Berlin.¹³ One point on which the West felt it achieved what it wanted was the issue of the freedom of Western access over the land routes. The Western commanders stressed that all Allied traffic into and out of Berlin must be free from the burden of search at the border. This meant that neither civilian nor military authorities were to be allowed to search Western vehicles on the access routes.¹⁴

Finally, in the first days of July, 1945, the Western garrisons moved into Berlin as the American and British troops pulled out of Saxony and Thuringia. The Control Council was set up to administer all of Germany and a four-power Kommandatura, theoretically subordinate to the Control Council, was established to administer Berlin which was to be treated as a separate entity from the zones of occupation of

¹³Smith, pp. 83-85.

¹⁴Eric Morris, Blockade (New York: Norton and Co., 1962), p. 45.

Germany. The twenty boroughs of Berlin were divided into four sectors. The largest was the Soviet sector consisting of eight boroughs in the eastern part of the city. The Americans took six boroughs in the southwest while the British received four in the west and the French occupied two in the north.¹⁵ This division was made on the basis of the 1920 law defining the administrative districts of Greater Berlin with the populations of the boroughs as the determining factors regarding their disposition in the respective zones. The intention was to divide the population of the city in accordance with the contributions of the various powers who defeated Germany.¹⁶ The Western powers were to be responsible for bringing in food and other supplies for their twelve boroughs since Zhukov had declared that the surrounding regions which were now the Soviet zone and formerly had supplied food for Berlin were no longer able to support the entire city of Greater Berlin. Thus, the sectors which came to be known as West Berlin were immediately dependent on the West for total support.

When the Kommandatura held its first meeting on July 11, the four-power occupation of Berlin became a reality. The first item of business was a Soviet demand that all orders issued by the Russians during the previous weeks remain in effect until further notice. The Western representatives agreed to this and in doing so committed

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 68-69, 46.

¹⁶ Walther Hubatsch, editor, The German Question (New York: Herder Book Center, 1967), pp. 246-249.

what Western authorities now consider a serious mistake.¹⁷ This action has subsequently been cited by Communist sources as proof that all of Berlin was to have been considered under the control of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany and therefore part of what is now the German Democratic Republic.¹⁸

Having reviewed briefly what transpired after the fall of Berlin and what provisions were made for the city during those first weeks, it is important to note what the respective parties felt had evolved out of this situation. The Eastern view obviously differs markedly from that of the Western nations. For the West, the designation of Berlin as a "special area" separate from the zones of occupation meant that it was not part of the Soviet zone. A succinct statement of the views of the governments of the United States, Britain, and France was presented in 1948 in the identical notes addressed to the Soviet Union. In those notes, the Western powers asserted that "Berlin is not a part of the Soviet zone, but is an international zone of occupation." The notes also reiterated the view that the American and British troops had been withdrawn from the Soviet zone only on the basis of an agreement with the USSR to guarantee Western access rights to Berlin.¹⁹ This joint statement reflected the uniformity of the Western positions regarding the status of Berlin.

¹⁷Smith, p. 89.

¹⁸Yuri Rzhevsky, West Berlin (Moscow: Novosti Press, 1969), pp. 21-22.

¹⁹U.S. Department of State, Germany 1947-1949: The Story in Documents (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1950), pp. 205-206.

While publications of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany conceded the four-power status of Berlin,²⁰ Bonn has also asserted from time to time that "West Berlin is a Land of the FRG."²¹ This view has represented the most extreme opposite of the Communist position on the status of West Berlin. This view has been noticeably lacking in support from the occupying powers. The crises of 1948-49, 1953, 1958, and 1961 brought no changes in the positions of the FRG's allies on this question.

The Soviet scholar Yuri Rzhevsky, in evaluating the postwar developments on Berlin, emphatically stated the Soviet position when he declared ". . . Berlin . . . , despite the special occupation arrangements instituted for it . . . , was not excluded from the sphere of supremacy of the Soviet Commander-in-Chief, nor was it divorced territorially from the Soviet zone of occupation."²² The Soviets cite Section A, paragraph 1 of the Potsdam Agreement in defense of their position. This paragraph states that "supreme authority in Germany" will be exercised by each of the occupying powers "each in his own zone of occupation." The Control Council is to act on the basis of unanimous votes "in matters affecting Germany as a whole."²³ For the

²⁰A bis Z: Ein Taschen- und Nachschlagebuch uber den anderen Teil Deutschlands (A to Z: A Fact and Reference Book on the Other Part of Germany) (Bonn: German Federal Press, 1969), p. 93.

²¹Helmut Arntz, Facts About Germany (Bonn: Press and Information Office of the FRG, 1968), p. 19.

²²Rzhevsky, p. 16.

²³Germany 1947-1949: The Story in Documents, pp. 47-48.

Soviets, the important contrast is between the "supreme authority" of the occupying powers and the functions of "administration" which were to be held by the Kommandatura in Berlin. The view that the West has the same rights in Berlin as the USSR is specifically rejected. The West may have the right to "administer" twelve boroughs of Berlin on a temporary basis, but the USSR is still the "supreme authority" in those areas according to Soviet spokesmen.²⁴ In addition, occupation of West Berlin by the Western powers "does not make the occupying state the sovereign of the occupied territory."²⁵

According to Soviet accounts, the Western troops entered Berlin, not as a result of any agreement regarding the withdrawal from Saxony and Thuringia, but essentially as "guests" of the Soviet forces which had liberated the city. In its notes of July 14, 1948, addressed to the U.S. and Britain, the Soviet government stressed that the Western right of access to West Berlin was nothing more than an act of goodwill on the part of the Soviet Union.²⁶ Soviet historians declare that the agreement which established four-power administration of Berlin "did not grant the Western powers any special rights to determine the order of access to Berlin."²⁷ The agreement on access was not written down as

²⁴Rzhevsky, pp. 14-18.

²⁵Ibid., p. 19.

²⁶Germany 1947-1949: The Story in Documents, pp. 207-208.

²⁷B. Ponomaryov, editor, History of Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1945 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), p. 473.

the Western powers, for various reasons, saw no need for a specific, written agreement. Apparently, some Westerners feared that by raising the question of access rights, they might call into question the Western presence in Berlin. That presence itself was seen by many as implying access rights to the city.²⁸

After the formation of East Germany as a state, the new East German government adopted a position similar to that of the USSR regarding the status of Berlin. One East German authority described the situation in this way: "Berlin and the Soviet occupation zone were one and the same, there was no difference between them; both were under jurisdiction of the Soviet occupation forces."²⁹ Concerning the matter of West Berlin itself, the charge is made that "West Berlin is not even a city, but only part of one."³⁰ The implication of this is quite clear. Since West Berlin is only part of a city, it must be part of the city of Greater Berlin. Since Berlin and the Soviet zone were parts of a single entity, West Berlin is clearly being designated as part of the German Democratic Republic. Carrying this further, the author of these statements asserts that West Berlin is obviously not a Land of the FRG.³¹ The East German account repeats the Soviet version of the Control Council and the Berlin Kommandatura as mere administrative

²⁸William M. Franklin, "Zonal Boundaries and Access to Berlin," World Politics, Vol. XVI (October, 1963), pp. 23-25.

²⁹Gerhard Kegel, Twenty Five Years After Potsdam (Berlin, GDR: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1970), p. 96.

³⁰Ibid., p. 92.

³¹Ibid., p. 95.

organs exercising no real authority over the territory of Berlin. The four-power status of Berlin is labeled as temporary since the Western powers "never had and today do not have any 'original' rights . . . to the occupation of the western sectors of Berlin." The fact that even after the Western garrisons were moved into the city the Soviet authorities retained control of all railway installations plus the Berlin waterways is declared to be a practical confirmation of the Soviet's already "unequivocal" legal position.³²

II. DEVELOPMENTS FROM 1945 TO 1948: THE BLOCKADE OF BERLIN

In the first months after the establishment of four-power control in Germany it became apparent that the eastern and western zones were following vastly different policies. Presumably, four-power control had been intended to facilitate unity in the efforts to reconstruct Germany as well as Berlin. However, this was certainly not proving to be the case.

Both economic and political issues divided the four occupying powers. One of the first disruptive questions was the matter of reparations. American officials objected to the fact that while their country was spending substantial amounts to prevent the Germans from starving the Russians were systematically taking reparations from the current production of Soviet zone factories without consulting the Western powers in accordance with the requirements of the Postdam

³²Ibid., p. 99.

Agreement. In response to these Soviet actions, on May 3, 1946, the West halted delivery to the Russians of dismantled plants from the Western zones even though, according to the Potsdam Agreement, they were entitled to 25 percent of the dismantled factories in West Germany as reparations.³³

In Berlin further disagreements arose because of the uncooperative activities of the borough administrations in the western sectors of the city. These administrators, of course, had been appointed under the supervision of the Russians and under the immediate direction of the Ulbricht Group in the first days after the fall of Berlin. As a result of their open defiance of the military authorities many of the borough mayors had to be removed by the military.³⁴

Additional problems were posed in Berlin because of the continuation of Soviet marauding in the Western sectors. Allied Military Policy had to use force to restrain the Soviets on many occasions. Kidnapping of West Berliners also became a continual threat as East Berlin agents crossed into the West to get not only ordinary citizens, but several important officials also. In addition to this, disagreement arose regarding the use of Berlin's press and radio facilities. The West believed that it was entitled to share in control of Radio Berlin and the national German transmitter. The Western authorities also suggested

³³John C. Campbell, editor, The United States in World Affairs, 1945-1947 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 182-187.

³⁴W. Phillips Davison, The Berlin Blockade (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), p. 32.

that four-power control be established over the newspaper of the German city government, the Berliner Zeitung. The Soviets refused to yield on any of these issues. However, when the British announced their intentions to publish a German-language newspaper themselves in Berlin, the Russians insisted that it would be better if all of the four occupying powers sponsored one newspaper jointly. As it turned out, there was to be no jointly controlled media in Berlin. In 1946 the U.S. military government started its own radio station, R.I.A.S.³⁵

In spite of these disagreements, for the first year four-power administration in Berlin proceeded without serious disruptions. The first major dispute came with the attempt in 1946 to merge the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Communist Party. It became obvious that what this amounted to was an effort to swallow up the SPD in a new party, the Socialist Unity Party (SED), which would be dominated by the Communists and manipulated by the Soviet authorities. Western occupation authorities insisted that democratic procedures be used in implementing the merger and that it be allowed only after an affirmative vote by the membership of both parties. The West also took measures to protect antimerger SPD leaders who were subjected to Soviet intimidation. The result was that a vote was taken on March 31, 1946 in which the West Berlin SPD voted against merger by a margin of 19 to 2. Even though the Eastern SPD under the leadership of Otto Grotewohl was merged with the Communist Party, the West Berlin SPD remained independent and, after the

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

merger, got rid of its most slavishly pro-Soviet elements.³⁶ The SED's party history ignores the vote by the membership of the West Berlin SPD and simply insists that the leadership of the West Berlin SPD was in the service of "anti-Communism" and "imperialism."³⁷

The second crisis of major proportions arose over the issue of municipal elections for Berlin. After considerable Soviet objections, the date for the elections was set as October 20, 1946. During the election campaign the entire resources of the Soviet command in Berlin was thrown behind the efforts of the SED. The SED was provided with ample literature to distribute as well as with food and coal briquettes to hand out to the voters. In a further effort to pressure the voters in the Western sectors, the amount of electric power allowed to flow from Soviet-controlled generators into West Berlin was sharply reduced.³⁸ In spite of this massive effort, the SED received only 21 percent of the votes in the Soviet sector and even less in the Western sectors. The SED citywide total was 412,000 votes. The strongest party was the SPD which had better than 48 percent of the vote citywide, a total of over 1,015,000 votes. The Christian Democratic Party was second with 462,000 votes and a total of 22 percent of the total vote.³⁹ The Soviet command responded to this defeat by refusing to allow the newly elected city government to assume the full authorities due to it. When it became

³⁶Ibid., pp. 37-45.

³⁷Otto Reinhold, editor, Seht, welche Kraft! (See, What Strength!) (Berlin, GDR: Dietz Verlag, 1971), p. 67.

³⁸Davison, pp. 45-47.

³⁹Reinhold, p. 79.

clear that Ernst Reuter, who was seen as unlikely to yield to Soviet pressure, was going to become the new mayor, the Russians refused to allow him to take office. As a result, Berlin had no mayor during much of 1947 and all of 1948.⁴⁰

As the struggle for both governmental and nongovernmental power was continuing in Berlin, British, American and French representatives met for talks in London. The Benelux countries were invited but no invitation was given to the USSR. On March 6, 1948, the conference announced that it had agreed on further economic coordination among the Western zones and also on plans for a federal form of government in those areas.⁴¹ Amid rumors that the Soviets planned to blockade the city, on March 20th the Soviet delegation walked out of the Control Commission in protest to the actions of the London conference.

In the following weeks there occurred a rapid sequence of events which made the USSR's intentions to apply pressure on West Berlin very clear. On March 31 the Soviet authorities announced that inspection by Soviet military personnel would be required before Western military passenger trains were allowed to travel through the Soviet zone. On April 1 they announced that Soviet approval would be required before freight could leave Berlin. One of the most serious incidents occurred on April 5 when a Soviet interceptor collided with a British plane while

⁴⁰Davison, pp. 49-51.

⁴¹John C. Campbell, editor, The United States in World Affairs, 1947-1948 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), pp. 466-467.

harrassing its entry into West Berlin. In May the U.S. Army Signal Corps personnel who maintained communications lines between West Berlin and West Germany were expelled from the Soviet zone. Later in May the Soviets began to require additional documentation for freight coming into Berlin from the west and in June an increasing number of civilian supply trains were held up on various technicalities.⁴²

The climax of this series of confrontations came in the middle of June. The Western Allies, realizing that the Soviets were not going to cooperate in measures to halt the inflation that was destroying the German economy, announced that a new currency would be introduced. Less than a week later, on June 24, the new currency was secretly brought into West Berlin and replaced the city's old currency. The Soviet response was to immediately halt all rail traffic into West Berlin. The Western reply was the initiation of a massive airlift operation for the city. In an effort to appeal to West Berliners, the East Germans made an offer in July of 1948 to give ration cards to any West Berliners who would "register" in the Eastern sector. In spite of the deprivations West Berliners suffered during the eleven month blockade, the number accepting the offer never rose above 70,000 out of the city's population of over two million West Berliners.⁴³

The apparent Soviet belief that the West would surrender West Berlin was demolished by the determined, united resistance of the Allies

⁴²Frederick Hartmann, Germany Between East and West (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 41-42.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 42-44.

and the citizens of West Berlin. The fact that the USSR had refused to supply the Western sectors as soon as the American, British, and French garrisons moved in in 1945 actually helped the West since they had already developed a system of supplying West Berlin. The blockade simply forced them to find another method of bringing in supplies which had formerly moved by land routes. American and British aircraft became the alternate means of transportation in spite of the many difficulties associated with this method. Had the Soviet Union not refused to supply West Berlin with many essential materials in 1945, the Western task would have been much more difficult.

After several months of bargaining with the Russians over a variety of demands, the Western powers were successful. At midnight on May 11, 1949 the highways and rail lines to West Berlin were reopened. The success of the airlift operation had made this possible without any major Western concessions to the USSR. Yet, while the West had not lost during the bargaining, it had not gained much either. There was still no written guarantee of Western access rights to West Berlin. The situation remained as it had been during the summer of 1945.

III. THE 1958 BERLIN CRISIS

While the years after the ending of the blockade were free from any major crisis, there were several significant confrontations. The first was in 1949 as a result of West Berlin's inclusion in the Marshall Plan. This was met with strong objections by the Communists who, in a GDR Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement, described this as an effort to

develop West Berlin as an outpost of "imperialism."⁴⁴ In response to this development, the USSR imposed a processing slowdown of Western military traffic on the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn in January, 1950. While the slowdown was not uninterrupted, it was reimposed from time to time for almost two months. In July the Soviet Union began short-term interruptions of the flow of electricity into West Berlin. In September the West Berlin power plant built under the Marshall Plan was able to meet the requirements of West Berlin without assistance from the East, so the effectiveness of this Communist lever was terminated. In 1952 another travel ban was imposed on the autobahn against American and British vehicles, but was lifted within eight days after a statement by the U.S. Secretary of State declaring the intention of the U.S. to remain in West Berlin. Several days later the East German authorities cut West Berlin's telephone service with the East and the USSR closed the border between East and West Berlin to West Berliners. The effect of this action was to deprive over 30,000 West Berliners of bungalows and allotments which they possessed in the Eastern sector.⁴⁵

Lack of agreement between the nations of the anti-Hitler coalition led, in 1949, to the completion of plans for the creation in the Western occupation zones of a new federal republic. In May the Western Military Governors approved the Basic Law for the new German state and elections

⁴⁴Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the GDR, How Germany Was Divided: Documentation (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1966), p. 63.

⁴⁵Stefan Brant, The East German Rising (New York: Praeger, 1957), p. 33.

were held for the Federal Republic's parliament in August. The elections resulted in what U.S. Secretary of State Acheson described as a "victory for moderation and common sense" and the formal establishment of a government for the Federal Republic of Germany under the leadership of Konrad Adenauer.⁴⁶ Adenauer himself described this development and the Occupation Statute which facilitated it as Germany's best chance for regaining its freedom.⁴⁷ The view from the East was somewhat different regarding this development. The official SED history describes this event as a signal of the intention of the Western powers to create a separate German state which would be a "satellite" of the United States. Furthermore, it continues, the selection of Adenauer to head the new government proved the willingness of the new state to be a tool of imperialism and capitalism.⁴⁸ The creation of the German Democratic Republic shortly after the establishment of the Federal Republic was described not only as evidence of the determination of the USSR to refuse to allow all of Germany to be turned into a capitalist "puppet," but also as an "historic achievement" by which a "workers and peasants state" had been created to advance the interests of all "peace-loving

⁴⁶Richard P. Stebbins, editor, The United States in World Affairs, 1949 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), pp. 177-181.

⁴⁷Konrad Adenauer, Memoirs 1945-1953 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965), p. 185.

⁴⁸Reinhold, pp. 95-97.

Germans."⁴⁹ This new Soviet-oriented state was placed ostensibly under the leadership of the newly created Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED).

Meanwhile, the steady flow of refugees from East Germany and East Berlin into West Berlin and the FRG served as evidence of the extreme unpopularity of the Soviet administration in the East which was now acting at least partially through the SED dominated GDR government and thus marking the first significant step in the evolution of the East German state. The lack of popular support for this new creation became painfully obvious when, on June 16, 1953, riots broke out in East Berlin which were followed by more disturbances throughout the zone the next day. Order was restored only after Soviet military intervention saved the regime. In spite of the opportunity that these events seemed to offer the Western powers, there was no Western effort to interfere in East German affairs during the riots. The failure of the West to show a willingness to act with force in order to free East Germany from Soviet domination undoubtedly served to strengthen the inclination of East Germans to resign themselves to their situation. In an effort to stabilize the East German regime the authorities of the GDR government prohibited travel from East Germany to Berlin on August 1, 1953.⁵⁰ The exodus from the Soviet zone, however, continued in spite of these efforts.

⁴⁹B. Ponomaryov, editor, History of Soviet Foreign Policy 1945-1970 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), pp. 198-200.

⁵⁰Smith, p. 370.

In the years after 1953, West Berlin served as a continual source of irritation to the Soviet Union. Not only was it an embarrassment, it was a threat to the stability of a militarily important satellite state. By 1958, the USSR felt strong enough to issue a direct challenge to the West on the question of West Berlin. In a Kremlin press conference on November 27, 1958, Khrushchev declared that the situation in Berlin was "abnormal" and that West Berlin was a "convenient place" for the Western powers to conduct an aggressive policy against East Germany, the USSR, and all of the Warsaw Pact states. Accordingly, the Soviet government suggested the abolition of the "outworn foreign military occupation of West Berlin and turning it into a free demilitarized city."⁵¹ Should the West refuse to consider this suggestion, a separate peace treaty between the USSR and East Germany would be signed and Western rights in Berlin would be terminated without Western consent. The plan, as presented by the Soviets, would not upset the political order in West Berlin or alter the independence of the city. The USSR would become the guarantor of West Berlin's independence and the supplier of those materials essential to its survival. The Western powers would no longer be needed in Berlin and would be compelled to depart from the Western sectors.

While the Soviet offer was phrased in very conciliatory terms, it left no doubts about what rejection of this plan would mean. Should the Western powers refuse to sign a peace treaty with both German states

⁵¹Ponomaryov, History of Soviet Foreign Policy 1945-1970, pp. 366-368.

incorporating the plan for a "free city" of West Berlin, the USSR would sign a separate peace with East Germany. The result would be that East Germany would have "sovereign rights" over West Berlin and the West would have no access rights to the city. A Western effort to use force to enter Berlin would be considered as the beginning of war by the Soviet Union. This threat was coupled with a reminder a few days later by a Soviet general that the USSR now had the military capability to give the United States an "annihilating defeat" in the event of war.⁵²

The Soviet Union had given the West a period of six months to withdraw their troops from West Berlin. When the deadline passed, the Soviets responded by extending the deadline. Finally, when negotiations were underway at Geneva on the Berlin question, the Russians could claim that the West was in the process of fulfilling the requirements of the ultimatum. Meanwhile, Otto Grotewohl, Minister President of the GDR, boasted that East Germany had gotten de facto recognition by being allowed to participate in the Geneva conference in an advisory capacity along with West Germany. In June of 1959 another time limit for a Western withdrawal was announced but it too was later extended for an additional six months. Finally, in July Soviet Politburo member Frol Kozlov, according to Western reports, denied while visiting the United States that any ultimatum existed.⁵³ By the end of 1959, it became clear that the USSR had no intention of forcing a solution of the West Berlin problem or of enforcing any withdrawal deadlines.

⁵²Hans Speier, Divided Berlin (New York: Praeger, 1961), p. 29.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 33-35.

IV. THE BUILDING OF THE WALL

The only point on which both sides were in agreement at the end of the Geneva conference in 1959 was the Western offer not to station nuclear or rocket weapons in West Berlin.⁵⁴ Aside from this relatively unimportant issue nothing else was resolved regarding the future of Berlin. For the West, the uncertainty of access rights and the challenge to their continued presence in Berlin remained. For the East, the serious drain of East German manpower through Berlin continued. For both sides, Berlin continued to be an important stage of espionage activities of all sorts.

It was the Eastern problem which most contributed to the instability of the Berlin situation over the next two years. The drain on the East German economy caused by the steady loss of many of its most qualified people across the border into West Berlin and the Federal Republic threatened to topple the SED regime. Prior to 1958, the rate of escapes averaged approximately 200,000 per year. In 1953, the number had risen to over 330,000 while in 1951 the country had lost only 165,000 across the frontier. While in 1959 the figures dropped to 144,000, by early in 1961, the regime was experiencing the loss of 25,000 each month, according to West German sources.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ John Mander, Berlin: Hostage for the West (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 77.

⁵⁵ Berlin: Crisis and Challenge (New York: German Information Center, 1963), p. 28.

East German officials described the situation as intolerable but in so doing their references were not to the flight of East German citizens alone. While it is reasonable to assume that this was the primary reason for the sealing of the border in Berlin, the GDR officials insisted that there was a far graver justification. It was charged that during the summer of 1961 sabotage and "subversionist activities" against East Germany from West Berlin had increased to drastic proportions. A fire in the East Berlin stockyards on August 7 was blamed on saboteurs from West Berlin.⁵⁶ An even more fantastic charge was made by SED Politburo member Albert Norden who has alleged that the West was preparing for war against East Germany in 1961. NATO is charged with having no less than "thirty-two different plans for Berlin." A military truck convoy was to challenge the East German inspectors on the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn and attempt to crash through the barriers. If this convoy was fired on by East German guards, it was to return fire. If additional East German troops were brought up, a second convoy with supporting tanks was to join the first. If necessary, a "small atom bomb" was to be dropped on a big concentration of Eastern troops. Simultaneously, there were to be attacks on the GDR's Baltic coast. According to Norden, NATO had already rehearsed its attack on the East German northern flank. Western troops were to enter East Berlin from the western sectors of the city. Norden concedes that many of the GDR's most highly skilled citizens were leaving by way of West Berlin but

⁵⁶How Germany Was Divided, p. 155.

insists that they were merely being victimized by the "enticements" of the West which were part of the campaign to destroy the GDR as a state and incorporate it into West Germany.⁵⁷

Berlin was filled with rumors during the weeks before the beginning of the construction of the Wall on August 13. There were rumors that there might be an explosive uprising in East Germany and stories that many East German officials had made statements about taking over West Berlin. In spite of this atmosphere, most of the Western leaders did not anticipate that something would happen until that fall. For example, in an interview several years later, former U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk said that while "we had expected the Russians to take some measure to halt the hemorrhage of East Germans into West Berlin," that action had not been expected until much later.⁵⁸

The first official word that the border with West Berlin had been closed came in an early morning broadcast on Radio GDR. The announcement began with a list of threats said to be emanating from West Berlin, including a reference to the "systematic enticement of GDR citizens and a thorough-going traffic in human beings." For these reasons, listeners were told, the GDR Council of Ministers, in agreement with the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact, had adopted a series of measures. Controls were to be introduced "along the frontiers of the

⁵⁷Albert Norden, Thus Wars Are Made (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1970), pp. 285-286, 290-292.

⁵⁸Eleanor Dulles, The Wall: A Tragedy in Three Acts (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 25-27.

GDR, including those with the Western sectors of Greater Berlin." In Berlin, "reliable surveillance and effective controls" were to be established along the West Berlin frontiers "in order to block subversive activities." East Berliners would require a special permit to go to West Berlin although West Berliners would still be allowed to visit the East. The announcement concluded with the statement that these measures would remain in effect "pending the conclusion of a German peace treaty." Later broadcasts went into detail regarding the physical arrangements that were being made for closing certain subway lines and the Berlin elevated rail service, the S-Bahn. In addition, East German citizens not working in Berlin were "requested to refrain from journeys to Berlin until further notice."⁵⁹

The first measures in constructing what the East German government referred to as an "antifascist, protective wall" consisted of barbed wire fastened by wooden posts. However, within a few days, the concrete wall that eventually was constructed began to take shape. On August 20, East Berliners who lived in houses or apartments along the border were ordered to move out as preparations began to clear a wide area for patrols inside the Wall.⁶⁰ Security measures along the Wall were steadily tightened and on August 29, the first escaping East German was killed by border guards.⁶¹

⁵⁹BBC Summary of World Broadcasts (hereafter noted as SWB), August 14, 1961, EE/715/A1/3-4.

⁶⁰Arno Scholz, Stacheldraht um Berlin (Barbed Wire Around Berlin) (West Berlin: Verlagsgesellschaft, 1961), p. 36.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 74.

Although General Lucius Clay and Vice-President Lyndon Johnson arrived in West Berlin within a few days to symbolize the United States' concern for the independence of West Berlin, the American response was deliberately restrained. The American note which was delivered to the Soviet commanders in East Berlin was not a formal protest as such, but simply a statement of what had taken place and a condemnation of the Communist actions.⁶² One U.S. Senator, Fulbright, actually defended the East German actions.⁶³ This restraint was typical of the reactions of all the Western powers in Berlin. There were massive protest rallies in West Berlin and West Germany, but the Western powers took no action to comply with the West German demands to knock the Wall down. Apparently, the West saw the Berlin situation as explosive and unstable before the erection of the Wall and felt that by constructing the Wall, the Communists had at least brought stability to a situation that had contained the potential for erupting into war.

V. FROM THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WALL THROUGH 1967

The West evidently felt that Western rights in Berlin were not endangered by the construction of the Wall. Only after the massive East German military concentrations were observed around the Western sectors did the allied commanders put their troops on alert.⁶⁴ Finally,

⁶²Dulles, p. 76.

⁶³Smith, pp. 259-260.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 279.

they began to feel that their rights might possibly be affected. The threat, however, was seen in purely tactical, not political, terms.

The mildness of the Western response doubtless encouraged the East Germans to make their measures much more extensive. After the border was sealed, they cut the telephone and telegraph lines. On August 15 West Berlin vehicles were prohibited from entering the East without special permits by the Communist authorities.⁶⁵ This action represented one of the first real threats to Western rights in Berlin.

While the thoroughness of the GDR's measures resulted in an almost immediate decline in trade between West Berlin and East Germany, the East German economy up to this time had such a national orientation and placed so little emphasis on foreign trade that little significance can be attached to this matter.⁶⁶ Of greater significance was the diminished human contacts between West Berlin and the East. Shortly after the initial East German half of regular visits by West Berliners to the East it became apparent that the Communists intended to sever human ties as completely as possible. The only grounds for approval of visits by West Berliners on a routine basis, as opposed to those following from special governmental arrangements, after the construction of the Wall became that of "compassionate" reasons, to visit a seriously ill or dying relative, for example. The first "compassionate passes" were

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 279.

⁶⁶Wolfgang Stolper, The Structure of the East German Economy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 12-13.

granted in October of 1964 and by the end of 1967 over 70,000 had been issued.⁶⁷

In December of 1963 the first Christmas passes were issued after the completion of an arrangement negotiated by West Berlin's Mayor Brandt and the East German government. Approximately 1.2 million passes were issued for a period of eighteen days during the Christmas season.⁶⁸ The East used these agreements in an effort to extract as much recognition as possible for the GDR government by making a variety of demands during the issuance of the passes. Repeated demands, for example, were made that higher ranking Western officials deal with them rather than the medium-ranked officers who were involved in most of the contacts.⁶⁹

For the next three years there was considerable success in the efforts to renegotiate passes for Christmas and other special days. In September, 1964, a new pass agreement was concluded with the East Germans by the Bonn Erhard government which was scheduled to extend until June, 1965. Under the same agreement retired pensioners were allowed to go from East Germany to visit relatives in the West for as long as four weeks. During the summer of 1965 another agreement was reached on passes for the next year.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ David Shears, The Ugly Frontier (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 200.

⁶⁸ Eleanor Dulles, Berlin: The Wall is Not Forever (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), pp. 93-94.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

In spite of the occasional breaks in the East German policy of severance of human contacts across the Wall, the political climate after the construction of the Wall improved very little. In October, 1961, just as the Soviet leader Gromyko was making a speech in Moscow berating the determination of the West to defend the rights of West Berlin,⁷¹ one of the most serious confrontations was taking place. On October 26, East German border guards stopped a group of Americans in a civilian car with military license plates attempting to pass through Checkpoint Charlie. The East Germans refused to allow the Americans to pass without showing their military identification cards. The American vehicle went back to the West only to return to the Checkpoint accompanied by an armada of tanks as an escort. The East German guards stood by as the tanks proceeded with the civilian car into East Berlin. For several days afterward combat ready Soviet and American forces faced each other across the Wall.⁷²

In early 1962 another confrontation occurred when Soviet planes began to interfere with the air corridors into West Berlin. After a strong American and British protest the interference was finally stopped. Shortly afterward, in April, the Americans toyed with the idea of having the Berlin access routes placed under the supervision of a thirteen nation agency which presumably would have operated

⁷¹Robert M. Slusser, The Berlin Crisis of 1961 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), p. 399.

⁷²Scholz, p. 80.

through the United Nations. When the intensity of West German opposition to this proposal became known, it was promptly forgotten.⁷³

Political and military pressure on West Berlin decreased considerably after the Cuban crisis in October, 1962. Not only did this Soviet-American confrontation, seemingly unrelated to the West Berlin issue, help raise the sagging prestige of the United States in Berlin, it seemed to deflate the USSR's apparent self-confidence regarding Berlin. This development clearly illustrated how closely the West Berlin issue was tied in the fabric of major power policies. The Cuban crisis of 1962, a clear defeat of an important Soviet policy and an apparent Western triumph, resulted in the adoption of a more cautious policy by the USSR on West Berlin. Some scholars have hypothesized that the Soviet introduction of missiles in Cuba in 1962 was intended as a lever for forcing a settlement of the Berlin and the German problems favorable to the Kremlin. The Cuban defeat, therefore, had consequences seemingly unrelated to Cuba.⁷⁴

In 1963, Western standing in West Berlin was further improved by the visit of U.S. President Kennedy to the city. In a mass rally after a personal visit to the Wall, Kennedy assured West Berliners that freedom throughout the world was at stake in Berlin and that the U.S. was willing to fight, if necessary, for the rights of West Berliners.

In June, 1964, the Soviet Union concluded a treaty with East Germany which was apparently a substitute for the long-awaited separate

⁷³Hartmann, p. 126.

⁷⁴Slusser, p. ix.

peace treaty. While it called for a "normalization" of the situation in West Berlin and pledged the USSR's support in maintaining the "integrity of the state frontiers of the GDR," it did not threaten Western rights. West Berlin was described in the treaty as "an independent political entity."⁷⁵

When the West German legislature held a plenary session in West Berlin the next April, a custom it had followed for more than a decade, the Communist response was relatively restrained. Access routes were not threatened and the USSR limited itself to occasional interruptions of the speeches in the Bundestag with sonic booms caused by the low-flying Russian fighter planes over the building in which the session was being held.⁷⁶

Aside from the infrequent confrontations such as those mentioned here, the first six years after the construction of the Wall were relatively peaceful. There were many incidents along the Wall and five East German border guards were killed by West Berlin policemen when they fired on escaping refugees who had reached West Berlin territory. During the same time over sixty refugees are known to have been killed during would-be escapes in Berlin.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, over six thousand East Germans were reportedly arrested and jailed by the GDR authorities for

⁷⁵Milestones of Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1967 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1967), pp. 222-223.

⁷⁶Shears, p. 198.

⁷⁷Rainer Hildebrandt, Es Geschah an der Mauer (It Happened at the Wall) (West Berlin: Arbeitsgemeinschaft 13 August e. V., 1968), p. 60.

attempted "flight from the Republic," an offense carrying a sentence of fifteen months imprisonment.⁷⁸ The exact number of those who succeeded in their flights is not known. There seems to be general agreement that approximately 16,000 escaped by going over, through, or under the Wall, or by crossing the so-called "green frontier" between East and West Germany during the first two years after the erection of the Wall.⁷⁹ During subsequent years the number was considerably smaller although there is little agreement on just how large that number is.

Meanwhile, the East German economy finally began to improve. The Wall played no small part in this improvement. The importance of the Wall to the East German economy was emphasized by Politburo member Albert Norden who has written that after August 13, 1961, the GDR was "at last able to put the laws of Socialism into practice without disruption from outside."⁸⁰ For years the open border in Berlin had drained most of the average of over 200,000 people who left East Germany every year. Of these refugees, 50 percent were under twenty-five and 74 percent were under forty-five. They represented many of the youngest and best trained people in East Germany.⁸¹ Now that the flow had all but ended, the East German economy was freed from one of its greatest handicaps.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 75.

⁷⁹Berlin: Crisis and Challenge, p. 28.

⁸⁰Norden, pp. 282-283.

⁸¹Hartmann, p. 124.

VI. FROM 1945 TO 1967: AN INCREASED ROLE FOR THE EAST GERMANS

It was obvious when the Soviet Army entered Berlin in 1945 that the local Germans in their zone of occupation were playing the most minor of roles in a script written entirely by the Russians. The Ulbricht Group and those it recruited were clearly not allowed to act with any independence. If the role of the Germans in the Western zones differed it was only to the degree that they were ignored more than their Eastern counterparts who were acting, literally, as agents for the Soviet Military Administration and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

By the time of the 1948 Berlin blockade, the status of the East Germans had risen only slightly. The creation of the People's Council in 1948 by the Soviet authorities as a response to Western intentions to create the Federal Republic of Germany assigned the East Germans a somewhat more important role, but it was still a Soviet-written script in a Soviet drama.

The 1958 ultimatum by Khrushchev represented an additional increase in the status of the East Germans. They now, of course, had their own government and that government had become the pivot of an important Soviet diplomatic and political offensive against the West. The clear meaning of the Soviet message to the West was that the Western powers were going to be having to deal with the East Germans directly if they did not cooperate. The East Germans could almost be seen as a club with which the USSR could threaten the Western powers.

The Berlin crisis of 1961 found the East Germans playing a major role even though it is safe to venture that the drama was still of a

Soviet design. Khrushchev has written that he relied on Soviet forces while establishing border control for East Germany. However, the Soviet troops were dispersed and well back from the focal point of the actions in August, 1961.⁸² A CIA agent who spent the night of August 12 in East Berlin is reported to have seen only one Russian jeep with two Soviet officers actually on the scene during the preparations for sealing the border between East and West Berlin.⁸³ The central roles in this particular scene were assigned to the East Germans themselves. They were the ones who undertook the actual closing of the border and the construction of the Wall. The years after 1961 found the East Germans continuing to play an increasingly important and, on matters such as the Christmas passes, apparently independent role. The extent and importance of this evolution of the SED regime will be the major concern in the chapters that follow.

⁸²Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971), p. 506.

⁸³Dulles, The Wall: A Tragedy in Three Acts, p. 38.

CHAPTER II

THE WEST BERLIN ISSUE FROM 1968 TO 1971: THE ULBRICHT ERA

The period covered in this study, 1968 to 1974, can be divided into two phases. The first covers the years from 1968 up to the spring of 1971, the last years of Walter Ulbricht's dominance. The second phase covers the years since Ulbricht's removal as First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party, the years in which Erich Honecker has been the dominant East German political figure. Before examining this first phase, the subject of this chapter, the West Berlin issue must be considered in its role as a central element in Soviet-U.S. relations in recent years and what many see as the key to detente in Europe today.

It would be an understatement to say that the postwar arrangements had a profound effect on the political situation in Europe. In many respects, the East-West confrontation in Europe centered on what was and what was not done in those months after the conclusion of hostilities in May, 1945. Nowhere was the confrontation more bitter, however, than in the case of the so-called German problem. The division of Germany came to symbolize, on a small scale, the division of Europe. The division of Germany was further complicated by the unresolved questions of the relationship between the newly-created German states and the frontiers of Germany with Poland. The Western-oriented Federal Republic of Germany found considerable support in the first years after its creation for a policy which refused to recognize either the territorial

status quo in Europe or the permanence of the partition of Germany. However, by the early 1960's, the formal Western commitment to reunification and the provisional nature of the Oder-Neisse line became uncertain and the Federal Republic soon found itself increasingly isolated from its allies on these questions.¹

The Federal Republic responded to the threat of isolation by an Ostpolitik which, according to then Foreign Minister Willy Brandt, was "intended to help overcome the division of Europe."² The new policy also carried with it a vision of a new role for West Germany, a role which implied that the conception of the value of the Western alliance system might be undergoing a change. "For centuries," Brandt declared, "Germany was a bridge between East and West. We are striving to build anew the shattered bridge, better, sturdier, and more reliable."³ The realization of such a goal, however, was not expected to come easily or soon. What was seen as a very real possibility in the near future was an improvement in the lot of the East Germans whom Brandt referred to as "Germans who are our countrymen." Brandt declared that the FRG wanted closer relations with its "fellow Germans," that it wanted "the barriers to be lowered." If such relief for the East Germans was sought in the short run, the goal of reunification was not renounced for the

¹Charles R. Planck, The Changing Status of German Reunification in Western Diplomacy, 1955-1966 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), pp. 57-60.

²Willy Brandt, A Peace Policy for Europe (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968), p. 105.

³Ibid., p. 116.

long run. The partition of Germany was described as the "source of mischief" and something which the Bonn government wanted to eliminate "by means of peaceful understanding."⁴

The West German hopes for gradual "liberalization" of the political systems of the Communist Party states in East Europe were effectively ended by the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Any illusions that might have existed about improving West German relations with East Europe in general and East Germany in particular without granting demands for an acceptance of the territorial and political status quo in Europe were dispelled by the events of August, 1968. The Soviet invasion was followed by a phase of West German foreign policy characterized by acceptance of many basic Communist demands regarding the status quo in Europe. The first fruits of the new phase were the treaties with the Soviet Union and with Poland. A key point regarding West German contacts with Poland and the other East European states was stressed earlier by Brandt when he asserted,

The development of our relations with the other countries of Eastern Europe should supplement the development of our relationship to the Soviet Union, not run counter to it.⁵

The realization of the promise by Brandt to the USSR meant that Bonn had effectively recognized one of the Soviet Union's most longstanding and vital aims regarding its policy toward Europe. What this amounted to was that Soviet control over East Europe had been legitimized by West German policy. In the past, the Soviet goal of legitimization of

⁴Ibid., pp. 122-123.

⁵Ibid., p. 105.

its control over East Europe had always been tied with a second goal, the dissolution of the Western alliance system in Europe. This linkup was no longer necessary, so with the West German recognition of Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe came Soviet acceptance of West Germany's continued membership in NATO.⁶

With its position in the Western alliance system granted by the USSR after Bonn acceptance of the European status quo, the Federal Republic could now concern itself with its own direct interests and with the continuing problem of West Berlin. In discussing this question, Richard Lowenthal has written,

From the point of view of the Federal Republic, normalization of its relations with the Soviet bloc entailed as its corollary recognition by the Soviet Union and by the East German state of special ties of West Berlin with the political, legal, economic, and financial institutions of the Federal Republic, including the right of the Federal Republic to negotiate on behalf of West Berlin.⁷

Consequently, progress on improving the position of West Berlin was declared by the FRG government to be a prerequisite for its final approval of the treaties with Poland and the USSR. Brandt labelled West Berlin as the key of detente in Europe. Detente could not bypass West Berlin, Brandt declared. "Berlin must remain the barometer on which not only bad but good weather can be read."⁸ The signing of the

⁶Peter C. Ludz in Eastern Europe in the 1970s, edited by Sylva Sinanian, Istvan Deak, and Peter C. Ludz (New York: Praeger, 1972), p. 231.

⁷Ibid., pp. 231-232.

⁸Brandt, p. 139.

Four Power Agreement on Berlin on September 3, 1971 signified the realization of the progress that the Bonn government sought.⁹ With the affixing of the appropriate signatures on the Four Power Agreement, the Federal Republic was in a position to continue its policy of improving its relations with the East.

If West Berlin is seen as the key to success for the West German government's Ostpolitik, it must not be forgotten that it is more than that for many West Germans. West Berlin is an emotional issue for many West Germans who in the past two decades have come to view West Berlin as part of the territory of the Federal Republic. Even West German politicians such as Brandt, who would have to be considered far more "liberal," or realistic, on the West Berlin issue, have made repeated assertions of the ties of West Berlin to the Federal Republic. While Foreign Minister Brandt emphatically declared that "West Berlin belongs to the Federal Republic of Germany,"¹⁰ the inclusion of nonvoting members in the Bundestag from West Berlin adds to the illusion that the isolated city is formally a Land of the FRG. Official government handbooks have continuously listed West Berlin with the various Lands of the FRG when giving information about the Federal Republic.¹¹ Furthermore, even population charts list the population of West Berlin

⁹Neues Deutschland, September 3, 1971, p. 1. (Hereafter noted as ND).

¹⁰Brandt, p. 137.

¹¹Helmut Arntz, Facts About Germany (Bonn: Press and Information Office of the Federal Republic, 1968), p. 79.

as resident of the Federal Republic.¹² In addition to official information, family ties link many West Germans emotionally with West Berlin and the unofficial policy of encouraging public school children to visit West Berlin before completing their education insures that young citizens have firsthand knowledge of West Berlin. In short, West Germans are encouraged to regard West Berlin as "theirs." The result is an emotional attachment to West Berlin, the strength of which is illustrated by the rhetoric of leading politicians in the Federal Republic.

Finally, the material resources of West Berlin cannot be overlooked as an important factor regarding the Berlin issue. Population alone makes West Berlin an extremely valuable region of Germany. The West Berlin population of over 2.1 million is larger than that of any other city in either East or West Germany.¹³ The commercial position of West Berlin further enhances its importance. Trade in goods between West Berlin and the Federal Republic amounts to 25 billion marks annually, a figure which is about one half the size of the entire amount of import and export trade for West Germany with all of Europe for a year.¹⁴ Therefore, while the West German emotional attachment may receive considerable attention in any examination of the Federal Republic's policy toward the Berlin question, it cannot obscure the very real

¹²Handbook of Statistics for the FRG (Wiesbaden: Federal Statistical Office, 1970), p. 16.

¹³Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 100, 108.

importance of West Berlin to the economy of West Germany. Bonn's policy is by no means simply a response to the demands and pressures of those who regard West Berlin as a symbolic test for the West but is also a reflection of important economic needs of the Federal Republic.

Just as West Berlin plays a major role in affairs of the Federal Republic, it also figures prominently in East German politics. For the German Democratic Republic, West Berlin represents a serious security problem in three ways. This threefold threat is political, military, and economic. However, it should also be kept in mind that the present situation of West Berlin also gives the East Germans one important advantage in its relations with the West.

West Berlin poses a threat to the political security of East Germany in several ways. First, there is the possibility that a confrontation over West Berlin might erupt into an actual exchange of fire. While this seems unlikely at this time for a variety of reasons, the likelihood that any large-scale shooting incident might lead to a nuclear exchange being the most prominent, it is nevertheless a possibility. While such an event would be a tragedy for both sides, the fact is that GDR territory, along with West Berlin, would be most affected. The possibility of such a violent eruption must be considered a threat to the political stability not only in the sense that any war threatens the security of the governmental institutions on whose territory it occurs, but also in that it offers hope of outside intervention for those within the country who might be violently opposed to the regime.

This leads to the second way in which West Berlin represents a threat to the political security of the GDR. The danger for the GDR comes from the possibility of damage to the prestige of the East German regime that could result in the event of a confrontation over Berlin that is resolved by what looks like an Eastern retreat. Because of almost constant negotiations or controversies over some aspect of the West Berlin problem, the East German leadership is in a position in which its standing in the community of "socialist states" is likely to be measured by decisions that are made over various disputes connected with the West Berlin issue. In many cases, such as the negotiations over the Four Power Agreement of 1971, the East Germans are not direct participants themselves but are, in effect, represented by the Soviet Union. Should the Soviet Union not secure what can be considered a "good deal" with regard to East German interests, the conclusion may be drawn in the West, in other Communist states, and even in the GDR that the SED leadership is no longer highly regarded by its Russian patrons. The result would be a weakening of the leadership's positions at home and abroad. In the case of violent opponents to the Communist regime in East Germany, the GDR faces a threat in the event that such individuals might seek to cause incidents along the Wall that will make it necessary for the West to respond with force. In other words, political opponents could provoke violent incidents with the goal of either bringing about a certain Western response or of simply embarrassing the regime. The East German leadership has recognized this possibility on a number of occasions by referring to the desire of those who do not

like "the way things are going" to see border incidents involving violence in Berlin.¹⁵ In an effort to overcome the adverse effect of the publicity surrounding a border shooting a few days before the World Youth Festival was to be held in East Berlin during the summer of 1973, the East German authorities expelled an individual who was alleged to be the supposed shooting victim and declared that his obvious good health demonstrated the dishonesty of Western reports about a killing at the Wall. While discrepancies in the man's story led to speculations regarding whether or not he was actually the man, the East Germans' action illustrates their sensitivity to incidents of this sort.¹⁶ In the twelve years following construction of the Wall, sixty-nine people were known to have been killed in border incidents in Berlin.¹⁷ The detrimental effect of these actions on the GDR's prestige is incalculable.

The third way in which West Berlin poses a threat to East German political security is economic. Numerous GDR commentaries have recognized the importance of the construction of the Wall in bringing stability to the East German economy.¹⁸ Albert Norden cites a figure of 30 thousand million marks as the cost of the damage to the GDR

¹⁵ND, July 20, 1973, p. 1.

¹⁶Berliner Morgenpost (West Berlin), July 22, 1973, p. 1.

¹⁷BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, August 13, 1973, EE/4371/A1/6. (Hereafter noted as SWB).

¹⁸ND, August 13, 1973, p. 1.

economy suffered during the time before the Wall.¹⁹ The mass exodus ended in 1971. However, escapes have continued and have actually increased in recent years. In 1973 a total of 6,450 GDR citizens are known to have successfully fled East Germany, usually by way of West Berlin, an increase of 16 percent from the previous year. While this number is of almost no consequence when compared with the annual number of escapees before August of 1961 when the Wall was built, it remains very important because it includes many of the best trained people in East Germany, people who qualify for jobs in West Germany which offer considerably more monetary return than East German jobs bring them. In fact, many West German firms are said to have paid the expense involved in hiring professional escapee services to aid certain highly-trained persons in leaving the GDR illegally.²¹ For most of the escapes, West Berlin is either the destination or a base of operations from which to launch an escape.

In addition to the economic damage resulting from loss of valuable personnel, the GDR is threatened by West Berlin in another economic way. In the past, economic sabotage has frequently been launched by West Germany, according to some Western accounts, using West Berlin as a base. Such sabotage involved the manufacturing of phoney bills of

¹⁹ Albert Norden, Thus Wars Are Made (Dresden: Verlag Zeit in Bild, 1970), p. 286.

²⁰ SWB, January 2, 1974, EE/4489/A1/1.

²¹ Der Spiegel, No. 34, August 20, 1973, pp. 23-34.

lading that were introduced into East German commercial dealings in such a way as to sidetrack valuable shipments of certain commodities and thus damage the GDR economy.²² While such fantastic adventures are apparently no longer undertaken, GDR reports continue to stress the damage to the economy resulting from the activities of Western banks, especially those in West Berlin, which have a harmful effect on the GDR currency. In 1973 East German charges of speculation in GDR currency by Western banks reached a peak during the time that tourist trade to East Germany was reaching its highest levels. Neues Deutschland on November 8, 1973, charged that West Berlin authorities were tolerating illegal currency transactions resulting in practices described as "basically a repetition of those that were in use a long time ago, before August 13, 1961."²³ The East German response to this situation was to double the amount of GDR currency that Western tourists were required to exchange at the border. While reporting that more than half a million illegally imported GDR marks had been confiscated during the last year, Nues Deutschland announced that the new exchange requirements should have the effect of decreasing the tourists' need for illegal marks to a certain extent. The old minimum exchange requirements, ten marks a day for each day of a visit to the GDR, were declared to be insufficient to meet the minimum needs of a tourist in East Germany.²⁴ East German

²²John Dornberg, The Other Germany (New York: Doubleday, 1968), p. 81.

²³ND, November 8, 1973, p. 2.

²⁴Ibid., November 5, 1973, pp. 1-2.

attacks on alleged currency speculation in the West as a threat to the East German economy have continued, indicating that the GDR still feels a threat to its economic security. West Berlin, of course, is only one source of this particular threat. However, it is a significant participant and for this reason can justifiably be viewed as posing a threat to the economic security of the GDR.

The third way in which West Berlin is a security problem for East Germany is militarily. The possibility of the Western outpost serving as a focal point for the outbreak of war has already been mentioned in another context. However, it should be added that in the event of conventional hostilities, assuming that such a conflict is possible in Europe, West Berlin would be an important beachhead from which military operations could be launched early in the hostilities. East German rhetoric has frequently alluded to such a role for West Berlin.²⁵ Assuming that no war erupts, West Berlin is still of military importance for espionage directed against not only the East German military, but also the Soviet military installation in the GDR. On those occasions that the GDR hosts Warsaw Pact maneuvers, West Berlin provides the opportunity for espionage against the WTO forces in general. In this connection, the observation might be made that West Berlin is valuable for a wide variety of types of espionage, not only the military type. Espionage, of course, works two ways, and it can be expected that the East also uses West Berlin for considerable espionage endeavors.

²⁵Norden, pp. 290-291.

Finally, an evaluation of what West Berlin means for East Germany would not be complete without making the observation that this city can be extremely valuable to the GDR and its Soviet ally. The value of West Berlin to the East lies in its convenient position for blackmail. West Berlin, in short, can become a hostage in an East-West confrontation. Brandt's observation about Berlin as a barometer for both good and bad weather indicates this. Just as Communist goodwill can be demonstrated in Berlin, bad will can also be given expression here. The years of what we refer to as the Cold War are filled with evidence of West Berlin's value to the East as a means of applying pressure. In balance, this advantage which the East Germans and their allies enjoy because of the extended, isolated position of West Berlin may outweigh all of the disadvantages discussed above.

I. THE COMMUNIST CONCEPTION OF DETENTE

Both Communist and non-Communist sides agree that the Berlin problem is of considerable importance to the effort to achieve detente in Europe. While the emphasis may differ depending on whether the account is an Eastern or a Western one, there are no questions raised about the crucial nature of what happens either in Berlin or relating to Berlin. East German accounts typically cite such things as visits by officials of the government of the Federal Republic to West Berlin for the performance of official duties as proof of the West German desire to perpetuate the Cold War.²⁶ Meanwhile, West German authorities

²⁶ND, June 23, 1968, p. 1.

such as Claus Soenksen, counsellor for the FRG Embassy in Washington, describe successful developments relating to the Berlin problem as verification of the validity of their policy for achieving detente in Europe.²⁷

In order to better evaluate developments in the disputes over Berlin, it is appropriate at this point to make some brief observations regarding the character and significance of detente in Europe. Since an expressed concern for detente has served as the public motivations for both East and West German initiatives on the Berlin problem, a better understanding of the meaning of detente might improve our ability to view this particular issue as part of the larger picture of East-West relations.

The events which have been transpiring in Europe for the past five years and are described as elements of detente are not isolated instances but are part of a worldwide trend toward accommodation with the Soviet Union and its allies. This desire for accommodation is clearly based on a new estimate of the reality of world power in which the United States is seen as weaker relative to the USSR. The aftermath of Vietnam has left the United States in a position in which it possesses the instruments of modern warfare but seems, in the Soviet view, to lack the will to use those weapons. The American desire to withdraw from global military commitments is dramatically evidenced not only by speeches of many leading U.S. Senators, but also by the policy of

²⁷ Sinanian, Deak, and Ludz, p. 236.

withdrawal from Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, as Walter Laqueur of the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University has written recently, "while America is in retreat, the Soviet Union still has a global policy."²⁸ In a time when the U.S. is reexamining its present commitments, the USSR is expanding its commitments in such areas as the Middle East and elsewhere. The result is a situation in which many world leaders must feel a compelling desire to reach an "understanding" with the power whose fortunes are in apparent ascendancy.

If other nations see the United States as a power of reduced stature, it should not be surprising that the Soviet Union today views detente as a consequence of a spiritually and militarily weakened West. Detente is not considered evidence of good will on the part of the West. In the words of one Soviet authority:

The deepening of the crisis of imperialism's foreign policy is forcing political leaders of Western countries to formulate their plans and their policy towards the Soviet Union and other socialist states more cautiously than they did until now.²⁹

Yet, according to Soviet leaders and their East European allies, the West has not weakened to such an extent that it is no longer basically hostile. The Soviet authority quoted above observes that "the policies of the chief imperialist powers are not undergoing any fundamental change." The things which some mistake for real change are in fact

²⁸Walter Laqueur, Neo-Isolationism in the World of the Seventies (New York: Library Press, 1972), p. 48.

²⁹Sh. Sankoyev, "Peace in Europe and the Confrontation of the Two Systems," International Affairs (Moscow), No. 11, 1972, p. 14.

only "tactical changes."³⁰ In discussing West German foreign policy, the SED official newspaper Neues Deutschland commented that the anti-Communist crusade of the Federal Republic was being continued but with the utilization of "differentiated and selective methods."³¹ In short, the East feels that the policy of detente signifies no real change in the Western outlook but simply reflects the decline of their systems. Meanwhile the ideological struggle is said to be intensifying at the very time the West talks about the end of the Cold War.

Meanwhile, during the time that Western unity seems to be declining in many important ways, the nations of the Soviet bloc enjoy what Walter Laqueur described in 1973 to a Senate subcommittee as detente.³² The West obviously enjoys no such consensus on how to deal with the Communist states. While few would assert that there is absolute Communist unity on the question of relations with the West, the Czechoslovakian invasion of 1968 certainly helped clarify the matter considerably. The situation for the West remains as difficult as ever, if not more so, in the wake of the 1968 intervention in Prague.

Detente is quite properly regarded by many as, in effect, a waiting game.³³ The goal of detente is not merely the acceptance of the status quo in order to perpetuate the status quo indefinitely. The goal,

³⁰Ibid., pp. 14-15.

³¹ND, February 27, 1972, p. 4.

³²Walter Laqueur, "Detente," Survey, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1973, p. 74.

³³Robert Bowie in Sinanian, Deak and Ludz, p. 240

rather, seems to be more a matter of each side desiring acceptance of the status quo for the present time in hope of altering it in the future to its advantage. Each side sees time as on its side, offering the prospect of weakening the position of the adversary. The East looks at the West and hopes for a historical vindication of Marxist-Leninist predictions about capitalism. Meanwhile, the West bases its hope on such ideas as the theory of the eventual convergence of both systems and the internal liberalization of the Communist party states. Neither sees the status quo as the most desirable of all worlds. While the issue of a divided Germany is not the most important question for either the United States or the Soviet Union, that division does represent one of the most conspicuous concerns of the East-West confrontation. The economic and political interests involved are considerable but insufficient by themselves to determine the outcome of competition between the Communist and non-Communist worlds.

In the present era of detente, the Soviet Union enjoys a definite advantage in that the legitimacy of its empire in Eastern Europe is no longer challenged by the major Western powers. The only power of consequence which refuses to acknowledge the validity of the Soviet Union's claim of leadership over the East European states is another Communist nation, China. Western leaders no longer speak of a "rollback" of Communism or the liberation of Eastern Europe. Many give the appearance of simply hoping that a rollback of capitalism does not occur. The West has placed itself in a situation in which it does not challenge the right of its adversary to control a considerable portion

of the earth's surface while the adversary continues to question the legitimacy of capitalist governments throughout the world. The extent of such a disadvantage for the West is obvious.

The East German regime has also come to enjoy the advantage of having the attack on its legitimacy withdrawn to a considerable extent. The West German foreign policy since 1967 has no longer sought to isolate the GDR from its allies as it did in the years prior to that time.³⁴ With this change, the East Germans can now negotiate for vastly different stakes. Earlier the situation was such that, for a variety of reasons, the East Germans preferred not to negotiate at all. The GDR's position has improved to the extent that while a few years ago it had diplomatic relations with only two dozen or so nations, most of which were Soviet allies, by spring of 1974 it enjoyed full diplomatic relations with 105 nations.

Regarding the West German Ostpolitik, it is clear that because of its size and importance, any actions of a West German government are going to have far different consequences from similar actions by a French or an Italian government. Bonn spokesmen, including Brandt, frequently have referred to their desire for relations with the Communist states which are no more or no less than the relations of France and Italy to the East European nations. The power of the Federal Republic, however, both real and potential, is such that its relations can never be the same as those of France or Italy. The FRG simply poses too great a

³⁴Pierre Hassner, Europe in the Age of Negotiations (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1973), pp. 57-58.

potential threat to the East, militarily, economically, and politically. This is true for several reasons. The most obvious is the economic strength of the West German economy which has been so great as to make all of Europe stand in awe. An additional factor has been the frequently stated desire of the FRG for access to nuclear weapons. Given the economic and industrial potential of the country, this desire must seem to be one capable of fulfillment. Finally, there is the East European memory of German aggressiveness in the past, a memory which the USSR has done its best to keep alive. Since the FRG was clearly the most powerful of the two Germanies, it seemed to inherit something of the unfavorable German image in East Europe. Therefore, any FRG overtures will likely be met by the East with a united policy. The way in which the treaties with Moscow and Warsaw were achieved demonstrates this. The negotiations on Berlin have been no different so far and no departure from this pattern seems likely in the foreseeable future. While independent action on the part of the SED leadership is possible within certain limits, no one can seriously dispute the fact that there are very definitely limits to the freedom of action enjoyed by East Berlin.

These considerations have affected developments on the entire German question and the Berlin problem, which has been a part of it for the past quarter of a century. Any possible resolution of the Berlin problem ultimately involves consideration of the balance of power between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allied states. The problem is not one subject to any sort of bilateral

resolution by the two states directly affected acting alone. The dispute is intimately wrapped in the fabric of East-West relations as well as the tangled web of relations between East and West Germany.

II. ULBRICHT'S WESTPOLITIK

Few individuals have placed their imprint on the Berlin problem in a more personal way than Walter Ulbricht, who for almost a quarter of a century was First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party. Before looking at the GDR policies and rhetoric directed specifically at the issue of West Berlin during Ulbricht's last years, we should first examine the general orientation of the Ulbricht-led government toward the West in general and West Germany specifically. This examination is necessary in order to fully understand the Pankow regime's concern over West Berlin. After all, the West Berlin issue would assume a vastly different nature in the absence of a West German issue for the GDR. Any improvement in East Germany's relations with Bonn should be expected to bring at least some improvement in the former's relations with West Berlin. In the same manner, a deterioration in East-West German relations seems likely to signal a worsening of East German-West Berlin relations. The last two and one half years of the Ulbricht regime are characterized by a generally unpleasent preoccupation with the Bonn Ostpolitik, the alleged West German military threat, and what East Berlin considered the generally aggressive nature of the West German government. This preoccupation colored the GDR's relations with West Berlin in almost every respect.

Walter Ulbricht's toast on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of the GDR set the tone for East Germany's general orientation toward the West in this period. In his toast, Ulbricht declared that it was "necessary to be vigilant, to counter effectively and oppose the methods of psychological warfare, of economic warfare, and of antisocial activity" that characterized Western policy.³⁵ This analysis was echoed by the GDR Foreign Minister, Otto Winzer, in an interview in which he declared that while imperialism had not become stronger in recent years, it had become more aggressive.³⁶ The East German view was that this aggressiveness was reflected in NATO policy which, accordingly, was pursuing an increasingly hostile policy toward the East, a policy which was enjoying the support of the FRG government.³⁷ As a consequence of such policies of Western powers, according to the GDR's Public Prosecutor General, Josef Streit, there were many plots against the GDR and in order to aid prosecution of those behind such activities, the government was introducing a new penal code designed to war "the spies, agents, and saboteurs that in attacks against the GDR they risk their necks."³⁸ Not only did the new penal code contain the normal strictures against such offenses as treason, it included specifications for more unique crimes such as economic diversion and sabotage. According to a commentary on

³⁵ND, October 7, 1968, p. 2.

³⁶SWB, January 3, 1968, EE/2659/C1/8.

³⁷ND, December 12, 1969, p. 1.

³⁸Ibid., January 13, 1968, p. 3.

the new code, it was designed to protect the society the GDR citizens had constructed by incorporating the lessons gained "during the confrontation with the enemies of socialism" during the past years.³⁹ An additional reflection of the official attitude toward the West came in the form of an order passed by the GDR Council of Ministers in March, 1969. According to the order, in view of the harmful influence of Western communications directed against the GDR.

All citizens are bound to protect children and young persons from influences which endanger or harm their development as socialist personages. They are responsible for keeping the influence of imperialist ideology, especially through the printed word, television, and radio, from children and young people.⁴⁰

In summary, the conception presented by official GDR sources during the last years of Ulbricht's administration was that the GDR was an embattled garrison which was reinforcing its defenses against a hostile and aggressive West.

The principal agent of the anti-East German campaign, according to official GDR, was the Federal Republic of Germany. While East German press and officials seldom missed an opportunity to condemn Western society, their special fury usually was directed against the FRG and its policies during these years. The introduction of the new West German Ostpolitik did nothing to change the East German attitude. In spite of Bonn's overtures to the East, Ulbricht insisted that it was

³⁹Heinrich Toeplitz, "The New Penal Code," Law and Legislation in the GDR (Berlin, GDR), No. 2, 1968, pp. 11-12.

⁴⁰ND, March 27, 1969, p. 2.

West Germany which was blocking detente. The new Ostpolitik was labeled by the First Secretary as simply another effort to change the territorial status quo in Europe.⁴¹ This negative evaluation was echoed by other leading figures, including Politburo members Erich Honecker and Professor Albert Norden, who charged that the Brandt-Scheel government of the FRG had infringed on the sovereignty of other states by threatening reprisals if they normalized their relations with East Berlin. According to Norden, West Germany was, as always, still the "troublemaker" of Europe.⁴² On March 7, 1970, the SED newspaper Neues Deutschland editorialized that "the much vaunted 'accommodation' shown by the Federal Republic these days consists of a flood of more or less beautiful words, and nothing else."⁴³

Ulbricht portrayed West Germany as a nation that had set itself on a course that was certain to lead to war. In his opinion the West German government was "playing with war."⁴⁴ A frequent East German theme which was used to reinforce Ulbricht's warning was that the FRG was bent on possessing nuclear weapons. In July, 1968, Dr. Rudolf Muenze of the GDR Nuclear Research Institute said that Bonn's refusal to sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty was a tactic designed to give West Germany time to develop its own nuclear weapon production.⁴⁵ This

⁴¹ND, January 7, 1968, p. 1.

⁴²Ibid., February 27, 1970, p. 3.

⁴³Ibid., March 7, 1970, p. 1.

⁴⁴Ibid., January 1, 1968, p. 1.

⁴⁵SWB, July 13, 1968, EE/2820/A1/2.

picture was embellished with the additional charge that Bonn was engaged in the development of weapons for chemical and bacteriological warfare. In December, 1968, the GDR press aired the charges of a microbiologist who had defected to East Germany from the FRG and who insisted that West Germany was making plans for chemical and bacteriological warfare.⁴⁶

The nature of the West German Bundeswehr was also cited by East German sources as evidence of the danger posed by the FRG. A pamphlet distributed by the GDR charged that the West Germany military was an instrument for changing the territorial status quo in Europe and that it was being prepared for a blitzkrieg against the East. Helmut Schmidt, who was then West German Defense Minister, was described as a person who was committed to the "abolition of the socialist order in the GDR."⁴⁷ In May, 1969, the East German news agency bolstered another common Ulbricht theme when it reported that, according to the account of a Bundeswehr major who had defected to the GDR, the West German military was a haven for neo-Nazis and that many members of the Bundeswehr, including officers, were leaving for that reason.⁴⁸ Also, West German military exercises always provided what East German sources labeled proof that the Bundeswehr was readying itself for a war against the East and that the Bonn government had no real interest in contributing

⁴⁶ND, December 28, 1968, p. 2.

⁴⁷The Bundeswehr: Spearhead of Revanchism (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1970), pp. 12-16.

⁴⁸SWB, May 7, 1969, EE/3067/A1/1.

to detente and European security. According to Neues Deutschland, there could be little doubt that the military-industrial complex was in control in both West Germany and West Berlin.⁴⁹

The East German response to this was to assure its own population and to warn the FRG government that, in the words of Major General Hans Ernst of the National People's Army, the aggressor would receive a "devastating blow" from the GDR military should it attack.⁵⁰ However, lest there be any doubt, East German military leaders insist that, due to Bundeswehr "agressiveness," the GDR must devote more effort to improving its defenses. According to Army General Heinz Hoffman, the "welcome foreign policy gestures" by the FRG were a cloak for increased aggressiveness and necessitated even greater stress on the combat readiness of the East Germany military forces.⁵¹

East German attacks on the FRG went beyond simply charging that it was militarily aggressive. Ulbricht added to this by stressing that West Germany had developed more sophisticated means of carrying out its aggression. Speaking at Prague Castle on February 22, 1968, Ulbricht charged that Bonn had failed in its effort to isolate the GDR from its allies and was now concentrating on trying to extend its influence toward the East by the "methods of psychological infiltration and economic dependence."⁵² This psychological war was said to have an

⁴⁹ND, October 1, 1970, p. 2.

⁵⁰Ibid., July 9, 1968, p. 4.

⁵¹SWB, January 19, 1971, EE/3587/A1/7.

⁵²ND, February 23, 1968, p. 1.

advantage over the traditional type of military exercise in that it was more subtle and difficult to detect. Furthermore, it could be presented as a gesture of friendship when in fact it was nothing more than aggression in a new form.

The broader attack on West German society also included a condemnation of the country as economically imperialistic. While such charges are fairly standard rhetoric in the press of Communist party states, the extent to which the GDR press engaged in such charges was exceptional. "Revelations" appeared almost daily regarding the activities of West German "monopoly capital." The impression conveyed was that there was absolutely no limit to West German imperialism. In Neues Deutschland on January 24, 1970, Foreign Minister Otto Winzer charged that the FRG was scouring the entire world for raw materials and exploiting the underdeveloped countries which provided those materials.⁵³ The West German imperialistic activities were presented as being so far-reaching that there was probably "no trail of dirt and blood" that did not lead to Bonn.⁵⁴

West German talk about a "special relationship" between East and West Germany or about "intra-German relations" were described as further evidence of the generally aggressive character of the Federal Republic, although the aggression in this case was of a sophisticated, "legal," nature. Neues Deutschland declared that the West German desire for

⁵³Ibid., January 24, 1970, p. 2.

⁵⁴Ibid., January 3, 1971, p. 3.

"special relations" with the GDR simply amounted to a demand for the subjugation of East Germany to the Bonn government.⁵⁵ Ulbricht insisted that only full diplomatic relations between the two states would be considered as an acceptable basis for normalization of relations between the GDR and Bonn. The notion of "intra-German relations" was seen as nothing more than a new name for an old policy which had the annexation of the GDR as its goal. When the Austrian government refused entry to an SED delegation led by Politburo member Kurt Hager in 1968, Neues Deutschland announced that this was evidence that Bonn wanted to represent Austria as well as East Germany.⁵⁶ Even after several years of the new FRG Eastern policy, the GDR continued to insist that the formally renounced Hallstein Doctrine of the FRG was still being practiced since Bonn was trying to prevent recognition of the GDR by other states. An editorial in Neues Deutschland expressed Ulbricht's view in January of 1971,

The methods change but the substance and aim of their policy has not changed because the character of the system has not changed. . . . The rulers of the Federal Republic are devious and aggressive, whatever particular methods may seem to show. They are devious and aggressive just as German imperialists have always been.⁵⁷

Few issues of the time better illustrated the attitude of the GDR government toward West Germany than that of the reforms in Czechoslovakia

⁵⁵ Ibid., May 13, 1970, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Ibid., January 17, 1968, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Ibid., January 9, 1971, p. 2.

in 1968. Ulbricht became one of the principal exponents of the hard-line on Czechoslovakia and the West German "menace" constituted his central theme in discussing developments in Czechoslovakia during the Dubcek era. According to an analysis by Francois Fejto, Ulbricht's press during this time reflected an intolerance and aggressiveness in comparison with which the Soviet press appeared amiably indulgent.⁵⁸ Typical comments in Neues Deutschland described developments in Czechoslovakia as "dangerous for socialism" and warned about the increasing influence of the West in Czechoslovakia.⁵⁹ The Dubcek-led Czech Communist Party was said to be under heavy attack by imperialists who were attempting to smuggle "anti-Communist theories" into the country.⁶⁰ While stressing the importance of the leadership of the Party in the nations of the "socialist commonwealth," official GDR publications charged that the Party was no longer in control in Czechoslovakia, but had been displaced by a variety of imperialists and Western agents.⁶¹

The spectre of West Germany loomed large in East German accounts of the Czech developments. In March, at a philosophy conference on Marx in East Berlin, Professor Kurt Hager spoke ominously of West German interest in the events taking place under Dubcek's administration.

⁵⁸ Francois Fejto, "Moscow and its Allies," Problems of Communism, Vol. 18, November-December, 1968, p. 36.

⁵⁹ ND, May 12, 1968, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Ibid., May 24, 1968, p. 1.

⁶¹ Ibid., May 11, 1968, p. 2.

Czech Minister Josef Smrkovsky was singled out as one of several Czech leaders whose attitudes gave the West Germans "hope that Czechoslovakia will be drawn into the whirlpool of revolution in the sense in which the Springer Press uses the word."⁶² The East German daily, Berliner Zeitung, charged that not only had Western and West German influence grown in Czechoslovakia, but that West German and U.S. troops were actually in the country. According to an account in Berliner Zeitung in May, a number of West German troops plus three FRG tanks were actually in the western part of Czechoslovakia. While the official excuse for their presence was the filming of a movie, "The Bridge at Remagen," the real reason, according to the paper, was to begin the West German occupation of Czechoslovakia.⁶³

East German accounts gave regular warnings against the types of activities which GDR leaders asserted were taking place in Czechoslovakia. "Tourists of a special kind" were said to be pouring into Czechoslovakia. The "most illustrious among these 'tourists'" was said to be Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski from the United States. According to Neues Deutschland, "All this, of course, is not accidental" but is part of the counterrevolutionary plans of the imperialists' powers. The events in Czechoslovakia were compared with those in Hungary in 1956 and antisocialist elements were declared to be in "open attack." The situation was viewed as particularly disturbing because the "vital

⁶²SWB, March 29, 1968, EE/2733/C1/7.

⁶³Berliner Zeitung (Berlin, GDR), May 9, 1968, p. 1.

interests" of the GDR were at stake just as much as those of Czechoslovakia.⁶⁴ As the climax of the Czech drama neared, East German charges accelerated with intensified attacks on the "policy of interference and subversion conducted by Bonn" and almost daily reports of the discovery of Western arms caches in the Czech countryside.⁶⁵ On the day of the Warsaw Pact invasion in August, Neues Deutschland called for a defeat for imperialism similar to the defeat that the GDR had given imperialists when it built the Berlin Wall in August, 1961. "The socialist camp," the SED paper hinted, "is preparing the same fate for the new variants of the policy of interference."⁶⁶

The official East German attitude on specific issues related to West Berlin during the period from 1968 to Ulbricht's retirement was consistent with the attitude on the West and the Federal Republic during this time. The same tone which was used in characterizing the West German foreign policy, the Bundeswehr, West German society in general, and the events in Czechoslovakia was evident in the rhetoric surrounding matters relating to West Berlin.

III. ULBRICHT ON THE WEST BERLIN QUESTION

Just as Ulbricht had charged that the West had "hardened Germany's division and built a high political wall between the two German

⁶⁴ND, July 13, 1968, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁵Ibid., September 17, 1968, p. 1.

⁶⁶Ibid., August 20, 1968, p. 1.

states,"⁶⁷ he also accused the United States, Great Britain, and the "right wing Social Democratic leaders" of West Berlin on responsibility for the division of Berlin. Speaking on the occasion of the presentation of the draft of the new GDR constitution in February, 1968, Ulbricht declared that the present division of Berlin was not necessary and would not have occurred if the "right wing Social Democratic leaders" had not been subservient to the Americans and the British who were determined to split the city of Berlin.⁶⁸

Continuing the theme of Western responsibility for the present division of Berlin, Ulbricht charged that the West also bears the responsibility for what West Berlin has become today. While the West was speaking of West Berlin in connection with the economic "miracle" that the Federal Republic was enjoying, the East German officials were charging that West Berlin had become an outpost of anticommunist subversion directed against the GDR and other communist states in Eastern Europe. For Ulbricht and his associates West Berlin represented a menace, a threat to the peace in Europe, not what the West Germans described as a city of "vitality" where one could benefit from the full "enjoyment of life."⁶⁹

Utilizing the theme that West Berlin was a threat to the peace in Europe, on the twentieth year of the existence of the GDR East German

⁶⁷Ibid., March 8, 1970, p. 2.

⁶⁸Ibid., February 16, 1968, p. 2.

⁶⁹Berlin in Brief (West Berlin: Press and Information Office of West Berlin, 1969), p. 3.

citizens were exhorted by Ulbricht and his associates to "resolutely oppose" all aspirations of the West for extending West Berlin as "a center of provocation and aggression against the GDR and other socialist states." The GDR declared determination to prohibit the development of any situation in which there could be a more serious threat to the "foundations of world peace." The building of the Wall in 1961 and the intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 were cited as proof of this determination.⁷⁰

The relationship between Bonn and West Berlin was pictured as adding to the danger to peace posed by West Berlin. A constant theme of the GDR leadership was that Bonn was the "main troublemaker in Europe" and, therefore, the consistent support that the West Berlin Senate gave to the Federal Republic made West Berlin a "principal stooge of this troublemaker."⁷¹ The description of West Berlin as a "stooge" is indicative of the belief in official GDR circles that it was not West Berlin itself which was the cause of the danger, but rather those who were misusing West Berlin. West Berlin's error, in the East German view, lies in allowing itself to be misused by West Germany and its allies. The primary villain, in Ulbricht's conception, was the Federal Republic, which insisted on using West Berlin as a base for attacks on the GDR. The West Berlin Senate, of course, was attacked for permitting the West Germans to, in effect, occupy West Berlin.⁷²

⁷⁰ND, January 16, 1969, p. 1.

⁷¹SWB, August 13, 1969, EE/3150/A1/1.

⁷²ND, February 1, 1968, p. 3.

The specific abuses that Ulbricht and his associates were concerned about were the performance of official functions by West German officials and governmental bodies in West Berlin, the use of the city as a base for espionage activities, and a variety of activities considered both disruptive and insulting by the East German authorities. Walter Ulbricht frequently reminded the West Germans that "no West German official has the right to carry out any official action in West Berlin,"⁷³ yet a continuous procession of West German officials visited West Berlin for the purpose of performing various functions in their capacity as officials of the Bonn government. Almost every week of the period under examination saw a visit to West Berlin by either a legislative committee from Bonn, a minister of the government, or some other prominent FRG official such as President Heinemann, who was a particularly frequent visitor. One of the most serious incidents of this type occurred in 1969 when the West German government announced that the Bundestag would be meeting in West Berlin in March for the purpose of electing the West German head of state. The East Germans declared that such a meeting would be a grave international provocation and would also illustrate the continuing West German desire to incorporate West Berlin into the Federal Republic. Such a meeting, they charged, would lead to neo-Nazi, revanchist activities and, furthermore, would involve "an abuse of the access roads" to West Berlin. The West Berlin population, they concluded, would suffer as a result of this

⁷³Ibid., March 14, 1968, p. 1.

meeting.⁷⁴ On this occasion Ulbricht enjoyed the support of the Soviet Union and was able to enlist Soviet assistance in measures designed to prohibit the West German Bundestag from having its West Berlin meeting. However, although such measures included the closing of the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn before and during the time of the Bundestag meeting, they proved unsuccessful. The Bundestag did meet and elect West Germany's new President in West Berlin.

The second alleged abuse with which the Ulbricht leadership was concerned regarding West Berlin was the use of the city as a base for espionage activities by Western agents. In 1969 the publicity surrounding the trial of West German agent Klaus Thalmann was used to make the point that West Berlin was serving as a base for Western spies against the GDR. In a report after Thalmann's indictment, the East German news agency, ADN, charged that "West Berlin is the sluice gate for spies, terrorists, agents, provocateurs, and subversive elements" working against the interests of East Germany and its allies. In another report West Berlin was referred to as an "Eldorado for imperialist secret services."⁷⁵ Even the British Broadcasting Corporation was viewed with suspicion by the East German leadership. The GDR foreign affairs weekly Horizont accused BBC of working with British espionage groups and using its West Berlin offices for meetings of agents. Even innocent-appearing news and musical programs played a

⁷⁴SWB, February 8, 1969, EE/2995/A1/1.

⁷⁵Ibid., February 20, 1969, EE/3005/A1/1.

part in espionage activities since they were allegedly used to convey information to agents.⁷⁶ This obsession with West Berlin as an espionage center permeates East German discussions of the city and is frequently used as justification for measures taken to isolate the western sectors of Berlin.

The third principal concern of the East German leadership during Ulbricht's last two and one half years was the issue of the disruptive and insulting activities for which West Berlin was alleged to have been used. Here the East German objection was to frequent incidents of an anticommunist nature, meetings and other activities by right wing political groups, and certain types of so-called "legal" disruptions that, in fact, simply amounted to legal discrimination against East Germany.

The East German news media gave considerable attention during this period to incidents involving violence directed against either the GDR or the Soviet Union. A bombing attempt against the sections of the GDR-operated S-Bahn in West Berlin were declared to be part of a conspiracy to inflict violent injury to personnel working for East Germany and property owned by the GDR.⁷⁷ When one of the Soviet soldiers guarding the Soviet War Memorial in the Tiergarten near the Brandenburg Gate was shot, the East Germans charged the West Berlin Senate with responsibility for the incident, since it had allowed

⁷⁶Horizont, No. 2, 1969, pp. 3-7.

⁷⁷ND, December 17, 1970, p. 6.

"fascist terror groups" to operate within the city.⁷⁸ Incidents such as these and others along the Wall, including escape attempts, were never allowed to pass as individual incidents, but were consistently declared to be part of a conspiracy directed against the GDR.

The second type of disruptive activity with which the Ulbricht leadership was concerned consisted of meetings, rallies, and other activities by right wing political groups such as the National Democratic Party and the more conservative of the two major West Germany parties, the Christian Democratic Union. For example, when the CDU announced in the fall of 1968 that it would hold its sixteenth congress in West Berlin, the East German government declared that this action was a violation of the independent political status of West Berlin and would "increase the tension in Europe." The GDR insisted that the CDU cancel the congress and avoid "poisoning the political atmosphere." It also charged that the holding of the CDU congress in West Berlin would result in misuse of the GDR communications to and from West Berlin, the same charge which it made regarding the Bundestag session which elected the Federal president.⁷⁹ The extreme right wing NPD was a constant source of irritation to the East Germans. Not only NPD meetings, but almost any NPD activity was seen as threatening by the GDR. The SED newspaper charged that the NPD had infiltrated the West Berlin police force and was working to increase extremist political actions in the city. Such

⁷⁸Ibid., November 7, 1970.

⁷⁹SWB, November 2, 1968, EE/2915/A1/1.

activities, the paper warned, constituted a menace to the well-being of the population of West Berlin.⁸⁰ Another complaint of the GDR leadership was the activities of expellee organizations such as the West German "Youth of the East." When this organization announced plans for a West Berlin rally, the East Germans once again charged that the city was being used for revanchist, neo-Nazi activities.⁸¹ The East German complaints, however, frequently went beyond attacks on groups whose programs were of an openly anticommunist nature and were aimed at those groups for whom one might have expected a more tolerant East German attitude. The announcement by the Conference of Chairmen of the Social Democratic Party of the FRG that they would hold a meeting in West Berlin provided an example of this. The East Germans accused the SPD of not only wanting to make trouble, but of wanting to make "massive trouble." The conference was described as a "deliberate disturbance" by the SPD, a violation of the sovereign rights of the GDR, and an effort to prove that the SPD "can stage provocations just as well or even better" than the CDU.⁸²

The Allied Travel Office in West Berlin represented what Ulbricht and the East German leadership were concerned about in terms of official or "legal" disruption by the West in West Berlin. If an East German wished to visit a NATO country and his government permitted him to do so, he had to apply at the Allied Travel Office for a Temporary Travel

⁸⁰ND, November 10, 1970, p. 7.

⁸¹SWB, June 17, 1970, EE/3406/A1/10.

⁸²ND, December 25, 1970, p. 7.

Document. This procedure was required because no NATO country, at that time, recognized an East German passport. The East German government viewed this as a serious disruption of East German travel rights. Brandt's support of the Allied Travel Office operations was cited by the East Germans as proof that the FRG was unwilling to contribute to better East-West German relations.⁸³ In the opinion of the East Germans, the presence of the Allied Travel office in West Berlin constituted one more example of the use of that city to disrupt the normal existence of the GDR.

The most consistent East German position during this time on the status of West Berlin was that West Berlin was an independent, separate political entity. This view first began to be voiced with frequency in 1968. Ulbricht and other GDR officials very emphatically denied that West Berlin was or ever could be a part of the Federal Republic. According to them, it was not possible to concede that while West Berlin had originally not been intended to be part of the FRG, its status had been changed through the years to a point where it had become a de facto part of West Germany. Before the 1969 Bundestag session in West Berlin, the East German government announced:

. . . Senate politicians talk about an "evolved status" But unlawful acts do not create rights, however often they may be repeated. All that has evolved as a result of the ties with Bonn--which are contrary to West Berlin's status as a separate political entity--are uncertainty and insecurity . . . for the inhabitants of West Berlin.⁸⁴

⁸³SWB, March 19, 1970, EE/3333/A1/5.

⁸⁴ND, February 14, 1969, p. 1.

However, the question of the four-power status of the city has tended to vary from time to time. In 1968 Ulbricht, following an argument used by the USSR, denied that a four-power status existed for all Berlin. The section excluded from such status, of course, is East Berlin. The issue of Berlin, especially from the East German point of view, is a question of the status of West Berlin. For them, one does not properly speak of the Berlin issue, but rather of the West Berlin issue. The term "East Berlin" becomes, in this context, a revanchist attack on the GDR. As Neues Deutschland pointedly declared, "East Berlin is a city that does not exist." What does exist is Berlin, the capital of the sovereign GDR and West Berlin which is a separate, independent political entity.⁸⁵

The East German description of West Berlin as a separate political entity during the last years of the Ulbricht regime is tinged with what must be described as a certain reluctance. Writing on this question in a book published in 1970, Albert Norden explained that Berlin, all of Berlin, was intended to be a part of the Soviet zone of Germany. No permanent Western occupation of part of Berlin was envisaged.⁸⁶ The decision to regard West Berlin today as an independent political entity is described as a "concession" by the East Germans in return for Western pledges that the city cease to be used as a "factor for insecurity in the world."⁸⁷ The implication that the West has not lived up to its

⁸⁵ Ibid., March 7, 1970, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Norden, p. 244.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 260.

part of this arrangement is clear and all that is left to conjecture is the matter of what the GDR would like to do now that the perfidy of the West has been proven. An indication appeared in the East Berlin daily Berliner Zeitung in March of 1970. In an article entitled "Berlin is the Capital of the Sovereign GDR," the Western attempt to create a "West Berlin myth" was attacked as an effort to violate the status of Berlin. All of Berlin, East and West, according to Berliner Zeitung, is part of the German Democratic Republic. The Western demand for guaranteed access rights to West Berlin was described as a "new 'Danzig corridor'" and another Western effort to violate the rights of the GDR.⁸⁸ Questions of traffic between West Berlin and the Federal Republic, Ulbricht insisted in a TV interview in 1970, had nothing to do with the FRG or any of the Western powers who were part of the West Berlin occupation force. The West, he insisted, had no right to demand guaranteed access because that was a matter to be handled by the GDR authorities and the West Berlin Senate alone.⁸⁹ From such statements as these, one can only conclude that the East German designation of West Berlin as an independent political entity comes grudgingly and, as other evidence would indicate, at the insistence of the Soviet Union.

While the official East German attitude toward West Berlin could best be described as hostile during this time, the period was not devoid of nonhostile appeals to the West German population. Speaking on the

⁸⁸Berliner Zeitung, March 25, 1970, p. 1.

⁸⁹SWB, November 10, 1970, EE/3530/i.

occasion of the presentation of the draft of the new GDR constitution in 1968, Ulbricht declared that he and his associates "feel linked with the workers of West Berlin, with its intelligentsia, its students, with all progressive forces of West Berlin." Ulbricht's conception here was that the best friends the West Berlin population had were those in leadership positions in East Germany.⁹⁰ This theme was constantly stressed in East German protests against certain West Berlin activities which were condemned for being contrary to the interests of the West Berlin residents.

The principal vehicle for the East German appeal to the West Berlin residents was the West Berlin-based Socialist Unity Party which was led by Gerhard Danelius. The GDR press gave considerable attention to the efforts of the SEW to influence West Berlin public opinion. The program of the SEW has as its goal the building up of support in West Berlin-East German relations. Accordingly, the SEW, while either offering candidates for the Senate or simply addressing itself to current issues, has presented itself as the alternative to the cold war, an alternative involving the establishment of a neutral, self-governing West Berlin free from West German political influences and the military protection of the United States, England, and France.⁹¹ Danelius says that this would enable West Berlin to "play a positive role in German and

⁹⁰ND, February 16, 1968, p. 2.

⁹¹Junge Welt (Berlin, GDR), March 11, 1971, p. 7.

international politics" and provide the population of the city with security which it does not enjoy today.⁹²

The Ulbricht government offered several proposals to the West Berlin Senate for improving the West Berlin situation during this time. Most related either to the question of the political presence of the Federal Republic in West Berlin or to the disruptive activities discussed above. The first major proposal dealing with West Berlin was presented in June, 1968 as part of a plan for improving East-West German relations. The plan, offered in the name of the GDR Council of State headed by Walter Ulbricht, called on both East and West German governments to sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, to renounce the storing of nuclear warheads on their territories, and to agree to an internationally valid renunciation of the use of force. The offer was tied to a rejection by the FRG of any claims on West Berlin. Acceptance would require the West Germans to avoid any future "intrusions" into West Berlin's affairs and to refrain from any future "hostile activities" regarding East Germany and its allies. While the proposal did not specify exactly what it meant by "intrusions" and "hostile activities" it was coupled with a denunciation of the presence of the West German NPD in West Berlin and a charge that the Brandt Ostpolitik constituted a threat to the East.⁹³ Speaking several days later at the opening of the eleventh annual Baltic Week, Ulbricht reaffirmed the proposal and said that if West Germany

⁹²ND, October 31, 1970, p. 5.

⁹³Ibid., June 23, 1968, pp. 1-2.

was sincere in its expressed desire for an easing of tensions, it should offer "deeds" as evidence by accepting the East German proposal.⁹⁴

The next important East German offer came the following year on the eve of the Bundestag session in West Berlin. In a letter to Brandt, Ulbricht made an offer of Easter passes for West Berliners to visit East Berlin if the Bundestag session would be held elsewhere. When West Germany insisted on a treaty guaranteeing access to West Berlin, Ulbricht declared that the Bonn government was attempting to blackmail the GDR. According to the SED First Secretary, the FRG had been maneuvered into an impasse as a result of the offer for Easter passes. Speaking of the FRG's reaction to the offer for Easter passes, he said,

When it heard this, it immediately raised the maximum demands. It demanded that the Soviet Union and the GDR should more or less recognize that West Berlin belongs to the FRG.⁹⁵

With the rejection of the offer for passes for West Berliners, the East Germans responded by, in Ulbricht's words, securing and protecting the GDR's communications routes against West German provocations.⁹⁶ The result, of course, was the closing of the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn which normally carried Allied traffic to West Berlin.

Although the question of passes for West Berliners was raised again on several occasions, the next major indication of an East German interest in making proposals relating to West Berlin came in Ulbricht's

⁹⁴Ibid., July 8, 1968, p. 1.

⁹⁵Ibid., March 4, 1969, pp. 1-2.

⁹⁶Ibid.

New Year's message on December 30, 1970. In his speech Ulbricht spoke of concluding a transit agreement with the West Berlin Senate. The offer, however, was coupled with a demand that the FRG halt its "troublemaking activities" in West Berlin. Ulbricht presented this offer primarily in terms of an attack on the West German government. His first expression of interest in a transit agreement was preceded by a statement that the time had "clearly come now to conclude agreements which will put a stop to the troublemaking activities" of the West Germans in order to make "normal relations" possible. Furthermore, the agreement that Ulbricht spoke of was to be concluded between the West Berlin Senate and the GDR rather than with the Federal Republic. The major powers in West Berlin were also to be excluded by Ulbricht's offer. As advice to the FRG government, Ulbricht said that Bonn should stop using the three Western powers as part of the effort to improve the West Berlin situation.⁹⁷

Council of Ministers Chairman Willi Stoph added to the Ulbricht offer several weeks later when he affirmed that the "termination of the political presence of the FRG and the cessation of all revanchist, militarist, and antipeace activities" in West Berlin could lead to what he termed a "broad development of normal good-neighborly relations" between the GDR and West Berlin. By good-neighborly relations, Stoph said he meant such things as entry by West Berliners into East Berlin and other parts of the GDR, assurance of transit traffic for goods and

⁹⁷ Ibid., December 31, 1970, pp. 1-2.

persons to and from West Berlin to all states, and the possible conclusion of an agreement with the West Berlin Senate on "frontier adjustment" in connection with the enclaves such as Steinstucken.⁹⁸

In terms of positive results, the several Ulbricht proposals were essentially unproductive, especially in 1968 and 1969. The first year was characterized by disagreement on virtually everything regarding West Berlin's relations with the GDR. The extent of the hostility was evidenced by disagreement on such minor matters as the West Berlin sewage treatment debt to the GDR.⁹⁹ The relationship between Bonn and East Berlin, of course, was no better. The next year brought some improvement with the submission of the draft of a treaty on relations between East and West Germany which contained an article dealing with West Berlin. The substance, however, was such that it did not in fact mark any dramatic breakthrough but rather simply a reaffirmation of the basic East German position on West Berlin.¹⁰⁰ Yet, the submission of the draft of a treaty attempting to bring some formal improvement in relations must be considered a step above the sort of polemics that were generally characteristic of relations between East Berlin, West Berlin, and the third member of the triangle, Bonn. This year also saw the East German trade organization, the FDGB, make an effort to achieve a detente

⁹⁸February 4, 1971, p. 3.

⁹⁹January 20, 1968, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰"Draft Treaty on the Establishment of Relations of Equal Right Between the GDR and the FRG," Documents on the National and International Policy of the GDR, No. 7, 1969, p. 7.

of its own with the West German Trade Union Federation.¹⁰¹ Although this action was accorded very little fanfare in the East German press, it does signify some change. In the same sense, the September meeting of the FRG Action for Democratic Progress group with East German, Polish, and Soviet officials in East Berlin signified a small degree of improvement.¹⁰² This group consisted of Bundestag members who favored a policy on West Berlin closer to that advocated by the East Germans, and therefore could properly be considered little more than part of a stage prop for an East German propaganda move. However, the fact that the props in this case were West German elected officials at least made it necessary for the GDR to recognize in public that not all West German politicians fit the stereotype depicted in most issues of Neues Deutschland.

The most dramatic events of 1970 would have to be considered the Brandt-Stoph meetings which would be expected to bring some improvement in relations between the GDR and West Berlin also. However, even these meetings and the arrangement surrounding them were marked by considerable displays of the continuing bad relations between East and West in Germany. Ulbricht's evaluation was that Brandt's attitude was "disappointing" since he was unwilling to talk about equal relations under international law between the two states and the acceptance of the independent political status of West Berlin.¹⁰³ However, in economic

¹⁰¹SWB, May 13, 1969, EE/3072/A1/3.

¹⁰²ND, September 6, 1969, p. 2.

¹⁰³Ibid., March 21, 1970, p. 1.

relations there was at least the promise of improvement. In September, Horst Soelle, GDR Minister of External Economic Relations, speaking at the Leipzig Trade Fair, mentioned the willingness of East Germany to expand its trade with both the Federal Republic and West Berlin.¹⁰⁴ Such a statement, even while dealing primarily with economic matters, could not be considered without important political meaning in terms of the relations between East Germany and West Berlin.

Ulbricht's last few months in control of the SED were marked by two important developments in relations with West Berlin. The first came in January with the restoration of telephone links between West Berlin and the GDR, which had been severed in 1952. The second most important event occurred in March following Stoph's speech on West Berlin. This was the opening of negotiations between the GDR and the West Berlin Senate on March 12. The West Berlin-GDR talks were taking place at the same time as the talks between the Federal Republic and the GDR. While the Western delegations were attacked by the GDR press for making no contribution to progress in the talks on Berlin,¹⁰⁶ the fact that the talks were in progress must once again be considered an indication of an improvement in relations.

In summation, Ulbricht's last years were characterized by both success and failure in improving relations with West Berlin and West

¹⁰⁴SWB, September 4, 1970, EE/3473/A1/2.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., January 27, 1971, EE/3594/A1/3.

¹⁰⁶ND, April 17, 1971, p. 1.

Germany. It is important to note that more of the failures occurred in the earlier years and more of the successes in the latter part of this period. This seems to indicate that an inevitable change in relations between East and West in Germany was taking place. The change can be described as inevitable because it was, in the opinion of many leading Western authorities on Soviet and East European affairs, dictated by the USSR.¹⁰⁷ The question automatically arises then of whether or not Ulbricht welcomed this change. Did Ulbricht desire an improvement in relations between East Germany and the FRG and West Berlin or did he reluctantly accede to Soviet demands that he take certain measures simply in order to support the Soviet policy? This matter also raises the question of Ulbricht's retirement. Did he in reality simply resign of his own free will or was he encouraged to do so, either by his associates in the SED or by his Soviet allies? Was Ulbricht, as one might be tempted to believe, becoming "dizzy with success" as a result of the vindication of his views on Czechoslovakia by means of the 1968 invasion, the growing prosperity of the East German economy, and the personal prestige that he could claim by virtue of being one of the world's senior Communist leaders, one of the few living contemporaries of Lenin?

¹⁰⁷Peter C. Ludz, "Continuity and Change Since Ulbricht," Problems of Communism, Vol. 22, March-April, 1972, pp. 58-60.

IV. THE REVOLT OF A PUPPET?

The question to which we shall first turn is the issue of Ulbricht's relations with the USSR on matters of policy relating to West Berlin and the Federal Republic. The contrast between Soviet and East German rhetoric during Ulbricht's last months as First Secretary of the SED supports the belief that there was a clash between the policies of the two leaderships. The different interpretations placed on the November, 1970 Tiergarten shooting incident provides an especially telling illustration of this contrast. In reporting the incident, Pravda not only observed that the crime "has provoked the indignation and anger of West Berliners," but also included a statement by Mayor Klaus Scheutz of West Berlin expressing his condemnation of the incident.¹⁰⁸ The East German accounts charged the West Berlin officials with responsibility for the incident and declared that the authorities in West Berlin were attempting to "cover up" the true facts behind the shooting.¹⁰⁹ The East German news media discussed the incident for days in a manner which could only be described as hysterical and would indicate an official desire to use the event as a pretext for postponing the development of improved relations with the West, a development which by this time appeared inevitable.

¹⁰⁸ Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXII, No. 45, December 8, 1970, p. 18. (Hereafter noted as CDSP).

¹⁰⁹ ND, November 8, 1970, p. 1.

The more optimistic Soviet coverage of the West German treaties with Poland and the USSR provides another illustration. While Soviet accounts did not ignore "revanchist circles" in the FRG, the stress was clearly placed on the promise of these developments. The Soviet press continually emphasized that the treaties with West Germany constituted "an important act to promote the easing of the international situation."¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, East German accounts played down the importance of the West German treaties and reminded readers that the revanchists in the FRG were not simply an isolated fringe element, but highly placed individuals within the Bonn government. The West German leaders such as Strauss and Barzel, the GDR press warned, would never allow the Bonn government to go so far as to implement a treaty involving the renunciation of force against the East.¹¹¹ Such accounts made the GDR's reluctance to support an improvement in relations with West Germany extremely obvious.

Differences between Ulbricht and the Soviet leadership became particularly apparent in statements regarding possible solutions to the West Berlin problem. Ulbricht's proposals, such as the 1968 offer discussed above, involved primarily sacrifices by the West. The 1968 plan not only would have had a detrimental effect on West Germany's NATO position through its provisions to the prohibition of storage of nuclear warheads, but it also required an apparently complete abandonment of

¹¹⁰CDSP, Vol. XXII, No. 47, December 22, 1970, p. 22.

¹¹¹ND, August 8, 1970, p. 1.

West Berlin by the Federal Republic. The incentives offered by Ulbricht for acceptance of his plans made the one-sided nature of the offers even more apparent. The incentives consisted mostly of vague promises, such as an "improvement" in the life of West Berliners, and much more specific threats, many of which the GDR carried out. The initiation of a passport requirement for all travel and transit traffic to and from the FRG and West Berlin in June of 1968 following the passage of emergency legislation by the FRG which was to be applicable to West Berlin was one such threat. The refusal of the GDR postal service to handle mail with a West German stamp marking the occasion of the election of the FRG president in a West Berlin Bundestag session in 1969 and the closing of the Helmstedt-Berlin autobahn at the same time are additional evidence of the willingness of the GDR to implement many of its threats. In summary, most of the incentives Ulbricht offered were of an essentially negative character.

The Soviet attitude on West Berlin presented a sharp contrast with Ulbricht's approach. Not only did the Soviet Union praise Brandt's Ostpolitik in connection with developments on easing tension in Europe,¹¹² in contrast to the East German charges that the Ostpolitik was hostile and directed against the East, but the Soviet leaders spoke in a considerably more promising tone regarding the prospects for progress on West Berlin. In discussing the Soviet position, First Secretary L. E. Brezhnev said,

¹¹²V. Shakov, "European Security Systems: Soviet Effort," International Affairs (Moscow), No. 5, 1971, p. 36.

We believe that normalization of the situation with respect to West Berlin is fully attainable. For this purpose, all that is required is that the interested parties display goodwill and work out decisions that will meet the wishes of the West Berlin population and will take into account the legitimate interests and sovereign rights of the German Democratic Republic.¹¹³

Continuing with the more moderate Soviet theme, Soviet Foreign Affairs Minister Gromyko, speaking of the successful conclusion of the talks on West Berlin and other European security matters, declared that all of these issues "must be carried out simultaneously, without waiting for matter to be concluded in one area before moving on to another."¹¹⁴

While this statement can be considered as having application to the FRG's insistence on progress on West Berlin's status before ratifying its treaty with Moscow, it also applied with equal force to Ulbricht, who had been demanding diplomatic recognition of East Germany by the FRG before continuing work on the West Berlin question.

The nature of these disagreements, plus others which have been documented by observers of GDR-Soviet relations of this period,¹¹⁵ clearly indicates that the most faithful of the old Soviet "puppets," Walter Ulbricht, had in many respects revolted against his patron. The next obvious question, therefore, is: Did this revolt result in Ulbricht's ouster or did he, in fact, simply retire due to his failing health and advancing years?

¹¹³CDSP, Vol. XXII, No. 48, December 29, 1970, p. 23.

¹¹⁴CDSP, Vol. XXIII, No. 17, May 25, 1971, p. 34.

¹¹⁵Ludz, pp. 56-60.

A number of facts support the contention that Ulbricht was forced from his office as First Secretary of the SED. The absence of any warning that Ulbricht was going to retire is one of the most conspicuous indications that the move was intended to be a surprise for the aging First Secretary. On the eve of the Sixteenth SED Conference in May, 1971, there was no reason for anyone outside the innermost circles of the SED leadership to expect a change in the top leadership position of East Germany. It is reasonable to expect that if Ulbricht had planned on stepping down, he would have desired some public notice in order to facilitate the preparation of proper tributes to him for his years of service. If the preparations that preceded his sixtieth birthday in 1953 are any indication, Ulbricht was certainly something less than an unassuming, humble public servant. On that occasion, his birthday was to be both an official state affair and a national celebration with singing and dancing throughout the entire country.¹¹⁶ It is not unreasonable to suppose that he would have wanted his retirement to have been marked by even more elaborate commemorations. However, there were none. The matter was handled as casually as though such personnel changes were an almost annual occurrence. Had Ulbricht been responsible for the move, it would certainly have been handled differently.

The matter of his advancing age would also support the belief that the resignation was not of Ulbricht's free will. The logic in this case revolves around what must certainly have been both a Soviet and an East

¹¹⁶Carola Stern, Ulbricht (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965), pp. 135-136.

German concern: the possibility of Ulbricht's sudden death. Such a demise could have required the hurried and unplanned designation of a successor, and might have involved the installation of an individual who did not meet Soviet desires and expectations. However, by moving before the seventy-eight year old's death, the Soviet Union could plan carefully and in secrecy by working with selected members of the East German ruling establishment. The fact that few were aware of Ulbricht's imminent replacement meant that fewer GDR politicians were in a position to start making their moves to grab whatever advanced positions they might feel were available. In short, such a move was easier to plan and carry out. That the Soviet leaders, or anyone, would desire it to be so is obvious. It is also obvious that those members of the East German leadership who were closest to the Kremlin insiders, Honecker being one of them--as his selection clearly indicates--would prefer that the matter be handled in this manner. Ulbricht's movements in the three months preceding the party conference early in May would have facilitated such actions. On February 8, Ulbricht, accompanied by his wife, arrived in the Soviet Union for a vacation at the specific invitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.¹¹⁷ He did not leave the USSR for his return to Berlin until March 14, after a meeting with Brezhnev at which "certain questions of the international situation" were discussed in what was described as a "friendly and cordial atmosphere."¹¹⁸ Ulbricht's five-week absence from

¹¹⁷CDSP, Vol. XXIII, No. 6, March 9, 1971, p. 30.

¹¹⁸Ibid., Vol. XXIII, No. 11, April 13, 1971, p. 22.

East Berlin, at the invitation of the CPSU, it should be noted, gave Honecker and his allies sufficient time to plan a move set for the Sixteenth SED Conference set for the first week of May. The fact that Ulbricht and his wife were vacationing in the USSR meant that they could be under constant, thorough surveillance where any contacts could be monitored. His meeting with Brezhnev just prior to his return could have given the Soviet leader a last opportunity to determine if the move against Ulbricht was absolutely necessary. While the Pravda account simply says that "certain questions of the international situation" were discussed, the matter of the GDR's policy toward West Germany and West Berlin would surely have been one of them. If Ulbricht showed no signs of freely altering his rigid posture on these issues it could have served to give Brezhnev the final evidence he needed to demonstrate that the First Secretary had outlived his usefulness.

An additional very obvious indication that Ulbricht's retirement was not voluntary appeared almost two years after the event. In March, 1973, the Ulbricht Stadium in East Berlin was renamed the Stadium of World Youth. At the same time, the nearly underground station which had borne Ulbricht's name and the Walter Ulbricht German Academy for Political Sciences and Jurisprudence at Potsdam-Babelsberg were also renamed.¹¹⁹ Such actions may be considered strong evidence that Ulbricht's retirement came not as a result of advancing years and declining health, but rather as a result of diminished political influence.

¹¹⁹SWB, March 21, 1973, EE/4250/B/5.

The facts mentioned above are supplemented by the policy considerations which pointed to an Ulbricht ouster rather than a voluntary retirement. A little over a month after Ulbricht's return from the USSR, Radio GDR home service announced that the Soviet Union had made a proposal on West Berlin which involved the acceptance of West Berlin's ties with the Federal Republic, including consent to consular protection for the permanent residents of the city and the representation of their interests abroad by the FRG.¹²⁰ This statement clearly went against Ulbricht's publicly-stated position on West Berlin. In the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin concluded in September, these offers were officially agreed to by the Soviet Union and the three Western powers in Berlin. Their inclusion further indicates the extent to which the views of Ulbricht were at variance with those of the USSR. In such a situation it would be surprising if the Kremlin made no move to replace Ulbricht.

However, the Soviet decision to replace Ulbricht required an additional decision regarding the question of with whom should Ulbricht be replaced. Why was Erich Honecker selected as the replacement? The most obvious reason would be his position within the SED in contrast to that of the other most frequently-cited possible successor, Willi Stoph, within the State apparatus. Communist ideology dictates the predominance of the Party over the State and the history of power struggles within Communist Party states shows that those individuals with Party careers

¹²⁰Ibid., April 29, 1973, EE/3670/A1/1.

are more likely to rise to the top than individuals with careers in the State bureaucracy. Honecker had become a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1946 and continued to rise through the Party ranks after the union with the East German Social Democrats. In 1958 he became a full member of the Politburo of the SED after considerable experience with the East German youth organization of which he was one of the founders, and two years of political training in the Soviet Union. As a Politburo member he was responsible for military affairs and internal security, both very important matters for the GDR during the following years.¹²¹ In addition, Honecker had a safe, conservative background in terms of positions he had taken during the past. While he had adopted stands opposing rapprochement with West Germany and was rumored to have opposed the Stoph meetings with Brandt in 1970,¹²² he was part of a group among the GDR leadership noted for its flexibility.¹²³ Such a trait would have increased his value to the USSR in a time of change in Communist policies toward the West. The fact that Honecker had a long career in the SED was of further value in lending an air of stability during a time of transition in the GDR's leadership. For a nation which is frequently noted for its instability, such an appearance could be of considerable importance. Finally, the fact that Honecker

¹²¹Die Volkskammer (The Peoples' Chamber) (Berlin, GDR: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1972), pp. 354-356.

¹²²Peter C. Ludz, "The SED Leadership in Transition," Problems of Communism, May-June, 1970, p. 27.

¹²³Peter C. Ludz, The GDR From the Sixties to the Seventies (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1970), p. 49.

was strong within the Party but not too strong must have added to his attractiveness for the Soviet Union. An individual who was very weak within his own party would have been extremely easy for the Kremlin to control, but he could have lacked the capability, at least initially, to command his own organization. An individual who was too strong might have become independent from the USSR and could have been inclined to carry out a purge within the Party in order to strengthen his position further. This would have not been desirable either, from the Soviet point of view. What was best for the USSR was a man like Honecker, strong but not too strong. The fact that no purges of Ulbricht faithfuls such as Friedrich Ebert and Margarete Müller occurred indicates that Honecker's position within the Party is not at all similar to what Ulbricht's was fifteen or twenty years ago. Honecker's nondominance of the SED increases his dependence of the Soviet leadership and thereby further increases his usefulness to the USSR.

The view that Ulbricht's retirement was other than a voluntary move on the First Secretary's part has been supported by three authorities on East German affairs: Melvin Croan, Peter C. Ludz, and Heinz Lippman. Writing shortly after Ulbricht's retirement, Croan, while not specifically advancing the thesis that Ulbricht was ousted against his will, presents an impressive array of justifications for such a move. In short, he argues that the SED leader was advocating foreign policies that ran counter to detente, insisting on a special position for himself in European bloc affairs, and presenting the GDR rather than the

USSR as the model of economic efficiency and political stability.¹²⁴ Ludz has likewise presented a catalogue of Soviet-GDR policy differences in Ulbricht's last days. Ludz hypothesizes that Ulbricht's "unwillingness to modify his rigid posture" on a variety of issues precipitated his downfall.¹²⁵ Honecker's biographer and former associate, Heinz Lippmann, has insisted that Ulbricht's removal was brought about by a combination of East German and Soviet efforts. Honecker, he writes, was reported to have been urging Ulbricht's removal as early as mid-1970. Lippmann notes that there was conspicuous tension between Ulbricht and Soviet Ambassador Abrassimov in the last days, and that the Berlin Agreement had become a principal issue because of Ulbricht's obstructionist tactics. He believes that the choice for the USSR became one of either Ulbricht or the Berlin Agreement, but not both together. Lippmann argues that the crucial characteristic of Honecker's that prompted the Russians to select him as the successor was his "unconditional loyalty to the CPSU and the USSR."¹²⁶

In order to more fully evaluate the wisdom of Honecker's selection as well as to understand GDR policy on West Berlin since 1971, we must next examine the developments on West Berlin and related questions since the Sixteenth SED Conference. The following chapter is devoted to such an examination.

¹²⁴Melvin Croan, "After Ulbricht," Survey, Vol. 17, Spring, 1971, pp. 78-81.

¹²⁵Ludz, "Continuity and Change Since Ulbricht," pp. 57-58.

¹²⁶Heinz Lippmann, Honecker and the New Politics of Europe (New York: Macmillan Company, 1972), pp. 214-223.

CHAPTER III

HONECKER'S WEST BERLIN POLICY

The Honecker policy toward West Berlin has differed sharply from the Ulbricht policy in terms of actual progress on issues relating to the city of West Berlin. One of the most notable of these, the Four Power Agreement on Berlin, came within just a few months of Ulbricht's replacement in May. However, the rhetoric of the three Honecker years has had much in common with that of the last part of the Ulbricht era, suggesting elements of continuity in GDR foreign policy along with elements of change. The tone of the East German rhetoric toward the West in general and the FRG and West Berlin in particular, has been characterized by a concern over the persistent negative qualities of the Federal Republic, attacks on West German and West Berlin policies and personalities, continued emphasis on the Western military threat, and charges that West Berlin has permitted itself to be misused by the West.

Honecker himself made the East German view that West Germany had not changed explicit in his report on the Twenty-fourth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shortly after the announcement of Ulbricht's resignation. According to the new First Secretary, the CPSU and the SED were "agreed that nothing had changed as regards the reactionary and aggressive character of imperialism and the Federal

Republic of Germany."¹ An editorial in Neues Deutschland a few days later was consistent with Honecker's harsh theme in its condemnation of the current role of the FRG. According to the editorial, the FRG was to "assume the old function of the German Reich since the end of World War Two--that is to say, form the spearhead of the imperialist world system against socialism."² While such statements must be balanced with subsequent positive developments, they do serve to establish a pattern of continuity between the Ulbricht and Honecker regimes in terms of the East German conception of what the FRG is supposed to represent. In this regard, the similarities outnumber the differences.

In evaluating West German policy initiatives toward the GDR, Honecker's regime continued to pursue a critical attitude. Many West German offers were simply dismissed as "verbal compromises" lacking in any real substance. In the summer of 1971 when the Bonn government rescinded official directives on avoiding the use of the term "GDR," the East Germans responded by declaring that this was no more than a "feeble and illogical adjustment to the force of reality and a way of yielding to the pressure of public opinion. It does not indicate a change of policy."³ Just as the East Germans frequently charged that the FRG wanted to believe the worst about the GDR, the GDR press seemed to insist on believing only the worst about West German intentions. According to GDR sources, the FRG had done nothing to improve relations

¹Neues Deutschland, May 4, 1971, p. 1. (Hereafter noted as ND.)

²Ibid., May 8, 1971, p. 1.

³Ibid., July 15, 1971, p. 2.

with East Germany. In fact, Bonn was said to be engaging in an international diplomatic offensive against East Germany in order to block its membership in the United Nations and prevent other states from extending diplomatic recognition to the GDR.⁴ The official East German opinion was that the FRG was continuing to adhere to the sole representation doctrine and was engaging in an ideological crusade against the GDR. According to Neues Deutschland in 1972, there had been a recent increase in anti-Communist propaganda in the FRG which was massive and alarming. The campaign was declared to be especially dangerous in that it was now conducted by "differentiated and selective methods" rather than by the outdated, obvious, and less effective approaches.⁵

Individuals who were associated with such policies were occasionally singled out for personal attacks by the East German news media. As FRG Minister of Interior, Han-Dietrich Genscher was accused of lacking respect for Bonn's treaties with the USSR and Poland when he questioned East German frontier measures. Genscher, according to the GDR press, failed to recognize the existing frontiers of Europe, including those of the GDR.⁶ When members of the West German Federal Frontier Guard boarded an East German vessel in the Kiel Canal and took the captain into custody for several hours, the East German press portrayed the incident as one

⁴Ibid., October 16, 1971, pp. 1-2.

⁵Ibid., February 27, 1972, p. 3.

⁶Ibid., January 4, 1972, p. 2.

of major proportions. No one should be surprised, it declared, that this "act of piracy" met with the public approval of Genscher who was said to be on record as favoring "interference in the internal affairs of the GDR."⁷ In a similar fashion, FRG Minister Egon Bahr has been attacked for his alleged wish to cause the GDR "to disappear." In commenting on this, the East German radio program, "Voice of the GDR," charged that the Bahr statement was proof that the FRG had no real intention of renouncing its "revanchist" policies.⁸ West Berlin's mayor Klaus Scheutz was attacked in 1973 as one of "those people who maintain that West Berlin was best governed during the days of the cold war." A Neues Deutschland editorial charged that Scheutz had no interest in normalization of relations with the GDR and was acting in a manner inconsistent with the best interests of the West Berlin population.⁹ While Brandt himself was generally accorded reasonably restrained treatment by the GDR press during this time, he has also been the subject of occasional severe criticism. When Brandt made what the East German press viewed as disparaging remarks about the attitude of the GDR officials in April, 1973, the response was an East German attack in which it was charged that the Chancellor was hostile to the GDR and blinded by Social Democratic anticommunism.¹⁰ The new West German

⁷Junge Welt (Berlin, GDR), January 12, 1972, p. 2.

⁸BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, April 16, 1974, EE/4575/A1/1. (Hereafter noted as SWB.)

⁹ND, November 7, 1973, p. 1.

¹⁰SWB, April 13, 1973, EE/4270/A1/2.

chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, has been the subject of numerous German attacks. His work as Defense Minister has attracted most of the criticism he received from the GDR. In that capacity, according to Erich Honecker, Schmidt carried on the "infamous work begun by Strauss" and won the praise of Nazi elements in West Germany.¹¹

Since Honecker's assumption of power in May, 1971, the GDR has continued to stress the military threat posed by West Germany and NATO. This theme is essentially a continuation of one which started in the first years after the partition of Germany and was played upon in varying degrees during the 1950s and 1960s. The basic idea of it is that the military power of the West is directed against the communist party states of Eastern Europe. The specter of a nuclear military force under the control of the Bonn government has been a basic element of this theme. As Neues Deutschland editorialized in 1973,

In its military policy the FRG is at present in theory and practice pursuing the two-fold aim of increasing the conventional strength of the Bundeswehr by arming itself and getting a hold on nuclear weapons by the presence of American forces in the FRG.¹²

Any efforts at upgrading the technical quality of the West German military have been portrayed as a violation of the spirit of detente. In commenting on West German military modernization plans in 1972, "Voice of the GDR" asked rhetorically how such plans could be

¹¹ND, January 7, 1972, p. 2.

¹²Ibid., July 25, 1973, p. 1.

compatible with the West German treaties with the USSR and Poland.¹³ Military exercises, such as are very common within the Warsaw Pact states, including the GDR, are also cited by the East German authorities as a contradiction of Bonn's expressions of peaceful intentions toward the East. The NATO exercises in 1974 were heralded by Neues Deutschland as "proof of the unabated aggressiveness" of NATO. According to the SED newspaper, fewer and fewer people in the West believe that there is a "threat from the East" as the "anticommunist fairy tales" assert, so the only reason for Western military maneuvers must be to prepare for aggression.¹⁴ This image of the threat from the West is used as justification for East German military preparedness. In 1971, GDR Defense Minister Heinz Hoffmann declared that peace in Europe had been preserved, not by a balance of power, but only by a clear and growing military superiority of the East. Hoffmann cited the alliance of the United States and the FRG as justification for continued efforts to guarantee the military superiority of the WTO forces, including those of the GDR.¹⁵

The Honecker regime has continued to stress that West Berlin threatens the GDR. However, since early 1971, the rhetoric about the West Berlin threat has been considerably reduced from its previous level in terms of the intensity of East German attacks and charges. The basic

¹³SWB, January 19, 1972, EE/3892/A1/1.

¹⁴ND, May 7, 1974, p. 1.

¹⁵SWB, May 13, 1971, EE/3682/E/4.

complaint has been that West Germany is attempting to extend its jurisdiction to West Berlin and govern West Berlin as though it were another Land of the FRG. The GDR has repeatedly charged that West Germany is attempting to govern West Berlin through extensions of certain types of legislation to the city, by drafting residents into the Bundeswehr, and by establishing offices of the government of the FRG in West Berlin. The West German plan, put forward by Genscher as Minister of Interior, to establish a branch of the Federal Environmental Protection Office in West Berlin aroused considerable displeasure in office GDR circles. In August, 1973, Neues Deutschland described this plan as "political environmental pollution" and a violation of the Four Power Agreement on Berlin.¹⁶ This reaction was typical of the GDR response to West German efforts at perpetuating a political presence in West Berlin. The same reaction has continually been accorded visits by West German officials to the city for performance of official duties during the Honecker years.

However, these years have also brought improvements in the political atmosphere surrounding the West Berlin issue. These developments surpassed those of the preceding Ulbricht regime. A clear indication of such improvements appeared in a speech by Honecker in January, 1972 when he said that while he was aware of the aggressive character of the FRG, he was also taking account, "especially from the point of view of foreign policy, of the positive aspect of the

¹⁶ND, August 31, 1973, p. 2.

Brandt government."¹⁷ Ulbricht had been unwilling to make such concessions to the West German SPD. East German awareness of the "positive aspect" of the Brandt government was reflected in a variety of ways. The return of a West German soldier who had defected to the East, along with his army jeep, by the East Germans to the West German authorities signified the change.¹⁸ In the past, such an action would have been inconceivable. The reduction in the East-West German propaganda war in July, 1972, was additional evidence of East Germany's recognition that the SPD government did possess some good characteristics. What this propaganda "ceasefire" amounted to was an end to the display of posters at the Berlin Wall directed at GDR border guards and the termination of the East German "Soldatensender" propaganda broadcasts to Bundeswehr soldiers and the sending of communist propaganda magazines to Bundeswehr soldiers.¹⁹ Honecker acknowledged the changed situation in October, 1973 when he announced that he could see a change from the cold war in the direction of detente.²⁰ The most important evidence, however, of this change in the political climate can be seen in the record of proposals and negotiations during the first three years of the Honecker regime.

¹⁷ Ibid., January 7, 1972, p. 2.

¹⁸ SWB, May 9, 1972, EE/3984/A1/4.

¹⁹ Ibid., July 14, 1972, EE/4040/A1/3.

²⁰ ND, October 27, 1973, p. 2.

I. NEGOTIATIONS SINCE 1971

The most conspicuous of the agreements during the first three years of Honecker's control of the SED was the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin signed on September 3, 1971. The SED press was enthusiastic in its praise of the agreement, hailing it as "an important step towards detente in the heart of Europe." The SED asserted that its leadership had been "fully informed" at all times by the Soviet Union regarding progress on the agreement and had made a "constructive contribution" itself to the successful conclusion of the agreement.²¹ Expressing the USSR's appreciation of the GDR's role, CPSU Politburo member Piotr Shelest, speaking in East Berlin on the 22nd anniversary of the GDR the next month, agreed that the GDR did in fact play a "great constructive role."²²

The willingness of the GDR's leadership to support the USSR's efforts to achieve detente was demonstrated by the prompt conclusion of two agreements by East Germany with the Federal Republic and West Berlin on transit traffic to West Berlin. The agreement with West Germany was signed on December 17, 1971 by Dr. Michael Kohl for the GDR. At the time of the signing, Dr. Kohl declared that the agreement was significant for more than its material contents because it was actually a "useful contribution to detente" which could help encourage

²¹Ibid., August 27, 1971, p. 1.

²²Ibid., October 6, 1971, p. 3.

the further normalization of relations between the GDR and the FRG.²³ Three days later an agreement with West Berlin was signed, with State Secretary Guenter Kohrt acting on behalf of the GDR. Just as Kohl expressed the hope that the agreement with West Germany would lead to further measures to normalize relations, Kohrt declared his hope for the resolution of other issues in relations between West Berlin and the GDR.²⁴ It is significant that these agreements were concluded without official diplomatic recognition of the GDR by West Germany, a demand voiced by Ulbricht and previously barring such progress. Honecker seemed content in discussing the agreement with the FRG to remark that by signing an agreement with the GDR West Germany had acknowledged East Germany as a "sovereign state." Honecker also commented that the agreements amounted to an acceptance of the principal East German argument on West Berlin, that the city is an independent political entity. The fact that Western demands for a Western controlled corridor through the GDR's territory had been dropped was cited by Honecker as a major victory for East Germany. This, he argued, amounted to a further "de facto" recognition of the GDR.²⁵

The desire for a further normalization of East Germany's relations with the FRG was satisfied by the successful conclusion of the Treaty on the Bases of Relations between the GDR and the FRG. While the treaty

²³The Berlin Settlement (Bonn: Press and Information Office of the FRG, 1972), p. 59.

²⁴Ibid., p. 72.

²⁵ND, December 18, 1971, p. 2.

was initialed on November 8, 1972, after a long political wrangle in West Germany, it did not come into force until June 21, 1973. On the occasion of the signing of the treaty, Dr. Michael Kohl declared that the GDR viewed the treaty as a vehicle for "bringing about the replacement of the cold war by detente and cooperation."²⁶ As a logical continuation of this process, negotiations began on the establishment of permanent missions for the two Germanies in their respective capitals. These negotiations bore fruit in May, 1974 when permanent missions were established in Bonn and East Berlin.²⁷ The actual opening of the missions had been delayed for a short time as a result of the Guillaume spy case in West Germany. That the delay amounted to no more than a few days is in itself remarkable. In an earlier time, such an incident would have been sufficient to disrupt the entire process of normalization between the GDR and the FRG.

The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin contained a reference to the possible exchange of territory in the case of enclaves such as Steinstucken and other small areas. The first such exchange came as a result of an agreement in July, 1972 between the GDR government and the West Berlin Senate. Under the agreement, a small piece of land near Potsdamer Platz was transferred to West Berlin for the price of thirty-one million Deutsche Marks.²⁸ A much more extensive territorial

²⁶Ibid., June 21, 1973, p. 1.

²⁷Ibid., May 3, 1974, p. 1.

²⁸Ibid., July 20, 1972, p. 4.

exchange was agreed to in February, 1974 involving land formerly under the control of the GDR Reichsbahn in the Anhalter region of West Berlin.²⁹

Another important step in the process of normalization occurred with the establishment of the Boundary Commission in January, 1973. The purpose of the commission was to review and supplement the demarcation of the East-West German border, to prepare the necessary documents on the actual course of the boundary and to regulate other problems connected with the border.³⁰ Shortly after the establishment of the Boundary Commission, Bonn and East Berlin began talks on a public health agreement between the two states.³¹ The result of this series of talks which lasted for almost a year was a Health Services Agreement which was signed in East Berlin on April 25, 1974. The need for such an agreement had been mentioned in the Treaty on the Bases of Relations between the FRG and the GDR.³² In September, 1973, the GDR-FRG Frontier Agreements were signed. One dealt with caring for damage at the frontier and the other concerned the maintenance and development of the frontier waterways and the water engineering installations along the frontier. As a result of these agreements, provisions were implemented for reciprocal information at short notice regarding events such as fires,

²⁹SWB, February 23, 1974, EE/4534/A1/4.

³⁰ND, January 31, 1973, p. 2.

³¹Ibid., May 24, 1973, p. 7.

³²Ibid., April 26, 1974, p. 2.

gale damage, landslides, and epidemics.³³ Meanwhile, work continued on a possible post and telecommunications agreement, a cultural agreement, and a judicial assistance agreement between the GDR and the FRG and a variety of agreements between the GDR and West Berlin. One of the most important of the latter is an accident assistance agreement on which talks began in May, 1973. This agreement would cover the rendering of prompt aid after accidents on the sector boundary in Berlin.

As a means of improving contacts between the GDR and the FRG and West Berlin, negotiations continued in the area of telephone facilities, television programs, and press agreements. In July, 1972, arrangements were made for increasing and improving telephone connections. As a result, thirty-two local exchanges in the Potsdam area could be reached from West Berlin by direct dialing. This measure was made possible as a result of an agreement between the FRG Post Office and the GDR Postal Administration concluded in September, 1971. In the past, no call could be placed from West Berlin to the GDR without going through an operator.³⁴ In 1973 the prospect of an exchange of television programs between the FRG and the GDR was raised by Max Walter Schultz, the vice-president of the GDR Authors' Union. Schultz expressed his desire to show "as much as possible that will give a truly realistic picture of West German conditions--on the principle of reciprocity."³⁵ So far,

³³SWB, September 22, 1973, EE/4405/A1/2.

³⁴ND, July 25, 1972, p. 7.

³⁵SWB, April 26, 1973, EE/4279/A1/10.

however, there has been an absence of any higher official support for such an exchange of television programs. The exchange of journalists between the GDR and the FRG and West Berlin, in contrast, did develop. By 1973, provisions had been made for GDR journalists in Bonn and for FRG journalists in East Berlin. The German Press Agency (DPA) office in East Berlin, which opened on September 25, 1973, was even equipped with a permanent teleprinter line connecting it with the DPA office in West Berlin.³⁶ The extent to which human contacts between East and West had improved in Germany could be seen by the statistics on travel to the GDR in 1973. During the year, over 3,650,000 came from the Federal Republic and more than 3,461,000 from West Berlin.³⁷ The figures for 1972 are only slightly less than these but in 1971, before the implementation of the transit agreement, only 3,000,000 residents of West Berlin and the Federal Republic entered the GDR.³⁸ Telephone contacts also increased during this time. While in 1970 there were only 700,000 calls from the FRG and West Berlin to the GDR, in 1973 the number reached 5.8 million.³⁹

The prospects for better economic relations improved after Honecker's rise to the position of First Secretary. East Germany

³⁶ND, September 26, 1973, p. 7.

³⁷SWB, January 5, 1974, EE/4492/A1/6.

³⁸Ibid., December 23, 1972, EE/4178/A1/6.

³⁹Ibid., April 20, 1974, EE/4579/A1/5.

insisted that it would not allow itself to become dependent on a capitalist economy but trade talks continued and Honecker's first full year in control saw an increase of over 25 percent in the amount of West German imports into the GDR. This is in contrast to a slight decline in imports in 1971 compared with 1970. Imports from West Berlin, on the other hand, declined sharply in 1972. East German imports from West Berlin dropped by approximately 25 percent in 1972 compared with 1971.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, East German exports to West Berlin rose considerably. In 1972 they amounted to better than 495 million marks compared to only 347 million in 1971. Exports to West Germany declined during 1972, but only slightly.⁴¹ In 1973 talks between West Berlin and East Germany regarding the possible construction of an oil pipeline from the GDR to West Berlin were begun.⁴² It is possible that the SED leadership may envision a situation in which West Berlin might become oriented economically toward the GDR, thus increasing East Germany's ability to control the city. However, no positive results have yet come from the talks and East Germany's full intentions regarding trade with West Germany and West Berlin remain unclear. Yet, the fact that economic talks have been in progress for some time does signify a political change in East Germany, a change in the direction of increasing contacts with the FRG and West Berlin.

⁴⁰Statistical Pocket Book of the GDR (Berlin, GDR: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1973), pp. 92-93.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 90-91.

⁴²SWB, July 20, 1973, EE/4351/A1/5.

The extent of the change in GDR policy was signified in 1973 by a meeting which Honecker held with the chairman of the FRG Social Democratic Party, Herbert Wehner, and the chairman of the SPD's coalition partner, the FDP.⁴³ Given the traditionally hostile East German view of the Social Democrats, such a meeting, simply for an "exchange of views" rather than in the face of some crisis, must be viewed as significant. The fact that Honecker himself, rather than some lower-ranking SED official, participated in the meeting further increases its significance.

II. CONFRONTATIONS SINCE 1971

Even though the overall record is one of positive achievement, the Honecker period has not been without negative developments. The most prominent dispute of the Honecker regime with West Berlin and the Federal Republic has centered around the alleged abuse of the transit routes to West Berlin. The first indication of this issue came in April, 1972, following the temporary implementation of the transit agreement by the GDR, apparently in order to improve the prospects for West German ratification of the treaty with East Germany. After an estimated 300,000 West Berliners made use of the temporary facilities for visits to the East, GDR Foreign Minister Otto Winzer charged that "rightist extremist and revanchist forces" had attempted to misuse the GDR's "generous gesture of goodwill for evil purposes."⁴⁴ An editorial

⁴³ND, June 2, 1973, p. 2.

⁴⁴Ibid., April 6, 1972, p. 2.

in Neues Deutschland on August 10, 1973 signalled the beginning of an East German campaign against the "abuse" of the transit routes, with the primary concern being the activities of commercial escape assistance organizations operating from West Berlin and the FRG. According to the editorial,

There are forces at work to undermine the Transit Agreement and this is being done from the territory of the FRG and West Berlin, whose citizens derive direct advantage from the Agreement. The Transit Agreement, which is being implemented by the GDR authorities in spirit and in letter, has recently been increasingly misused by profiteers. From the FRG and West Berlin bands of criminals are at work who, for fees of DM 40,000 to DM 80,000 smuggle people across the border-- people who hope for a life of luxury in the FRG or in West Berlin, for instance, scientists, doctors, and other specialists are being promised such a life by official quarters.⁴⁵

The editorial went on to denounce the fact that such commercial services were able to freely advertise their services in newspapers in West Berlin and the FRG and that the activities of such individuals were tolerated and possibly even assisted by Western officials. It concluded with a demand that the authorities in West Berlin and West Germany do their part to aid implementation of the Transit Agreement by taking actions against those responsible for the activities in question.

The Neues Deutschland warning was followed by the implementation of much more rigid East German checks on traffic to and from West Berlin. The next month the SED repeated its demand for stricter controls to stop illegal crossings to the Federal Republic and West

⁴⁵Ibid., August 10, 1973, p. 1.

Berlin and attacked the idea of "freedom of movement" as a cover used by those who simply want to escape prosecution for crimes against the GDR.⁴⁶ Within a week, the East German news agency, ADN, reported that a number of citizens of West Berlin and West Germany had been taken into custody for violation of the Transit Agreement.⁴⁷ More arrests followed on a regular basis and on October 30, the GDR government began a much publicized trial of several of the "traders in human lives" in East Berlin. Western journalists were even invited to attend the proceedings, a very unique action in the GDR. During the course of the trial, the GDR charged that West Berlin and West German firms were actually paying the expenses for the escapes of individuals who were needed in their industries. Officials of West Berlin and the FRG were also said to be party to the operations of the "criminal smugglers." Members of the United States Army stationed in West Berlin were also charged with participation.⁴⁸ By February, 1974 a total of 150 West Berliners and West Germans had been arrested by GDR authorities and charged as escape helpers. Forty of this number had been sentenced, many of them for up to ten years imprisonment.⁴⁹ While the arrests of Western escape helpers are used for maximum propaganda benefit, the trials of GDR citizens who have attempted to escape are kept secret. Every effort

⁴⁶ Ibid., September 21, 1973, p. 1.

⁴⁷ SWB, October 2, 1973, EE/4413/A1/8.

⁴⁸ ND, November 1, 1973, p. 2.

⁴⁹ SWB, February 14, 1974, EE/4526/A1/2.

is made to avoid any publication of the details of escape efforts since this information might aid others who desire to attempt an escape later.⁵⁰ It is also desirable that the organizations assisting in escapes not be permitted to learn from their mistakes.

Meanwhile, the number of escapes from the GDR to West Berlin and the FRG for 1973 rose by 16 percent over the previous year, according to figures released by the West Berlin-based 13th August Working Group. The total number of escapes in 1973 was 6,450. The increase was considered a result of escapes via the transit routes during the first half of the year, prior to the initiation of more stringent East German checks. However, the number of "frontier-breakers" was also up considerably, 49 percent over 1972, and that also contributed to the increase. Almost 1600 of the escapees were "frontier-breakers" who required no assistance from outside organizations or individuals.⁵¹

A related controversy during this time centered around the matter of currency violations by Western visitors to the GDR. Since 1964, visitors had been required to exchange a minimum of ten marks a day for overnight stays in the GDR and five marks a day for one-day visits to East Berlin. In November of 1973 the GDR authorities doubled these amounts and applied the new regulations to previously exempt old-age pensioners. The East German argument was that this action was necessary in order to discourage the illegal exchange of their currency which

⁵⁰Frankfurter Allgemeine, July 15, 1974, p. 5.

⁵¹SWB, January 2, 1974, EE/4489/A1/1.

could be purchased in West Berlin or in the FRG at approximately one-third of its face value. Such exchanges, considered illegal by the GDR, were conducted openly at many Western banks and the rates were regularly advertised in the Western press as well as in the windows of banks. The East German leadership viewed such exchanges and the illegal importation of currency purchased in that manner as an effort to return to the situation that existed before the construction of the Wall in 1961. These activities were said to represent "deliberate damage" to the GDR and a "violation of its sovereign rights as well as interference in its domestic affairs."⁵² While the East Germans objected to the sale of their currency in the West as well as to its importation back to the GDR, they were in no position to enforce prohibitions against the former, so they concentrated on attempting to prevent travelers from bringing Western purchased GDR marks into East Germany. Over a period of about one year, more than 500,000 such marks were confiscated at border crossing points.⁵³ The doubling of the mandatory minimum exchange for tourists was intended to remove the incentive for bringing in such marks since it was obviously impossible to confiscate more than a fraction of the amount coming in prior to the implementation of the new regulations. The fact that the regulations were introduced without warning and were also applied to old-age pensioners visiting relatives and friends in the GDR raised Western suspicions that the real intention

⁵²ND, November 8, 1973, p. 1.

⁵³Ibid., November 6, 1973, p. 2.

of this action was to reduce the number of visitors coming to the country. Whether such an intention motivated the action or not, it certainly did have that effect. A survey of three checkpoints into the GDR in Lower Saxony over the weekend of November 30 to December 2 demonstrated the effect of the new regulations. While the previous weekend had seen over 6,800 travellers cross into the East, only 1,300 made the journey that weekend.⁵⁴ A survey of the number of automobiles using all crossings into East Germany for the three days of the Christmas holiday demonstrated a similar result. While Christmas of 1972 brought over 23,000 cars from West Germany and West Berlin, in 1973 only 12,600 automobiles were counted on the same days.⁵⁵ Numerous protests from the West and several meetings of representatives from the West Berlin Senate with East German authorities failed to produce a return to the old regulations. However, by October, 1974 a compromise was finally reached in which the GDR agreed to require the exchange of only 6.5 DM for one-day visits to East Berlin and 13 DM for longer visits to the GDR.⁵⁶ The absence of any public Soviet support for the GDR's position may have been a decisive factor in the GDR's decision.

Several other less important disputes involving the GDR and West Berlin arose during this time. In 1973 the GDR began to question arrangements whereby West Berlin pumped its sewage into the Teltow canal

⁵⁴SWB, December 13, 1973, EE/4475/A1/9.

⁵⁵New York Times, December 28, 1973, p. 5.

⁵⁶Berliner Morgenpost, October 27, 1974, p. 1.

for processing by the East Berlin purification plant. The East Germans accused West Berlin of disregarding the interests of the GDR and warned that "serious consequences may stem from unilateral action by West Berlin authorities."⁵⁷ West Berlin authorities denied charges that they were violating agreements with the GDR on the treatment of waste water, but did agree to a series of meetings on the question. At a meeting in January in East Berlin the GDR demanded higher prices for the removal of waste water from West Berlin.⁵⁸ The West Berliners rejected the East German demand and the issue remained unsettled by late 1974. An additional dispute appeared in January when the East Germans demanded an increase in the price of the lignite briquettes that they had been selling to West Berlin for the past twenty years. Citing Western inflation as justification the GDR raised its prices on the briquettes from 79 marks per ton to 92 marks. Rather than meet the East German demand, West Berlin simply halted its purchases and prepared to endure the winter without the GDR's briquettes.⁵⁹

In spite of these disputes, Honecker has continued to insist on the feasibility of a complete normalization of relations between West Berlin and the GDR. Apparently such issues as discussed above are not intended to wreck the development of detente over West Berlin. In an interview with the Associated Press on May 30, 1974, Honecker explained with regard to West Berlin,

⁵⁷ Berliner Zeitung, August 7, 1973, p. 2.

⁵⁸ SWB, January 25, 1974, EE/4509/A1/5.

⁵⁹ Ibid., January 10, 1974, EE/4496/A1/1.

If problems and difficulties arise at times this should not be dramatized, considering the complex nature of things and the different interests which we take into account. As far as we are concerned we do not seek a "cooling off" but rather a warming up of the international climate in the interests of peace and the people.⁶⁰

III. THE HONECKER POLICY AND THE USSR

Completion of this brief review of the outlines of Honecker's policies pertaining to the West Berlin issue and related matters permits some observations and generalizations at this point. While the GDR's domestic policy has not been radically altered since Ulbricht's resignation, the East German foreign policy has undergone a considerable change in emphasis since May, 1971. According to one prominent authority on East German political affairs, many of the positions taken by Ulbricht during his last years were viewed by the Soviet leadership as both irksome and disturbing. In an article in 1972, Peter C. Ludz ventured the observation regarding Ulbricht that

. . . In a certain sense he was projecting himself as a potential rival of Moscow in its claim to ideological leadership; beyond that, by stressing the GDR's independent achievements, he was obviously trying to strengthen its position and influence in the international political arena.⁶¹

The emphasis since Honecker's selection as a replacement for Ulbricht has been very different. Honecker has repeatedly stressed both the

⁶⁰"Interview granted by Erich Honecker to the US News Agency," Political Documents of the GDR, No. 3, 1974, p. 9.

⁶¹Peter C. Ludz, "Continuity and Change Since Ulbricht," Problems of Communism, March-April, 1972, p. 57.

closeness of the GDR's positions to those of the Soviet Union and East Germany's unflinching support of the USSR as the leader of the "socialist community of nations." Honecker's recognition of a debt to the Soviet Union permeates discussions of the development of the GDR. In May, 1974 he declared that the successful development of a socialist state in East Germany was possible only because its leadership "chose the right side in the great class battles of our time, the side of the Soviet Union and its battle-tested Leninist party. . . ." ⁶² Discussing the position of the GDR today, Honecker was able to declare on May 12, 1974, regarding his country's relationship with the Soviet Union,

Today relations between the GDR and the USSR have reached such a stage that our close cooperation penetrates practically every important sphere of social life. . . . We agree on all political, ideological, and theoretical basic questions of social development. ⁶³

This absolute devotion to the guidance of the USSR is in sharp contrast with Ulbricht's talk about the independent achievements of the GDR, East Germany's unique road to socialism, and his independent proposals. Ulbricht's New Year Message for 1968 in which he proposed, independently from the USSR, that the GDR and the FRG conclude a treaty on the renunciation of force and initiate talks on the complete disarmament of both states illustrates the extent of Ulbricht's independence. ⁶⁴ Honecker has avoided such displays of what the USSR

⁶²ND, May 30, 1974, p. 2.

⁶³Ibid., May 13, 1974, p. 2.

⁶⁴Ibid., January 1, 1968, pp. 1-2.

would rightly consider arrogance. In his GDR-Soviet Friendship Day speech in May, 1974 Honecker made the SED's stand regarding the Soviet Union's authoritative position amply clear when he asserted that "every step we are taking today" is determined by the faith that only through a firm alliance with the USSR could East Germany's efforts succeed. This alliance was described as the key to the GDR's achievements in both economic and foreign affairs. Even the West, Honecker insisted, was aware of this and, accordingly, was trying to "malign our alleged impairment of the sovereignty of our Republic." However, he continued, what the Western states fail to realize is that the East German alliance with the USSR is of a "different quality from . . . [alliances] . . . of capitalist countries." The East German-Soviet alliance, in Honecker's view, is based on a community of ideology, social system, and goals. The Soviet and GDR leaderships share what Honecker sees as a common objective, namely, the benefit of the working class.⁶⁵ His position is that such an alliance is both unique and unshakable. Enthusiastic reaffirmations of this position have been liberally sprinkled through Honecker's policy statements during the years since his assumption of power. These statements illustrate the most important instance of discontinuity with the last years of the Ulbricht regime.

While Honecker's declarations of East German fealty to the USSR must be considered the most obvious new trend in GDR foreign policy since 1971, the stress on Bloc cooperation clearly constitutes the

⁶⁵Ibid., May 13, 1974, p. 2.

second most important pattern in this period. In this respect, the Honecker statements more closely resemble those of Ulbricht. The first concern regarding Bloc cooperation centers around the defense of the GDR. The idea that cooperation with the Bloc provides a valuable protective shield for the GDR has repeatedly been made clear by East German leaders. Honecker forcefully expressed it in his report to the Eighth SED Congress in June, 1971. In his speech Honecker explained that the alliance with the "community of socialist states" was necessary because

. . . Through the collective defense alliance of the armed forces of the Warsaw Treaty, especially by the military shield of the Soviet Army, peace and security for the people of the German Democratic Republic are reliably protected.⁶⁶

By way of further invoking Bloc support, the East German leadership has gone so far as to describe the defense of the GDR as the "test for the East" in facing up to Western imperialism.⁶⁷

A second concern relating to cooperation with the Bloc involves a social orientation toward the East. East Germany's leadership is concerned about the development of social patterns that are congruent with those of its allies to the East. In a speech to the SED's Central Committee in July, 1972 Politburo member Kurt Hager discussed the cultural policy of the GDR. While explaining the need for a

⁶⁶Erich Honecker, Unter dem Banner des Internationalismus (Under the Banner of Internationalism) (Berlin, GDR: Dietz Verlag, 1972), p. 117.

⁶⁷ND, May 8, 1971, p. 1.

cultural policy embracing the entire Socialist community, Hager said,

The Socialist culture of the GDR occupies a firm place in the cultural development of the Socialist countries. We consider it one of our most important cultural tasks actively to promote the mutual approach and fertilization of Socialist cultures.⁶⁸

The East German government under both Honecker and Ulbricht has encouraged such "fertilization" through provision of ample opportunities for contacts between its citizens and those of most of the other East European communist party states. One of the most important opportunities has been travel. According to figures released by the GDR Travel Bureau near the end of 1973, almost one million East Germans availed themselves of the opportunity to visit the GDR's Warsaw Pact neighbors in 1973.⁶⁹ The Tenth World Youth Festival which was held in East Berlin in the summer of 1973 was another important part in promoting East German contacts with those who shared the SED's official outlook. According to the SED, the festival "was a great manifestation of democratic and socialist culture and illustrated the living power of the ideas of internationalism."⁷⁰

A third concern relating to the GDR's stress on Bloc cooperation is coordination of the foreign policies of the Warsaw Pact states. As previously mentioned, Honecker describes relations between the USSR

⁶⁸Kurt Hager, Socialist Cultural Policy (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1972), p. 53.

⁶⁹SWB, December 20, 1973, EE/4481/B/3.

⁷⁰ND, August 22, 1973, p. 4.

and the GDR as being dictated by common interests and ideology. The same is considered to be true of the USSR's relations with other East European states. Therefore, predictably, the East German leadership denies that the Brezhnev Doctrine can properly be described as evidence of coercion within the Bloc. An example of such a denial was a 1973 "Voice of the GDR" broadcast in which East German Professor Joachim Raabe proclaimed the international duty of Communists to defend socialism as a principal determinant of the behavior of Bloc members, the GDR included.⁷¹ From this, one can easily infer the necessity from the East German view of a coordination of Eastern policies, especially those regarding noncommunist states. Thus, the SED's leaders have sought support from their allies in the matter of West Germany's relations with West Berlin. Honecker and his associates enjoyed considerable success in this matter in 1973 as evidenced by the lack of progress for a time in talks between Czechoslovakia and the Federal Republic. The dispute arose from Bonn's effort to secure the right to represent not only West Berlin residents but also her institutions and associations abroad. The Czech leadership supported the GDR on this issue and branded the FRG's efforts a "gross provocation not only against the sovereignty of the GDR but also against the other socialist countries."⁷² The East Germans viewed this also as an effort to secure from the GDR's allies what the SED was unwilling to give and thus to play the East European states off

⁷¹SWB, October 5, 1973, EE/4481/B/3.

⁷²Ibid., August 21, 1973, EE/4378/A1/3.

against each other. Accordingly, they issued a call for Eastern unity in the face of West German "pressure."⁷³

The East German drive for a more effective coordination of Bloc policies culminated with the call for an international Communist meeting. On May 22, 1974, after a meeting with the General Secretary of the U.S. Communist Party, Gus Hall, in East Berlin, Honecker noted that the tendency towards a detente was now predominant in world developments and that the international balance of power was increasingly altering in favor of the Soviet Union and its allies. Yet, he continued, the opponents of detente were still trying to revive the cold war so, therefore, there was a need for "all the world's peace forces" to work harder in the joint struggle for "international detente, security, and peace." The positive achievements the world is enjoying today, Honecker insisted with Hall's concurrence, were largely a product of the program formulated at the 1969 international meeting of Communist and workers' parties in Moscow. Accordingly, both Honecker and Hall concluded, the appropriate thing would be the convocation of a new international consultation by the same parties in order to develop a plan to secure the benefits of detente. As Honecker explained,

The point now is how to make the progress of detente irreversible, in defiance of all its adversaries. At the same time we are working for the further strengthening of the unity and cohesion of the world communist movement.⁷⁴

⁷³ND, September 7, 1973, p. 1.

⁷⁴Ibid., May 23, 1974, p. 1.

Only a series of bilateral and multilateral exchanges between all the parties would facilitate the development of such a program, according to the SED First Secretary. By taking the initiative in issuing such a call, the SED effectively demonstrated the extent of its enthusiasm for the cause of the USSR's authority in the world communist movement and did much to contribute to the belief that East Germany can once more be considered the Kremlin's most faithful ally.

A final important SED concern relating to its position within the Bloc is shown by the stress placed on economic cooperation. Economic integration has been a major theme of the SED under both Ulbricht and Honecker. Planning in the Comecon states has been one manifestation of this policy and the current policy calls for emphasis on long-range and complex planning among the member nations. The GDR has been especially active in the development of mathematical models to guide Comecon planning.⁷⁵ The creation of joint enterprises and institutes has been an additional manifestation of the SED's economic policy. By 1974 there were thirty-two such examples of "socialist integration in action" in East Germany. While most of these involved joint efforts of the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the USSR, Rumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria were also active.⁷⁶

East German attacks on Red China during the time of Honecker's control of the SED have further advanced the GDR's status as an

⁷⁵Wirtschaftswissenschaft, No. 8, 1973, pp. 1176-1189. Quoted in ABSEES, Vol. V, No. 1, 1974, pp. 155-156.

⁷⁶Horizont, No. 41, 1974, p. 9.

enthusiastic proponent of Soviet domination of the international communist movement. East German officials and publications have continually denounced China's international activities in general as well as the character of Peking's relations with Moscow. In August, 1971, for example the East Berlin daily Berliner Zeitung criticized Chinese activities in the Balkans, charging that such activities were being conducted with the active support of the United States. The Chinese leadership, according to the account, was guilty of big power chauvinism and was behaving in a manner hostile to the interests of peace.⁷⁷ East German charges have concentrated on Chinese-American relations, especially since the improvement in these relations became obvious. As the time for President Nixon's trip to China neared, the GDR attacks intensified. Not only was China depicted as aiding the cause of imperialism, but, according to Neues Deutschland, it had actually begun "coordinated collusion with the chief force of reaction in the world. . . ." The result, the SED paper charged, could only be described as a "monstrous" situation in which the Chinese were seeking "to anticipate every wish of the Nixon government."⁷⁸ Speaking in Leipzig on March 10, 1972, Honecker added to the charges by declaring that Peking shared responsibility for the increased American bombing attacks on North Vietnam because of its refusal to issue a strong condemnation of the action.⁷⁹ In this respect, the Honecker policy

⁷⁷Berliner Zeitung, August 20, 1971, p. 1.

⁷⁸ND, January 22, 1972, p. 3.

⁷⁹Honecker, p. 308.

differs greatly from that of Ulbricht who refused to join in the Bloc attacks on Red China during his last years.

Attacks on Red China have occasionally been linked with criticism of West Germany. On October 11, 1972, a "Voice of the GDR" commentary charged that the improvement in West German-Chinese relations signalled an alliance between Bonn and Peking for the purpose of permitting the FRG to secure Chinese markets. China, for its part, was depicted as attempting to join with forces in the Federal Republic in order to disrupt the process of detente. The FRG's establishment of relations with China was declared to be absolute proof of Chinese treachery.⁸⁰

Finally, Honecker's call for a new international communist meeting was coupled with an attack on the Chinese. Declaring the need for fighting against distortions of Marxism-Leninism, Honecker described Maoism as the open enemy of the world communist movement and the national liberation movement. The Chinese, he continued, had made common cause with the most reactionary forces in their efforts to oppose the development of detente.⁸¹ Such a conference, should it come about, could once again be used in the continuing Soviet effort to secure a formal condemnation of the Red Chinese, something the USSR has repeatedly failed to do. The GDR's assistance in this effort would undoubtedly endear Honecker and his associates to the Kremlin. If a conference should materialize and meet with some success, it is

⁸⁰SWB, October 13, 1972, EE/4117/A3/2.

⁸¹ND, May 23, 1974, p. 1.

reasonable to conclude that the GDR would gain credit from the USSR, credit that it might hope to apply toward its more pressing international problems in the future.

It requires little imagination to anticipate what use the GDR might wish to make of any credit it might build up in the Kremlin. Its ability to actually use the credit for the desired purpose could be another and more difficult matter. Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the GDR's position is uncomfortable in an era of detente. The origins and development of the East German regime have contributed to a political heritage which makes acceptance of detente difficult for the SED leadership. In discussing the development of totalitarian systems, Friedrich A. Hayek, writing in 1944, commented that an enemy is an indispensable requisite of a totalitarian leadership.⁸² While the traditional concept of totalitarianism has been subject to some skepticism in recent years, its applicability to the GDR regime of the 1950's is beyond question. The fact that the citizens of East Germany passed directly from the Hitler dictatorship into a Communist dictatorship makes the totalitarian concept especially applicable to their case. Their experience with constant harangues about enemies, internal and external, can be traced back to 1933. Under Hitler the enemy was the international Jew. With the creation of the Soviet Zone of Germany in 1945, the theme was continued with a new enemy,

⁸²Friedrich A. Hayek, The Road to Serfdom (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 139.

Western imperialism, which had been a frequent subject of Hitler's discourses as well. The personification of the enemy was West Germany more than any other state. The Communist regime in East Germany became accustomed to tension from its very first years. While the emphasis on such tension is not nearly as great under Honecker as it was under Ulbricht, it still remains. In the absence of a sense of national identity, the sense of confrontation served a unifying purpose and helped to stabilize the regime. The SED found security through confrontation and the need for confrontation continues today. Detente has a potentially destabilizing effect by virtue of the expectations that it arouses. It leads people to anticipate change after years of indoctrination that change would never come. East Germany is not alone in the Bloc in its vulnerability to detente. Even the Soviet Union itself has had to face this uncertainty regarding the new policy. But, as Gerhard Wettig has written recently in Osteuropa, the Soviet Union has sought to develop the ideological and institutional structures that could neutralize the politically psychological effect that could result from detente and cooperation between East and West.⁸³ However, East German vulnerability is much greater than that of the USSR. The SED's repeated reaffirmations of the need for a closed frontier illustrate this. The point was effectively made in March, 1972 by the SED newspaper Leipziger Volkszeitung when it printed a commentary warning against illusions that the frontier with the FRG could be opened because

⁸³Gerhard Wettig, "Sowjet Politik zur Westeuropa" ("Soviet Policy Towards Western Europe"), Osteuropa, No. 7, 1974, pp. 852-853.

of detente. The suggestion of open frontiers was described as "far removed from political reality."⁸⁴ Warning against ideological disarmament serve the same purpose. In a word, the enemy is still there, according to the SED. The fact that the SED so obviously feels a need for an enemy demonstrates the insecurity and even instability of the regime. This is not to deny the existence of a very real rival in the Federal Republic. The point is that the hostility and aggression that the SED attributes to its West German rival are exaggerated. Security, however, as seen by the SED, requires such exaggeration and dictates that the SED oppose detente, as Ulbricht successfully did for sometime. The alliance with the USSR, on the other hand, now calls for support for detente in view of current Soviet policy. The USSR obviously had its way and Honecker replaced Ulbricht. The GDR's policy became more favorable to detente and even included West Germany as an object of that policy. However, East Germany's instability remains and the SED can be expected to offer its Soviet ally a considerable amount of very cautious advice on how to proceed with detente, especially where it concerns the FRG.

Honecker, of course, lacks the seniority that Ulbricht enjoyed and can certainly not wield the influence that his successor must have been able to exercise in dealings with the Kremlin. Yet, it is possible that Honecker might try to use whatever credit he can gain with the Soviet leadership in order to either sabotage or at least slow down detente.

⁸⁴SWB, March 8, 1972, EE/3934/A1/4.

The Soviet Union, however, can generally be expected to push the GDR into line when it appears on the verge of straying too far afield. Possibly, the enthusiastic support of detente being voiced by the GDR in May, 1974, which contrasted with the much weaker support in April, may have resulted from Soviet pressure in the wake of the Guillaume affair. As a result of the exposure of Brandt's close personal aide, Gunter Guillaume, as an East German spy, it became known that the GDR's State Security Service had been sending considerable numbers of agents into the FRG since the early 1950's in an effort to infiltrate the West German government. Guillaume, who was only one of several such "plants" who had reached fairly important posts in the Bonn government, had evidently been aiding the GDR's agents in an attempt to blackmail Brandt as a result of an affair he had with an East German woman.⁸⁵ The Kremlin may have feared that detente in Germany could suffer as a result of the exposure of the GDR's intensive espionage efforts in the FRG unless Honecker adopted a particularly accommodating attitude in the wake of the affair. The Russians may actually have suspected that the East Germans were trying to sabotage detente by the activities of their Security Service. The question of the increased minimum exchange quota for persons visiting the GDR illustrated the extent of the SED's shift. Until early in the spring of 1974, East Germany assumed an uncompromising stance on the issue, making its refusal to alter the rates very clear to West Berlin negotiators. However, in an interview on May 30, Honecker

⁸⁵ Berliner Morgenpost, April 28, 1974, p. 37.

said that the requisite decisions "will be taken by our side," clearly implying that the issue was not closed after all as all GDR spokesmen had been stressing earlier.⁸⁶ This, coupled with the GDR's new and very optimistic comments on detente, could be evidence of Soviet pressure on the East Germans to prove their goodwill after the exposure of the GDR's espionage efforts in the FRG.

Does the selection of Honecker seem to have benefited the Soviet Union? As far as events up to this time are concerned, the answer must be an unqualified "yes." The East German press and the new First Secretary have given strong public support to detente with West Germany and West Berlin. The GDR's support of Moscow's authority within the world Communist movement, support which has been illustrated by Honecker's call for an international meeting, is further evidence of the wisdom of the USSR's support for Honecker. The changed emphasis in the SED newspaper Neues Deutschland provides further evidence of the wisdom of the Soviet move in 1971. Whereas under Ulbricht, the paper had become preoccupied with cataloging the sins of West Germany and devoted most of its foreign news coverage to stories about the FRG, after Ulbricht Neues Deutschland began to stress news about the Soviet Union and to ignore the Federal Republic. The absence of any claims of uniqueness for the East German path to Communism and initiation of polemics against Maoism must also please Moscow. The SED under Honecker has also improved relations with Yugoslavia, something which Ulbricht

⁸⁶"Interview Granted by Erich Honecker to the US News Agency," p. 9.

had been reluctant to do in spite of the USSR's rapprochement with Tito. As mentioned earlier, the GDR has become the most faithful of Moscow's allies once again. The replacement of Ulbricht by Erich Honecker certainly helped make this development possible and thereby contributed to the strengthening of the USSR's East European position.

Yet, the future remains open to some question. The disputes over the misuse of the transit routes and the sale of GDR currency in West Berlin and West German banks could easily be used to disrupt the process of detente if the SED felt itself in a position to sabotage the USSR's policies toward the West. Disputes over the GDR's handling of traffic to West Berlin were continuing through the fall of 1974 as East German officials delayed transit traffic up to thirty hours.⁸⁷ Incidents such as this and the disputes over the price of lignite and the arrangements for sewage disposal could erupt into major confrontations given the proper combination of circumstances. Disagreements over the German translation of the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin could also serve as a pretext for a confrontation between East and West over Berlin. The issue of the nature of the FRG's ties to West Berlin also could cause an incident between the GDR and West Germany. The exact nature of those ties has yet to be determined. The English version of "ties" implied social ties as well as communication ties while the Russian word for "ties" implied only communication. Some Western scholars believe that the issue has been clarified to the extent that the USSR will accept

⁸⁷Berliner Morgenpost, October 20, 1974, p. 1.

social as well as communication ties,⁸⁸ however, it seems most likely that the issue will be resolved through practice rather than further agreements or formal efforts at interpretation. The absence of specific guidelines for establishing what shall be considered proper West Berlin-FRG ties makes the prospects for disagreement particularly good. The controversy over alleged "agent-hunting" by West Germany could also provide fuel for future disputes with the GDR. The SED has already commented on the ability of this "contemptible campaign" to disturb the normalization of relations with the FRG.⁸⁹ Furthermore, a change of power in the Kremlin might enable Honecker to improve his status and thereby his ability to veto those moves toward detente which could affect the GDR's policy toward West Berlin. In this event, the SED might disrupt the movement toward detente.

In sum, while the Soviet Union can take a considerable amount of satisfaction in developments since Honecker's election as First Secretary, the future is by no means secure. While the Soviet Union would likely desire a more stable and secure East German regime, the development of such a regime could encourage Honecker to become more independent. Ironically, the dependence that is a product of the GDR's instability also contributes to the maintenance of the GDR as a more malleable Soviet ally. In any event, the GDR could not indefinitely cripple

⁸⁸Gunther Doeker, Klaus Melsheimer, and Dieter Schroder, "Berlin and the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971," American Journal of International Law, Vol. 67, No. 1, 1973, p. 59.

⁸⁹ND, May 2, 1974, p. 2.

Soviet efforts at maintaining detente with West Germany and West Berlin. However, the East Germans could make the maintenance of Soviet policies toward the FRG and West Berlin much more difficult and costly in terms of concessions the Soviets might have to make toward East Germany.

CHAPTER IV

EAST GERMAN NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS: ITS EFFECT ON THE WEST BERLIN ISSUE

I. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES

A recent development in the field of international relations has been the effort to examine linkages between foreign and domestic policies. Dealing primarily with Western democracies, work in this area has been advanced in the last decade by Richard C. Snyder, Wolfram F. Hanrieder, James N. Rosenau and others. Such an examination for East Germany is certain to be much more difficult than in the case of an open society. However, an examination of the linkages between domestic and foreign policies in the GDR would surely aid in understanding the present situation regarding the SED's policy toward West Berlin as well as possible future developments. It should also clarify the question of the relationship between GDR domestic policies and the West Berlin policy in terms of trends that may be common in both policies. In addition, it could facilitate a determination of the compatibility of the SED's policies on foreign and domestic matters. This chapter will be devoted to an effort to examine the present relationship between domestic developments and foreign policy problems, specifically the West Berlin issue, in the GDR today.

In his recent book, Between Two Ages, Zbigniew Brzezinski makes the observation that the foreign policy of a Communist state, citing the

Soviet example, is affected by the domestic needs of the Communist Party to demonstrate visible successes in order to enhance its prestige and reinforce faith in its legitimacy. That is, a communist party rules by virtue of its monopoly of truth and is therefore required to prove that it retains legitimacy by bringing glory to the state that it governs.¹

In a similar context, other authors have discussed the function performed by the Marxist-Leninist ideology in the area of foreign policy and concluded, as Vernon Aspaturian has, that there is a direct ideological impact on foreign policy.² In another recent book, Wolfram F. Hanrieder discusses the impact of the domestic political system on West German foreign policy during the period up to 1970 and concludes that FRG foreign policy was affected by both internal and external influences.³ Considering political systems in general, Karl W. Deutsch has hypothesized that the crucial element in a consideration of the relationship between foreign and domestic policies is the "linkage group" which he describes as a "group with links to the domestic system and with some particular links to the international or foreign input." Such a group, Deutsch writes, becomes more susceptible to the inputs

¹Zbigniew Brzezinski, Between Two Ages (New York: Viking Press, 1970), pp. 77-84.

²Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Ideology and Foreign Policy," Foreign Policy in World Politics, edited by Roy C. Macridis (Englewood, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 165.

³Wolfram F. Hanrieder, The Stable Crisis (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 130.

from abroad if its ties to the domestic system are weakened.⁴ In short, there are numerous works affirming that there is an interaction between foreign policy and domestic policy. This mutually affective relationship seems to exist in both communist and noncommunist states. This chapter will attempt to demonstrate this proposition by an examination of, first, the current official GDR view on reunification of the two Germanies and the SED's analysis of recent history relating to a sense of East German national consciousness, second, the sort of society the SED envisions for the GDR, and, third, the methods which are being employed in an effort to accomplish the construction of a "socialist Germany." An evaluation of the consequences of the answers to the above questions for East German foreign policy in general and for the handling of the West Berlin issue in particular will conclude the chapter.

While the crucial point drawn from the studies mentioned above is that domestic politics in a communist state affect and are affected by foreign policy considerations, the fact that we are dealing with a German speaking state should not be neglected. This circumstance has had a perverse bearing on East German politics in that the SED has been faced with the problem of establishing a feeling that the GDR is a separate German state and not simply a temporarily estranged appendage of the Federal Republic. The communist leadership in East Berlin demonstrated its awareness of the problem of creating a sense of

⁴Karl W. Deutsch, "External Influences on the Internal Behavior of States," Approaches to Comparative and International Politics, edited by Barry Farrell (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), pp. 12-13.

national identity with the GDR by relying upon confrontation with the West in order to foster unity among its population. As Melvin Croan wrote in late 1971,

The regime has grown accustomed to tension under the present leadership, as it had under Ulbricht, and probably still needs a degree of tension in the absence of a durable sense of national identity that it has not been able to manufacture in this relatively short period of time by methods that have been essentially those of compulsion.⁵

The question of the necessity for confrontation and the degree of tension required, as well as the prospects for replacing confrontation as a substitute for national identity, represent important concerns in evaluating domestic affairs in East Germany today. The belief that the type of society the SED seeks for East Germany and the methods that are to be used to create such a society will affect the GDR's foreign policy is a basic assumption of the following analysis.

II. ONE GERMANY OR TWO?

A consideration of the question of the development of the GDR as a separate German state raises the issue of nation-building or nationalism, something the SED cannot avoid in its effort to delimit East Germany from the FRG. While there is no precise and acceptable definition of the term in question, Boyd C. Shafer has formulated a list of beliefs that are associated with the idea of the nation. An examination of the beliefs he presents illustrates the problems facing the SED throughout

⁵Melvin Croan in Eastern Europe in the Seventies, edited by Sylva Sinanian, Istvan Deak, and Peter C. Ludz (New York: Praeger, 1972), p. 245.

the recent years. There seems to be little serious question about the definition of the territory encompassed by the GDR, the common cultural characteristics of the nation, the common dominant social institutions, or the love or esteem for fellow nationals present in the GDR. Nor can it be denied that East Germany has a separate government. There is probably even a belief in a common history, although the interpretation of that history might cause some controversy. The fact that this history is also common to the Federal Republic is another problem. However, the remaining beliefs enumerated by Shafer cannot be readily assumed to have been present in the GDR during most of its history. A devotion to the GDR as an entity, a common pride in the achievements of the nation, a hostility to those groups threatening the GDR's separate existence, and a hope that the nation will have a great and glorious future are all elements seen as lacking in East Germany at various times since the establishment of a separate state in the Soviet Zone.⁶ While these elements may not be so visibly scarce in the GDR today, they are still points on which proof is frequently insufficient. In short, of the ten beliefs enumerated by Shafer, at least five are or have been in doubt in the East German case. In his analysis of nation-building, Ivo D. Duchacek stresses the importance of national spirit which is described as a "glorification of past achievements" in order to help overcome the lack of a sense of identity. The SED's efforts in this

⁶Boyd C. Shafer, "Toward a Definition of Nationalism," in Nationalism and International Progress, edited by Urban G. Whitaker, Jr. (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1961), pp. 4-5.

regard will be considered shortly and demonstrate the regime's awareness of the importance of history. Duchacek observes that the nationalist emphasis on past glories and experiences is often mixed with intolerance or a supercilious attitude toward other nations or races.⁷ This attitude has been used with success by many leaders, Nehru, for example, and has contributed to development of a national spirit. However, because of the GDR's position as a member of the Soviet Bloc, such techniques are denied the East German leadership.

The importance attached to the concepts of nation-building and national spirit should not be minimized. According to R. M. MacIver, individuals realize themselves fully only as part of society. It is to society that they owe their "existence, their nurture, their equipment, their habits, their thought-ways, their opportunities, . . . their homes, their all." A developed state must consist of more than secure frontiers and a capital city, according to MacIver. It must be, in MacIver's words, "a greater unity to which they can devote themselves and which gives greater dignity, greater purpose, greater meaning to their lives."⁸ The task for the SED has been more than one of securing frontiers, developing the economy, and insuring the GDR's place within the Bloc. National consciousness, while difficult to measure, is clearly more than the sum total of the physical attributes of a state.

⁷Ivo D. Duchacek, Nations and Men (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), pp. 54-55.

⁸R. M. MacIver, The Web of Government (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 305-306.

The SED's nation-building problem has been complicated by the fact that East Germany was created as a result of the partition of the Third Reich. Not only did the partition meet with the resistance of the GDR's population which resented being arbitrarily separated from friends and relatives in Western Germany, but it also necessitated a restructuring of a preexisting society. The typical underdeveloped nation faces a problem of creating unity but the SED had to destroy a sense of unity between its part of Germany and the rest of the dismembered Reich. After the destruction of one sense of unity, the SED then had to provide an alternative national consciousness. In his study of partition, Ray E. Johnston has raised several questions relating to the effects of partition on the domestic patterns of a country. In so doing, he considers the relationship between partition and domestic changes, implying by his questions that the relationship may be direct in many cases.⁹ Certainly, the GDR would seem to be such a case in view of the necessary restructuring of society after 1945. This would illustrate the interaction between foreign and domestic policies in the East German case.

The first question relating to nation-building for the SED in its efforts to create a sense of national identity was the issue of reunification. The intentions of the USSR in the first years after the conclusion of the war are difficult to determine and apparently the matter of reunification remained open for more than a decade. As

⁹Ray E. Johnston, "Partition as a Political Instrument," Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 27, No. 2, 1973, pp. 170-172.

recently as 1957, the USSR officially favored a plan for an alliance of the two German states in an independent, nonaligned confederation.¹⁰ As long as the continued existence of the GDR as a separate state remained an unresolved question, the SED's efforts to generate enthusiasm for identification with the GDR faced considerable difficulties. The erection of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent closing off of all major avenues for escape from the GDR undoubtedly did much to convince the East German population that they must resign themselves to a permanent separate German state in the East.

Official East German statements today leave no doubt as to the permanent and separate character of the GDR. The official view was succinctly stated by Fritz Selbmann, a veteran East German communist, before the GDR Cultural League Presidium Council in January, 1973.

We believed and hoped . . . that for years after 1945 the possibility existed of creating a great popular movement in Germany which would enable us to preserve the unity of the nation. In the meantime, Germany has now been definitely split into two states.¹¹

The affirmation of a permanent, separate German state is reinforced in a variety of ways. The most obvious--and deadly--is by the maintenance of one of the world's most heavily guarded frontiers. However, in addition to this, and possibly of more lasting significance, are the Abgrenzung policy, a fervent emphasis on history, and a theoretical explanation of what makes a nation.

¹⁰B. Ponomaryov, editor, History of Soviet Foreign Policy 1945-1970 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), pp. 364-365.

¹¹Neue Deutsche Literatur, No. 6, 1973, pp. 7-8.

The East German theoretical explanation of the basis of a state concedes that there are certain principles entering into the definition of the nation. Such considerations as culture, language, psychology, history, and homogenous state territory are among these most frequently cited. However, while these traditional elements are seen as of some importance, they are criticised as being too emotional and idealistic rather than objective. The actual content and character of the nation is, according to Alfred Kosing and Walter Schmidt of the Institute for Social Sciences of the SED Central Committee, determined primarily by the "prevailing economic foundations of the society, the class relationships, and the historical actions of the classes. . . ." ¹² These, in their entirety, are said to have the capability of integrating the GDR population into a higher form of national community. The people, according to this formulation, will be drawn together to form a stronger social unit and help prepare for a higher developmental phase of the communist society.

The East Germans do not attempt to deny the obvious ethnic similarities between themselves and the West Germans. They simply assert that the ethnic elements of any nation are constantly changing and that the two Germanies are going in opposite directions. A new socialist national consciousness is developing in the GDR which is changing the ethnic and sociopsychological components of East German

¹² Alfred Kosing and Walter Schmidt, "Zur Herausbildung der sozialistischen Nation in der DDR" ("On the Cultural Policy of the Socialist Nation in the GDR"), Einheit, No. 2, February, 1974, p. 182.

national life through new economic, social, political, and ideological conditions.¹³ The society which is emerging, they say, will have very little in common with capitalist German society. Therefore, there can be no future convergence of the GDR with the FRG in spite of continuing West German insistence on the unity of the entire German nation. While East and West Germany have a common historical past, they no longer have a common present or future. The unified German nation is declared to be a relic of the historical past, rather than a hope for the future. While the stress in the past used to be on the possible unity of the two states after a proletarian revolution in the FRG, GDR authorities today emphasize that even this should not be taken for granted. According to Kosing and Schmidt,

The question of whether later, when the working class in the FRG, united with all workers, has achieved the transformation of society and the nation, a unified socialist nation can arise, will be decided by history if the necessary conditions for it have matured.¹⁴

This view was emphasized even more authoritatively by the revisions in the GDR Constitution in 1974. Whereas the Ulbricht constitution of 1968 affirmed the unity of the nation under a future communist leadership and declared that the GDR was "a socialist state of the German nation," the new Honecker constitution simply designates the GDR as a "socialist state of workers and farmers."¹⁵

¹³Ibid., pp. 183-185.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 185.

¹⁵Neues Deutschland, September 28, 1974, p. 3. (Hereafter noted as ND.)

The picture presented by the SED is one in which the GDR is being drawn further and further away from the world of the capitalist FRG and integrated ever more closely with the states of the Soviet Bloc. As Fritz Selbmann declared, East Germany and West Germany are "integrated into two completely opposing and antagonistic world systems."¹⁶ In the future, the GDR population will be experiencing an "increasing unity of thought, will, and action" with its Eastern allies and, consequently, will be well on its way to becoming part of an international community of socialist states and thus losing much of the separate identity that it possesses today.¹⁷ When this process is completed, the GDR will have converged with its socialist neighbors and any talk of convergence or reunification with West Germany will be obviously pointless. The culmination of this process will bring the creation of the national identity sought by the SED. The further development of mature socialism and its gradual transition to communism are said to increase the specific importance of the international "without crowding out or even displacing the national." The East German population will simply see itself and its state differently. New historical values will have been adopted which will "determine the thinking of men" and give the "socialist national consciousness of the GDR its international character."¹⁸

¹⁶Neue Deutsche Literatur, No. 6, 1973, pp. 7-8.

¹⁷Kosing and Schmidt, pp. 186-187.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 186-188.

In summary, as Politburo member Hermann Axen explained in June, 1973, the character of a nation is determined above all by its social or class content and the class content of the nation is determined by the political power of the working class.¹⁹ The traditional concerns for language, culture, and a common historical past are secondary and pale in comparison to these ideologically motivated considerations. Accordingly, the GDR and the FRG are being drawn apart and the prospects for reunification are steadily diminishing. A logical concomitant of this assertion is the policy of Abgrenzung initiated by Walter Ulbricht as a means of effecting the final demarcation of the two German states. However, while Ulbricht viewed this delimitation as enduring only until the coming of a socialist revolution in the FRG, the Honecker regime, as indicated by the revisions in the GDR Constitution, may well regard it as eternal.

The importance of the Abgrenzung or demarcation policy was clearly reflected in Walter Ulbricht's announcement in January, 1971, that the "ever stronger State demarcation" between the GDR and the FRG would be the theme of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the SED in April of that year.²⁰ An East German statement in April praised the policy of demarcation as an

. . . Unmistakable rebuff to all speculation by West German monopoly rulers and their ideologies about making the socialist economy of the GDR dependent on the monopoly-capitalist economy of the FRG and linking them even more

¹⁹Hermann Axen, The Development of the Socialist Nation in the GDR (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1973), pp. 16-17.

²⁰ND, January 14, 1971, p. 1.

closely on the pretext of an alleged nonexistence of class differences in the scientific-technical revolution and teaching about the "convergence" of the social systems.²¹

After the conclusion of the Eighth SED Congress in the spring of 1971, Neues Deutschland editorialized that the antagonisms between socialism and imperialism were "unbridgeable." Therefore, it continued, objective developments were certain to lead the FRG and the GDR even further apart so the demarcation between the two states "in all spheres of life should become more and more far-reaching."²² According to a resolution of the SED Congress, such a process was at that time taking place between the GDR and its western neighbor.²³

The precise meaning of this process is difficult to determine, but it is possible to note three distinct meanings that have been imparted to the term Abgrenzung in practice. The first is related directly to the national question discussed above and concerns a process of separation of the GDR from the FRG by creating in the GDR a society that differs radically from that of West Germany. This conception involves the creation of a gulf between the two states that is not physical but political and social. In discussing this meaning of the Abgrenzung policy in 1973 the SED journal for Party life, Neuer Weg, declared that a "clear boundary between the socialist GDR and the capitalistic FRG"

²¹BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, April 28, 1971, EE/3669/A1/3. (Hereafter noted as SWB.)

²²ND, June 22, 1971, p. 1.

²³Documents on the 8th Congress of the SED (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1971), p. 9.

had been created by East Germany's socioeconomic structure, policy, and ideology. Opposite value criteria and ideologies, the journal argued, had done the most to contribute to the demarcation of the GDR from West Germany.²⁴ The overall effort of the SED to create a socialist national culture in the GDR is predicated on the assumption of a need to separate East Germany from the FRG in a meaningful, permanent manner. Progress in this endeavor was noted by a resolution of the Eighth SED Congress in 1971.²⁵

The second manifestation of the policy of Abgrenzung is an outgrowth of the first. This is the intense ideological confrontation between socialism and capitalism. A basic assumption of this policy is the belief that the West is heightening the ideological struggle against the East and that the attack on the East is assuming a variety of new and subtle forms. This assumption is not seen as contradicting the process of normalization of relations between states with differing social systems. The argument is simply that such normalization of relations does not put an end to the contradictions which already existed between socialism and capitalism. These contradictions, we are told, are now sharpening because the capitalists, in a mood of desperation, are intensifying their ideological attacks in order to reverse the process of normalization which is said to be contributing to the final destruction of many of the myths of the imperialists.

²⁴Neuer Weg, Vol. 28, No. 22, 1973, p. 23.

²⁵Documents of the 8th SED Congress, p. 21.

Thus, in order to make the process of normalization irreversible, the SED leadership says that it now places "the greatest value on the intensification of the political-ideological education of the members of the socialist society." Ideological work has become the "principal content of our political activity, as the most important lever with which to raise our fighting strength."²⁶ Western talk about the "free flow of ideas" across the GDR frontier is denounced by East German authorities as evidence of the intensity of the ideological assault against the GDR. A "Voice of the GDR" commentary in August, 1972, dismissed the demand for a free flow of ideas as nothing less than an effort to spy on East German military installations.²⁷

The importance attached to the controversy over the concept of the nation can be seen much more clearly in the context of this intense ideological confrontation. Hermann Axen clarified the connection when he denounced the idea of a "national community" formed by the FRG and the GDR as a major element of the FRG's ideological war against East Germany. According to Axen, this dispute over the exact nature of the nation was "much more than an academic dispute." It is, he argued, a dispute about "fundamental political and ideological questions."²⁸

Recent East German concern over the proper study of history, especially by its youth, is also a reflection of the SED's preoccupation

²⁶Horizont, Vol. 7, No. 6, 1974, p. 2.

²⁷SWB, August 22, 1972, EE/4072/A1/1.

²⁸Axen, pp. 23-24.

with an ideological confrontation. The creation of a "socialist historical consciousness" has been described as an "important ideological task" and the only way in which an understanding of the way in which the "German monopolist bourgeoisie" betrayed the German working people can be gained. Without such an understanding, ideological defeat is seen as much more likely in the confrontation with opposing ideologies.²⁹ Honecker used the 450th anniversary of the German Peasants' War as an occasion to stress the importance of a class approach to the study of history. In discussing the events of the Peasants' War, the SED First Secretary stated that the ideological foundations of the GDR actually dated back to the revolutionary demands that were expressed during that war.³⁰ While the legitimacy of his statement is subject to question, he is clearly attempting to demonstrate continuity between the GDR and significant events in German history. The East German educational system is geared to accomplish the sort of instruction that will make the lessons of history clear to the GDR's youth. The primary emphasis is on teaching history from a class point of view in order to teach students regarding the place of their society in German history.³¹ Under the integrated educational system of the

²⁹ Helmut Meier, "Sozialistisches Geschichtsbewusstsein in Unserer Zeit" ("Socialist Historical Consciousness in Our Time"), Einheit, No. 6, June, 1973, p. 711.

³⁰ ND, November 10, 1973, p. 10.

³¹ Erhard Scherner, Kultur und Kunst in der DDR (Culture and Art in the GDR) (Berlin, GDR: Staatssekretariat für westdeutsche Fragen, 1970), pp. 36-37.

GDR, students receive their first formal lessons in history in the fifth grade with one hour a week devoted to such instruction. In the sixth year this is increased to two hours per week and in the seventh year an additional hour of civics is added. This three hours a week of instruction in areas of either pure history or history-related subjects is one of the largest concentrations of the week. Only polytechnical training, mathematics, and German receive more time while the study of Russian receives equal time.³² East German authorities do not attempt to deny the political orientation of their educational system. They proudly observe that their consciously political education demonstrates that they have drawn the proper lessons from history.³³

The third manifestation of the policy of Abgrenzung is the securing of the GDR frontier with West Germany and West Berlin. In discussing the concept of state sovereignty, the GDR's Professor Peter Alfons Steiniger explained that the principles of inviolability and territorial integrity were basic derivatives of that concept. According to Professor Steiniger, this meant that the frontiers were to be protected against both military assault and other forms of international intervention as well. He cited the example of Nazi intervention against Austria in 1938 to illustrate how phrases such as "self-determination of the German nation," frequently used by Bonn officials, could be misused.³⁴

³² Helmut Klein and Wolfgang Reischock, Bildung für heute und morgen (Education for Today and Tomorrow), Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1973), p. 18.

³³ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

³⁴ Horizont, Vol. 6, No. 38, 1973, p. 4.

Neues Deutschland added "freedom of movement" to the list of those concepts subject to abuse in such a way as to violate the sovereignty of the GDR while avoiding the outright use of force.³⁵ While the escapee problem faced by the East German authorities in recent years is not nearly as great as in the past (some 6,450 escaped in 1973),³⁶ it was evidently enough to cause concern about the security of the GDR borders with West Berlin and West Germany. According to Western accounts, in early 1973 the GDR state frontier with the FRG consisted of a double barbed wire fence with a length of 836 kilometers, a series of spring-gun installations stretching 79 kilometers, mine fields running for 750 kilometers with an estimated 1.7 million mines, 540 observation towers, 936 bunkers, 517 dogs, and 109 light barriers.³⁷ Yet, there was evidently official dissatisfaction with these installations and the manner in which they were operated. Late in the summer of 1973 there was a major reorganization of the border troops which brought greater centralization in command over the border units. The eleven border brigades were placed under four operational commands with each under direction of a major general and with a lieutenant general in charge of the entire force. Two separate units, those responsible for the borders with Poland and Czechoslovakia, were not

³⁵ND, September 21, 1973, p. 1.

³⁶SWB, January 2, 1974, EE/4489/A1/1.

³⁷Die Welt, February 14, 1973, p. 5.

included in the reorganization and remained independent.³⁸ Subsequently, work began on improving the border positions of the frontier troops. In January, 1974, extensive work was begun to demolish buildings near the frontier which restricted the guards' fields of fire. In several cases in Mecklenburg entire villages on the border were dismantled. GDR demolition troops were reported at work throughout an entire 140 kilometer section of the Mecklenburg frontier with the FRG removing any structures blocking fields of fire.³⁹ At the same time new construction work was begun on other parts of the GDR-FRG frontier and also on the frontier with West Berlin. Additional barriers were erected and new electronic monitoring devices were installed. New cement observation points were added throughout the length of the zonal border in Lower Saxony and "forward command points" were built into many of the observation towers. These "forward command points" are designed for placement at strategic points along the border in order to facilitate the employment of "alert troops" in preventing any illegal border crossings.⁴⁰ This work was being continued in the border regions of Lower Saxony during the summer of 1974 and the GDR border units were concentrating on strengthening those sections of the border used most frequently as escape routes during warm weather. The frontier in Berlin

³⁸Informationen (Bonn: Bundesminister für innerdeutsche Beziehungen), No. 18, September, 1973, p. 5.

³⁹Die Welt, January 28, 1974, p. 3.

⁴⁰Der Tagesspiegel (West Berlin), February 24, 1974, p. 2.

was being subjected to the most stringent precautions in several years to prevent escapes into West Berlin.⁴¹

The picture very clearly emerging from these developments is that the East German authorities are emphatically denying the possibility of any reunification with the West under foreseeable circumstances. They are emphasizing a policy of demarcation from West Germany which involves the continued and intensified restructuring of GDR society along lines incompatible with West German society, an intense ideological confrontation with the West, and a strengthening of the East German borders with the FRG in order to guarantee the inviolability of their frontiers by either enemy forces or their own citizens. Although Honecker announced that the process of demarcation from the West had ended once and for all with the admission of the GDR to the United Nations in October, 1973,⁴² none of the specific policies or programs discussed above have been abandoned. Apparently their continuation is justified by East German efforts to consolidate what has been gained in recent years. Certainly there is no sign of relaxation to date of this basic policy of divergent development.

III. THE GDR'S SOCIALIST CULTURAL POLICY

Since the SED has announced its intention to create a separate and fully developed state of its own, one must ask what type of society the

⁴¹Die Welt, May 16, 1974, p. 5.

⁴²SWB, October 29, 1973, EE/4436/A1/1.

SED is seeking to build. The issue here is less one of the fundamentals of the GDR's economy and political system than a matter of the tone or atmosphere of the nation. This is what SED Politburo member Kurt Hager has described as the GDR's "socialist cultural policy."⁴³ Of primary importance in the development of the East German cultural policy is the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Therefore, it is to the place and function of ideology that this inquiry is first directed.

In January, 1972, in an article in Neues Deutschland Erich Honecker wrote of the process of development of the GDR and observed that East Germany was only beginning to master the scientific-technical revolution. The level of scientific economic management, Honecker explained, was of crucial importance to the East German economy. However, math, cybernetics, and operations research, he cautioned, "could not and must not replace the political economy of socialism as the theoretical basis of economic policy." Ideological work was described as the "center" of the SED's leadership activity. The conflict between socialism and imperialism was coming to a head precisely in the ideological field, Honecker declared, so especially close attention must be paid to work in that area.⁴⁴ This theme was continued in a "Voice of the GDR" commentary in 1973 which affirmed that no ideological coexistence was possible. The ideological struggle was described as part of the class struggle and of growing, not diminishing, importance. The commentary

⁴³Kurt Hager, Socialist Cultural Policy (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1972), p. 8.

⁴⁴ND, January 16, 1972, pp. 1-2.

asserted that the correct formulation was not that peaceful coexistence is also ideological coexistence but that peaceful coexistence meant a sharper ideological confrontation.⁴⁵ The SED's theoretical journal, Einheit, stressed the same theme when it declared that there had been no change in the "essence of imperialism" and that there was no prospect for "renunciation of force in the ideological sector." Imperialism, according to Einheit, was continuing an ideological struggle against socialism through such "secret and devious means" as "cultural pressure" and demands for "freedom of ideas and opinions." West Germany's Social Democrats were cited as among the principal villains guilty of this sort of attack. The article concluded by stating that the chances for peace would improve as the GDR succeeds in "anchoring socialist ideology in the consciousness of the people."⁴⁶

The policy of the SED as resolved at the Eighth Party Congress was marked by two fundamental goals. The first was a continued rise of material and cultural standards of the GDR and the second was the establishment of favorable external conditions for the building of socialism in the GDR. In discussing these objectives of the foreign and domestic policies of the SED, Politburo member Kurt Hager maintained that their realization required concrete historical approaches and actions based on complete scientific, ideological knowledge. The tasks of the Marxist-Leninist philosophy, as outlined by Hager, were so

⁴⁵SWB, January 16, 1973, EE/4195/A1/3.

⁴⁶Heinz Geggel, "Keine ideologische Wafferruhe" ("No Ideological Ceasefire"), Einheit, No. 1, January, 1973, pp. 8-9.

extensive that no aspect of East German society could remain untouched by ideological considerations. Reliance on "unprincipled pragmatism" was specifically condemned as an unacceptable approach to social and economic development. The only valid guide, Hager repeatedly stressed, was ideology. Mastery of the scientific-technical revolution and the development of the natural sciences were both described as philosophically dependent. Only through a proper understanding of philosophy, he insisted, would the formation and all-round development of socialist personalities be possible.⁴⁷ The carrying out of this work has frequently been described as the "principal concern of party activity and party leadership."⁴⁸ The 1973 Party elections were seen by the SED's leadership as an opportunity to increase the intensity of ideological work. The elections were to be used for "further improving political and ideological indoctrination and making it more effective." "Lenin's working style" was set as the norm to which all Party members should strive to conform in carrying out the ideological tasks that were necessary for meeting the goals of the Eighth Party Congress. Only after the thorough "socialist indoctrination of all workers" could the 84,000 party group organizers and the 73,000 leaderships of the basic organizations and department party organizations feel that they had met their obligations in the 1973 campaign.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ND, April 17, 1974, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁸Horst Dohlus, "Die Leninschen Normen in Leben unserer Partei" ("Leninist Norms in the Life of our Party"), Einheit, No. 10, October, 1973, p. 1178.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 1179-1180.

The development of a sense of East German statehood is dependent on the work of the SED in the implementation of the ideological tasks set for the party, according to Hager and others in the SED hierarchy. The successful implementation of the SED's goals is seen as requiring an especially high standard for individual members. Politburo member Erich Mueckenberger dealt with this need in an article in Neuer Weg in September, 1973. According to Mueckenberger, the implementation of the Eighth SED Congress's resolution regarding the building of a developed socialist society makes new and greater demands on the party. Accordingly, the Central Control Commission of the SED, of which Mueckenberger is chairman, must increase its efforts to rid the party of "unworthy elements." While insisting that the work of the Control Commission had brought the SED more unity and resolution than ever before, he warned that "residues of the old capitalist society continue to affect ideas and action, even of party members." In addition, there are some party members who are simply unable to "keep pace with the new challenges facing us. . . ." ⁵⁰ Therefore, the party leaderships throughout the country must be alert for identification of those members whose behavior "offends against the unity, purity, and resolution of the party, thereby crippling its fighting strength." The "ruthless exposure" of these elements is necessary, Mueckerbenger explained, because the enemy in the class war was continuing to work for the same goals as in the past but with "greater stealth and refinement." In so doing, the

⁵⁰ Neuer Weg, No. 18, 1973, pp. 818-819.

enemy "appeals to those whose political and ideological attitude is not quite firm, who harbor doubts and hesitations." Therefore, only by calling to account "all those who damage the prestige of the party" will the SED be able to tighten its ranks even more strongly and increase its fighting strength in the effort to fully implement the GDR's cultural and political goals.⁵¹ This "purge" could well represent an effort by Honecker to strengthen his position within the SED since it comes on the heels of a previous "purge" or exchange of party documents, as the SED called it, in 1970.⁵²

Since the GDR is in the process of building what it proclaims as a developed socialist society, it is appropriate to examine the contours of this society in order to see how it advances the goal of creating a sense of national consciousness. The SED's conception of a developed socialist society centers around an insistence on total involvement of its population in the affairs of the state. Such involvement, it believes, will aid its citizens in self-identification with the goals of the regime and thus contribute to a greater national consciousness. "Every further development of social democracy," according to deputy chairman of the GDR State Council Friedrich Ebert, "must start with the inevitably growing leadership role of the working class and its party."⁵³

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 819-822.

⁵²ND, April 29, 1970, p. 1.

⁵³Friedrich Ebert, "Stadt und Demokratie unserer socialistischen Gesellschaft" ("State Democracy in our Socialist Society"), Einheit, No. 4, April, 1974, p. 397.

The social composition of representatives in all popularly elected bodies is supposed to correspond to the actual social composition of the GDR's population. The unrestricted sovereignty of the working people, which is the key to the development of a sense of national consciousness, is said by Ebert to be implemented by the participation of citizens in both the management and the planning of all decisive state and social concerns and also by the exercise of an increasingly broad based popular control. Three million GDR citizens are said to be participating responsibly in the exercise of power in East Germany. This participation takes the form of membership in committees and study groups of representative bodies, in commissions of the National Front, in a variety of activist groups, and numerous other committees. Citizens of the GDR are described by Ebert as more ready to participate now than ever before. Not only political, but also economic decision making is affected by the masses of East German citizenry. Ebert asserts that 85 percent of all workers and employees in state owned industries participated in discussions regarding the economic plan which was adopted for 1974. The discussion of draft laws prior to their formal adoption is described as another way in which social democracy is being implemented and strengthened. The drafts are formally submitted for discussion by the East German population before becoming law. The recently passed GDR Youth Law is estimated to have been discussed by 5.4 million citizens in more than 240,000 open meetings. Some 4,800 suggestions regarding the draft of this law were submitted by organizations and individuals. Ebert gives no figures for the number

of changes made following the submission of these suggestions, but the presumption is that there were changes.⁵⁴

The strength of the popular representative bodies is to be a major factor in the development of a sense of national consciousness in the GDR's socialist democracy. The strength of these organs, according to Ebert, depends upon how well they "succeed in achieving constantly closer relations with the working people and relying upon this in their entire management activities."⁵⁵ If the population is to feel that it is truly a part of the decision-making process, such closeness is a necessity. In a speech in December, 1973, to the staffs concerned with constitutional and legal problems of East German local government, Ebert admitted that the maintenance of such relations is not easy. "The link between citizens, state organs, and representatives is frequently rather tenuous," he said. A method of overcoming this problem was tried in Leipzig where constituency activist groups were established in order to collaborate with the citizens to determine emerging problems and submit suggestions to the state organs for dealing with such problems. The constituency activist groups included representatives from local government, the National Front, the Peoples' Police, local enterprises, schools, and cultural facilities.⁵⁶ Another method of creating closer ties with the population discussed by Ebert was the use of voters'

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 397-398.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 400-401.

⁵⁶ Neue Justiz, Vol. 28, No. 1, January, 1974, pp. 1-6. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 857, March 19, 1973, p. 27.

mandates or, in effect, referenda. Yet, the mandates, Ebert cautioned, must respond to the interests of a broad strata of people and be related to economically feasible measures.⁵⁷ Newspapers were described as another important link in the maintenance of close contact with the people. Ebert faulted newspapers, however, for failing to have established a "genuine partnership" with the staffs of state organs. The reports of meetings, he said, failed to show the way in which the decisions made in meetings reflect the will of the workers and consisted of nothing more than reports of the speeches.⁵⁸

While official discussions of the nature and meaning of the cultural policies assume a particularly humanistic tone, rigid ideological control is never relaxed and the party's position is carefully preserved. The population must be encouraged to identify with the goals of the regime and to feel that its will directs policy, but the mechanisms for "popular control" must never be allowed to overshadow the party. Lest the SED's position be seriously threatened and in order to avoid any misconceptions about the nature of the world west of the GDR frontier, a much less "positive" side to the explanation of the GDR's developed socialist society is retained. In discussing the theory of state and law, Professor Wolfgang Weichelt, director of the Institute for Theory of State and Law of the Academy of Sciences of the GDR, mentioned opinions which see the role of the state as detached from the concrete processes and laws of socioeconomic development. Those who

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 35.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

hold such positions, he concluded, will either think too highly of the state or will denigrate the importance of the state. While "leftist" theories associated with Trotsky are most commonly thought of in this connection, Professor Weichelt insisted that "leftist" and "rightist" are actually now in union against socialism. Distinctions between these two forms of revisionism have been obliterated as the two join in a struggle against socialism and communism "on the basis of anticommunism, anti-Sovietism, and nationalism." If the continued development of socialist democracy is to be assured, he declared, all variants of revisionism must be vigilantly opposed.⁵⁹

The concern over threats to the GDR's program of nation building extends far beyond the theoretical issues raised by Professor Weichelt. The East German authorities see themselves as the object of an intensive psychological warfare campaign by the West with the Federal Republic and West Berlin acting as principal agents in the campaign. The presence of a large number of Western television and radio transmitters in the fifty kilometer strip along the FRG-GDR frontier is cited as an example of the determination to direct hostile psychological influences against East Germany. The goal of Western, and especially West German, imperialism in this effort is seen as twofold: first, to denigrate the leading role of the SED in East Germany, and, second, to harm the organs of state power in the GDR, particularly the National People's Army (NVA). GDR officials believe that the FRG seeks to separate the East German

⁵⁹ Staat und Recht, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1974, pp. 571-579. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 923, June 28, 1974, p. 47.

government and the SED from the citizenry of the GDR. Colonel Doctor Dieter Langer of the NVA notes that while there are West German military organs for conducting psychological warfare against the GDR during periods of tension or in wartime, the electronic mass media of the FRG and West Berlin are responsible for the peacetime psychological missions. This includes West Germany's Deutschlandfunk and the West Berlin Radio in the American Section (RIAS) as well as others in the FRG and Western Europe.⁶⁰ Radio Luxembourg has also been singled out as one of the "most ingenuous forms of Western psychological warfare." According to a West German report, East German authorities feel that when a western hit song gains a foothold in a Communist mind, it helps drive out something else. They charge that Radio Luxembourg has four goals in its programming: first, to restrain the initiative of workers in socialist countries; second, weakening belief in the superiority of a socialist order; third, undermining the authority of the communist parties; and fourth, combating socialist internationalism.⁶¹

The SED's belief that western music posed a threat to their nation building efforts was demonstrated by the 1973 "Order on Discotheque Programs" issued by the Ministry of Culture. The order noted that there was a heavy responsibility on the disc jockey for the management of these programs so he must be required to have "an adequate, basic, socioscientific knowledge." In order to avoid any cultural harm, the

⁶⁰Volksarmee, No. 17, 1974, p. 6.

⁶¹Die Welt, March 19, 1973, p. 3.

order stipulated that only recordings made in East Germany or other CMEA countries may be played in discotheque programs. All recordings and reproducing equipment owned by social establishments as eating places which conduct discotheque programs are required to be registered with the Cultural Department of the local district council. Violation of any of these provisions may bring a penalty of a fine of up to one thousand marks.⁶² Meanwhile, the NVA's Political Main Administration issued a call to GDR soldiers to examine their attitude toward "enemy broadcasting." Noting that western "hot music" is intended to lull "our vigilance," it asked soldiers to prevent Western ideological inroads with the GDR by refusing to listen to Western radio stations.⁶³

In January, 1974, the GDR People's Police were called upon by the Ministry of Interior to be alert for "hostile subversive activities" against the GDR. The process of detente will be aided and protection of the GDR improved as public order is strengthened and as ideological work with members of the People's Police itself is increased, according to the Ministry of Interior.⁶⁴ Later in 1974, according to a West German report, the GDR authorities introduced an informant system in order to better control contacts between East Germans and Westerners. While many East German citizens have already been asked to pledge that

⁶²Gesetzblatt der DDR, Part I, No. 38, August 27, 1973, pp. 401-404. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 792, October 10, 1973, pp. 38-42.

⁶³IWE Tagesdienst (West Berlin), February 21, 1973, p. 2.

⁶⁴Ibid., January 9, 1974, p. 1.

they will renounce any Western contacts, the new system required citizens to report any contacts with Westerners. They must report whom they have been in contact with, the type of contact, and how the contact came about as well as the contents of the conversation or letter. In some cases, citizens are required to present any Western mail they receive to officials before opening it.⁶⁵

The tone of the East German cultural policy was further amplified in directives relating to military affairs. In September, 1973, the GDR Ministry of Defense called upon commanding officers to intensify political indoctrination in order to help repel western influences among the soldiers. This intensified ideological indoctrination campaign was justified by the Ministry's claim that the class enemy of the GDR is increasing its ideological pressure and attempting to misinform and lead East Germans astray by slandering the policies of the SED and its allied parties.⁶⁶ At the same time, efforts are being made to improve the military posture of the GDR. Early in 1973 a program was initiated to adapt the cadres of the NVA to the "requirements of armed conflict with an imperialist aggressor." According to Lt. Gen. Otto Pech, this improvement in the cadres, as well as an increase in their number, is necessary to increase the combat readiness of the NVA.⁶⁷ In a similar fashion, the NVA has placed higher demands on its soldiers physical

⁶⁵Die Welt, May 29, 1974, p. 3.

⁶⁶IWE Tagesdienst (West Berlin), September 24, 1973, pp. 1-3.

⁶⁷Ibid., February 21, 1973, p. 2.

capacities. In order to improve the combat readiness of the individual soldier, the minimum requirements of the so-called event test, which serves as the criterion for combat fitness, were substantially raised.⁶⁸ Additional evidence of the GDR's militant stance is presented by the expanded East German civil defense system. The objective of this effort, which was begun in 1973 and justified by the Defense Ministry as a contribution to the increased "defense readiness" of the GDR, is to guarantee all citizens some protective accommodations in case of war. The program calls for both state and private contributions in the construction of shelters.⁶⁹ The militancy of the SED's outlook in its nation-building efforts was most succinctly expressed in a recent issue of Armeerundschau. In justifying official hostility toward the West, it asserted, "Our love of socialism reflects our hatred against its enemies."⁷⁰

IV. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CULTURAL PROGRESS

While the general tone of the SED's cultural policy can be seen from the analysis above, the question of how this policy is implemented remains to be considered. East Germany's leadership considers the implementation of a socialist cultural policy to be an indivisible component of the ideological work necessary for the development of

⁶⁸ Ibid., November 23, 1973, p. 2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., November 2, 1973, p. 1.

⁷⁰ Armeerundschau, No. 1, January, 1974, p. 3.

a national consciousness in the GDR. Accordingly, it sees work relating to the cultural policy as being too important and extensive to be the responsibility of cultural organizations or artists' and writers' associations by themselves. In terms of party responsibility, it is not possible to limit efforts to one or two particular agencies. As Rudi Raupach, sociologist and deputy department chief in the SED Central Committee has written,

Since socialist culture permeates all areas of our society, and cultural-esthetic education and artistic creation are closely linked with political, ideological, economic, and scientific tasks, the encouragement of the development of socialist culture become imperative for the leadership functions of every basic organization.⁷¹

The basic organizations, in turn, may look to any of a variety of institutions or organizations for assistance with regard to particular aspects of the cultural policy. Together, they are working toward what the SED authorities term "cultural progress." Such progress, according to Raupach,

. . . Is reflected particularly in a greater receptivity for the problems of our socialist society, in increasing social and cultural activity, in the growing need for involving art and literature in one's daily life, in a subsequent greater appreciation of art, and in a rising desire for personal participation in art and culture.⁷²

There is, however, no implication that this is art and culture simply for their own sake. Rather, there is a very practical consideration here, namely, that the "further improvement of productivity needs people

⁷¹Rudi Raupach, "Initiator der Kulturarbeit" ("Initiator of Cultural Work"), Einheit, Vol. 29, No. 3, 1974, pp. 334-335.

⁷²Ibid., p. 336.

who have been shaped by socialist conditions to be creative, cultured, and socialist."⁷³ In addition to this, there is the further consideration that cultural activities can play an important part in the ideological struggle. Thus, it becomes increasingly important that the party work for cultural progress both in and through as many channels as possible. East German cultural efforts, therefore, will now be considered as they relate to a cultural offensive in the ideological struggle, to youth, to literature, art, and music, and to the churches.

In 1973 the GDR Ministry for Advanced and Technical School Education expressed an interest in the expansion of cooperation with western nations in areas relating to its jurisdiction. An improvement in the quality of educational teaching standards played a secondary role in East German motivations, according to statements of the Ministry. Central importance was placed on making a contribution to the foreign policy program of the 24th Communist Party of the Soviet Union Congress and the Eighth SED Congress as well as the ideological offensive of socialism. While the improvement in the class-conscious indoctrination of students sought by the Ministry might be viewed as a direct contribution to education, greater stress was placed on strengthening the international position of the GDR and of socialism.⁷⁴ This example is illustrative of the basic East German orientation toward anything which might be considered even indirectly as a cultural exchange. A

⁷³Ibid., p. 335.

⁷⁴IWE Tagesdienst, May 9, 1973, pp. 1-2.

publication of the GDR Institute of Politics and Economy (IPW), outlined the official SED attitude toward cultural exchanges. According to the IPW's publication, an increase in "spiritual-cultural and information exchange" with Western countries is desirable but must be harmonized with the fact that the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism is intensifying. Such harmony is not difficult to obtain because the presence of "socialist scientists, artists, and works of art in capitalist countries is tantamount to the presence of socialist ideology."⁷⁵ According to the IPW, this presence has two favorable effects. First, it reduces anticommunist prejudices and allows people in capitalist countries to see socialism as a "humanist social order, as it truly exists." Second, the socialist cultural initiative is a means of ideological struggle in that it spreads the spirit of detente over the whole world and promotes cultural international relations in such a way that it benefits the strengthening of peace.

Such harmony is only possible if the cultural exchange is viewed in accordance with certain criterion. The desirable criterion, in the SED's conception, is the freedom granted to Marxism-Leninism in a country. The greater that freedom the greater one may consider freedom of thought in that country and, with it, the opportunities for cultural exchanges. According to the IPW report,

Consequently, the Marxist-Leninist also gauge the state of development in spiritual freedom in the possibilities

⁷⁵ IPW-Berichte, No. 11, November, 1973, pp. 23-32. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 840, January 17, 1974, p. 39.

existing for propagating the ideology of the working class in the capitalist countries.⁷⁶

If it is not possible for a cultural exchange to aid the socialist view, then a cultural exchange is not possible.

In order to assure the achievement of harmony between cultural exchanges and the ideological struggle which is seen as an outgrowth of present-day foreign policy conditions, the East Germans posit certain content qualifications for evaluating cultural exchanges. If the exchange involves the transmission of information or ideas deemed harmful to the cause of "peace" it must not take place. All exchanges must have the effect of strengthening those causes considered worthy by the socialist nations. The IPW's report concludes that

Such an objective for the exchange of spiritual-cultural values implies, of course, that no freedom of dissemination will be granted to spiritual products whose content is hostile to peace, is nationalistic, racist, contemptuous of humans, and is counterrevolutionary.⁷⁷

Responding to those who might object to this restriction, the IPW article asserts that the thing which is actually deplorable is not the struggle against such views, but rather the existence of those views. People who insist on the "freedom of opinion" are depicted as simply seeking to stop the victorious advance of the ideas of socialism and to put the ideology of imperialism on the offensive once again. For Marxist-Leninists to accede to such demands, we are told, would be to

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 40.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 42.

yield to an appeal for ideological coexistence, something which is clearly out of the question. Such "subversive activity" will never be legalized, according to the IPW's analysis.⁷⁸

While cultural exchanges, under these circumstances, are seen as very desirable by East German authorities, the GDR has not hesitated to place preconditions on even such obviously one-sided exchanges. Before the GDR will agree to any exchange of cultural information the Western states involved must accept certain principles as well as East German interpretations of those principles.

Those principles mainly are the sovereign equality of the states and respect for the rights inherent in the sovereignty; the refraining from the threat or use of force; inviolability of the borders; territorial integrity of the states; peaceful arbitration of controversies; and noninterference in internal affairs.⁷⁹

The possibility has also been raised that the GDR might insist that West Germany, before entering into a cultural agreement with the GDR, hand over to the East Germans certain works of art and other valuable items presently held by the FRG Prussian Cultural Property Foundation on the grounds that the GDR is, as Erich Honecker has said, "the state embodiment of the best traditions of German history."⁸⁰ With regard to the West Germans, the SED has been, in effect, insisting on the GDR's right to sole representation of both German states in cultural matters. The unwillingness of the Bonn government to yield to this demand has meant that virtually all cultural contacts between the FRG and the GDR

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 44.

⁸⁰ Frankfurter Allgemeine, January 17, 1974, p. 20.

have been thwarted. West Germany's refusal to yield to the GDR's demands in the cultural negotiations between the two states has undoubtedly led the SED to conclude that broad cultural exchanges at this time would not aid the GDR's ideological struggle.

The importance of the GDR's youth in terms of the cultural policy of East Germany is such that references to the proper education and upbringing of the nation's youth repeatedly appear in party writings and officials' speeches. Considerable energy is also devoted to the study of youth by East German sociologists. Their concern for issues relating to the SED's cultural policy is reflected in the major research questions: first, problems of the development and consolidation of the socialist consciousness of youth, including the processes of the formation of socialist attitudes; second, problems of the development and management of socialist youth teams, especially in youth organizations; third, problems of developing intellectual, cultural, sports, and tourists interests in youth with particular consideration given to cultural and tourist facilities and the influence of the mass media; and fourth, problems of the efficiency of the integrated youth organization within the system of planning and management of work with young people.⁸¹ The attention devoted to the recently passed Youth Act is yet another indication of the tremendous importance placed on the proper political and sociological development of the nation's youth in

⁸¹Gunther Bohring, "Youth Research in the GDR," Sociological Research in the GDR, edited by the Scientific Council for Sociological Research (Berlin, GDR: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaftler, 1970), p. 106.

order to advance the social development of the GDR. The official efforts to guarantee that the youth adopt proper attitudes are started at the earliest age possible. Children of preschool age are expected, according to the Ministry of Public Education, to receive from their parents the information that will enable them to distinguish between friend and enemy. Parents are urged to tell their children if they see GDR soldiers that the troops guard their borders against enemies so the children can play in peace. In order to protect children from Western influence, parents are admonished not to allow children to listen to Western radio or television programs.⁸² In so doing, the parents are considered to be making a contribution to the early formation of proper socialist attitudes in young people.

The Tenth World Festival of Youth and Students, which was held in East Berlin in 1973, gave the GDR a chance to display its youth to the world. On this occasion Erich Honecker boasted that, thanks to their socialist training, every third young worker is an innovator who demonstrates his initiative in the economic affairs of his country. The Free German Youth (FDJ) organization, he said, shows that the great majority of the East German youth possess political maturity. This is possible because in the GDR "girls and boys start early to participate in social life." This early start aids in developing socialist personalities and in training youth to recognize its "social obligations," Honecker explained.⁸³ The GDR's youth was active during

⁸² IWE Tagesdienst (West Berlin), February 2, 1974, p. 1.

⁸³ Neuer Weg, No. 14, July, 1973, pp. 628-630.

the Festival not only in arranging parades and demonstrations, but also in enforcing public order and security. FDJ groups were given extensive training prior to the Festival by the People's Police to enable them to influence "endangered youths" who were not properly educated in a socialist outlook and to ensure the maintenance of order at all Festival meeting places.⁸⁴ The FDJ evidently fulfilled its security responsibilities well at the Festival because several months later GDR authorities began a program to give the FDJ public order groups increased assignments to protect youth from "harmful influences."⁸⁵

The emphasis on youth in the GDR has led to a concern that the educational system fulfill ideological and cultural responsibilities specified by the SED. The 1974 Youth Act specified some of the goals in its declaration in Article 27 which states,

It shall be the concern and the task of young people to adopt a cultured way of life, to use their leisure time in a meaningful way, to engage in cultural and artistic activities and to take a creative part in the development of culture and art.⁸⁶

Further specifics were given in the Act on the Integrated Educational System of the GDR which included an enumeration of educational objectives and responsibilities at each level. In discussing social science lessons at the secondary state, the Act illustrates the extent

⁸⁴IWE Tagesdienst (West Berlin), April 5, 1973, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁵Ibid., April 22, 1974, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁶Youth in the Socialist State: Youth Act of the GDR (Berlin, GDR: Panorama DDR, 1974), p. 43.

of the responsibilities of the public schools in the GDR. It states in Article 16 that,

The pupils shall be led to recognize the historic role and national duty of the German Democratic Republic. They shall come to the conclusion that the future belongs to socialism in the whole of Germany.⁸⁷

To insure that young people spend their leisure time in "a purposeful way" the Act introduces the concept of a "whole-day" school education. This concept, which is to be applied to an increasing number of pupils, involves a close connection between formal instruction and extracurricular education. Students are called upon to perform "socially useful work" and to develop "pleasure in work." Holidays are to be used by students to "strengthen their physique and health in the community of happy and self-radiant young people." Organized games and excursions are to be utilized in fulfilling this objective. Socialist enterprises and scientific institutions are required under the Act to entrust young people involved in the "whole-day" educational system with useful and interesting work. Organizations such as the FDJ and its younger partner, the Ernst Thaelmann Pioneers, are to be responsible for assuming leadership of many of the activities associated with this educational innovation.⁸⁸ This approach is supported by GDR educational journals which stress the importance of showing the "unity" between school and life. According to a recent article in Deutsche

⁸⁷ Act on the Integrated Socialist Educational System of the GDR (Berlin, GDR: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1972), p. 31.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

Lehrerzeitung, schools are supposed to implement the instructions of the SED calling for an increased congruity between the teachings in educational institutions and the demands of life in the GDR. Accordingly, schools are working to stress politically relevant themes and to demonstrate the inadequacies and misconceptions of imperialist ideology.⁸⁹

An additional and especially significant aspect of the educational process in the GDR is the premilitary training which is justified by the assertion that the only revolution worth anything is the one that knows how to defend itself. Honecker has described defense preparedness as a basic requirement for the guarantee of the socialist gains of his nation and, at the same time, for the consistent continuation of the international detente policy made possible only by the strength of socialism.⁹⁰ For defense preparedness to be complete, the SED feels that the youth must understand their military class mission. Therefore, the FDJ, along with the Society for Sports and Technology (GST), has been called upon to prepare the nation's youth for military service in political, physical, and premilitary terms. A basic part of the FDJ's responsibility involves meeting future requirements of the East German military. Only by the inculcation of proper attitudes toward military service, the SED believes, can the young people of the GDR be adequately

⁸⁹Deutsche Lehrerzeitung, No. 17, April, 1974, p. 4. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 913, June 10, 1974, pp. 10-13.

⁹⁰ND, November 1, 1973, p. 1.

prepared. The FDJ's success in this respect has recently been noted in an East German youth publication.

Being a soldier for socialism and being a mercenary for monopoly capitalism are two things that have nothing in common with each other. The youth of the GDR is fully aware of this fact.⁹¹

Having developed an appreciation for the honor of serving in the GDR military, the FDJ and the other youth organizations then proceed to impart a knowledge of military techniques to young students. The GST organizes students into companies where military topics such as the use of hand grenades, creeping and crawling, and map reading are taught. Students participate in a variety of sports which have a close relationship to military activities, including sport shooting and communications sports. According to Volksarmee, "defense sport has become a component part of a meaningful and interesting way of using free time."⁹² In addition to teaching young people the basic military skills, the GST prides itself on the discipline imparted to those who participate in its activities, discipline which will enable them to defend socialism against its enemies in the future.⁹³ In the spring of 1974, according to Western reports, the GDR was undertaking yet a further increase in premilitary training and military education. "Young soldier" working groups were being organized in school to impart military

⁹¹Junge Generation, No. 2, February, 1974, pp. 59-63. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 878, April 5, 1974, p. 10.

⁹²Volksarmee, No. 7, February, 1974, p. 11.

⁹³Armeerundschau, No. 9, September, 1972, pp. 79-80.

and political knowledge to students outside of the obligatory premilitary training programs already in the school curriculum. Target ranges were even set up in the basements of many East German schools so students could practice marksmanship without having to go to one of the camps normally used for such activities.⁹⁴

In evaluating the efforts to inculcate proper socialist attitudes and a love of the "socialist fatherland" in the young people of the GDR, the SED's theoretical journal observed that there is a necessary connection between the internal strengthening of each socialist country and the increase in its world political effectiveness. Thanks to the government's educational programs, the journal concluded, the GDR has been strengthened internally since the overwhelming majority of its youth is associating itself increasingly firmly with socialism in the GDR and is developing patriotic and internationalistic ways of thinking and acting. Therefore, the authors assert, not only is the international effectiveness of the GDR now greater, but the development of East Germany as a socialist nation completely independent from the FRG has been enhanced.⁹⁵

While literature has been mentioned in another context, it is important to consider this topic separately as a vehicle for social

⁹⁴IWE Tagesdienst (West Berlin), April 10, 1974, p. 2.

⁹⁵Horst Adam and Helmut Zapf, "Sozialistischer Patriotismus und Proletarischer Internationalismus in der ideologischen Erziehung der Jugend" ("Socialist Patriotism and Proletarian Internationalism in the Ideological Upbringing of Youth"), Einheit, No. 6, June, 1973, pp. 678-680.

development. Lenin wrote in a draft resolution on proletarian culture that literary and artistic works "should be imbued with the spirit of the class struggle being waged by the proletariat."⁹⁶ This statement, which came during a controversy in the Soviet Union in 1920, was neither the first nor the last in a long line of pronouncements regarding the proper role of literature, art, and music in a socialist society. Krushchev published an entire volume entitled The Great Mission of Literature and Art in 1964 in an attempt to provide a comprehensive guide to the evaluation of cultural contributions in the USSR. East Germany is no different from the Soviet Union in its concern that writers and artists have a "socialist" outlook in their contributions.

The popular East German magazine Sonntag spelled out the cultural-political needs of the GDR by listing

. . . The convincing artistic presentation of figures of workers and of the struggle and life of the working class as the history-forming power of social progress, of its battles and victories, its historic greatness, defeats, and experiences; the artistic presentation of true socialism, . . . the crystallization of new standards of morality, . . . and the consciousness formation toward a "social entity."⁹⁷

In order to promote the arts and the development of a favorable climate for new accomplishments, Sonntag called for a public discussion of the nature of social responsibility and the functions of the arts in a developed socialist society. This was seen as necessary if the arts

⁹⁶V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, Volume Three (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1967), p. 476.

⁹⁷Sonntag, January 6, 1974, p. 5.

were to aid in shaping the working class into a core for further progress in the arts. What was not said, but was clearly implied, however, was that art was conceived of as something to be enjoyed by the masses rather than by a select few. The references in the 1974 Youth Law to the cultural enrichment of youth further support the position that East German art is primarily for the masses. In surveying these cultural-political needs, Werner Neubert, editor-in-chief of Neue Deutsche Literatur, enthusiastically asserts that "for the first time in our historical experience in our GDR, literature is in the position to realistically participate in a real task."⁹⁸ Neubert, too, is concerned that literature be responsive to its social responsibility and maintain a high level of class content.

Yet, not all East German writers fulfill their social obligations, judging from a variety of comments appearing in the GDR press. Such shortcomings were discussed in the official SED newspaper, Neues Deutschland, in an article in 1973. The problem with many literary works, we are told, is that the worker is unable to establish a connection between himself and the figures in the story. The characters simply do not raise the questions over which the worker himself muses. They do not dress in the same fashion as he dresses. No do they speak as he speaks. The reader is irritated, according to Neues Deutschland, because figures are placed before him which are petty bourgeois, irrelevant or antisocial, or merely reflections of the author rather

⁹⁸Neue Deutsche Literatur, No. 11, November, 1973, pp. 3-4.

than figures from the life of the average East German citizen. Such a situation is described as "an impoverishment of literature against which we must defend ourselves. . . ." ⁹⁹ In order to mount this defense, writers are called upon to resist "nondialectical" tendencies and to write in such a way as to bestow confidence on his contemporaries.

Literature is also subject to the SED's ideological alert. The official view is that there is a close connection between literature and art and political-ideological questions. Therefore, literature is expected to share in responsibility for effecting a clear-cut delimitation from imperialism. Hence, literature is placed in service to the Abgrenzung policy. The SED believes that writers have an obligation to support the Abgrenzung policy through their literary contributions. Failure to do this is generally considered the result of inadequate knowledge of the basic problems of Marxism-Leninism. Writers are to be subjected to the restrictions of ideology in that they are not allowed to deviate beyond ideologically-inspired guidelines. Political themes are not an option, but a necessity in literature. The rule governing literary and artistic freedom is summarized in the Marxist observation that even in the details of art "there is no ideological freedom. Artistic problems are ideological problems, since art is a form of ideology." ¹⁰⁰ In assisting the writers in fulfilling their ideological obligations, literary critics are called upon to make

⁹⁹ND, June 10/11, 1973, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., July 6, 1973, p. 4.

a more thorough analysis.¹⁰¹ The lack of a literary history of the GDR is viewed as a serious shortcoming by the SED because it has given West Germany an opportunity to offer the only broadly based criticisms and histories of East German literary efforts. According to Western reports, the East German cultural bureaucrats are concerned lest their own literary criticisms be infected by what is seen as a continuation of the ideological struggle in the field of literary history. East German critics are being encouraged to conduct their own analyses in complete independence of any West German contributions.¹⁰²

Few events illustrate the concern of the SED to stress the cultural heritage of the GDR more than the commemoration of Beethoven's 200th birthday. In addressing the Council of State on the occasion of the beginning of the ceremonies in East Germany honoring Beethoven, Willi Stoph set the tone when he declared that Beethoven's music

. . . Radiates power impulses for the people who were striving to throw off the shackles of feudalism-absolutism oppression. In Beethoven's powerful music they found their own ideas, sentiments and concepts of a better, a more human world confirmed in a new and unique way.¹⁰³

Stoph claimed that Beethoven had finally found his "true homestead" in the GDR. It is in East Germany, according to him, where Beethoven's ideas have come to life. The power of Beethoven's music was dramatically

¹⁰¹ Ibid., January 31, 1973, p. 4.

¹⁰² Der Tagesspiegel (West Berlin), December 20, 1973, p. 4.

¹⁰³ Beethoven Commemoration of the GDR (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1970), p. 8.

illustrated, we are told, during World War Two when it was played in the USSR during the days of Hitler's attacks on Russia. In the same sense, Beethoven's music is said to have inspired the building of an antifascist, democratic order in the GDR. Today, the ideologies of imperialism and anticommunism are being combated, not only in the traditional ways, but also by making use of artistic means, such as Beethoven's music. Stoph concluded that the celebrations of Beethoven's birth in the GDR have made it clear that his music is firmly rooted in the hearts of East Germans, that it has found a firm place in the intellectual and cultural life of the country, and that, in reality, Beethoven's music is more a part of the GDR's cultural heritage than of West Germany's.¹⁰⁴ In the same fashion, other cultural figures such as Heinrich Heine are cited as having influenced the development of the GDR. His thoughts, in turn, are said to be embodied in the East German political and social systems.¹⁰⁵ Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, and Herder are described as "representatives of the progressive bourgeoisie who worked for the liberation of man from the fetters of feudalism" in their time. Their beliefs and aspirations have been realized, we are told, in the development of the "present-day reality of the German Democratic Republic. . . ."¹⁰⁶ The SED prefers to stress that it draws on a long

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 13-15.

¹⁰⁵Lutz Dietze and Vladimir Gorodnov, editors, Through the Eyes of Friends (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1974), p. 33.

¹⁰⁶Herbert Arnt, Horst Dorrer et al, Introducing the GDR (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1973), pp. 18-19.

history of such progressive individuals as well as the one hundred year history of the German labor movement in the development of its traditions. What transpired since 1945 is presented simply as the culmination of a process which was started long ago.

Organized religion is another subject of considerable importance in East Germany's cultural policy. Its importance stems from the fact that not only does organized religion exert such influence as to make it an important potential ally in the development of any society, but it also represents a potential threat to the communist regime. For the most part, the SED's policy over the years has been to neutralize by any means possible the influence which the churches might utilize to oppose official policies. Yet the approach has not been phrased completely in negative terms. It is possible to discern official efforts to make the church an ally of the regime, especially in recent years. Albert Norden sounded a relatively positive note at the 13th Congress of the GDR Christian Democratic Union in Erfurt when he referred to the contributions which the churches could make to the cause of peace and reminded his listeners that some farsighted Christians had grasped the dangers of imperialism even before the 1917 revolution in Russia.¹⁰⁷ However, the despairing observation about the "social impotence" of GDR Christians by Bishop Fraenkel of Goerlitz probably best summarizes the actual position of East German churches today.¹⁰⁸ Other East German

¹⁰⁷Albert Norden, Active Partners for Mankind's Noblest Cause (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1972), pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁸Frankfurter Allgemeine, April 6, 1974, p. 2.

church leaders have confirmed Bishop Fraenkel's view by the account they give of the minority situation of Christians in the GDR. Dr. Albrecht Schoenherr of the Berlin Ecumenical Institute estimates that the percentage of Christians in East Germany runs as low as 10 percent now in many areas. Even more indicative of the position of the churches in his view is the fact that religious instruction and other church functions are rapidly dwindling everywhere.¹⁰⁹ Such ceremonies as church marriages and christenings are on the decline in East Germany, as admitted even by East German publications.¹¹⁰

Though Ulbricht's policy toward the churches softened when he undertook to transform the GDR into a permanent state, his successors have formulated no specific policy or approach toward the church. Unlike Ulbricht, they have failed to maintain any significant contact with the churches. The most conspicuous form of pressure against the churches has consisted of discrimination against those associated closely with it. Young citizens who participate in the church are denied admission to the secondary schools leading to higher education and to universities. Christians are also denied the right to become teachers. The occupational outlook in other professions for Christians varies from district to district. However, it is only in the educational sector that one finds ironclad rules against employing Christians.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Mitteilungsblatt des Bundes der Evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR, February 1, 1974, pp. 2-5. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 884, April 17, 1974, pp. 56-57.

¹¹⁰ Democratic German Report, Vol. XXI, No. 14, July 26, 1972, p. 119.

¹¹¹ Frankfurter Allgemeine, October 27, 1973, p. 24.

As for the church organizations themselves, they run into problems only when they stray into subjects that are political in nature. Again, as reflected in much of the literature, educational matters seem to be particularly sensitive and the GDR press has responded very sharply to statements by church officials deploring the "hate education" being given to East German youths. As Neue Zeit, the Christian Democratic Union's official paper, observed,

Whoever today deplores a "hate education" of youth in our schools, and thereby considers it necessary to criticize the quite deliberate partisan feel and action toward imperialism and anticommunism inherent in our youth, disqualifies himself as a theologian. He opposes party engagement in the struggle against exploitation . . . and racism.¹¹²

The dispute over church boundaries and the partial resolution of this issue by the Vatican has been one of the most notable episodes involving the East German Catholics and GDR officials. Until 1973, the jurisdiction of the bishops of Fulda, Wuerzburg, Paderhorn, Hildesheim, and Osnabrueck extended into the GDR by virtue of the fact that the GDR-FRG frontier cut through their church districts. As a result, East German Catholics were under the church authority of bishops who lived in the FRG. In 1973 the Vatican appointed separate bishops for the East German regions, but refused to designate the separation as permanent. Rather, it insisted that the final resolution would have to wait until later, after the possibilities of reunification of the dioceses can be thoroughly examined. East German officials responded by charging that the Vatican had yielded to "the notorious opponents

¹¹²Neue Zeit, February 16, 1974, p. 9.

of detente in the FRG and in West Berlin."¹¹³ Meanwhile, the official approach to the GDR Catholic Church consists largely of appeals to the leadership of the Church to "use its means and possibilities to support the peace efforts of the government of the GDR."¹¹⁴ The SED is concerned, of course, about establishing relations with the Vatican and, rather than destroy these prospects, it prefers to attempt to coax Catholics into using their Church as a vehicle in the SED's construction of a developed socialist society.

GDR Protestants have been subjected to a policy which had as its goal the delimitation of the Eastern Evangelical Church from its Western counterpart. The Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) in the FRG is accused of being integrated into the power structure of the Federal Republic and of being used as a tool of capitalism. Several years ago the GDR church leader Dean Dietrich Scheidung demanded a "resolute separation from the EKD" for the Protestant churches of the GDR.¹¹⁵ By 1972, the separation was virtually complete as the SED's Abgrenzung policy was applied to the Protestant church.¹¹⁶ Otherwise, while some of the restrictions on church meetings, such as registration with the People's Police for any meeting other than those on Sunday, have been

¹¹³ Begegnung, September, 1973, pp. 4-6. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 814, November 21, 1973, p. 21.

¹¹⁴ Neue Zeit, March 2, 1973, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., February 28, 1969, pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁶ SWB, March 28, 1972, EE/3951/B/4.

relaxed, the GDR officials have concentrated on limiting church influence on young people. Discrimination against Christian youths, while varying in intensity from district to district, is being continued.¹¹⁷

East German Jews have been the subject of less official concern. Their small number--approximately 800 persons in the GDR belong to the Jewish religious community--probably accounts for this. They receive a special state welfare as a result of being recognized victims of fascism and they are allowed to publish their own newspaper.¹¹⁸ Yet, the SED apparently intends to keep its small Jewish population isolated from West German Jewry, as evidenced by its ban on the FRG Jewish weekly, Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung. Contacts with other foreign Jewish groups are likewise not encouraged.¹¹⁹

The official East German attitude toward organized religion was probably best summarized by the statement that "the socialist state does not need the encouragement of the churches. . . ."¹²⁰ However, the SED would clearly prefer to have any support that it might receive since this would further strengthen the internal situation in the GDR. Church assistance in achieving cultural goals and developing a sense of national identity could be most valuable. Meanwhile, the official policy is

¹¹⁷ Frankfurter Allgemeine, June 5, 1974, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ Begegnung, February, 1974, pp. 7-9. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 887, April 23, 1974, pp. 24-25.

¹¹⁹ Die Welt, August 14, 1973, p. 2.

¹²⁰ Begegnung, No. 4, April, 1974, pp. 1-2. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 921, June 26, 1974, p. 16.

directed toward isolating East German religious communities from those in the West and preventing the churches from developing independent power bases from which they might challenge the regime. At the same time it tries to enhance the prestige of the GDR by claiming the leader of the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther, as part of the historical heritage of East Germany. On the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation, the GDR Christian Democratic Union, speaking on behalf of the regime, boasted of the "friendly cooperation" between Christians and Marxists in the GDR and of the Marxist strains present in the teachings of Martin Luther.¹²¹

While the survey above indicates that the SED has enjoyed considerable success in working toward the development of a national culture and a sense of national identity, contemporary literature indicates that a number of problems remain. The persistence of these problems is clearly disturbing to the East German leadership. The major problem areas are the inability to eliminate criminal behavior, shortcomings in the training of youth, and the lack of thorough ideological work. Lack of success in their elimination obviously hinders the nation building efforts of the SED.

The problem of criminality was discussed by GDR Prosecutor General, Dr. Josef Streit, in a recent article in Neue Justiz. While giving no figures on the crime rate--such figures are never released now--Streit

¹²¹Secretariat of the Christian Democratic Union, Gedenkstätten des ganzen Volkes (Remembrance Places of All People) (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1970), pp. 3-4.

expressed displeasure with the development of crime prevention in the GDR and indicated that crime had actually increased. In the process of increasing the material prosperity of East Germany, Streit admitted, a certain contradiction had arisen in that the desire of the individual to satisfy his material needs "does not always coincide with a high moral sense or with a high degree of awareness and of responsibility toward the collective and society." In order to correct this situation, Streit called for greater efforts to explain the "political content of the law." In a more direct sense, the public prosecutor's office was called upon to increase its supervision of society. In short, he explained, both educational and coercive measures must be increased if socialist legality is to be safeguarded.¹²² The failure to consolidate socialist legality has also been reflected in a campaign by the People's Police in 1974 to intensify its measures for the protection of the GDR economy. This campaign was inspired by the frequency of destruction and arson in industry, the building trade, agriculture, commerce and transportation. In addition, there had been a considerable increase in thefts of socialist property.¹²³ The announcement of a campaign against alcoholism in late 1974 was yet another indication of an increase in East German social problems.¹²⁴

¹²²Neue Justiz, May 2, 1974, pp. 285-286. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 920, June 25, 1974, pp. 38-40.

¹²³IWE Tagesdienst (West Berlin), January 25, 1974, p. 2.

¹²⁴ND, November 14, 1974, p. 4.

Shortcomings in the training of GDR youth are evident in both educational and attitudinal concerns. Western reports indicate that officials of the People's police are concerned that some young people have "no firm socialist class viewpoint, no clear socialist ideology and . . . demonstrate kinds of behavior which contradict our socialist morality and ethics." Rowdy behavior and the imitation of Western life-styles are considered evidence of this problem.¹²⁵ Political indifference among the Young Pioneers is yet another reflection of shortcomings in this area. The fact that few children come to meetings with political topics and many refuse to be active workers in the organization is viewed as a serious problem.¹²⁶ There are also reports that East German young people are not receiving a proper education in "socialist history." The factual knowledge of many young people is said to be limited to a few particularly impressive events. Therefore, they do not understand the total historical picture and, as a result, this "makes it hard for them to think through historical processes independently."¹²⁷

The lack of thorough ideological work affects several aspects of East German society. Party journals frequently note the need for greater and more effective ideological undertakings in economic policy.

¹²⁵ IWE Tagesdienst (West Berlin), April 22, 1974, pp. 1-2.

¹²⁶ Ibid., April 8, 1974, p. 1.

¹²⁷ Rolf Doebling, "Unsere Jugend und die Ansprüche an die geschichts-ideologische Arbeit" ("Our Youth and the Claims on Historical Ideological Work"), Einheit, No. 10, October, 1973, p. 1211.

The managerial cadre have been criticized because of the "too general and verbal economic propaganda" and their lack of qualification in leading political-ideological discussions. Furthermore, they have been scolded for failing to maintain a unity between ideological education and training and the acquisition of economic and specialized professional knowledge.¹²⁸ The SED has also cited the military services for their deficiencies in ideological work. Criticism has been voiced in military party circles of the political behavior of SED members in the NVA who are supposed to ensure that ideological tasks are fulfilled. The policy of Abgrenzung has been accompanied by an intensification of the stress placed on the political training of NVA officers.¹²⁹ Further failures have been noted in the NVA relating to discipline and order. If a more "militant" atmosphere prevailed, according to Volksarmee, these deficiencies could be overcome.¹³⁰

V. NATION BUILDING AND FOREIGN POLICY IN THE GDR

Having reviewed East Germany's nation-building efforts, what may one conclude that it means for the conduct of the GDR's foreign policy? What is the impact generally and more specifically in relation to the West Berlin problem? While all statements make the importance of

¹²⁸ Klaus Gaebler and Heinz Puder, "Weltanschauung und Oekonomie" ("World View and Economy"), Einheit, No. 6, June, 1973, pp. 701-704.

¹²⁹ Dale Roy Herspring, East German Civil-Military Relations. (New York: Praeger, 1973), pp. 165-166.

¹³⁰ Volksarmee, No. 12, March, 1973, p. 1.

ideology very clear, it is not easy to determine ideological dictates which apply directly to the West Berlin question, or, for that matter, to most other foreign policy matters facing the GDR. Yet, it is possible to draw some conclusions from the above analysis of efforts to mold and direct East German society.

The linkage group which makes the relationship between foreign and domestic policies felt is, in this case, obviously the SED. The party is charged with supervision of the domestic situation in East Germany and at the same time is one of several parties that comprise an international system under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The SED receives input, one may reasonably assume, from both the internal and the external environments. The external environment, of course, is dominated by the Soviet Union since the USSR is clearly the dominant member of the bloc of communist party states. The SED must consider the demands of both systems, the national system of the GDR and the international system of the Soviet Bloc.

The SED has made its recognition of the relationship between its foreign and domestic policies explicit in its pronouncements that the international effectiveness of the GDR improves as the development of East Germany as a socialist nation completely independent from the FRG is enhanced.¹³¹ The SED's nation building efforts are thus viewed as a complement to the GDR's foreign policy undertakings. At the same time, however, it always points out that what advances the international

¹³¹ Adam and Zapf, pp. 678-680.

standing of the GDR also enhances the internal development of East Germany. Therefore, the relationship between foreign and domestic policy flows in both directions. Each aids the other. At no point is one explicitly subordinated to the other.

The primary link between the foreign and domestic policies, in terms of creating needs and demands that have mutual consequences for both, is the GDR's principal ally, the Soviet Union. The alliance with the Soviet Union requires the development of the East German society along lines compatible with the USSR's internal characteristics. It also requires with equal force that the GDR conduct a foreign policy supportive of the Soviet foreign policy. Recent discussions about a unified, coordinated foreign policy for the Soviet Bloc illustrate this particular need.

An additional link of particular importance is the Abgrenzung policy of the SED. It has both foreign and domestic aspects. Its foreign policy aspects are seen in the SED's campaign of asserting the unique character of the GDR in relation to the FRG. The physical expression of this demarcation from West Germany is the reinforcements of the GDR-FRG frontier and the work of the GDR-FRG frontier commission. This aspect has also required the SED to strive to enlist the aid of its allies in supporting the East German demands on the Federal Republic, especially those relative to West Berlin. The domestic aspect of the Abgrenzung policy has been reflected in numerous ways, such as the effort to enlist literature in the service of Abgrenzung. The SED has repeatedly issued calls for the cultural and ideological demarcation

of the GDR from West Germany. An aim of this policy has been to make it very clear that reunification with the Federal Republic is completely out. Demarcation has been proceeding in every possible area which could affect a union between the GDR and the FRG. Such actions as the rupture of the church organizations emphasize the effort to create a society in the GDR totally different from that existing in the FRG. As this policy proceeds, of course, the isolation of West Berlin from its physical environment is solidified. The absence of any hope for reunification means that the West Berlin problem will persist until some other solution is found and no other one offers such a comfortable prospect for West Berlin.

While there is no evidence of a demand for a hostile military confrontation with West Germany or West Berlin--there is a total absence of statements of the necessity of armed conflict--an ideological struggle has been declared by the SED to be in progress as a direct consequence of the foreign policy situation existing between socialism and capitalism. Events in the FRG and West Berlin will be viewed and evaluated in ideological terms. Weaknesses and problems will be focused upon as evidence of the decline of capitalism and the emergence of socialism as the dominant world system.

Yet, military improvements in the GDR, new civil defense programs, and the emphasis on the military class mission of youth demonstrate the desire to be ready for military confrontation. The effect of these policies is to make any future East German military threats more credible. Such an increase in the credibility of those threats might

add to their likelihood. If that happened, the position of West Berlin might worsen considerably since it could easily become the subject of more frequent East German demands.

Talk of psychological war against the GDR alleged to be emanating from West Germany and West Berlin shows the willingness of the East Germans to initiate a crisis if proper circumstances exist. Principal among those circumstances, of course, would be the consent of the USSR. The prospect for a psychological victory for East Germany would increase the prospects for a crisis in view of the persistent need to demonstrate success and thereby the superiority of their system. This would certainly help fulfill an important ideological mission for the SED which has stressed the importance of ideological work in domestic affairs. Again one sees the ease with which West Berlin's problems could be exploited.

By placing its concept of the nation under the rubric of proletarian internationalism, the GDR is binding itself ever more closely to the Soviet Union and its allies. While widening the gulf between East and West Germany this also limits the freedom and independence of the SED in foreign affairs. The effort to develop a social in the GDR which is compatible with that of the East European communist party states is likely to continue to be reflected in a foreign policy mirroring those of its allies. Ideology, of course, does not remove the need for Western, especially West German, technology in both the GDR and the other members of the Soviet Bloc. The GDR shares this need and, as Peter C. Ludz has observed, does not object to a special relationship

existing between itself and the FRG in terms of economic cooperation.¹³² Accordingly, East German freedom of action is limited and the prospects for pressure directed against West Berlin are decreased as a result of this factor.

In spite of all that has been done, the GDR still has not completely realized its objectives in social development. Stress is repeatedly on the fact that the SED is presently building a developed socialist society. The assertion that such a society has already been constructed is not made. Therefore, one can conclude that the ideal of complete identity with the GDR among the population, the total sense of socialist patriotism, has yet to be achieved. Therefore, in the absence of a total devotion to the GDR as an entity, tension is still needed to compensate for an incomplete national consciousness. West Berlin, whose extended position means that it is always vulnerable, provides the most convenient opportunity for creating tension that might provide, if only temporarily or occasionally, a degree of unity among an East German population believing itself threatened. Continued official reminders that a psychological war is being waged against the GDR from the territory of West Berlin is only one step from an assertion that imperialism is planning a military adventure against the GDR on West Berlin's territory. Accordingly, social needs perceived by the SED may well be reflected in confrontations with the West over the issue of West Berlin. In this respect, the West Berlin problem will continue

¹³²Frankfurter Allgemeine, October 3, 1974, p. 10.

to be a vivid illustration of the relationship between the SED's domestic needs and its foreign policy.

CHAPTER V

THE SOVIET ROLE IN THE GDR'S WEST BERLIN POLICY: THE GDR AS A JUNIOR ALLY OR A SATELLITE?

In an effort to more closely evaluate the extent of independence enjoyed by the German Democratic Republic in the formation of its foreign policy, this chapter will examine the public attitude of the Soviet Union, as expressed in major party and state publications, toward the West Berlin problem. Obviously, it is impossible to determine exactly what the USSR's role is in such matters because of the relatively closed nature of both the Soviet and the East German policymaking process. One cannot and should not rule out the possibility of considerable behind-the-scenes pressure by the USSR and maneuvering by the GDR. Nor can one determine precisely the manner in which the participants relate to each other. While certain assumptions are possible under normal circumstances, it is only during times of major public ruptures in the Communist alliance system that we learn more than what is indicated in speeches, communiques, and newspapers. Such public disputes are rare and the East German-Soviet relationship has been punctuated by none of them. Therefore, we must rely on public communications in order to make an evaluation of what the USSR has sought with regard to the East German policy on West Berlin.

Up to this point, the West Berlin issue has been examined in terms of its handling during the last years of the Ulbricht regime and the

first of the Honecker period. East German nation-building policy has been reviewed in order to evaluate the possible impact of domestic affairs on the SED's foreign policy. This chapter will endeavor to consider Soviet desires relative to the West Berlin issue, as well as related concerns, and, hopefully, in this manner permit a more direct analysis of the evolution of the GDR's status from satellite to junior ally of the Soviet Union.

I. SOVIET-EAST GERMAN RELATIONS DURING ULBRICHT'S LAST YEARS

The conception of East Germany as something more than a totally subservient satellite of the USSR has been gaining since the mid-1960's. In 1966, Ilse Spittmann wrote of the changed relationship between the GDR and the USSR and commented that the "SED is no longer a vassal but a partner in a joint venture."¹ This belief continued to grow up until the time of Ulbricht's removal as First Secretary in 1971. In evaluating Ulbricht's achievements, Melvin Croan declared shortly after his removal that developments clearly and uncontrovertedly demonstrated the degree to which the former First Secretary had "outgrown his erstwhile status of Soviet viceroy in Germany."²

The process which led to this situation is a long and involved one which cannot be separated from events of the Soviet Union's foreign and domestic policies. Ulbricht benefited from developments affecting

¹Ilse Spittmann, "Soviet Union and DDR," Survey, No. 61, Fall, 1966, p. 165.

²Melvin Croan, "After Ulbricht: The End of an Era?", *Ibid.*, No. 79, Spring, 1971, p. 78.

primarily and most directly the USSR, but ultimately was sacrificed in order to help meet the requirements of Soviet policy. One of the first events aiding the creation of a more independent GDR, if only in terms of subsequent East German rhetoric, was the ouster of Khrushchev in 1964 which, according to Ilse Spittmann, enabled the GDR to take credit for its own successes. While, in her analysis, the East German reaction to the fall of Khrushchev was ambiguous, it did demonstrate an awareness of the absence of a unified leadership in the Kremlin.³ Accordingly, the fall of Khrushchev is said to mark a turning point in the relationship between the GDR and the USSR. Khrushchev's efforts to effect a West German-Soviet detente with the exclusion of the GDR undoubtedly contributed to the East German desire to adopt an attitude of greater independence. Likewise, the statements by Khrushchev's son-in-law, Adzhubey, while visiting in the West that Ulbricht was suffering from cancer and would not live long would not have endeared the Khrushchev regime to Ulbricht.⁴ After Khrushchev's removal, Ulbricht publicly criticised the Soviet Union for its shortcomings in agricultural policy and chided the USSR for not correcting these mistakes earlier.⁵ For the remainder of the decade, Ulbricht persisted in his boasts of the independent accomplishments of the SED. Even on the occasion of the

³Spittmann, p. 171.

⁴Michel Tatu, Power in the Kremlin (New York: Viking Press, 1967), p. 389.

⁵Neues Deutschland, November 5, 1964, p. 1. (Hereafter noted as ND.)

International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties in 1969, as Ulbricht was calling for greater unity within the Bloc, he also reminded his listeners that socialism has been built in the GDR due to the creative applications of Marxism-Leninism to "the concrete conditions of our country" by the SED itself. The value of the alliance with the CPSU was mentioned only briefly and secondarily in Ulbricht's report on developments in the GDR.⁶

An additional important development which facilitated the evolution of the GDR from satellite to a junior ally was the initiation of the new economic system, planning for which had begun in June, 1963.⁷ With the GDR-USSR Treaty of Friendship of 1964 the SED had the needed reassurance that the USSR, while supporting the SED's economic reforms, was also as committed as ever to the defense of East Germany.⁸ The prestige that East Germany enjoyed in economic affairs clearly added to the influence of the GDR with the Soviet Union as well as other members of the Soviet alliance system. The importance of the GDR economy to the Soviet Union could be seen by the sharp increase in Soviet imports from East Germany after 1965. By 1971 this trade had increased by 47 percent over the 1965 figures.⁹ The sophisticated nature of East German products and

⁶International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties (Prague: Peace and Socialism Publishers, 1969), pp. 224-226.

⁷Otto Reinhold, editor, Seht, welche Kraft! (See, What Strength) (Berlin, GDR: Dietz Verlag, 1971), p. 170.

⁸Ibid., p. 172.

⁹Statistical Pocket Book of the GDR, 1973 (Berlin, GDR: Staatsverlag, 1973), p. 91.

the reputation that they enjoyed in the West added further to the status of the GDR within the countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. As the need for commodities of this sort increased in the USSR and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, Ulbricht had reason to take considerable pride in the accomplishments of the SED. The growing popularity of the annual Leipzig Trade Fair gave further testimony each year to the wisdom of the SED's economic programs. At the same time, Ulbricht undoubtedly felt that his political stature must also benefit from his economic achievements.

With the modification of the West German Ostpolitik by the Erhard government, the spectre of East European defections from Soviet tutelage grew in the late 1960's. It is reasonable to assume that the stock of Ulbricht, who was continuing to stress his loyalty to the Kremlin, rose during this time. The entry by Rumania into formal relations with the Federal Republic in 1967 demonstrated the potency of the West German Ostpolitik as practiced by Erhard's successor, Kiesinger, and presented the FRG as a potential threat to the hegemony of the USSR in Eastern Europe. While the FRG has been pursuing a more conciliatory policy toward East Europe for several years, it had achieved no significant successes until 1967. Simultaneous disruptions of the alliance by pro-Chinese Albania further underscored the need for some new basis for unity in the Soviet alliance. In response to this need, the Soviet Union abandoned proposals for an all-European security conference and began a strident anti-German campaign in order to, as Melvin Croan has

observed, "arrest fissiparous tendencies in Eastern Europe."¹⁰ The congruity between the Soviet and East German attitudes on this point was remarkable. Both Brezhnev and Ulbricht, speaking at the International Conference of Communist and Workers Parties in 1969 heaped scorn upon those "right wing Social Democratic leaders" who were attempting to disrupt the unity of the international communist movement.¹¹ The Kremlin's concern for preservation of its authority in Eastern Europe prompted it to attack West Germany and Red China, while the East Germans' fears of isolation as well as its everpresent need for tension inspired the SED to also pursue an intensified anti-West German campaign. Regardless of divergences in their motivations, both the USSR and the GDR shared a common purpose at the time of the Czechoslovakian developments in 1968.

The year of the Czechoslovakian intervention is especially important in tracing the evolution of the GDR's status. While estimates of Ulbricht's influence in persuading the USSR to launch the invasion vary, few would deny that it was the GDR which spearheaded the press campaign against Dubcek's "revisionism." The SED press and East German officials were the first to raise alarm at Czech experiments, pointing not only to the extreme dangers of revisionism but also to the subversive influence of West Germany. Early in the spring, the SED's Kurt Hager referred in ominous tones to the FRG's interest in Czech

¹⁰Croan, p. 79.

¹¹International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, pp. 164 and 222.

developments and to Bonn's efforts to "soften up the socialist countries from within."¹² Neues Deutschland editorialized the SED's warnings that all of the socialist states would suffer as a result of the Czechoslovakian experiments.¹³ The intolerance and aggressiveness of the East German press surpassed that of the Soviet Union and its other allies long before the August invasion. In the aftermath of the invasion, numerous observers expressed the belief that the action meant that Ulbricht's influence in the Kremlin had been a major factor and that a "fusion" had taken place in which the Soviet and East German "imperialism" were united for the first time.¹⁴

Whether the invasion was, in fact, undertaken due to Ulbricht's influence or not, it did mark a victory for the SED's First Secretary. The fact that the USSR responded according to his publicly stated wishes certainly gave him the appearance of enjoying the special confidence of the Soviet leaders in Bloc questions. It also underscored most dramatically the importance of the conception of the West German menace in East Europe, a conception which Ulbricht had preached for years. Ulbricht began to speak more frequently of the special role being played by the GDR in the Soviet alliance and even cited the East German experience as a model which could be followed by other states wishing

¹²BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, March 29, 1968, EE/2733/C1/7. (Hereafter noted as SWB.)

¹³ND, May 12, 1968, p. 1.

¹⁴Francois Fejto, "Moscow and Its Allies," Problems of Communism, Vol. XVII, No. 6, 1968, p. 37.

to achieve economic efficiency and political stability.¹⁵ Ulbricht emphasized his "special relationship" with the USSR in a number of ways. Most significant was his willingness to make independent proposals regarding matters of European security, such as agreements on the reunification of force.¹⁶ Ulbricht's long lectures on "the secret of our success" in the GDR provided another indication of how he saw himself in the Bloc. He would repeatedly speak at length on how a nation could develop itself in working for victory over capitalism, how it could achieve a developed socialist society, and the techniques to be used in improving labor productivity. At the same time, it has proceeded to give advice to nations of the Third World, particularly the Arab nations. To them and to the rest of the world, it has also offered the benefits of the technology developed by the GDR. Ulbricht pointed to East Germany's unique "socialist architecture" as evidence of the many technological advances made in the GDR.¹⁷ In sum, even if Ulbricht did not enjoy a special relationship with the Soviet Union, he certainly behaved as though he felt himself to be very much a special individual.

Soviet actions in 1969 should have convinced Ulbricht that he did not, in fact, enjoy a special relationship with the Kremlin. Events very quickly indicated that Ulbricht lacked the stature that enabled

¹⁵ND, October 25, 1968, p. 1.

¹⁶Ibid., January 1, 1968, p. 3.

¹⁷Ibid., June 11, 1969, pp. 1-2.

him to veto Soviet policy when he desired to do so. The negative tone assumed by the USSR toward West Germany prior to the Czech invasion was quickly replaced by a renewal of efforts to achieve a relaxation of tensions between the two states in 1969. In the summer of that year the Soviet government called for steps to ease the West Berlin situation while minimizing the crisis which had arisen in February and March over the use of West Berlin for a session of the FRG Bundestag. The immediate result was agreement on an exchange of views by representatives of the Four Powers in Berlin which commenced in March, 1970.¹⁸ After the Bundestag elections in September, 1969, the Soviet Union formally recognized that changes had taken place in West Germany's political situation by tendering a proposal on talks on the renunciation of force with Bonn. The talks began before the end of 1969 and were concluded on August 12, 1970 with the signing of the Soviet-West German treaty on the renunciation of force.¹⁹

However, Ulbricht refused to yield to the USSR's obvious calls for a reversal of the rigid policy toward the FRG still being followed by the GDR. While Soviet accounts simply spoke of the necessity of goodwill on the part of the West Berlin authorities for improving the West Berlin situation, Ulbricht maintained a series of demands as a prerequisite for alleviation of the situation. While the USSR called for "the establishment of equal international relations" between the GDR and

¹⁸B. Ponamaryov, History of Soviet Foreign Policy 1945-1970 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), p. 540.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 541.

the FRG as a prerequisite for an improvement in the larger "German problem."²⁰ Ulbricht maintained a much harsher approach. He continued to demand full diplomatic recognition as the price for improving relations and added an additional demand in January, 1970, when he insisted that Bonn would have to withdraw from NATO if it seriously wanted an improvement.²¹ The fact that the Stoph-Brandt talks in March and May were set against the background of a consistently hostile East German tone toward the FRG indicated that Ulbricht, in spite of Soviet wishes to the contrary, was still essentially opposed to detente.

In this manner, Ulbricht was succeeding in isolating the GDR from its own allies, the very thing he had feared that the FRG would accomplish. Evidence of this was seen at the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee meeting in Moscow in December, 1969. The communique of that meeting called for bilateral negotiations with West Germany without pledging to work for diplomatic recognition of the GDR by the Bonn government, an obvious departure from Ulbricht's formula.²² Ulbricht's defiance was exemplified by charges that NATO and the FRG were "as aggressive as ever" and that the policies of the West had not changed at all.²³ This approach served to underscore the extent of his

²⁰Ibid., pp. 539-542.

²¹ND, January 20, 1970, p. 3.

²²Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. 20, No. 44, December 28, 1969, p. 21. (Hereafter noted as CDSP.)

²³ND, December 12, 1969, p. 1.

self-imposed alienation from the USSR and his other allies. It might be supposed that the realization of this was dawning on Ulbricht when he consented to the Stoph-Brandt meetings early in 1970. The fact that he agreed to the meetings in spite of his openly critical attitude of detente indicates that the degree of Soviet pressure must have been considerable. Yet, Ulbricht's independence was such that complete capitulation was impossible.

The remainder of Ulbricht's tenure saw a pattern of alternating defiance of the Kremlin on the one hand and acquiescence to Soviet wishes on the other. It might be argued that he would resist until he felt that the Kremlin was losing patience and then would make some effort to show that he was willing to cooperate with the Soviet policy. His speech to the Central Committee following the Stoph-Brandt meetings illustrates this. At this time Ulbricht dropped the demand for diplomatic recognition by the FRG, a significant departure from previous statements.²⁴ He continued his more moderate tone the following month at the 13th Workers' Conference of the Baltic Sea Countries in Rostock when he asserted that "a certain measure of recognition of realities" was apparent in the new Brandt government. Just six months earlier he had been arguing that there had been no change at all in the nature of imperialism and had included West Germany as one of the major imperialists. While his praise at Rostock was also coupled with a denunciation of "right-wing" and "neo-fascist" tendencies in the FRG,

²⁴Ibid., June 16, 1970, pp. 1-2.

his only demands were that Bonn ratify a treaty with the USSR on renunciation of force and that the GDR be regarded by the FRG "as a subject in international law." He stopped short of a demand for diplomatic recognition by simply stressing the GDR's demand for "what the Federal Republic itself practices and demands in its own relations with other countries."²⁵

While the conclusion of the Moscow-Bonn treaty in August, 1970 was greeted by the GDR as a favorable development, there are indications that it failed to achieve what the SED hoped for. The fact that the treaty did not elicit guarantees from the FRG on those issues of central concern to the SED meant that it had not altered the East German bargaining position at all. The USSR made no demands for a settlement of unresolved issues of the German question, so the SED was forced to read into the treaty those points which it had sought. While the negotiations on the treaty brought a pledge from West Germany to agree to an upgrading of the GDR's international status through its admission to the United Nations and other international organizations, it was clear that the FRG meant this only as a reward for a favorable East German response to West German initiatives for alleviating the inter-German situation, including the Berlin situation. In short, the West Germans were offering as a reward what Ulbricht regarded as a right.²⁶

²⁵Ibid., July 17, 1970, p. 1.

²⁶E. H. Albert, "Bonn's Moscow Treaty and Its Implications," International Affairs (London), April, 1971, pp. 319-323.

The SED made up for these shortcomings by analyzing the treaty in its own more favorable terms. The statement by the GDR Council of Ministers issued two days after the conclusion of the treaty gave the SED an opportunity to air its own interpretation of the treaty. "The heart of the treaty," according to the statement, "is the recognition of the territorial status quo in Europe. . . ." The border between the GDR and the FRG was mentioned as one of the most important aspects of the results of the Second World War affected by the treaty. The statement continued this theme by declaring,

The treaty between the USSR and the FRG stipulates in a form binding in international law the inviolability of the state border between the FRG and the GDR and the unlimited respect for the territorial integrity also of the GDR. With that, the normalization of relations between the GDR and the FRG on a basis of equality has become a task the solution of which is now in the realm of possibility.²⁷

The statement went on to assert that, for these reasons, it was now "necessary to establish normal diplomatic relations" between the GDR and the FRG. It also argued that now there was no longer any reason for any third state to continue to avoid establishing diplomatic relations with the GDR or for the GDR to be denied admission to any international organization.

The failure of the Soviet press to repeat the complete text of the East German statement, thus failing to air what amounted to a renewal of old demands by Ulbricht, indicated that the GDR was once again isolating itself from its allies and pursuing a policy counter to the

²⁷ND, August 15, 1970, p. 1.

wishes of the USSR. The communique of the Warsaw Pact summit meeting later in August gave further credence to the assertion that the GDR was once more out of step. It spoke of the overall concerns for achievement of detente in Europe and the convening of a security conference, but made no mention at all of the East German demands issued in the statement on the treaty.²⁸ The continuation of the Four Power talks on Berlin raised the further possibility of another Soviet "betrayal" of East German interests. By this time, there was a strong possibility that the USSR might agree to a statement affirming the continuation of at least some sort of ties between West Berlin and the Federal Republic. Repeated warning appeared in the GDR press about the creation by Bonn politicians of a "West Berlin myth" which would deny that all of Berlin was part of East Germany.²⁹ These warnings illustrated the SED's fears but apparently had no effect on the Soviet negotiators who were in the process of doing exactly what Ulbricht was attempting to prevent.

Robert Bleimann has posited the existence of two factions in the SED Politburo at this time, divided according to their orientations toward Soviet pressure on the GDR. The central issue in this dispute was, according to Bleimann, how to upgrade the international position of the GDR. Honecker, Verner, and Stoph are said to have favored the Soviet position that recognition of the GDR would be achieved only by supporting the process of normalization sought by the USSR. The USSR,

²⁸CDSP, Vol. 22, No. 36, October 6, 1970, p. 10.

²⁹Berliner Zeitung, March 25, 1970, p. 3.

in turn, would protect the sovereign rights of the GDR. This faction also favored the forging of closer ties with the Soviet Union.³⁰ Walter Ulbricht is described as the leader of the other faction which took a more skeptical view of the USSR's guarantee. Bleimann explains that Ulbricht resented the revision in the Warsaw Pact's demands in which the GDR's needs had been given a lower priority.³¹ Ulbricht expressed this resentment in the fall of 1970 by publicly criticizing the USSR for alleged shortcomings in the area of "joint consultation" between the East European states³² and by failing to appear at the 10th Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party which was, as is the usual practice, attended by all major communist leaders.³³ Bleimann hypothesizes that the 10th Hungarian Congress was to have been an informal meeting of the heads of the East European communist states to examine the detente policy of the Soviet Bloc. Ulbricht's absence is thus interpreted as an expression of his disapproval of detente.³⁴

Brezhnev's speech to the Hungarian Congress demonstrates the Soviet Union's efforts to refuse to allow Ulbricht to exercise a veto over detente. Responding to Ulbricht's fears of a Soviet "sellout" of East German interests, Brezhnev argued that the Moscow-Bonn treaty and

³⁰Robert Bleimann, "Ostpolitik and the GDR," Survey, Vol. 18, No. 3, Summer, 1972, p. 43.

³¹Ibid., p. 44.

³²ND, November 15, 1970, p. 3.

³³Ibid., November 22, 1970, p. 1.

³⁴Bleimann, p. 45.

the Polish-FRG treaty were "based on a clear recognition of the actual state of affairs in Europe. . . ." Accordingly, he insisted, the treaties create "good preconditions" for improving detente while at the same time safeguarding "the legitimate interests of the German Democratic Republic. . . ." ³⁵ The same theme was stressed in a Pravda editorial earlier which had attacked the Red Chinese for charging that the Moscow-Bonn treaty was a betrayal of the interests of the GDR. Pravda charged the Red Chinese with seeking to aid the "neo-fascists" in the FRG. ³⁶ These statements clearly show that the USSR was aware of Ulbricht's reluctance to support Soviet policy and was making efforts to overcome that opposition. Brezhnev continued to apply pressure in his speech at the Armenian Jubilee on November 30, 1970. In his speech he linked a settlement of the West Berlin problem with an improvement in detente for all of Europe. Brezhnev declared that the USSR believed normalization of the West Berlin situation was possible and that all such a normalization required was, not the acceptance of Ulbricht's demands, but simply that the

. . . Interested parties display goodwill and work out decisions that will meet the wishes of the West Berlin population and will take into account the legitimate interests and sovereign rights of the German Democratic Republic.³⁷

³⁵CDSP, Vol. 22, No. 47, December 22, 1970, p. 6.

³⁶Ibid., Vol. 22, No. 38, October 20, 1970, p. 8.

³⁷Ibid., Vol. 22, No. 48, December 29, 1970, p. 4.

The meeting of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee in Berlin in the first week of December served as an additional warning to the GDR that Ulbricht's intransigence would not be allowed to disrupt Soviet policy. The communique of the meeting, while expressing support for the "peace-loving policy" of the GDR and stating that "without the participation of the GDR it is impossible to build the edifice of lasting peace in this area," went on to reaffirm the Soviet Union's views on all major issues. Ignoring Ulbricht's demands for the fulfillment of additional prerequisites by the FRG prior to the further advancement of detente in Europe, the communique asserted that "sufficient preconditions had been created" and that the process of normalization could now continue.³⁸

In his speech at the 14th session of the Central Committee of the SED the following week, Ulbricht issued a further challenge to the USSR, clearly demonstrating his unwillingness to yield to Soviet pressures. First, he emphasized that the WTO Political Consultative Committee meeting had declared its "solidarity" with the policy of the GDR and, in so doing, placed considerably more stress on that endorsement than the three sentences in the communique would seem to have justified. The diplomatic recognition of the GDR by the FRG was described as a "vital requirement of the times," as Ulbricht quoted very selectively from the communique. He continued by denigrating the concessions made by Bonn, declaring that "nobody . . . pays anybody anything . . . if a

³⁸Ibid., Vol. 22, No. 49, January 5, 1971, pp. 2-3.

state abandons in whole or in part positions that have always been unrealistic or illegitimate." In discussing the West Berlin problem, Ulbricht spoke of a settlement taking into consideration the "needs of the population of West Berlin" rather than the "wishes" as Brezhnev had. He then proceeded to specify the needs of West Berlin's population as he saw them, stressing the need for an end to "illegal state intervention" by Bonn in West Berlin's affairs. He concluded with his most significant challenge, an offer to enter into talks with the FRG to settle those very questions being discussed at that time by the Soviet Union and the major Western powers in Berlin. Ulbricht implied that once the GDR and the FRG succeeded in working out major problems, such as transit from the FRG to West Berlin, the need for the USSR and the other powers in Berlin to negotiate a settlement would be eliminated. In effect, Ulbricht was replacing the competence of the USSR for the Berlin question with that of the GDR.³⁹ Meanwhile, Paul Verner's report to the Central Committee stressed the leading role of the USSR in resolving the major issues between the GDR, the FRG, and West Berlin, clearly illustrating the rift in the Politburo spoken of by Robert Bleimann. Verner made no reference to those points made by Ulbricht in his speech nor did he discuss any major independent initiative by the GDR on international questions.⁴⁰

A pattern of pressure and counterpressure between the USSR and Ulbricht emerges from an analysis of events since 1968. The influence

³⁹ND, December 10, 1970, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 3.

of Walter Ulbricht seemed to reach a zenith with the Czech invasion of 1968. It might be supposed that as a result the SED's First Secretary developed an overconfident attitude regarding his importance to the Soviet Union and the Bloc. In the three years that followed the Czech invasion, Ulbricht attempted to exercise a veto over major Soviet policy decisions affecting Germany and, consequently, demonstrated that he could be a rather awkward ally for the USSR. Apparently, the man who had headed what was once the USSR's most subservient satellite was endeavoring to assume an independent position within the Bloc, at least in certain policy areas. In attempting to analyze this development, one West German observer of GDR affairs, Peter Jochen Winters, speculated that, in fact, Ulbricht was and "remained a German nationalist to the end of his days." According to Winters, Ulbricht, as a German nationalist, "did his best to keep his distance from the Soviet Union and tried to preserve for the GDR at least a modicum of independence."⁴¹ Whether the Winters analysis is accurate or not, the GDR had evolved from satellite, to junior ally, and then, in the Ulbricht formulation, to equal partner of the USSR. While these developments followed a period in which the Soviet Union was apparently loosening its rigid control over the East European nations,⁴² the GDR had clearly tried to achieve more than the USSR could tolerate. This was also more than Ulbricht could survive when he lost the flexibility that had previously

⁴¹Frankfurter Allgemeine, September 30, 1974, p. 10.

⁴²Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 433-434.

enabled him to almost unerringly anticipate shifts in Kremlin policy and immediately accommodate the GDR's positions to those of the USSR. By contrast, Honecker demonstrated that he possessed the flexibility that made him valuable to the Kremlin. While Honecker's early statements led many to assume that he was among those resisting detente--for example, his apparent opposition to East-West German rapprochement in early 1970⁴³--by the time the USSR's determination became obvious, Honecker had become a part of the faction in the SED Politburo supporting the Soviet position. By the fall of 1970, Honecker had become especially vocal in his support for an East German policy of even closer ties with the Soviet Union.⁴⁴ In addition, Honecker had also been on record previously for his enthusiastic support of the Soviet positions on Red China and had been noted for his frequent attacks on the Chinese leadership, attacks which were much more numerous than those of the more reluctant Ulbricht.⁴⁵ Seen in the light of the USSR's concern for maintaining the GDR as a cooperative, responsive ally, Honecker's selection to replace Ulbricht appears to be a highly logical decision on the part of the Soviet Union.

⁴³ND, February 22, 1970, p. 3.

⁴⁴Ibid., October 24, 1970, p. 4.

⁴⁵Heinz Lippmann, Honecker and the New Politics of Europe
(New York: Macmillian Company, 1972), pp. 207-208.

II. SOVIET INFLUENCE SINCE 1971

Soviet influence on East German foreign policy since the promotion of Erich Honecker has apparently been much stronger. The Honecker period has been characterized by a return to the previous East German attitude of quick responsiveness to Soviet suggestions. This has been a time in which the reliability of the SED as a partner of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has increased considerably.

The Soviet Union's expectations were spelled out with some specificity on a variety of occasions. The main Soviet theme was sounded in an article in World Marxist Review which has been quoted extensively by various East German publications. The author, CPSU Central Committee Secretary Konstantin Katushev, stressed the necessity of unity for socialist victories in international affairs today. He begins by citing evidence of a change in the international situation "in favor of detente and the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems." This change, he insists, did not come about because of any alterations of the nature of imperialism, but because of the "coordinated foreign policy of the socialist countries. . . ." Unity under the leadership of the CPSU is described as an absolute necessity for the victories being enjoyed for socialism. The Soviet Union, Katushev writes, has a "special responsibility" by virtue of its position as the biggest and most powerful of the socialist countries. Accordingly, all actions must be taken in unison with the USSR.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Konstantin Katushev, "Toward Closer Unity of the Socialist World," World Marxist Review, Vol. 16, No. 8, August, 1973, pp. 4-5.

Brezhnev made a similar point in his speech at the 8th SED Congress in June, 1971, just one month after Ulbricht's removal. According to Brezhnev, the greater the unity of the socialist states,

. . . The more stable will the foundations of universal peace and security be and the more firmly will the peoples advance towards freedom and independence. . . . We consider it our duty to do everything we can to strengthen this alliance.⁴⁷

The Soviet First Secretary also noted that CPSU foreign policy programs were enjoying the active support of the Central Committee of the SED and declared that his was simply further striking proof of the unity of the foreign policy aims of the Warsaw Treaty states. Reports of Brezhnev's speech to the Congress indicate that each of the statements stressing some aspect of Eastern unity was met with either "stormy, prolonged applause" or at least "prolonged applause." These personal reactions themselves, assuming the accuracy of the newspaper accounts, testify to the East Germans' sensitivity to the Soviet leader's message. His emphatic assurances that the negotiations on West Berlin were being conducted with "due consideration for the lawful interests and sovereign rights of the GDR" also indicate the CPSU's awareness of East German fears that the Soviet Union might not fully protect the GDR's concerns in the talks.⁴⁸ By linking this reassurance with calls for greater unity, Brezhnev clearly intended to express the USSR's view that no independent actions on the part of the SED were necessary to advance the GDR's interests on the Berlin question.

⁴⁷ND, June 16, 1971, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 2-3.

The Soviet conception of the increased necessity for unity on foreign policy questions was coupled with an ideological justification. A Soviet authority wrote in 1971 that the "nature of the epoch" was determining changes in international relations in such a fashion that the need for coordination was now greater than ever. Increased coordination was described as dictated by ideological necessity, not the whims of the CPSU.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the Soviet authority continued, the imperialists were the principal opponents of a coordinated foreign policy for the socialist states and were seeking to create the impression that such a policy involved a violation of the sovereignty of the East European states or an abuse of their legitimate rights. The best interests of the WTO states, he insisted, required a rejection of these views. He concluded with an observation reflecting once again the USSR's awareness of previous East German unwillingness to smoothly and completely coordinate all aspects of their foreign policy with that of the USSR. While the overwhelming majority of the countries were coordinating their policies, not all countries of the socialist community were willing to do so.

Experience shows, however, that the country which underestimates the importance of coordinating its foreign policy actually weakens the effectiveness of its own policy and finds itself in a position of international isolation.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Sh. Sanakoyev, "Socialist Foreign Policy: Coordination and Effectiveness," International Affairs (Moscow), No. 6, 1971, p. 8.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 13-14.

Though only China was specifically named in this connection, there can be little doubt that the warning, coming almost at the very time Ulbricht was being removed, was intended for the GDR as well as other East European states.

The SED has demonstrated its responsiveness to Soviet concerns in a number of ways since 1971. One has been the renewed emphasis on the importance of foreign policy in the overall development of socialist societies. Official East German publications have placed considerable stress on the necessity for the creation of the proper conditions for the internal development of their society. Such external conditions can be achieved, in the SED's view, only through the pursuit of a coordinated socialist foreign policy. One East German author recently explained that such a policy

. . . Has to an increasing extent become a basic condition for the full utilization of the advantages of the socialist society in the socialist countries. The importance of foreign policy in the uniform social strategy and tactics of the communist parties of the socialist countries is growing.⁵¹

This has been coupled with ever increasing praise for the Soviet Union from the highest SED officials. Most notable have been the frequent verbal bouquets offered by SED chief Erich Honecker who has regularly praised the USSR for its "consistent, farsighted, and flexible policy" which has aided peace, international security, and world socialism.⁵² The view Honecker advances is that peace on the European

⁵¹Werner Hanish and Hartwig Busse, "Peaceful Coexistence: Principle of GDR Foreign Policy," German Foreign Policy, Vol. XIII, No. 1, 1974, p. 14.

⁵²ND, June 7, 1972, p. 1.

continent has been preserved, more than anything else, by the power and strength of the Soviet Union. The occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the USSR in 1972 gave the GDR an especially good opportunity to make the SED's devotion to the USSR visible to its own citizens and all who passed through the GDR. Bright red banners and billboards proclaiming this event and the GDR's enthusiastic support of the USSR could be seen on almost every street in East Berlin as well as in the smaller towns and along the railways. This was in sharp contrast to the much less conspicuous and less frequently seen proclamations in neighboring Poland. Praise for the USSR itself has been equaled only by the innumerable instances of official praise for the GDR's alliance with the Soviet Union, such as that of Gerald Gotting, president of the Volkskammer, in a recent article stressing the "true and durable friendship" of the USSR and East Germany.⁵³ Oskar Fischer, Acting GDR Foreign Minister, has also spoken of the considerable value of this alliance and the "daily consultation with our Soviet friends" on all foreign policy matters.⁵⁴ East German soldiers are even called upon to pledge their allegiance to the alliance with the Soviet Army in their soldiers' oath.⁵⁵

⁵³Gerald Gotting, "Growing International Reputation of the GDR," German Foreign Policy, Vol. XIII, No. 1, 1974, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁴RBI-Journal (Berlin, GDR), No. 3, 1974, p. 5.

⁵⁵Handbuch Militarisches Grundwissen (Handbook of Basic Military Knowledge) (Berlin, GDR: Militarverlag der DDR, 1972), p. 25.

The greater responsiveness of the SED to Soviet pressures has also been demonstrated by the calls for increased Bloc cooperation which have become an almost daily element of official rhetoric. East German accounts emphasize that there are now new bases for the cooperation of the states of the socialist community. The field of foreign-political coordination is said to be particularly affected by this development. The official view is that historical experience shows that the increased coordination of the foreign policies of the socialist states is an "inevitable process" which has resulted from the internationalist character of socialism and the existence of several independent and sovereign states which are linked by a bond of common interests.⁵⁶ Erich Honecker has praised the system of meetings between the heads of the communist parties of East Europe as one important means of consolidating the unity of the community of socialist states.⁵⁷ Since his elevation as First Secretary, Honecker has been among the most enthusiastic of the East European leaders working for increased consultation and coordination among the Bloc states. An additional element of Honecker's theme has been an intensified stress on the belief that the USSR must be recognized as the authoritative voice in East Europe on all major issues. While Ulbricht also recognized the USSR's authoritative position, he seemed to be seeking to make exceptions to Soviet authority on certain issues, especially those

⁵⁶Anton Latzo, "Foreign-Political Coordination in the Interests of Socialism and Peace," German Foreign Policy, Vol. XIII, No. 2, 1974, pp. 170-171.

⁵⁷ND, December 10, 1973, p. 1.

relating to detente and the West Berlin question. Honecker makes no effort to except certain areas from Soviet authority and has been optimistic about the results of the GDR's renewed efforts at policy coordination. SED spokesmen have boasted that cooperation with both the Soviet Union and the other socialist states has been strengthened and deepened in recent years.⁵⁸

The handling of the crisis over the opening of a branch of the FRG Environmental office in West Berlin in 1974 demonstrates the change in the relationship between the USSR and the GDR. Observers of East German affairs felt that the GDR's conduct during the last serious crisis over West Berlin, that arising as a result of the FRG's decision to elect a new president in West Berlin in 1969, illustrated the lack of cooperation between the SED and the Soviet Union. At that time, according to an analysis by Melvin Croan, the SED precipitated a crisis on its own while the USSR attempted to play the dispute down and acted as a mediator rather than a participant aiding the GDR in its confrontation with the West.⁵⁹ The 1974 crisis illustrated the unity of the GDR and the Soviet Union. East German objections to the branch office are couched in terms of a violation of the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin⁶⁰ while the Soviet Union has made public its support of the SED's position and its intention to support the implementation of appropriate measures to

⁵⁸Gotting, p. 3.

⁵⁹Croan, pp. 80-81.

⁶⁰Foreign Affairs Bulletin (Berlin, GDR: Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Vol. 14, August 2, 1974, p. 167.

counter the West German moves.⁶¹ In contrast to their conduct during the 1969 crisis, in this incident the East Germans have been especially careful to place their demands within the context of a Soviet-approved policy, the full implementation of the Berlin agreement as interpreted by the Soviet Union. The fact that Moscow has given full support to the GDR and voiced similar objection to the establishment of the branch of the FRG Environment Office in West Berlin clearly indicates that the CPSU does not see the crisis as an East German attempt to impede detente. The Soviet press placed the blame in this controversy squarely on the FRG Ministry of Interior and branded the decision as "devoid of any practical business sense" and "in complete contradiction to the letter and spirit of the quadripartite agreement on West Berlin."⁶² The conformity of the Soviet and the East German responses demonstrates the coordination of foreign policy spoken of so frequently by both nations. This might also be considered evidence of what the SED refers to as the "new element in the worldwide struggle between socialism and imperialism." This new element is described by the East Germans as a result of the socialist states having reached a "new, higher stage of their common foreign policy."⁶³

Spokesmen for the SED and the GDR government never tire of pointing out the benefits of a common foreign policy for the WTO

⁶¹New York Times, July 21, 1974, p. 3.

⁶²CDSP, Vol. XXVI, No. 27, July 31, 1974, pp. 21-22.

⁶³Paul Markowski, "Common Foreign Policy of the Socialist Community of States," German Foreign Policy, Vol. XII, No. 5, 1973, p. 501.

states. Since Honecker's elevation as First Secretary the SED has repeatedly emphasized the advantages that the GDR enjoys as a result of the USSR-East German alliance. Speaking of this in 1974, an East German commentary advanced the view that East Germany's "position within international politics has fundamentally changed within the last year." This change, it insists, came about thanks largely to the efforts of the Soviet Union.⁶⁴ The SED sees this change as one which helps create the internal and external conditions for shaping the "evolved socialist society in the GDR." Hanisch and Busse, writing in German Foreign Policy, expressed the East German view of a link between foreign and domestic policies.

. . . Socialist foreign policy has to an increasing extent become a basic condition for the full utilization of the advantages of the socialist society in the socialist countries. The importance of foreign policy in the uniform social strategy and tactics of the communist parties of the socialist countries is growing.⁶⁵

Furthermore, East German authorities explain, the basic condition for full international equality of the GDR is its alliance with the Soviet Union. Without this alliance, East Germany would still suffer from the discrimination said to have been practiced by the West in its relations with the GDR, discrimination which caused many difficulties and forced the GDR to make additional expenditures for defense. As a result, during this time the GDR was at a disadvantage in protecting its

⁶⁴ND, April 27, 1974, p. 9.

⁶⁵Hanisch and Busse, p. 14.

interests vis-a-vis the capitalist countries as well as within the United Nations.⁶⁶ The USSR's assistance is considered the decisive factor in helping East Germany advance beyond its previous status. In December, 1973, Honecker went so far as to attribute not only the above improvements but "every success of socialism in the GDR" to its alliance with the USSR.⁶⁷ On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the GDR, Kurt Hager declared that "without the Soviet Union's all-round comradely aid, the very existence and evolution of our republic would have been impossible."⁶⁸ While Ulbricht never questioned the value of the GDR-Soviet alliance and heaped considerable praise upon that alliance, he never lavished the excessive praise on the alliance seen during the Honecker years.

The East German stance on the treaties negotiated by the USSR, especially the one on West Berlin, further illustrates the SED's increased responsiveness. In September, 1971, Pravda spelled out its view of the meaning of the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin. First, it declared the agreement to be "an effective foundation" for the normalization and improvement of the West Berlin situation. Second, it stressed that the agreement excludes West Berlin from the territory of the FRG. And, third, it pointed out that the agreement meant that

⁶⁶Werner Hanisch, "The GDR and Its International Relations," German Foreign Policy, Vol. XII, No. 6, 1973, pp. 632-633.

⁶⁷ND, December 10, 1973, p. 1.

⁶⁸Kurt Hager, "Werte und Errungenschaften unseres Lebens" ("Values and Achievements of our Life"), Einheit, No. 9/10, September/October, 1974, p. 1072.

there would be a curtailment of West German "political activities" in West Berlin.⁶⁹ At almost the same time as it was making its view of the West Berlin agreement public, Pravda was also able to report on the "complete unity of opinion" between the USSR and the GDR on "questions of West Berlin."⁷⁰ The SED has further demonstrated its responsive attitude by giving credit for the agreement, without reservation, solely to the Soviet Union.⁷¹ Also, while Honecker attributes certain constructive contributions in the process of detente to the GDR, he is careful to phrase his claims in terms of the SED's close adherence to the foreign policy program outlined by the 24th Congress of the CPSU.⁷² East German accounts are also careful to point out that the negotiations which it has been carrying out with the FRG on such matters as a postal and communications agreement, a health agreement, and on mutual legal aid are being conducted pursuant to the Berlin Agreement concluded by the Soviet Union with the Western powers.⁷³ In other words, the GDR sees itself acting to put the finishing touches on what is described as the settlement of the German question, but, only in connection with provisions already determined by the Soviet Union. There is no talk of independent East German proposals as was very much the case during

⁶⁹CDSP, Vol. XXIII, No. 36, October 5, 1971, p. 22.

⁷⁰Ibid., Vol. XXIII, No. 35, September 28, 1971, p. 21.

⁷¹ND, June 7, 1972, p. 1.

⁷²Ibid., p. 2.

⁷³Hanisch, p. 645.

the Ulbricht regime when the GDR offered initiatives for the preparation of an all-European security conference.⁷⁴ Honecker has worked carefully within the framework of Soviet initiative and, as a result, has won the praise of the Soviet Union for the GDR's "businesslike approach and goodwill."⁷⁵ The fact that the SED, as Honecker himself has stated, views the actions of the USSR as having closed the German question,⁷⁶ certainly no small achievement, is additional testimony of East Germany's responsive attitude. Finally, the appreciation of the SED, which declared that the agreement on West Berlin showed how "our republic's vital interests are ensured precisely in the course of cooperation between the GDR and the USSR," was noted with approval in Pravda following the conclusion of the Quadripartite Agreement.⁷⁷

The SED has exhibited its increased loyalty to the Soviet Union by acting as a major spokesman against Chinese revisionism, once more echoing the Kremlin's current view on the activities of the Red Chinese. Not only have the allegedly disruptive actions of Peking in the international arena been condemned, but Honecker has also warned against Chinese interference in German affairs. In December, 1973, he spoke of ominous indications of a potential union between certain elements in the FRG government and the Red Chinese who are said to share a common desire

⁷⁴Dieter Vogl, "The Warsaw Treaty States and the European Security Conference," German Foreign Policy, Vol. X, No. 1, 1971, p. 27.

⁷⁵CDSP, Vol. XXIII, No. 50, January 11, 1972, p. 22.

⁷⁶ND, December 10, 1973, p. 1.

⁷⁷CDSP, Vol. XXIII, No. 40, November 2, 1971, p. 23.

to disrupt the process of detente in Central Europe.⁷⁸ The sharply critical attitude assumed by the SED in recent years toward the Red Chinese contrasts with the more restrained tone of the last Ulbricht years, a tone which did not always fully reflect the intensity of Soviet feeling with regard to Peking. Ulbricht's speech at the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties illustrated the GDR's restraint. While Brezhnev spoke at some length on the Chinese problem,⁷⁹ Ulbricht devoted most of his speech to an attack on the West German Social Democrats. Only three paragraphs of his speech dealt with the Red Chinese. While Ulbricht noted that the "aggressive armed raids" on the Soviet-Chinese border had "angered" the GDR and that the Chinese leadership had "officially completed its departure from Marxism-Leninism," he also spoke of the Chinese Communists as people "with whom we feel closely bound up" and invited them to "resume cooperation" with the other Marxist-Leninist parties.⁸⁰

Finally, the SED has altered its attitude toward the West German Social Democrats during the time since Honecker's elevation and, in so doing, has further accommodated its position to that of the Kremlin. The establishment of an SPD government in the FRG was greeted in the GDR as an event of little significance initially. Neues Deutschland suggested that the "much vaunted 'accommodation' shown by the Federal

⁷⁸ND, December 10, 1973, p. 1.

⁷⁹International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, pp. 156-160.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 229-230.

Republic" in the first months after Brandt's election as Chancellor was, in reality, nothing more than a "flood of more or less beautiful words. . . ." ⁸¹ The SED also suggested that the SPD, instead of wanting to recognize "realities," desired a "restoration of the state of affairs that existed before August 13, 1961." ⁸² As First Secretary, Honecker has done much to reverse the negative tone set by Ulbricht with regard to the SPD. The change became apparent with Honecker's statement in November, 1971, following a visit to East Berlin by Brezhnev. Upon Brezhnev's departure, Honecker noted the "constructive approach" of the Brandt government in dealing with the settlement of "unresolved questions" and stated the GDR's intention of giving a favorable response to the Brandt approach. ⁸³ The reversal was further shown by an interview Honecker gave to the director of the East German news agency and the editor of Neues Deutschland in 1972. In response to a question as to what he might expect from a West German government under the leadership of the conservative Christian Democratic Party, Honecker made his preference for an SPD government explicit. He explained that the CDU had demonstrated its negative attitude toward the GDR for the twenty years it had controlled the government in the past and that it would be likely to resume such a policy should the CDU's Barzel become Chancellor. A defeat of the SPD and a victory for the CDU would, in Honecker's

⁸¹ND, March 7, 1970, p. 1.

⁸²Ibid., March 17, 1970, pp. 1-2.

⁸³Ibid., November 7, 1971, p. 1.

opinion, bring an end to the process of detente, a process to which the GDR was fully committed by this time.⁸⁴ The reversal of the traditional East German view of the Social Democrats as being worse than the more conservative parties must be seen as an event of considerable significance and an additional expression of the GDR's willingness to cooperate more fully with the USSR than during Ulbricht's last years.

While there is no reason to believe that Ulbricht was completely unresponsive to Soviet wishes during his last years, it is apparent that he had become less responsive than desired on certain specific issues and that he attempted to exercise a veto over Soviet policy in some respects. By contrast, Honecker has returned the GDR to a pattern of more complete and full compliance with Soviet dictates. In short, while Ulbricht was responsive, Honecker has been more responsive. This is not to suggest that the GDR has reverted to the servile status that it had during the years it was the Soviet Zone of Germany. A return to such situation does not seem desirable even for the Soviet Union. However, recent developments do suggest a greater awareness on the part of the Honecker leadership that East Germany cannot become an independent force within the Bloc. Honecker's policies indicate an awareness of the futility of attempting to oppose the Soviet Union on major policies, especially one such as detente which seems to form a central element of Soviet strategy in world affairs today. The current leadership realizes that the GDR can be an effective power in Europe only as it acts more

⁸⁴Ibid., April 26, 1972, p. 1.

closely than ever within the WTO and in concert with the Soviet Union. Honecker, unlike his predecessor, displays no pretensions of being an equal partner with the Soviet Union.

III. DOMESTIC INFLUENCE OF THE USSR ON EAST GERMANY

The Soviet Union has consistently issued calls for its allies to follow as closely as possible the example set by the Soviet Union not only in foreign policy but also in domestic affairs. While this emphasis on the necessity for unity does not represent a return to the Stalinist policy of institutional and ideological uniformity of the postwar years,⁸⁵ it does involve similar concerns. Essentially the same ends are sought but different means are employed for their attainment today. The USSR utilizes what it refers to as "collective analysis" of the experiences of all socialist countries rather than just that of the Soviet Union. Ideally, the communist parties of the Bloc states are supposed to arrive at common policies during frequent meetings at which coordination is discussed. The implication is that these policies are supposed to be formulated after joint consultation, not simply on the basis of Soviet dictates as would have been the case during Stalin's time. One Soviet author recently addressed himself to this issue and explained that

Coordination of the political activity of countries of the socialist community is determined by practical necessity and ensues from the community of their international and national

⁸⁵ Brzezinski, pp. 67-83.

interests. . . . It serves as another example of the untenability of concepts of different "models of socialism."⁸⁶

Soviet sources call for the elaboration of a common line among all socialist countries in economic, political, and ideological affairs. Multilateral and bilateral talks as well as the meetings of the WTO Political Consultative Committee are described as the principal means of achieving the desired common line.

East German domestic policies during the period since 1968 do not reveal any serious divergence from the policies supported by the Soviet Union. Both Ulbricht and Honecker have demonstrated attitudes remarkably similar to those of the Kremlin's leadership relating to the domestic development of the GDR. Most accounts see this congruity of outlooks on domestic affairs, especially cultural questions, as characteristic throughout East Germany's history.⁸⁷ The most notable variation in East German domestic policy from that of the USSR is the SED's economic policy. Even in the period prior to the Czech disturbances the East German leadership, according to typical Western analyses, was seeking a certain amount of economic freedom through its reforms, commonly referred to as the New Economic System (NES).⁸⁸ However, even in this departure from what might be considered orthodoxy, the SED's efforts were facilitated by the Soviet Union itself, hardly an indication that East Berlin was exhibiting independence from Moscow.⁸⁹

⁸⁶V. Dolgin, "Unity of Goals and Action," International Affairs (Moscow), No. 7, July, 1974, p. 5.

⁸⁷Spittman, p. 170.

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 174-176.

⁸⁹Croan, p. 83.

Yet, even this has been abandoned within recent years and a process of economic recentralization has begun in the GDR, which makes its economic system indistinguishable from those of the Soviet Union and most other East European communist states.⁹⁰ This development does not seem related to the shift of power from Ulbricht to Honecker, but rather to increasing dissatisfaction with the results of the system since 1970 and 1971.

Honecker, unlike Ulbricht, has demonstrated a sensitivity to the USSR's calls for unity in the internal development of the Bloc states and an awareness of the necessity for linking domestic policies with foreign policy in order to facilitate the development of an "evolved socialist society" in the GDR.⁹¹ Furthermore, according to Honecker, just as the improvement of the GDR's international position, which has come about due to the efforts of the USSR, has strengthened the internal development of the GDR, the continued domestic development of East Germany along the lines favored by the Soviet Union has a favorable impact on the world power ratio.⁹² In other words, favorable domestic developments aid favorable international development which, in turn, aid the former, thus suggesting that the relationship between foreign and domestic policy is reciprocal. And, according to the SED's First Secretary, it is only through coordination with the USSR in both areas that the GDR can achieve success. SED Politburo member Kurt Hager has

⁹⁰Michael Keren, "The New Economic System in the GDR: An Obituary," Soviet Studies, Vol. XXIV, No. 4, April, 1973, p. 554.

⁹¹ND, May 29, 1973, p. 1.

⁹²Ibid., April 27, 1974, p. 9.

explained that coordination with the Soviet Union is particularly important in the area of philosophical question. He has described cooperation on these issues as being of primary importance in building the type of socialist personality essential for the successful construction of a socialist society in the GDR.⁹³ In May, 1974, Professor Doctor Heinrich Vogel of Rostock University echoed Hager's views and observed that the cooperation of the philosophers of the USSR and the GDR "has become closer in recent years." According to Vogel, numerous East German philosophical works were being reprinted in the Soviet Union as part of an intensive philosophical exchange effort.⁹⁴

Discussions of the basis of East German "socialist democracy" reveal the extent of Soviet influence in the development of the state organization of the GDR. The Soviet example is constantly cited and efforts are continually made to emulate the USSR's model. The deputy chairman of the GDR State Council, Friedrich Ebert, explained the importance of the experiences of the USSR in an analysis of East German local government. Bourgeois democracy proclaims the equality of all citizens, Ebert stressed, while in reality creating domination by capitalist "exploiters." By contrast, he claims, the Soviet state organization destroys this swindle by implementing genuine democracy, the real equality of all working people. Accordingly, it is to the Soviet example of state organization that the GDR as well as other

⁹³ Ibid., April 17, 1974, pp. 5-6.

⁹⁴ Ostsee Zeitung, May 28, 1974, p. 4. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 942, August 9, 1974, pp. 1-2.

socialist states look as a model for their own governments.⁹⁵ In order to expand what the SED refers to as "democratic collaboration" by the citizens in the management of the state organization, the GDR has begun to experiment with the so-called "voters' mandate" or referendum. This is also viewed as an effort to build on the basis of Soviet innovations in popular control of government. East German accounts cite an evaluation of Soviet experiences with the mandates as a major contribution to their understanding of the proper use of such a mechanism.⁹⁶ East German experimentation with the voters' mandates is by no means the only example of the SED's effort to mold its governmental organization in the image of that of the USSR. Both Ulbricht and Honecker displayed a readiness to look to the Soviet example for numerous features which might be applicable to the GDR.

The SED's cultural policy represents one of the most remarkable and extensive areas of East German emulation of the Soviet model. Ulbricht frequently referred to the impossibility of creating a socialist national culture in the GDR without the fraternal help, guidance, and cooperation given by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in "all aspects of life."⁹⁷ While Ulbricht began to deviate from the USSR in certain foreign policy questions, he never strayed far from the

⁹⁵Friedrich Ebert, "Staat und Demokratie unserer sozialistischen Gesellschaft" ("State and Democracy in Our Socialist Society"), Einheit, Vol. 29, No. 4, 1974, p. 396.

⁹⁶Neue Justiz, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1974, pp. 1-6. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 857, February 27, 1974, p. 35.

⁹⁷SWB, October 8, 1969, EE/3197/C2/1.

orthodoxy of the CPSU's cultural policy. Honecker has continued the cultural policy inherited from his predecessor. The Soviet Union remains the primary influence affecting the East German cultural policy. The SED stresses its concern for the harmonious development of its cultural policy and its determination to guarantee the more systematic inclusion of cultural problems in party life. In order to do this, according to a recent article in Einheit, the experiences of the Soviet Union will continue to be used as a guide for determining the cultural standards of the people.⁹⁸ Efforts to improve social control over the population are also based on Soviet experiences. GDR sources state that they are looking to basic enterprises, collective farms, offices, and organizations as the means of implementing more complete social control. This choice is described as one which was based on a study of the experiences of Soviet popular control organs.⁹⁹ The intensification of the effort to strengthen ties between the GDR and the USSR was further illustrated by the 1974 order requiring training in the Russian language for all university students.¹⁰⁰ Such a requirement would obviously facilitate the creation of closer bonds between the two states by easing communication between Russians and the better educated and presumably leading members of East German society.

⁹⁸Rudi Raupach, "Initiator der Kulturarbeit" ("Initiator of Cultural Work"), Einheit, Vol. 29, No. 3, 1974, p. 334.

⁹⁹Staat und Recht, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1974, pp. 571-579. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 923, June 28, 1974, p. 50.

¹⁰⁰Gesetzblatt der DDR, Part I, No. 14, March 27, 1974. In Translations on Eastern Europe, No. 908, May 29, 1974, p. 15.

The measures discussed above, as well as many others implemented during the last six years by the GDR, illustrate the official effort to draw East German society more closely within the orbit of Soviet society. This policy must be viewed as a logical concomitant of the SED's Abgrenzung policy. The GDR is being demarcated from the FRG and at the same time integrated ever more firmly with the Soviet Union and its allies. The development of a social and cultural policy compatible with that of its allies is seen by the SED as being just as important as compatible foreign policies.

IV. IN SUMMARY: JUNIOR ALLY OR SATELLITE?

This chapter has considered the relationship between the GDR and the USSR regarding foreign policy questions impinging on the West Berlin issue as well as matters relating to the domestic development of the GDR. The latter has been included in view of the connection between foreign and domestic policies spoken of by both the USSR and the GDR. In conclusion, it is reasonable to conclude that Ulbricht, during his last years as First Secretary, began to depart from the USSR's desired course on a number of foreign policy questions. This by no means implies that there was anything like a rebellion by the man who had been considered for so many years Moscow's most faithful puppet. Rather, it was an effort by Ulbricht to exert more influence on the Kremlin's policy in certain areas of foreign policy. This effort did not extend to domestic policy questions. Ulbricht's independence was resisted by the Soviet Union and apparently played a major role in

helping the Soviet leadership decide upon the need for Ulbricht's removal. Gerhard Wettig has speculated that the Soviet need for practical cooperation at this time demanded a "pragmatic renunciation of confrontation." Ulbricht's reluctance to renounce confrontation obviously ran counter to Soviet needs. According to Wettig, at the same time as the USSR was working to achieve cooperation with the West in order to benefit from Western economic and technological advancements, it also saw a need that the Eastern camp's relationship with the West be "determined by the awareness of an insurmountable antithesis and unrelenting militancy if 'socialism' is not to give itself up."¹⁰¹ Honecker was able to retain East German sensitivity to Soviet desires for an ideological confrontation that not involving any military aspects. The new First Secretary has returned the GDR to its former position as an especially cooperative, reliable ally. East German social policy throughout this period has remained close to the Soviet guidelines. This is important because it demonstrates that the GDR's efforts to resist Soviet pressure during the last Ulbricht years did not represent an attempt to dramatically alter East German society. Any efforts by the SED to initiate serious changes in the pattern of East Germany's social and cultural development, what one might consider a new version of de-Stalinization, coupled with a recalcitrance in foreign policy questions, would have undoubtedly been viewed with

¹⁰¹Gerhard Wettig, "Sowjet Politik zu Westeuropa" ("Soviet Policy Towards Western Europe"), Osteuropa, No. 7, 1974, pp. 851-852.

considerable alarm by the USSR. De-Stalinization and desatellitization are two separate processes and the Soviet Union has always preferred that they be kept apart. A union of the two might be considered cause for intervention, as was the case in Hungary in 1956.¹⁰² The SED under Ulbricht made its reluctance to create such a union very clear by its continued orthodoxy on domestic questions. In so doing, it further emphasized its basic satisfaction with its status within the Bloc.

While one cannot determine the degree or tone of the pressure that the USSR might have exerted on the SED behind the scenes, it is obvious that the disagreements between itself and the GDR's leadership were handled with relative delicacy. The fact that it was possible to handle its disagreements in this manner makes one inclined to view the GDR not as an abject satellite but rather as a junior ally. Even allies, after all, frequently have serious disagreements. What would seem to characterize the ally relationship is the more circumspect manner of resolution of disputes contrasted with the heavy-handed methods typical of earlier periods of Soviet-East European and East German relations. In this instance the Soviet Union was no longer compelled to rely upon the introduction of Red Army tanks in order to restore a more desirable situation for itself as had been necessary in 1953 in East Germany. However, before concluding that the relationship between the Soviet Union and the GDR is the same as that between the United States and the FRG, two factors should be taken into consideration. First, the

¹⁰²Brzezinski, p. 434.

differences of opinion in the last Ulbricht years were not nearly as great as those in the 1968 Czech-Soviet disputes. Accordingly, the stakes weren't so immense; there was no suggestion that the GDR was about to leave the Bloc. Therefore, it was easier for the USSR to adopt a more casual method of conflict resolution, one not involving force. Second, it should also be remembered that the Ulbricht-Kremlin disputes did lead to the removal of the GDR's leader. That in itself points out the nontraditional relationship between the GDR and the USSR. The GDR may no longer be a satellite, but it is still not a completely independent state.

CHAPTER VI

THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF THE WEST BERLIN PROBLEM

In order to gain a fuller appreciation of the significance of the GDR's West Berlin problem and its relationship to East Germany's membership in the Soviet Bloc, it is necessary to develop an overview of this issue in terms of its possible long-range impact. This overview will be developed, first, through a reexamination of the significance of the Soviet influence which has been demonstrated in the previous chapter. Second, the West Berlin issue will be approached with a consideration of its actual meaning for the GDR's political system. Next, an effort will be made to evaluate the nature of the "threat" posed by West Berlin to the SED regime and, on the basis of this, an attempt will be made to determine the root motives of the East German policy on West Berlin. A final concern will be an evaluation of the significance of the so-called era of detente for the West Berlin dispute.

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOVIET INFLUENCE

The Soviet Union's influence on the GDR must now be evaluated in light of two considerations: first, it is important because it affects East Berlin's relations with the socialist community of states; and, second, it is significant due to its impact on the GDR's foreign policy. In neither of these aspects is the GDR's situation unique. It is the subject of what is essentially the same policy for each of the member

states of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. While there are significant variations between the respective applications to each of these states, these variations are a function of local conditions and issues, not of a separate policy goal. In short, the USSR is primarily concerned about the implementation of a policy which will strengthen East European unity and embellish and perpetuate Soviet leadership over the alliance.

The Soviet Union's belief in the necessity for East European neighbors who were "friendly" to the USSR was demonstrated in the last years of World War Two. Immediately after the Teheran Conference in 1943 Stalin initiated a particularly bold political line with regard to the political situation of the states bordering it on the West.¹ While the USSR was first concerned about the situations in Poland and Czechoslovakia, its interest extended to what is now the rest of the socialist community of states in East Europe as well as Greece and Turkey. Stalin was determined to have a protective cordon between Russia and its western neighbors who, in Stalin's mind, were evidently seen as potential invaders. The Soviet response to the invitation to participate in the European Recovery Program illustrates Stalin's conception of the dangers facing the USSR. He had no intention of allowing Soviet participation and when Poland and Czechoslovakia expressed interest in the program, Stalin pressured them into reversing their positions. Stalin saw Polish and Czech participation in the European Recovery Program as the first step in the direction of a

¹Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Praeger, 1968), pp. 354-356.

defection to the West and this, he felt, would present a challenge to the very survival of Communist power in the Soviet Union.² The maintenance of a string of satellite states between itself and the West was clearly viewed as an absolute necessity for the military and political security of the USSR. The securing of such a protective shield had been a major Soviet goal during the war and after the war its preservation assumed the highest priority in Soviet foreign policy.

The military importance of the East European satellites rested, however, on a traditional conception of war. In the context of a nonnuclear war, such as the Second World War, Stalin's exercise in geographical strategy was a highly rational one. However, the advances in military technology of the past quarter of a century have made this strategy obsolete. Today, the USSR's protective cordon could easily be bypassed by modern missiles and high-flying aircraft. The East European buffer states can no longer protect the territory of the Soviet Union from a direct and sudden military assault. What would have served as a valuable and effective shield against a Nazi attack in 1941 is no longer of any real military significance.

In spite of the dramatically diminished military value of Eastern Europe, Moscow has not downgraded the importance of the region. Not only does East Europe augment the traditional military forces of the Soviet Union, making the Warsaw Pact force one of the most powerful military organizations in the world, but it also enhances the political

²Ibid., p. 436.

position of the USSR. First, it serves as a demonstration of the applicability of the basic Soviet-style system to countries other than the USSR. The success of the "peoples' democracies" in East Europe is considered a fulfillment of a major stage in the development of world socialism.³ It is now possible to speak of more than socialism in one country since the system has spread throughout an entire region encompassing eight separate states if Yugoslavia and Albania are counted. Second, it makes it possible for the Kremlin to act as spokesman for a group of states rather than simply one state. In this fashion the political impact of the USSR is magnified. In an international organization such as the United Nations it has a bloc of votes on which it can count in almost any situation. In short, while East Europe may be of less value militarily than it once was, its political significance continues to justify the importance that Moscow attaches to its alliance with its small neighbors. Finally, the economic importance of East Europe should not be overlooked. East Europe provides the USSR with valuable markets for its products and, in turn, also produces a considerable amount of commodities vital to the Soviet economy. The economic significance of the Soviet-East European alliance has been such that many authorities feel that progress in the development of economic ties between the USSR and Eastern Europe actually exceeded progress in the formation of effective political bonds.⁴

³Shalva Sanakoyev, The World Socialist System (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), pp. 59-65.

⁴Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 287-288.

A pro-Soviet East Europe derives additional importance from its value to the Soviet Union as a laboratory for experimentation with numerous Marxist theoretical concepts. Nish Jamgotch, Jr., has written a brief book in which he examines the efforts of the Soviet Union to develop so-called "international relations of a new type" between itself and East Europe. The current relationship between the USSR and East Germany will facilitate a careful analysis of the success that the Soviet Union has enjoyed in its endeavors relative to this ideal type of international relationship. While in the past it was common to dismiss the relationships between the Kremlin and its East European client states as being of a purely "satellite" character or, in other words, characterized by total subservience on the part of the minor states, the tendency to consider the Soviet alliance system as more of a genuine political coalition has increased in recent years.⁵ Accordingly, the issue to which Jamgotch addresses himself has become more significant. The East German case, as a review of previous chapters would indicate, may serve as a demonstration of the sort of alliance that the USSR is hoping to create in Eastern Europe. An examination of the Soviet Union's apparent designs will also provide a better understanding of the GDR's place in the Soviet coalition.

According to Jamgotch, the most basic condition postulated by the Soviet Union for the development of international relations of a new

⁵Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel, The International Politics of Regions (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 366-367.

type is proletarian internationalism, which is defined as a set of principles collectively guiding the world socialist movement.⁶ The East German case illustrates acceptance of this precept as a guide to its policy. Both Ulbricht and Honecker repeatedly cited proletarian internationalism as the foremost authoritative concept in the formulation of the SED's policies. Honecker enunciated the GDR's consistent attitude relative to proletarian internationalism in May, 1974 in his speech on East German-Soviet friendship. He spoke then of the advanced stage of GDR-Soviet relations, stressing that "every step we are taking today" is determined by the GDR's membership in the Soviet alliance system. Only through complete unity, he emphasized, could the socialist state community achieve security and peace.⁷

A second essential attribute of the development of the new type of international relations is the concept of socialist internationalism.⁸ This involves a complete and equal sharing in the benefits derived by members of the socialist community of states. In short, it is a socialist affirmation of all for one and one for all. Also, just as the entire community advances as a result of the successes achieved by individual states, each state also suffers from mistakes made by other members. This concept provided the theoretical underpinning for Ulbricht's warning in 1968 that the Czechoslovakian experiments would result in harm to all of the members of the Soviet alliance, not simply

⁶Nish Jamgotch, Jr., Soviet-East European Dialogue: International Relations of a New Type? (Stanford University: The Hoover Institution, 1968), p. 94.

⁷Neues Deutschland, May 13, 1974, pp. 1-2. (Hereafter cited as ND.)

⁸Jamgotch, p. 95.

in harm to the Czechs alone. Socialist internationalism is described in Soviet accounts as a "motive force" in the world socialist system today. It is seen as the best contribution

. . . For the economic and political development of each country with the common effort to strengthen fraternal cooperation and mutual assistance of socialist states.⁹

East German authorities have emphasized the logic of a situation in which all the "revolutionary forces" share equally in the successes and setbacks of socialism. This, they assert, leads to an "interlacing of interests" and to "joint responsibility" in the development of the socialist community.¹⁰ The forecasts relative to socialist internationalism predict increased cooperation in economic, military, and cultural endeavors. The GDR, as noted previously, has been one of the most enthusiastic members of the Bloc in its proclamations of the need for increased cooperative efforts in these areas. East German enthusiasm can most likely be attributed to, first, the need to develop a sense of identity in the GDR with the Bloc, something which would limit the attraction of the FRG to East German citizens if accomplished. Cultural and economic cooperative ventures are especially important in this respect. Second, the GDR's position as the "front line" of socialism obviously makes the SED conscious of military matters so it is reasonable to expect the leadership to stress the military aspects

⁹Sankayev, pp. 131-132.

¹⁰Harald Neubert, "Interrelationship of National and International Aspects in the Socialist Community of States," German Foreign Policy, Vol. XIII, No. 2, 1974, p. 137.

of the alliance with the Bloc. A close military relationship with the Bloc, in effect, puts the power of the USSR on the line in defense of the GDR. Finally, as Peter C. Ludz has noted, the GDR enjoys certain economic benefits as a result of economic cooperation with the Bloc. East Germany has profited more than its neighbors in the "international socialist division of labor" which was begun in 1967. As a result, the GDR has achieved an economic monopoly in East Europe in certain key industrial products, especially in the chemical industry.¹¹

Jamgotch explains that the Soviet conception of the new type of international relations is distinguished by the continued existence of state sovereignty, limited independence, and Soviet restraint upon excessive intrusions in East European affairs.¹² The East German case, once again, is illustrative of the fulfillment of this objective. The GDR state organization obviously possesses sovereignty over its territory in most respects today. Furthermore, the SED stresses the element of state sovereignty as a necessary component for the new type of international relations.¹³ If qualifications are to be expressed regarding the complete sovereignty of the GDR, their application must be to certain foreign policy restrictions which are clearly derived from the insistence by both the GDR and the USSR for a common socialist foreign policy. In this respect, the SED has echoed the Soviet view

¹¹Peter C. Ludz, The GDR From the Sixties to the Seventies (Cambridge: Harvard Center for International Affairs, 1970), pp. 66-68.

¹²Jamgotch, pp. 98-99.

¹³Neubert, pp. 136-137.

that national considerations should not be allowed to interfere with the attainment of communitywide objectives for the Bloc. Spokesmen for the SED have declared that a socialist country should not concentrate exclusively on tasks which serve primarily its own national state interests. First consideration must be given to those tasks which benefit the entire community. However, the East German leadership feels that there are no "antagonistic contradictions between the national and international interests of the socialist countries." The two are said to form a "unity" of common interests.¹⁴ Thus, limited independence is seen as a possibility because of the community of interests within the Bloc. Soviet hesitancy about blatant and excessive intervention in the GDR's internal affairs has been illustrated by the relatively restrained way in which it exerted its influence in the ouster of Ulbricht. His removal was not followed by public denunciations in either the GDR or the USSR. Nor was Ulbricht charged with legal offenses and subjected to prosecution, as was commonly the case during Stalin's time in East Europe. By contrast, Ulbricht was allowed to retain an important office in the GDR.

Honecker summarized the SED's view of the successful achievement of international relations of a new type in 1971 when he said,

The GDR grows stronger and thrives as part of the whole of the socialist community of states. The construction of evolved socialism in our country is thus directed towards the welfare of our own people and the increasing unity, strength and attractiveness of our socialist fraternal alliance.¹⁵

¹⁴Neubert, p. 135.

¹⁵ND, October 9, 1971, p. 1.

The development of this new type of international relations, in the view of the SED, is consistent with both Soviet and East German needs. On the one hand, the socialist community, including the GDR, is becoming increasingly solidified. On the other hand, the "class-determined differentiation" of the GDR and the FRG is being intensified.¹⁶

Therefore, the need of the GDR for a thorough delimitation from the Federal Republic converges smoothly with the Soviet Union's oft stated desire for greater Bloc unity during the era of superpower detente.

This coincidence of East German needs and Soviet policy eases the coordination of their foreign policies today. One need not operate on the assumption of Soviet directorship over questions relating to the GDR's foreign policy to see how Soviet and East German needs complement each other. The common foreign policy for which the GDR and the USSR are working makes it necessary to view the West Berlin problem, not as an isolated issue, but as a policy object for coordinated resolution by the two allies. The importance that the USSR places on the West Berlin issue was emphasized by the fact that the Soviet Union saw a need to work for the conclusion of the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin. The Soviet Union was certainly motivated in its negotiations on the Quadripartite Agreement by the desire to eliminate a situation in which West Berlin was, as Brezhnev said, "a detonator of tension and crisis."¹⁷

¹⁶Nuebert, p. 140.

¹⁷L. I. Brezhnev, Following Lenin's Course (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), p. 480.

Such a desire is thoroughly consistent with the Soviet policy of detente. The elimination of West Berlin as a potential source of tension would greatly strengthen the USSR's detente policy. However, the Quadripartite Agreement has an additional effect. As a result of it, the GDR will not be in a position to act independently on West Berlin by asserting that the matter is one of little concern to the USSR and its alliance. Rather, the East Germans must act in at least approximate unity with the Kremlin and must coordinate efforts under the umbrella of a Soviet policy taking into consideration more than the issue of West Berlin alone. The haste with which the GDR has acted to negotiate agreements with the West Berlin Senate and the Federal Republic which were specified by the Quadripartite Agreement as necessary for the full implementation of the treaty demonstrates the SED's understanding of its role.

II. THE WEST BERLIN ISSUE: BASIC OR PERIPHERAL?

East German treatment of the West Berlin issue, it is reasonable to assume, will vary according to the perceived nature of this problem. If it is viewed as a peripheral or occasional problem, then the prospects for compromise and accommodation will be much greater. If the West Berlin problem is, in fact, simply one of several relatively equal concerns faced by the GDR, a more casual, balanced view of the matter will be possible. However, if this issue is one which is, in the perceptions of the SED's leadership, basic to the GDR as a state, there will be little likelihood that the SED's concept of the proper

approach to this problem will be one involving a willingness to compromise on essential points of dispute. In other words, the stakes will be too high to permit the GDR to sustain a serious setback on the West Berlin issue if it is seen as a problem of vital concern to the survival of East Germany as a state.

One especially important way in which the West Berlin issue has been manifested has been in the public reaction to the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and its continued rigid maintenance since that time. The consciousness of this situation among the East German population has undoubtedly varied since August, 1961. Though there are no East German accounts dealing with the specifics of the public reaction to the Wall, with the exception of the numerous propaganda reports that the country's population rejoiced at the construction of this "antifascist protective wall," Western journalists who have been permitted to visit the GDR frequently report the persistent dismay with which the East Germans view the Wall which separates them from friends and relatives in West Berlin.¹⁸ Apparently many, if not most East Germans refused to believe that the Wall was designed not to keep them in but rather to keep Westerners from entering. This disbelief was verified by the number of East Germans who attempted to escape across the GDR-FRG frontier, either in Berlin or elsewhere, following the construction of the Wall. In the first six years after the securing of the border, 26,000 East German citizens managed to cross illegally

¹⁸John Dornberg, The Other Germany (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1968), pp. 109-110.

into the West.¹⁹ The number of successful escapes leveled off to about 5,000 per year after the first few years but rose to 6,450 in 1973.²⁰ While this exodus is in no way comparable to the losses prior to August, 1961, it is testimony to the suspicion that the official justification of the Wall has met with considerably less than universal acceptance.

The SED's concern over the public's reaction to the complete partition of West Berlin from the rest of the city was reflected in changes in the career patterns of the Central Committee which occurred after 1961, according to Peter C. Ludz. His extensive study shows that the structure of the Central Committee in 1963 had changed in two directions as compared with the Central Committee elected in 1958. First, the "professionalization" of political functionaries in the party apparatus increased and, second, functionaries with leading technical and administrative occupations were found in greater numbers in 1963. In addition, individuals from educational professions were more prominent in the new Central Committee. Ludz interprets this relative "opening" of the SED toward different elements of GDR society as an effort by the party to achieve at least a partial rapprochement between itself and the East German population after the erection of the Wall.²¹

¹⁹Ibid., p. 111.

²⁰Summary of World Broadcasts, January 2, 1974, EE/4489/A1/1. (Hereafter noted as SWB.)

²¹Peter C. Ludz, The Changing Party Elite in East Germany (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 239-240.

The Ludz interpretation of the shifts in the composition of the SED Central Committee suffers from the same shortcoming as many journalistic works dealing with perceptions of the Wall, namely, the lack of empirical justification for the proposition that the construction of the Wall fundamentally changed the perception of the regime among certain strata of the population in East Germany. While it is not unreasonable to infer the unpopularity of the regime before the Wall, it hardly follows that the erection of the Wall necessarily made the SED even more unpopular among particular segments of the population. However, one might justifiably view the SED's "opening" as an effort to broaden the base of a regime that was already unpopular, a good move with or without the Wall.

An additional important consideration for the SED in dealing with the West Berlin problem is the impact of developments on the party cadres. While this may not be the greatest problem faced by the SED's workers today, it is one of the closest and most visible. A demonstrated success in resolving the West Berlin matter would undoubtedly ease the labors of the SED agitation-propaganda cadres in presenting the party's case to East German citizens. In the same fashion, an apparent defeat would spell an increase in the difficulties they face. The advantages that the SED would enjoy as a result of "proving" the validity of its policies in any important area are just as obvious as the disadvantages from which it would suffer should its policies be repudiated by developments. Ludz has asserted that the political system of the GDR has remained unstable and has posited three reasons to substantiate his

argument of political instability. First, he writes, "substantial segments of the population continue to withhold unqualified, active support from the party and its politics." Many groups are still openly hostile to the regime, according to Ludz. Second, there has not been a development of a "national consciousness" in the GDR. The result is that the normal citizen remains insecure regarding his conceptions of the correct sort of political behavior. Finally, Ludz believes that the GDR's close identification with the USSR in foreign policy matters has resulted in a feeling that the GDR is not a sovereign state. He concludes that as a result of the continuing political instability of the regime, the SED's foreign policy considerations are of particular importance to the domestic situation of East Germany.²² Accordingly, the results that the party achieves with regard to one of its most prominent issues, the West Berlin problem, will be of great importance in determining the ability of the SED to strengthen its regime. This involves not only the work of the cadres in encouraging efforts to reach economic goals, but also in striving for the development of a national consciousness for the GDR. The morale of the cadres, who certainly follow political developments much more closely than the average citizen, will be directly affected by the success or failure of the party leadership in achieving its objectives long before the general population. Their morale, in turn, will have an impact on their ability to mobilize public support for the SED policies in other areas.

²²Ludz, The GDR From the Sixties to the Seventies, p. 54, p. 79.

Probably the most important consideration for the SED in approaching the West Berlin problem is the issue of East German sovereignty. East German insecurity over the question of its sovereignty is reflected in the preoccupation of its leaders and its publications with emphasizing the sovereignty and permanence of the East German state. On the twentieth anniversary of the GDR's founding in 1969, Walter Ulbricht went to great lengths to stress the reality of East Germany's statehood. Asking the question "What constitutes a modern state?," Ulbricht answered himself by stating that a modern state must be a socialist state and that the GDR "is the modern German socialist state to whom the future belongs."²³ Recent East German accounts are careful to point out that, contrary to Western charges, the GDR's sovereignty is not in any way infringed by its close alliance with the USSR.²⁴ The FRG, however, according to numerous East German accounts, is the state which has curtailed its national sovereignty, having done so by its alliance with the capitalist states.

The continued existence of a city of two million "on the territory of the GDR," as Ulbricht never tired of repeating, is obviously seen as an infringement of East German sovereignty. Considering sovereignty as the exercise of control over ones own territory, it cannot be denied that the GDR does not enjoy complete sovereignty in that it lacks control over West Berlin. For a regime suffering from political

²³ND, October 7, 1969, p. 3.

²⁴Neubert, pp. 139-140.

instability, as Ludz asserts, such a deficiency must seem considerable. The existence of West Berlin, even as an independent political entity such as the SED prefers to consider it, must serve as a reminder of the incompleteness of the GDR. The SED's anxiety was undoubtedly intensified during the years when the Federal Republic pursued a policy calling for reunification of the two German states. Faced with a conception of West Berlin as only slightly less than a Land of the FRG and as a potential base for an effort to achieve reunification in some undetermined manner, the East German leadership probably was forced to condition itself to regard West Berlin as an aggressive enemy outpost. As Bonn began a retreat from a policy which involved such hostility toward the East German regime, the need for the SED to regard West Berlin as one of the most serious threats to the existence of the GDR diminished. Yet, the old attitude seems to have survived the gradual transition in West German policy. Even the most recent East German accounts and statements continue to reflect an attitude of animosity toward West Berlin. Though there have been fluctuations in the intensity of this approach, the official East German view has been consistent even during those periods of relative progress in resolving the West Berlin problem. The tone has varied but the essentials have remained the same. The demands for a reduction of the political presence of the FRG and for the cessation of a variety of allegedly anti-GDR activities in West Berlin have clearly indicated the desire of the SED to work toward a situation in which the Western city will "blend in" with its surroundings and be more amenable to an eventual merger with the GDR. In short, there is no

indication that the SED feels secure enough to be able to indefinitely tolerate the existence of a separate city within its own territory.

In view of these considerations it is necessary to conclude that the West Berlin issue is, from the East German point of view, not a peripheral or secondary issue. It is not a matter on which the SED can afford to accept a serious, long-term setback, such as, for example, one which would involve an increase in West Germany's official presence in West Berlin. The statement by the GDR government protesting the FRG's Environmental Office in West Berlin is a reflection of this.²⁵ Rather, the West Berlin issue involves concerns which are viewed as basic to the GDR as an independent state and which will, therefore, require the SED to refuse in the long run to abandon its view that all of Berlin is actually part of the GDR.²⁶ This demand, dropped for several years in order to accommodate East Germany's policy to that of the Soviet Union, will ultimately have to be reasserted.

III. THE WEST BERLIN THREAT: POLITICAL OR MILITARY?

Having concluded that the West Berlin issue is one which poses questions basic to the existence of the German Democratic Republic, it is now necessary to determine the nature of the threat, if any, which West Berlin presents to the SED. In other words, what is the

²⁵Foreign Affairs Bulletin (Berlin, GDR), Vol. 14, No. 22, August 2, 1974, p. 167.

²⁶Albert Norden, Thus Wars Are Made (Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1970), p. 244.

significance of this challenge to the GDR? Should West Berlin be viewed as a military or as a political threat to East Germany? The answer to this question should facilitate an understanding of the possible motivations that underlie the SED's policy on West Berlin.

The question of the significance of West Berlin as a military threat to the GDR is the easiest one to consider. On the many occasions when the major powers have confronted each other in Berlin, West Berlin has served as a base from which the Western powers, particularly the United States, could threaten retaliatory action against the Russians and their East German allies. However, even during the most severe of the many crises, such as the one in 1961, the Western response to Communist pressure has been uneven. On some occasions the United States would give the appearance of a willingness to engage in military action if necessary while on others the American determination to stand firm in the face of possible war was in doubt.²⁷ The record of the 1961 crisis was especially illustrative of Western restraint, in spite of frequent statements of the intention to fight if necessary.²⁸ Therefore, even during those times of greatest tension, when West Berlin seems to pose the most serious military threat, the restraint or timidity of the American and Western leaderships served to lessen the possibility of war. The lack of a military clash in Berlin during any

²⁷James L. Payne, The American Threat (Chicago: Markham Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 52-56.

²⁸Robert M. Slusser, The Berlin Crisis of 1961 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 133-139.

of the many confrontations of the past years points to the conclusion that the West Berlin problem need not necessarily erupt into war. Experience has shown that war is avoidable. However, it is still possible to argue that West Berlin poses a military threat to the GDR and its allies through its function as a trip-wire. That is, armed aggression in Germany beginning in Berlin would clearly involve the Western powers at an early moment. This, however, is probably more significant for the Soviet Bloc as a whole rather than for East Germany alone.

The absence of war in the past does not, of course, resolve this question. There is still the consideration of West Berlin as an advance outpost of the Western military forces. It is not unreasonable to argue that the presence of NATO forces one hundred and ten miles inside the territory of the Warsaw Pact constitutes a serious threat for more than a possible trip-wire function. However, this argument rests primarily upon the assumption that a nonnuclear war is a possibility in Europe. The validity of this assumption would require considerable restraint upon the part of both the WTO and NATO in the event of an outbreak of armed hostilities involving Germany. The conventional wisdom on this matter, of course, is that such a conflict could be fought by nonnuclear means until one side perceives that the course of events is running against it. When this happens, if the stakes in the contact are too great to permit a defeat, the temptation to utilize nuclear weapons would be irresistible. After all, if the defeat would entail the disintegration of one's empire, or the termination of a highly valued

"way of life," then it is not inconceivable that a rational decision-maker might decide that a nuclear war is the lesser of the two evils, as Herman Kahn has argued in his discussion of nuclear war by "calculation."²⁹ This is not to argue that the loss of East Germany would necessarily lead to USSR to prefer war, but should a situation arise in which war was chosen, the value of West Berlin as a military outpost would be diminished as long-range missiles and bombers took the place of conventional forces. Therefore, considering the present alliance systems in Europe, both of which have impressive nuclear potential, the likelihood of a nonnuclear war in which West Berlin plays a strategic role is very small. While the disintegration of the alliances might bring some change to this situation, speculation on that requires such a radical alteration of the conception of the political power distribution of Europe as to be virtually meaningless. West Berlin's military value is, at best, only of marginal importance to the Western powers today.

Concluding then that West Berlin does not constitute a serious military threat to the GDR under present circumstances, it remains to consider the city as a political threat to the SED's regime. In this context, the motivations for the concern expressed by the SED on the West Berlin question become more apparent. First, West Berlin continues to serve as an important outpost of Western broadcasting efforts. The East German press and the SED's spokesmen have frequently expressed the

²⁹Herman Kahn, Thinking About the Unthinkable (New York: Avon Books, 1962), pp. 53-61.

regime's concern over the concentration of Western broadcasting media in West Berlin as well as along the GDR-FRG frontier.³⁰ Western journalists visiting the GDR have noted the degree of anxiety of the SED over the fact that many East Germans seem to watch and listen to Western radio and television. This is expressed in a variety of efforts aimed at discouraging citizens who wish to tune in West German and West Berlin programs. These efforts range all the way from instructing school children in the evils of Western media to lectures by local party activists.³¹ In addition to the influence of the Western media which are based in West Berlin, the SED has for many years had reason to fear that the values of the society it was constructing might not be sufficiently appreciated because of the appeal exerted by West Berlin on GDR citizens who saw their own part of Berlin as shabby by comparison with the more modern Western sectors. However, the tremendous amount of construction which has been completed in East Berlin with the last few years has probably served to lessen the psychological impact of West Berlin's prosperity. This, coupled with the increase of economic problems in the West generally, has probably decreased the significance of West Berlin as a propaganda tool against the GDR.

The economic impact of West Berlin on the GDR in the past years has probably bothered the SED more than the appeal that the city might have for disaffected East German citizens in general. West Berlin has

³⁰Volksarmee, No. 17, 1974, p. 6.

³¹Dornberg, pp. 233-235.

affected the East German economy in two important ways in the last two or three years. The first was to act as a funnel through which hundreds of thousands of Western-purchased GDR marks flowed into the East German economy. Not only did the GDR's currency suffer as a result, but, according to the GDR press, East German citizens were forced to compete at a disadvantage with Western tourists for the purchase of certain valuable commodities frequently in short supply. In the fall of 1973, the SED took steps to eliminate much of the need for "illegal" East marks by doubling the required amount of currency that had to be exchanged by visitors coming into the GDR while at the same time continuing an intensified effort to apprehend currency smugglers.³²

While the economic damage that East Germany suffered as a result of illegal currency exchanges was of little consequence compared with the activities prior to the construction of the Wall in 1961, it was evidently serious enough that the SED was willing to risk damage to the process of detente with West Germany in order to attempt to bring it to a halt. While the minimum required exchange amount was lowered in 1974, it remained well above the previous minimum.

A second way in which West Berlin presented an economic threat to the GDR was by its use as a base for organizations specializing in aiding escapes from East Germany. The economic significance of this activity is derived not from the numbers involved but from the types of individuals who were being aided in leaving the GDR illegally. More

³²ND, November 6, 1973, p. 3.

and more highly trained specialists were being smuggled out of East Germany to the FRG and West Berlin where they enjoyed the prospect of much higher salaries in their professions. The East German press continually cited West Berlin as a haven for "gangs of criminal smugglers" which were composed of many West Berliners and U.S. military personnel stationed in West Berlin.³³ Through its use by such organizations, the SED has frequently charged, West Berlin is being manipulated as a tool against the political stability of the GDR.

Finally, West Berlin must be considered a political threat to the SED's regime in that it stands as a symbol calling into question the permanence of the GDR. In the context of West German politics today, West Berlin is not being used to the fullest extent in this fashion. However, the termination of the Brandt government could well mark the end of a period in which the FRG sought to back away from challenges to the permanence of East Germany as a separate state. The manner in which the Brandt government came to an end could well hasten a process of either reversal or restraint of the Ostpolitik begun during Brandt's years. The disclosure that Gunter Guillaume, a close advisor to the Chancellor, was in fact a longtime agent of the East German security service tended to confirm suspicions that the Social Democrats under Brandt's leadership had entertained illusions with regard to the intentions of the Soviet Bloc states. The subsequent sensational treatment in much of the press of the Guillaume case, coupled with

³³Ibid., November 1, 1973, p. 2.

suggestions that the GDR was directing an espionage campaign embracing other leading West German political figures³⁴ increased the prospects for additional pressure on the Bonn government to alter its policy toward not only East Germany but also the Bloc itself. The decision to go ahead with plans for establishment of a branch of the Federal Environment Office in West Berlin shows how the city can be used to facilitate a reversal of policy which the SED considered a political attack on the GDR.

Following his elevation to the office of Chancellor, the West German newspaper Handelsblatt, an economic journal which had followed Schmidt's career closely because of his background in economic affairs, predicted that Schmidt would approach the FRG's Ostpolitik with a more pragmatic view than his predecessor who had held a somewhat emotional view on the question of relations with the East. Much was made in the Handelsblatt analysis of the fact that Schmidt had been much more vocal in his reaction to the Czech invasion of 1968 than Brandt and other leaders of the Social Democratic Party. Schmidt, the journal stressed, had seen the invasion of Czechoslovakia as justification for the FRG to shelve plans for a Moscow-Bonn rapprochement.³⁵ By the summer of 1974, West German newspapers were noting Schmidt's tendency to concentrate on domestic policy at the expense of Ostpolitik. While there were no governmental statements indicating a formal change in the FRG's policy,

³⁴ Berliner Morgenpost, May 23/24, 1974, p. 1.

³⁵ Handelsblatt, May 10, 1974, p. 5.

West German commentators were noting that the policy of detente under Schmidt was differing greatly from that policy under the Brandt government. As the Frankfurter Rundschau editorialized with favor in July,

It could be a good thing that the small steps taken so far become even smaller. Rapprochement from now on will not be marked by the prospect of revolutionary change so much as by pressure to maintain the equilibrium.³⁶

A more puzzling question has been raised by the changed position of the FRG in Sino-Soviet relations since the end of the Brandt regime. In the first days after Schmidt's assumption of the office of Chancellor, one West German newspaper noted that Schmidt had long enjoyed the favor of Red China because he considers a strong Atlantic alliance and close ties with the United States still to be in the best interests of Europe.³⁷ Presumably, Brandt was regarded by the Chinese as overly critical of the Atlantic Alliance and too friendly to the Soviet Bloc. When a delegation of Federal Republic parliamentarians announced their plans to visit Red China in September or October of 1974, plans were well under way for a visit by Schmidt himself in the spring of 1975.³⁸ Considerable controversy erupted in September when another West German delegation under the leadership of Christian Democrat leader Helmut Kohl toured Red China and was toasted by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Red China with a reference to West Germany as the "one and only German

³⁶Frankfurter Rundschau, July 20, 1974, p. 4.

³⁷Frankfurter Allgemeine, May 17, 1974, p. 5.

³⁸Die Welt, August 20, 1974, p. 1.

nations." At another point, Premier Chou En-lai was quoted as having said that he had never heard of a city called Kaliningrad but only of Koenigsberg, an old German city incorporated into the USSR after World War Two. Pravda regarded this as an attack by the Chinese on both the USSR and the GDR and an effort by them to intervene in European affairs.³⁹ The fact that Schmidt's visit to Moscow occurred on schedule in October, 1974 helped dispel Soviet fears of an early union between the Chinese and the West Germans. Yet, the possibility remains that the West Germans might become a factor in the competition between the USSR and Red China.

The possibility of collusion between Peking and Bonn and the more cautious Ostpolitik of the Schmidt government raise the possibility that West Berlin might be used to mark an alteration of West German policy. This is not because there is a direct relationship between the West Berlin problem and Sino-Soviet-West German affairs but because it is simply one of the most convenient opportunities for confrontation. It is in a sense a barometer of the relations between the powers involved in the disputes over the German question. The absence of a concerted effort on the part of the Bonn government to exploit the West Berlin situation in some fashion does not remove the continuing threat to the stability of the SED regime in East Berlin. Brandt's departure makes the possibilities of a renewal of West Berlin's status

³⁹ Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXVI, No. 36, October 2, 1974, pp. 16-17. (Hereafter noted as CDSP.)

as what Honecker described as a "thorn in the flesh of the GDR" much greater than in recent years.

IV. MOTIVATIONS OF THE GDR'S WEST BERLIN POLICY

The most simple way to phrase the question which is the object of this discussion is: Was the SED's policy on West Berlin arrived at independently or was it formulated as a result of Soviet dictation? As previous chapters have indicated, the influence of the Soviet Union on East Germany is indeed, to say the least, profound. It is reflected not only in the many twists and turns of the SED's foreign policy statements but also in the elements which compose the society the SED is working to create. Clearly, the Soviet model is viewed as an extremely valuable and authoritative guide for the officials of the East German regime. In 1972 Honecker praised the GDR's alliance with the USSR as the "foundation for our successes" and described East Germany's friendship with the Soviet Union as "sacred for us, for the working class of the GDR and for our people."⁴⁰ He recently declared that the SED and the CPSU were in agreement on all political, ideological, and theoretical questions and that "every step" taken by the GDR was based on the alliance with the Soviet Union.⁴¹ Undoubtedly, no factor is of greater importance to the SED than its relationship with its Soviet ally. Citations of the value of the GDR-Soviet alliance are

⁴⁰ND, January 7, 1972, p. 2.

⁴¹Ibid., May 13, 1974, pp. 1-2.

outnumbered only by references to the Marxist-Leninist ideology itself.

Yet, the phrasing of this question obscures as much as it might reveal because it creates an impression that it is possible to speak of a dichotomy in East German decision-making on West Berlin in which some policies would be classified as independent while others would be classified as dictated. No such simple classifications are possible. An examination of the West Berlin issue as it affects the GDR reveals that there is an apparent equality of interests between East Berlin and Moscow on this matter. The fact that West Berlin continues to represent a serious political threat to East Germany leads to the conclusion that the SED turned to the Soviet Union in hopes of achieving a solution that enabled the GDR to make the best of a less than perfect situation. While the Quadripartite Agreement can in no way be viewed as the final solution to the West Berlin issue for the SED, it does, in view of East Germany's efforts to accommodate its policy with that of the USSR, provide the GDR with the assurance that it can enjoy the prospect of firm support from the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The situation which existed prior to Ulbricht's removal as First Secretary was one in which East Germany was in danger of being isolated from its own allies and thereby losing its viability as a state. Ulbricht's efforts to impede the process of a Soviet supported detente threatened to estrange East Germany from the WTO without bringing any change in its position relative to the West. The SED's recognition of the futility of such a course was reflected in Ulbricht's ouster in May, 1971 as First Secretary and his replacement by an individual who enjoyed the backing of the Kremlin.

The Soviet Union's interest in the West Berlin question has been a reflection of its global interests in the development of detente between itself and the United States. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which demonstrated beyond all doubt, as Roger E. Kanet has written, that East Europe is "considered a sphere of primary interest or domination that will be prevented at all costs from significantly lessening its dependence on the Soviet Union,"⁴² cleared the way for the Soviet policy of detente by restoring, even if by force of arms, the unity needed for extensive dealings with the West. For both East and West, Berlin was the symbol of a willingness to work for progress in the normalization of relations between the two superpower blocs. Brezhnev, as previously noted, had described Berlin as a "detonator of tension and crisis," a statement with which few could disagree. Therefore, Berlin became a convenient symbol because of a widely held view of the city as a potential source of international tension. In addition, the Berlin issue was an extremely important segment of the overall German problem and an important issue in the Western alliance because of the concern of West Germany for the city. Furthermore, while the USSR had a stake in the Berlin problem, the disposition of that matter was not so great as to prevent at least some prospects for compromise in view of the crucial technological needs of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union's perennial lag in technology was such that by the end of the 1960's in

⁴²Roger E. Kanet, "Czechoslovakia and the Future of Soviet Foreign Policy," in *The Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia: Its Effects on Eastern Europe*, edited by E. J. Czerwinski and Jaroslaw Piekalkiewicz (New York: Praeger, 1972), p. 95.

some areas it was behind the United States by as much as forty years.⁴³ This Soviet need for technology constitutes for the USSR the practical side of detente. An improvement in East-West relations could bring Western technology to the Soviet Union and an improvement in the West Berlin situation could bring the necessary changes in East-West relations. Therefore, post-Czechoslovakia East European unity, coupled with a continuing need for Western technology, made the time right for progress in normalization of West Berlin's situation. Ratification of the FRG's treaties with the Soviet Union and Poland was also made conditional on progress on the West Berlin question by the Brandt government. Therefore, a resolution of the West Berlin problem, even if only a partial one, became an absolute necessity for the Kremlin. The primary consideration for the USSR became one of overcoming East Germany's resistance. This obstacle was removed by two steps. The first was revealed in Erich Honecker's report to the SED Central Committee in May, 1971, upon his return from the Twenty-fourth Congress of the CPSU. In his report, Honecker stated that the Congress had confirmed both the rightness and the necessity of the SED's Abgrenzung policy with regard to the Federal Republic.⁴⁴ By giving this assurance, the Soviet leaders had relieved the SED of its fear that detente would lead to an infiltration of East Germany by West German influences. They

⁴³Gertrude E. Schroeder, "Soviet Technology: System vs. Progress," Problems of Communism, Vol. XIX, September/October, 1970, pp. 19-21.

⁴⁴ND, May 4, 1971, pp. 2-3.

had also given support to the SED's resistance of contacts with the West which, in the minds of the party leaders, might spell disaster for their politically insecure regime. The second step in the removal of the GDR as an obstacle to the Soviet Union's global aspirations was achieved by the forced retirement of Ulbricht.

Therefore, it is not necessary to conclude that either the GDR was forced into a reversal of its rigid policy on West Berlin or that it made the decision solely on its own. The GDR's leadership made the decision on the basis of what it perceived as being in its best interest in terms of maintaining its viability as a member of an alliance system directed by the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and what it saw as advancing its position relative to West Germany on the other hand. By pursuing a policy compatible with the global interests of the USSR, the SED was able to stress the community of interests existing within the Bloc and demonstrate its support for the concept of a unified socialist foreign policy. It also avoided a self-imposed isolation from its allies which could have aggravated the East European situation as much as the Czechoslovakian developments in 1968, developments which the SED was most active in denouncing. The GDR improved its position relative to West Germany by the further development of the Abgrenzung policy with an endorsement by Moscow. The process of the complete demarcation of East Germany from its western neighbor could now be completed with the assurances that it had the support of the alliance system which was presented as the foundation of every success enjoyed by the GDR. The SED's position on the West Berlin question itself

improved as the GDR was now in a position to act as a competent authority for the resolution of the many details to be worked out pursuant to the Quadripartite Agreement. This included such matters as traffic arrangements which, in the past, had been viewed by the West as matters for resolution by the World War Two allies themselves, with East Germany specifically excluded. The SED enjoys the right to take political initiatives, but only as long as they fall within the boundaries of Soviet guidelines. This is at the heart of the discussions of a coordinated socialist foreign policy. Independent actions may be taken only within the framework of a generally approved policy. The Quadripartite Agreement specified certain subsidiary agreements which were to be negotiated by the GDR and the FRG and these secondary matters are those concerns which would be clearly considered the responsibility of the SED. In the future, one could anticipate that the GDR may take independent initiatives affecting GDR-FRG relations, but not altering the fundamental East-West relationship. Ulbricht's efforts to slow the process of detente obviously fell into the latter category and for that reason were considered beyond the limits of tolerable independence.

V. THE WEST BERLIN PROBLEM IN THE ERA OF DETENTE

The groundwork for the present policy of detente pursued by the Soviet Union in Europe today was laid in 1968 with the WTO's invasion of Czechoslovakia. With its intervention, the USSR demonstrated the firmness of its intention to maintain its control over the East European communist party states and, at the same time, established the principle

that Eastern contacts with the West must be made only with the approval of Moscow. West Germany's prompt acceptance of this principle was indicated by its efforts to negotiate a treaty on the renunciation of force with the Soviet Union before attempting to do the same with Poland. The theme of East-West negotiations became the recognition of realities rather than the earlier discussions of bridge-building to the East by exploitation of polycentrism. Such efforts were all too often perceived by the USSR as little more than attempts to undermine the basis of the USSR's security system in Eastern Europe. The reactions of the Soviet and East German presses to the Czech reforms expressed the disapproval with which the Soviet leadership regarded these developments. However, after 1968 and the renewed stress on unity which could be seen in the frequent calls for a coordinated foreign policy, it became possible to speak of detente in Europe. This relaxation of tensions was possible only because Moscow no longer had reason to fear that it constituted a threat to its East European system.

The Soviet Union's dialogue with the West was facilitated by the policy which it began to enunciate regarding West Berlin. Whereas in the past, the USSR had issued frequent calls for an immediate withdrawal of all Western troops and the creation of West Berlin as a "demilitarized free city," as Krushchev had demanded in 1958,⁴⁵ by 1971 it was talking

⁴⁵Thomas W. Wolfe, Soviet Power and Europe, 1945-1970 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), pp. 90-92.

about the recognition of the status quo regarding the city. The Quadripartite Agreement proclaimed that "ties between the Western sectors of Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany will be maintained and developed,"⁴⁶ a sharp contrast with the Soviet pronouncements of the previous decade. It also declared that West Berlin-West German traffic would be "unimpeded" and would "receive preferential treatment."⁴⁷ These pledges, by themselves, constitute what would have seemed an impossibility considering most of the past rhetoric on the West Berlin problem. The reactions of the West were summarized in the introduction of the West German Press Office's release of the text of the agreement and related documents.

Berlin lies in the heart of Europe. To reach a settlement there has been described not only by the Federal Government but also by its Allies as a test of . . . the serious desire of the Soviet Union to enter into unquestionable and irrevocable obligations for detente and security in Europe. . . . When the representatives of the Four Powers have set their signatures under the important work, the peoples of Europe will have reason to hope that they will be able to address themselves, with prospects of success, to the further great tasks of detente and cooperation that lie before them.⁴⁸

This statement clearly reveals the extent of expectations regarding the completion of what is often referred to as a settlement of the Berlin problem.

The implicit assumption that the West Berlin issue has been settled, however, seems lacking in justification. The interruptions

⁴⁶The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin (Bonn: Press and Information Office of the FRG, 1971), p. 12.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 9-10.

of traffic between West Berlin and the Federal Republic during the summer of 1974⁴⁹ were a particularly vivid illustration of the ease with which agreements can lose their meaning. Even in the absence of interruptions in the flow of traffic to and from West Berlin, the question of the value of the guaranteed transit rights by themselves remains. The insistence of the Soviet Union and the GDR that they have the right to prevent the entry into West Berlin of certain individuals or classes of individuals⁵⁰ indicates that the city remains considerably less than sovereign in the eyes of its Communist neighbors. If it is possible for the USSR and the GDR to raise this issue, then it is equally possible to question the course of domestic affairs in West Berlin in other respects. If the USSR and its East German allies insist on creating, through pressure, a West Berlin that differs very little from Leipzig, what value should the West attach to transit rights to the city? After all, the right to travel to West Berlin has been only one aspect of the total West Berlin problem. Talk of transit rights has been based on an assumption that West Berlin's internal affairs may remain as they are or be altered only by the West Berliners themselves. Yet, events subsequent to the conclusion of the Berlin agreement lend substance to the belief that the internal situation of West Berlin might have to be altered as the price of guaranteed transit rights. The confidential nature of these rights was clearly demonstrated

⁴⁹New York Times, July 23, 1974, p. 3.

⁵⁰Ibid., July 21, 1974, p. 3.

by the ruptures in West Berlin traffic following the announcement by the FRG that a branch of the FRG Environment Office would be opened in the city.⁵¹

Is one justified then in the belief that the West Berlin problem has been resolved by the process of detente? It seems unlikely that one could justifiably make such a claim. Detente has brought a relaxation of the tensions surrounding the West Berlin dispute, but the basic situation remains essentially as it has been since the end of World War Two. The Soviet Union and the GDR have made concessions, but they are of such a nature that their reversal is possible at literally a moment's notice. The ease with which such a reversal could be accomplished was shown by the events of the summer of 1974.

What effect has detente had on the independence of the GDR? All evidence points to the conclusion that detente has been accompanied by a lessening of the independence of the USSR's German ally. In this regard, the GDR's situation is not markedly different from that of its other East European neighbors. As Walter Laqueur has written, "the Communist 'pluralistic universe' is largely mythical. On the contrary, the Soviet Union has reestablished its authority over most Communist parties in the world. . . ."⁵² This process of consolidation started in 1968 with the invasion of Czechoslovakia and, ironically, resulted in the removal of Walter Ulbricht as SED First Secretary, a man who had

⁵¹Ibid., July 22, 1974, p. 2.

⁵²Walter Laqueur, Neo-Isolationism and the World of the Seventies (New York: The Library Press, 1972), p. 5.

been one of the most enthusiastic advocates of the invasion. Detente, therefore, has resulted in a diminution of East German independence and has made the West Berlin problem a central concern of Soviet policy as the Kremlin has sought to demonstrate its desire for detente by "progress" on the Berlin question. The effect has been to charge the SED with the implementation of the subsidiary details of the agreement on West Berlin without giving it any real authority in determining the overall configuration of that agreement. Today, the GDR is limited in its initiative-making power to questions that fit within the framework of general Soviet foreign policy. Soviet policy sets the direction while the GDR may do no more than act as an advocate of that policy.

The West Berlin problem remains with us in spite of the signing of the Quadripartite Agreement, which was widely hailed as a settlement of the problem. Detente has brought recognition of West Berlin's ties with the Federal Republic, but those ties existed prior to 1971 and did not come as a result of detente. The Quadripartite Agreement, as an example of the recognition of realities, merely noted the existence the "ties between the Western sectors of Berlin and the FRG" and asserted that they "will be maintained and developed taking into account that these sectors continue not to be a consistent part of the FRG."⁵³ Of greater importance is the nature of the Soviet conception of detente. This conception is predicated on a belief that detente involves change. As a recent commentary in World Marxist Review observed, "the dialectics

⁵³The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin, p. 12.

of international detente" must be seen as a "combination of cooperation and struggle."⁵⁴ Accordingly, the Soviet Union and its allies cannot be expected to regard the status quo in Berlin as final. It is simply one point in a continuing process which, as they see it, will result in victory for the "progressive forces" of the world. This problem is not unique to the USSR on the Berlin question, but affects the Soviet view of international relations with the West in general.

Since the Soviet policy is predicated upon an assumption of change, it is appropriate to consider the factors that will condition change regarding the West Berlin situation. One of the most crucial factors is Soviet politics. The potential for confrontation in West Berlin continues to exist and represents a serious threat to the perpetuation of the policy of detente. Should shifts in the distribution of power in the Soviet Union occur in such a way as to increase the Kremlin's desire for confrontation and decrease its need for detente the West Berlin issue could serve as a convenient occasion for a dramatic reversal of policy. The relationship between Soviet internal politics and Soviet foreign policy have been explored by Michel Tatu in his analysis of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Tatu concludes that Khrushchev's Cuban move was part of a series of Soviet initiatives designed to bolster his standing within the Kremlin hierarchy while

⁵⁴ Jan Prazsky, "The Dialectics of Detente," World Marxist Review, Vol. 17, No. 9, September, 1974, p. 130.

fundamentally altering the world balance of power.⁵⁵ The same thing could happen again involving a crisis over West Berlin. While it is impossible to predict, the continuation of the Berlin problem means that confrontation remains a future possibility.

East German politics is a second conditioning factor. Internal political demands could affect the GDR's West Berlin policy, especially if West Berlin should pose a serious threat to the stability of the SED's regime. Should the West Berlin communications media present the GDR with what its leaders might perceive as a serious threat to the power of the SED, one would expect to see considerable agitation for a reversal of the present West Berlin policy. It would always be possible for the SED to argue that the influence of Western media spilling over into the GDR is creating difficulties in the construction of socialism. It might even be able to present a case that would persuade the Russians to allow the implementation of East German initiatives against West Berlin. The continuation of the loss of valuable personnel to the West as a result of the attractions of West Berlin and the FRG might also serve to trigger demands for sanctions against the city. If the SED was able to present a reasonable case that large numbers of people trained by the GDR were fleeing to West Berlin as a result of the promise of higher salaries, then the USSR might agree to go along with East German demands for "reparations" from

⁵⁵ Michel Tatu, Power in the Kremlin (New York: Viking Press, 1968), pp. 261-276.

West Berlin industries. Such an eventuality would dramatically alter the present West Berlin situation.

West German political developments will also affect future changes in the West Berlin situation. Should the leftward drift of the Social Democratic Party be accelerated by the activities of the party's young militant left wing, a possibility which has been noted frequently,⁵⁶ the impact on West German policy could be considerable. An equally sharp turn toward the right as a result of an increased appeal by the more conservative parties, something which might happen should the SPD move leftward, might also bring a reversal of the current policy on West Berlin. More spy scandals might have a similar effect.

Finally, NATO politics will have an important effect on the West Berlin situation. NATO policies, of course, are to a large degree a function of American political developments and the increase of isolationist sentiments in the United States would clearly have a significant impact on NATO. It would lead to a weakening of the Atlantic Alliance which would, in turn, make a unified Western policy on issues such as West Berlin more difficult than at present. The lack of Western unity would obviously give the Soviet Union an advantage in any negotiations of West Berlin. A shift in the opposite direction of isolationism is also a possibility. If this should be the case, the USSR might witness the formulation of a NATO policy calling for detente at a higher price and with demands for more meaningful concessions on

⁵⁶Laqueur, p. 42.

all matters subject to negotiation. Communist organs have noted this possibility and expressed their firm belief that such an eventuality would result in defeat for the West.⁵⁷

West Berlin's situation is, therefore, one which is a function of a variety of conditioning factors. The central point, however, is that the West Berlin problem has neither disappeared nor been totally and finally stabilized. Rather, it is subject to change and will likely continue to evolve in the years ahead. The final chapter will consider the present status we have arrived at and the possibilities for resolution of the problem in the future. In each of the possible scenarios of resolution, consideration will be given to the impact on the continuing issue of independence for the East German leadership.

⁵⁷Prazsky, pp. 130-131.

CHAPTER VII

SCENARIOS FOR A FINAL RESOLUTION OF THE WEST BERLIN PROBLEM

This chapter proposes to evaluate the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971 in order to determine its effect on the status of West Berlin. What has changed now that the Agreement has gone into force? The answer to this question will enable us to ascertain West Berlin's present situation in terms of its advancement toward a final resolution of the Berlin problem. In addition, this chapter will attempt to plot a variety of prospective solutions to this lingering post-War issue. These solutions will be presented as though part of a continuum from the most to the least desirable on the basis of what may be logically determined as in the interest of East Germany. In each case, the impact on the GDR's independence from Soviet influences will be considered.

I. THE EFFECT OF THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT OF 1971

The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin was intended not to resolve the West Berlin problem as such, but rather to settle those questions which have been responsible for most of the quarrels and difficulties regarding the status of the city. Expectations that the agreement would "settle" the problem were neither justified nor fulfilled. An examination of the agreement itself quickly demonstrates its intentions regarding the city. Its primary concern seems to have been the stabilization of the West Berlin issue by a recognition of the status quo

in most respects. The principle questions with which the Agreement dealt were the traffic problem, the matter of representation of West Berlin abroad, the participation of West Berlin in international activities of the FRG, visits by West Berlin residents to the GDR, and ties between the Federal Republic and West Berlin.

The traffic problem is first considered in paragraph A of Part II of the Agreement. In this section, the four occupying powers agree that traffic to and from West Berlin and the FRG will be "unimpeded" and that "such traffic will be facilitated so as to take place in the most simple and expeditious manner; and that it will receive preferential treatment."¹ Annex I of the Agreement specifies the details of the arrangements for implementing this provision. The essential point is that traffic through the GDR's territory becomes the responsibility of the East German authorities who are to work directly with the West German and West Berlin officials. Costs related to traffic on the communication routes to West Berlin are to be paid in an annual lump sum by the FRG to East Germany.² This is a departure from the previous situation in which traffic matters were always and exclusively referred to the occupying powers because East and West German officials would not work together. Air traffic and military traffic are not considered in the Agreement and remain the exclusive responsibility of the Four Powers. The positions of the major powers in Berlin change little as a result of the Agreement leading to

¹The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin (Bonn: Press and Information Office of the FRG, 1972), p. 12.

²Ibid., pp. 14-16.

the conclusion by three scholars of international law that the FRG and the GDR still have "only limited sovereignty" in control of transit traffic.³

The matters of representation of West Berlin residents abroad and the participation of West Berlin in international activities of the Federal Republic were considered in Annex IV. Provisions are made for the FRG to perform consular services for permanent residents of West Berlin. This step constitutes an important concession by the Soviet Union. The provision relating to West Berlin's participation in international activities also must be seen as an example of the willingness of the Soviet leaders to grant an additional concession. In section C of Part 2 of the Annex, the FRG is given the right to represent the "interests of the Western sectors of Berlin in international organizations and international conferences."⁴ In the next paragraph, this right is broadened to include West Berlin's participation with the Federal Republic in international exchanges and exhibitions.

Paragraph C of Part II of the Agreement considers the issue of visits by West Berliners to the GDR and declares that such visits will be possible for compassionate, family, religious, cultural or commercial reasons in addition to tourism.⁵ For this purpose, additional border

³Gunther Doeker, Klaus Melsheimer, and Dieter Schroder, "Berlin and the Quadripartite Agreement of 1971," American Journal of International Law, Vol. 67, No. 1., January, 1973, p. 59.

⁴The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin, pp. 19-20.

⁵Ibid., p. 13.

crossing points were opened and five offices were established in West Berlin where permanent residents of the city could apply to visit the GDR. The considerable delays which were immediately associated with this system gave credence to the belief that the SED did not actually welcome the prospect of a sharp increase in human contacts across the Wall.⁶ The doubling of the entry fees and the required minimum exchange amounts in 1973 was another indication that the East German leadership wanted to discourage such contacts.

The most important concession to the West comes in paragraph B of Part II with the assertion that "ties between the Western sectors of Berlin and the Federal Republic will be maintained and developed. . . ."⁷ The importance of this expression of a special relationship between the FRG and West Berlin has already been discussed in terms of its impact on the position of the GDR at that time. This clearly represents a reaffirmation of the status quo by the USSR favorable to the Western position. However, this is coupled with a Western disavowal of any claims that West Berlin is a "constituent part" of the FRG. Accordingly, the West German Bundestag and the Bundesrat will be denied the right to hold any future plenary sessions in West Berlin, no small concession in itself in view of the symbolic value attached to these demonstrations of West German ties with West Berlin. This prohibition extends to other constitutional or official acts by governing bodies of the FRG and

⁶Sddeutsche Zeitung, March 21, 1972, p. 3.

⁷The Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin, p. 12.

meetings by committees of the West German political parties.⁸ An additional shortcoming for the West in this provision of the Agreement is the lack of a definition of "ties." The period after the implementation of the Agreement has been filled with East German arguments about the difference between "ties" and "bonds" between the FRG and West Berlin.⁹

Experiences of the three years following the completion of the Quadripartite Agreement have justified statements of those who denied that a situation had evolved in which all the differences of the past twenty-five years would be forgotten. The official view of the Bonn government was expressed early in 1974 by President Gustav Heinemann who, while visiting West Berlin, asserted,

. . . What has emerged for Berlin and its citizens could surely be no ideal solution; and yet it is something that is easier to live with than the previous circumstances. . . . With this Four-Power Treaty, a circumstance emerged that has been tediously created, and that nobody considers the best of all possible solutions, an arrangement that has been accepted, has been recognized as being a basis on which Berlin can function.¹⁰

The present situation is, therefore, viewed by the West German government as an improvement over the previous arrangement, but by no means a perfect or final solution. In this regard, their position is like that of the Soviet and East German leaders who advocate a conception of

⁸Ibid., p. 17.

⁹Neues Deutschland, November 9, 1973, p. 3. (Hereafter noted as ND.)

¹⁰The Bulletin (Press and Information Office of the FRG), Vol. 22, No. 8, February 28, 1974, p. 52.

detente based on a belief in the continuation of change. There is a generally held view that the status quo is less than desirable, in spite of concessions that each side might justifiably regard as an improvement in terms of their particular interests. According to Doeker, Melsheimer, and Schroder, in terms of international law, Greater Berlin remains as a "special area in Germany" and the status of that special area has not been changed by the Quadripartite Agreement.¹¹ The Berlin problem has clearly not been resolved. It is, then, at this point appropriate to turn to a consideration of alternatives to the present Berlin situation.

II. TOTAL INCORPORATION: THE MAXIMUM SOLUTION

Professor Elmer Plischke has hypothesized that there are two primary sets of options for consideration in an effort to formulate a resolution of the Berlin problem. The first matter is the prospects for reamalgamation of the two halves of the city. Considering the present conflict of interests between the major powers involved, he concludes there is little prospect for a reunification of the city. The second option relates to the method of settling the Berlin question within the context of the broader German problem. This, according to Plischke, is the most appropriate and reasonable of the options but, life reamalgamation of Berlin, remains unattainable under present circumstances.¹² The problem of present-day realities is obviously

¹¹Doeker, Melsheimer, and Schroder, p. 61.

¹²Elmer Plischke, "Resolving the Berlin Question: an Option Analysis," World Affairs, Vol. 131, No. 2, July, 1968, pp. 94-99.

the major stumbling block in an effort to formulate scenarios for resolution of this problem. Therefore, in those which are discussed here, there will be no assumption that the status quo is our starting point. Rather, each will be approached in terms of its desirability and the status quo will be evaluated as it helps or hinders such a resolution.

Certainly the best and most final settlement of the Berlin issue would be the total incorporation of West Berlin into the GDR. From the East German point of view this would represent the maximum gain for the GDR in resolving this problem. It would mean that West Berlin would finally become, as Ulbricht liked to say, the "western suburbs of the capital of the GDR." Through an implementation of this solution, the basic abnormality of the Berlin situation, the physical division of the city between the Communist and non-Communist worlds, would be eliminated.

The benefits that the East German regime would accrue as a result of this would be considerable. First, the GDR would be able to add one hundred and eight-five square miles of territory to its capital city. At present West Berlin comprises over 54 percent of what was formerly Greater Berlin,¹³ thus by its addition to East Berlin, the GDR capital would be more than double in size. Second, the GDR would gain over two million new inhabitants,¹⁴ assuming that the majority of West Berlin's residents either chose to remain or were unable to leave.

¹³John Brose and Kathleen Kerr, Berlin in Brief (West Berlin: Press and Information Office of the Land Berlin, 1969), p. 61.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 64.

For a nation with a population of only seventeen million, the addition of two million people would be an extremely significant increase. Likewise, the industry of West Berlin would also be a valuable boon to the East German economy.

While the material advantages that the GDR would gain from the incorporation of West Berlin are of great value, the psychological benefits that East Germany would enjoy are even greater when the SED's most pressing needs are taken into consideration. First, there would be a significant increase in the GDR's prestige by virtue of having the largest city in both Germanies as its capital.¹⁵ This would help dispel the impression of East Germany as a "rump" nation created out of the poorer sections of Hitler's Germany. In addition, this would lend to the enhanced stability of the GDR since the region which for many years seemed to call into question the permanence of East Germany as a separate state would have finally become part of that state. For many years West Berlin served as what many West Germans regarded as a pan-German symbol.¹⁶ The removal of this symbol once and for all would be a serious psychological setback for those desiring German reunification. Furthermore, with West Berlin no longer existing as a separate entity inside East German territory, the Berlin Wall could at last be dismantled. This would enable the SED to claim that it, not the FRG, had succeeded in restoring the unity of Berlin. The GDR would derive

¹⁵Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁶Die Welt, August 31, 1971, p. 6.

tremendous propaganda value out of its demolition of the Wall erected in 1961 to prevent an "imperialist invasion" of the GDR, as East German spokesmen have claimed. Finally, the SED would have removed what Erich Honecker described as a "thorn in the flesh of the GDR, . . . a front-line city and bridgehead of revanchist policies against the Socialist states. . . ." ¹⁷ West Berlin would no longer be a potential base for either escape organizations or espionage operations. Nor would non-Communist radio and television stations exist inside the territory of a Communist state. This itself would improve East Germany's situation relative to preventing unwanted communications with the West.

There is, however, a potential loss associated with this solution. Melvin Croan has written that the SED regime has grown accustomed to tension since its creation and still needs a degree of tension in order to compensate for the absence of a durable sense of national identity. ¹⁸ West Berlin's situation inside the GDR provided the SED with its best opportunity for confrontation with the West on an occasional basis and for stressing to its citizens that there were enemies within their midst on a permanent basis. It was not difficult for Ulbricht, Honecker, and others to create a sense of tension as the GDR was presented in constant confrontation with Western spies, agents, and provocateurs. Without West Berlin as a "thorn in the flesh," the SED will be deprived of one of its important unifying elements.

¹⁷ND, June 7, 1972, p. 1.

¹⁸Melvin Croan et al., "The Role of the GDR Within Eastern Europe," Eastern Europe in the 1970s, edited by Sylva Sinanian, Istvan Deak, and Peter C. Ludz (New York: Praeger, 1972), p. 245.

In terms of its effect on East Germany's evolution toward independence, this solution provides both positive and negative aspects. The GDR would gain independence in that its dependency on the Soviet Union as the representative of East German interests with the Four-Powers would be eliminated. In addition, the successful resolution of the West Berlin problem would mean that the SED would no longer need fear a Soviet "sellout" of East German interests on this question because the question would no longer exist. However, the possible methods for accomplishment of this solution might leave the SED even more indebted to the Kremlin than in the past. This brings us to the question of the feasibility of this solution.

How would it be possible for the East Germans to gain control of West Berlin? Obviously, they lack the resources to achieve control of the city by themselves. Only the USSR has the political and military power to do this and there seems to be little prospect for change in this situation in the foreseeable future. Clearly, Soviet action of some sort would be necessary for the East Germans to achieve this objective. One way in which the Soviet Union could secure the city would be by a coup. Given the proper circumstances, one of which would be a diminished Western interest in West Berlin, a real possibility in the wake of the 1971 Berlin Agreement and the subsequent progress of detente, the Soviet Union and its East German allies could quickly seal off the city in a fashion similar to that used in 1948 and couple this with a series of moves inside West Berlin by civilian supporters designed to rupture the city's communications as much as possible. Assuming that

the Western military presence in West Berlin is considerably reduced, or still better, completely terminated, such an effort might well succeed. This action would, however, require the USSR to be willing to risk war unless it is reasonably certain that the West will not, in fact, actually go to war for Berlin.

A more likely avenue, however, would be for the USSR to work out an exchange with the Western powers whereby they would be given control of West Berlin in return for some other concession to the West. This would involve no risk of an armed confrontation with the West and might actually be presented as an action consistent with detente. As a result of Soviet military advances during the era of detente, the USSR enjoys the very real prospect of military superiority over the Western powers, according to a number of Western scholars on Soviet and world affairs.¹⁹ If this materializes, it is possible that in the not too distant future, the USSR might be able to negotiate an exchange by which the West would yield West Berlin in return for some much less important compensation. The West, negotiating from a position of decided weakness, might be forced to accept unfavorable terms.

Obviously, whichever route is used to effect Communist control over West Berlin, the East Germans would be more indebted to the Soviet Union than ever before. However, an important distinction here is that they would be indebted for something already delivered. At present, they are dependent upon the USSR to fulfill a continuing service for them, a

¹⁹Robert Conquest et al., "Detente: an Evaluation," Survey, Vol. 20, Nos. 2/3, Spring/Summer, 1974, pp. 8-9.

service which can be altered depending upon the mood of the Kremlin's leadership. In short, the SED would be replacing dependency with increased indebtedness. The latter seems preferable from the East German point of view.

III. TOTAL INCORPORATION: A TERRITORIAL EXCHANGE

This alternative is similar to the previous solution in that its end is the same, a reunified Berlin. However, in several important aspects, it differs from the total incorporation of West Berlin by a more or less unilateral action. Accordingly, it enjoys at least two advantages over the former method of resolution.

This settlement would come about as the result of an exchange of territory between the GDR and the FRG. It would have to be something upon which both sides were in agreement. It is not inconceivable that the East Germans might decide that an exchange of, possibly, Suhl bezirk in the southwestern part of the GDR plus parts of Erfurt bezirk, including the city of Erfurt, might be acceptable in return for West Berlin. In order to avoid the sort of thing that occurred in the first months after the construction of the Berlin Wall when many people chose to risk death rather than resign themselves to remaining in East Germany, a population transfer should be arranged. The population of Suhl bezirk is over half a million and, assuming that approximately one half of the population is Erfurt bezirk is involved, there is an additional half million to be moved, plus the population of Erfurt, which is two hundred

thousand.²⁰ Therefore, the East Germans will have approximately 1.2 million people to move while the West Germans will have to consider the transfer of two million people. In spite of the trouble involved, such a massive transfer is preferable to the alternative. This movement, of course, is not a particularly monumental task compared with those which took place in Europe in the first years after World War Two.

There would be an obvious disparity in terms of the actual amounts of territory involved in this exchange. However, regardless of exactly what formula was used in determining which land the GDR would sacrifice, it is almost certain to have to surrender a larger amount of territory in order to, one, provide the West Germans with at least one fairly large city, and two, to approximate the number of people involved in the exchange. Considering the real estate the East Germans would be receiving, this exchange would still be to their advantage.

Such an exchange would be characterized by orderliness and bilateral negotiations between the East and West Germans. A political precondition for these negotiations would be an extremely favorable atmosphere of detente involving both Germanies and their major allies. It could never take place in the presence of serious, basic disputes between the two alliance systems. In this respect, this solution differs markedly from the first one considered.

All that is required of the USSR in this case is that it allow its East German ally to participate in the negotiations and attempt to work

²⁰Statistical Pocket Book of the GDR (Berlin, GDR: Staatverlag der DDR, 1973), pp. 11-12.

out an arrangement for the Berlin problem on its own. The four occupying powers in Berlin would all have to be in agreement to a surrender of their rights in Berlin for this solution to be feasible. It is reasonable to conclude that, for the Western powers, this would present little problem. First, they are there ostensibly to defend the interests of the population of West Berlin. Should the West Berlin Senate express its desire for such a solution, and such a desire would be a prerequisite for this plan, then there would be no reason for the West to object. Second, considering the current economic and political problems of the Western powers, it would be in their interest to eliminate at least part of their German commitment.

The situation for the Soviet Union is somewhat more complex. Agreement would require a willingness on their part to yield what amounts to a powerful lever that it exerts in limiting East German freedom of action. By virtue of its status as the protector of East German interests in relation to the West Berlin problem, the USSR has an advantage in dealing with the SED. A complete resolution of the West Berlin question would deprive them of this advantage. At the same time, this solution also involves the sacrifice of a jointly held lever that the USSR and the GDR hold against the West. For years the existence of West Berlin as an outpost of Western prestige gave the WTO powers a convenient target at which to strike in the event of a serious East-West disagreement. This solution, as well as the previous one, would require a loss of one of the Warsaw Pact's best weapons.

The effect of this solution upon East German-Soviet relations would be to increase the GDR's independence. East Germany's dependence upon

the USSR as the protector of its sovereign interests in West Berlin would be terminated. Also, unlike the previous settlement, this one requires no Soviet action which would measurably increase the GDR's indebtedness to the Kremlin.

The principal advantages of this plan over the previous one are, first, that no hostile East-West confrontation is required, and, second, that this proposal could actually be presented as serving the interests of detente. Obviously, by this method, there is no threat or possibility of an outbreak of military hostilities between the powers involved. This very fact increases the feasibility of this alternative. Regarding the second advantage of this over the first plan, it must be kept in mind that this route would be consistent with current Soviet policy. Furthermore, since no show of force by the East is involved, there is no necessity for a humiliation of a West which might see itself as militarily inferior. Notions of military inferiority or superiority do not play any part at all in this scenario.

It is also important to note that all the gains which the GDR would have enjoyed by the previous alternative are preserved in this plan with two exceptions. First, the GDR would not gain the entire population of West Berlin and, second, since this plan involves an orderly transfer of the population, it is reasonable to conclude that much, if not most, of the material wealth of the city, including industrial installations, would also be removed. In addition, of course, the East Germans are required to surrender some territory of their own.

The primary disadvantage of this route is that it would likely require that the FRG be recognized as a power with the right to act on

the full and final disposition of the West Berlin issue. West Germany would not only be acting on behalf of West Berlin, but would also be inheriting the population and most of the movable resources of the city.

IV. A COMMUNIST CONTROLLED WEST BERLIN

The two previous alternatives for a settlement of the Berlin problem resulted in the disappearance of West Berlin as a separate entity. In this scenario, West Berlin continues to exist as what is essentially a separate city with its own government. While the city is Communist controlled, the control is exercised, not through the SED, but rather the SEW, the West Berlin branch of the GDR's Socialist Unity Party. The SEW is responsible for the operation of the city government and acts through the West Berlin Senate. Other political parties would either be suppressed or would operate as "echoes" of the SEW. Such political parties as the Christian Democrats would almost certainly have to be completely abolished while the Social Democrats might be merged with the SEW just as the East German Social Democratic party was united with the Communist Party after the war to form the SED.

In this scenario, the matter of Allied rights in Berlin becomes a special concern. To allow the Four Powers to continue as so-called occupying powers in the city would be to perpetuate what would be, by this time, an obviously unneeded relic. Therefore, Four-Power rights in Berlin would most likely be terminated. This seems probable for two reasons. First, the SED's anti-Western attitude would make the continuation of American, British, and French rights in West Berlin

most difficult. The SED, as a communist party, would be inclined to regard the Western forces as a hostile element. Second, and most obvious, there would be little need for maintenance of the Western garrisons to defend the rights of a pro-Soviet West Berlin. The rationale of the maintenance of Western forces in the city was that they would provide protection against the USSR and the GDR. Under the terms of this settlement, the East Germans and the Russians would be regarded as West Berlin's protectors.

A West Berlin controlled by the SEW would, of necessity, have to be subjected to a social revolution such as that undertaken in the Soviet Zone of Occupation after the war. West Berlin's economy is on a capitalistic basis with Western banks and other financial institutions in operation there. The Federal Republic's currency is used in West Berlin. Branches of West German commercial enterprises are situated in West Berlin. All of these as well as any other vestiges of capitalism would have to be eliminated or brought under the control of the state. The schools would also have to be remodeled so as to reflect the views of the SEW. The West Berlin police force would have to be carefully examined and purged of any "hostile" elements. In short, the SEW would face a task of completely restructuring the society of a city of two million people so as to make it compatible with the society of the GDR.

How could the SEW manage to gain control of West Berlin? Its ascension could most easily come about as a result of political and economic turmoil. Should the Western nations suffer from a serious economic depression, West Berlin would be affected. A consequence would

well be the political upheaval that would facilitate the SEW's seizure of power through the electoral process. In its efforts, the SEW would certainly be able to count on substantial support from the GDR. The GDR might even be expected to engage in covert intervention in West Berlin politics or in some other manner attempt to subvert the political processes so as to aid the SEW. The GDR and the USSR together could apply external pressure on West Berlin at this time. They could issue a series of protests against "fascist provocations" by the SEW's opponents or they could promise the city that it would enjoy special benefits as a result of indicating its "political maturity" by electing the SEW. The prospect of removing the Berlin Wall could even be raised as an incentive to vote for the SEW. The main point is that the SEW's elevation to power would be as a result of the operation of the West Berlin political system. Its control would be gained by essentially democratic methods aside from the external pressure of its allies across the Wall. There would be no organized violence although there might be considerable unorganized violence through demonstrations and riots designed to show the failure of the non-Communist political forces. Nor would Soviet or East German troops play any role in the SEW's victory. It would be important to avoid the introduction of direct military pressure on West Berlin lest the Western powers take countermeasures. The atmosphere of detente would be helpful in aiding the SEW's victory since it would diminish fears of a "Communist menace" among the West Berlin electorate. Military confrontations would likely weaken that favorable atmosphere.

The advantages of this scenario over the previously discussed ones are that it involves no serious East-West confrontation, it requires no exchanges of territory, nor does it demand that the FRG be recognized as the authoritative agent of the West Berliners. The GDR still enjoys the benefits of an increase in its real estate holdings, enhanced prestige and stability, and the removal of what Honecker described as a "thorn" in the GDR's flesh. It would also be possible to remove the Wall once "hostile elements" in West Berlin were subdued.

In terms of East German-Soviet relations, the GDR's position would improve as a result of the implementation of this scenario. The Soviet contributions in this case would consist of a willingness to give up its special rights in Berlin and any assistance which it might possibly give in the application of external pressure on West Berlin. Consequently, the GDR does not substantially increase its indebtedness since the USSR would not be required to make any extraordinary efforts. East German independence is increased as a result of the settlement of the Berlin problem in this fashion.

The nature of the arrangement that results from this sequence of events raises a question as to the permanence of West Berlin as a separate SEW-controlled entity. Would such an arrangement be expected to endure indefinitely? It would probably be maintained just long enough to enable the SEW to complete its social revolution and to allow the Western powers to leave and forget Berlin. If the separate status was officially terminated too soon, the Western powers might feel compelled to make some response, even if only to indicate that they

realized they had been outmaneuvered or deceived. The West, however, might prefer to overlook any Communist duplicity in order to avoid a confrontation in which they would have little to gain in view of a fait accompli in West Berlin.

V. A "FINLANDIZED" WEST BERLIN

In this variation West Berlin continues to exist as an independent entity under non-Communist control. There has been neither a social nor a political transformation of the city. East German-West Berlin relations are essentially cordial or, at the very worst, not openly hostile. West Berlin is viewed as neutral and allied with neither East nor West. In spite of its neutrality, West Berlin's trade with the GDR is extensive and of special importance to the city's economy. There is no longer a Four-Power status for the city and there are no Western troops present. West Berlin is not operated as a United Nations protectorate but is regarded as a sovereign political entity.

In spite of West Berlin's independence and neutrality, it is subject to intervention in its internal affairs by the GDR. In this regard, the pattern of East German-West Berlin relations resembles that of the Soviet Union and Finland. This relationship is characterized by frequent Soviet intervention in Finnish domestic political affairs.²¹ The Finnish government was initially described as sufficiently to the

²¹Bengt Matti, "Finland," Communism in Europe, Vol. Two, edited by William E. Griffith (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1965), pp. 374-375.

left to allay Soviet suspicions, but sufficiently representative of the center and bourgeois elements not to seem a prelude to communist dictatorship.²² With the passage of time, Soviet influence over Finland increased, but there was no move to establish a dictatorship under the control of the Finnish Communist Party. West Berlin's position is geographically much worse than that of Finland in relation to the USSR, so one might expect a speedier increase in East German influence over the city than occurred with the Finnish-Soviet relationship. Should West Berlin's political affairs reflect an increase in the influence of what the SED considers "anti-Communist" elements, GDR-West Berlin relations will undergo a distinct chill. This deterioration in their relations may be characterized by any one or several of a variety of actions that the East Germans could take in response to West Berlin developments. First, trade and economic agreements could be jeopardized as the East Germans announce an intention to suspend trade in areas vital to West Berlin's economy. This is probably one of the more restrained threats that the East Germans could take. A second step that they could take to indicate their displeasure would be to recall the East German ambassador or any other GDR representatives that are stationed in West Berlin. An even more drastic step could be the announcement by the GDR that in view of a "threat to peace" originating in West Berlin the East Germans and the West Berlin authorities should

²²Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Origins of the Cold War," The Conduct of Soviet Foreign Policy, edited by Erik P. Hoffmann and Frederic J. Fleron, Jr. (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, Inc., 1971), p. 241.

engage in military consultations. The purpose of such consultations would be, according to the GDR, to consider the establishment of an East German military base in West Berlin to protect the population of the city from "anti-Communist elements." This corresponds to a similar threat made by the Soviet Union when political developments in Finland in 1961 took a turn hostile to Soviet interests.²³ This announcement by the GDR would have the effect of a threat to take military action against West Berlin. The objective of these East German measures would be, not an actual takeover of the city, but rather the suppression of those elements viewed as hostile to the GDR. The goal would be achieved if the West Berlin authorities agreed to take the necessary steps to suppress the offending political movement or individual. The key point is that the West Berliners themselves would be correcting the situation. It would not be desirable for the East Germans to actually take the steps unilaterally.

Just as unfavorable domestic developments in West Berlin would inspire threats from the GDR, good relations would be rewarded by favorable economic arrangements, the exchange of official state visits by East German and West Berlin political figures, and symbolic gestures such as the waiver of certain passport and visa requirements for visits by West Berliners to the GDR. Similar developments took place in Finnish-Soviet affairs during those periods of especially good relations. The situation between West Berlin and the GDR would be one in which the

²³Matti, p. 374.

West Berliners could enjoy a cordial atmosphere with their East German neighbors, but only at the price of sacrificing certain of its freedoms on occasion.

This situation is one which could develop as the product of continued East-West detente and Western neglect of West Berlin. No upheavals in West Berlin are required. No East German-Soviet external pressures are necessary to create a neutral West Berlin. In fact, the opposite, Communist benignity, would do more to advance the development of such a West Berlin since it would encourage a belief that West Berlin could coexist peacefully with its neighbors. The only Soviet contributions in this scenario are, first, the continuation of its policies of detente, and, second, a willingness to surrender Four-Power rights in Berlin. Neither would have the effect of measurably increasing East Germany's indebtedness to the USSR.

The principal advantage of this arrangement for the GDR is that West Berlin ceases to act as an irritant to the East German regime. West Germany's political presence in West Berlin could be completely eliminated. Anti-Communist political activities and demonstrations could also be banned in West Berlin. The feasibility of this scenario is indicated by the success of detente so far in promoting an image of the USSR and its allies as status quo powers. West Berlin has also witnessed steps toward eliminating anti-Communist demonstrations such as the annual observance of the 1953 East German uprising which was cancelled for the first time in 1974.²⁴ As West German and

²⁴New York Times, June 13, 1974, p. 3.

anti-Communist influences are terminated in West Berlin, they can be gradually replaced by an East German political presence. A shortcoming of this arrangement, however, is that the GDR is deprived of the material and psychological benefits that would have accrued to it by the total incorporation of West Berlin. It should be stressed at the same time that these benefits are not completely lost for all time since this arrangement could not be considered a final settlement of the West Berlin question. It seems more likely to be simply one phase in a transitional development of the city's status.

The effect of such an arrangement on East German independence relative to the Soviet Union would be positive. With West Berlin no longer representing a serious problem, the GDR's dependence on the USSR in dealing with the West would be decreased. At the same time, East Germany would be in a position to handle its West Berlin affairs with much less help from the Soviet Union by means of economic and political arrangements.

VI. WEST BERLIN AS A FREE CITY UNDER UN SPONSORSHIP

This alternative and the previous one probably come closest to approaching the situation as it now exists in West Berlin. This scenario, however, represents a departure from the previous ones in that it does not overwhelmingly favor the East German interests. In this case there would be an internationally sponsored effort to perpetuate what is essentially the status quo. The West German political presence is to be muted. West Berlin's political affairs

are to be free from outside intervention by either the East or the West. The economy of West Berlin would retain its capitalistic features and its trade would continue to be oriented toward the West. The Four-Power status of the city would have been terminated by the establishment of a United Nations protectorate and transit rights to the city would be guaranteed by the UN which would likely be responsible for control of the westward corridors.

This arrangement could come about as a product of detente and Western efforts to provide a stable foundation for West Berlin's independence. The Western powers would no longer act as the guarantors of West Berlin's rights since the city would have become a UN responsibility just as Danzig before World War Two was supervised by the League of Nations. This solution would have to be worked out by the former occupying powers under United Nations aegis. It seems reasonable to assume that the FRG and the GDR, who are also now members of the UN, would also be consulted regarding the arrangement and that their support would be essential. The two Germanies could hardly be expected to oppose this very strenuously since it is a plan which could be presented as in the best interests of peace. Therefore, their support could almost be taken for granted although they would obviously work for the most advantageous arrangements for themselves as the program was formulated.

As with the previous scenario, East Germany would no longer be dependent on the USSR as the sole protector of its interests regarding the West Berlin problem after the adoption and implementation of this

policy by the UN. The problem, of course, is not removed by this program, but it is out of the hands of the East Germans and the Soviets. In the United Nations the Soviet-led bloc would have to act with the GDR in order to advance the East Germans' interests relative to West Berlin should there be any conflict regarding the city's status or operations. This means that the East German government would remain dependent on the Soviet Union for support in the General Assembly and the Security Council. However, the USSR alone would not be able to guarantee the protection of East German rights. This is especially true in the General Assembly where the USSR would have to rely upon the votes of not only the WTO states but also the so-called Third World nations as well. Therefore, the GDR's dependence would become diluted, as it has to appeal to a variety of groups in order to secure support necessary for successfully waging a fight in the United Nations. Overall, the GDR's independence would be increased by the implementation of this program for West Berlin. The increase, however, would not be as great as in those scenarios where the West Berlin question was given a final resolution.

There are several advantages that would accrue to the GDR under this plan. First, the removal of U.S., British, and French troops from West Berlin is, by itself, a victory for East Germany. The maintenance of hostile garrisons inside the GDR's territory could hardly be regarded as a minor consideration by the SED. Thus, its removal would not be considered a minor accomplishment. Second, the East Germans profit under this plan by virtue of not having to recognize a special FRG-West

Berlin relationship. By having the UN work out the arrangements, the GDR is insulated from that danger. What the East Germans accept through the plan is the authority and responsibility of the United Nations. Finally, the East Germans would benefit by the fact that the West Berlin problem is being handled in an atmosphere of relative harmony and reconciliation, a necessity for agreement by the former occupying powers. By their participation in this process, the East Germans can boast that they have made a contribution to the cause of detente in Europe.

The proposal considered here is not without its disadvantages for the East Germans. First, the GDR is deprived of the enjoyment of the important material gains that come with total incorporation. The psychological boost that it would get from possession of the entire city of Greater Berlin is also lost through this formula. Probably most important is the fact that United Nations supervision of West Berlin makes any future unilateral Communist moves regarding the city, such as those involved in some of the preceding scenarios, much more difficult. Of course, the same prohibition is operative against future Western moves in West Berlin.

VII. WEST BERLIN IN AN EAST-WEST GERMAN CONFEDERATION

This option would bring reamalgamation of Berlin by reunification of the two Germanies in a genuine confederation. Representatives would be elected throughout all of Berlin and Germany to an all-German legislature. Districts could most easily be formed by adherence to

preexisting political subdivisions, bezirks in the GDR and Lander in the FRG. They could be formed in Berlin on the basis of the boroughs established in 1920 and thus avoid lumping East and West Berliners together in one district. The representatives would all sit together as equals in one legislature which might well be located in Berlin. The most appropriate method of apportionment of the districts would be by population.

In an article in 1969, Professor Elmer Plischke discussed the ways in which reunification of the two Germanies might be achieved. The only feasible method, he concluded, was by agreement among the four wartime allies with the GDR and the FRG.²⁵ In addition, it should be observed that agreement among these six powers would be possible only during an era of detente. Both blocs must also be willing to surrender a major ally to create what would probably have to be a neutral Germany. The problem of a formula for representation in the national legislature would be the major sticking point since the prospects of both sides for achieving dominance in the confederation would be dependent upon it. Straight population might be the most appropriate formula, but it is one which would reduce the political forces of the GDR to the status of a permanent minority. Acceptance of that would be difficult for both the USSR and the GDR.

The effect of this option on GDR-Soviet relations would be revolutionary since the GDR would cease to exist as a separate entity.

²⁵Elmer Plischke, "Reunifying German: An Options Analysis," World Affairs, Vol. 132, No. 1, June, 1969, p. 34.

The principal concern would now be all-German-Soviet relations. The implementation of this option would probably result in an increase in the feelings of goodwill toward the USSR in Germany since Soviet approval would have been a necessity for its coming into force. The USSR would be unlikely to approve of the creation of a reunified Germany unless it felt that the new state would be reasonably friendly toward the USSR.

The main advantage of this plan is that the East German elements would have a chance to win control of both West Berlin and West Germany by becoming the dominant force in the confederation. Should that happen, the result would be a communist Germany that could be much more independent of the USSR than the GDR could ever hope to be. This independence would be a function of the fact that power would most likely have been gained without any major Soviet efforts, assuming the GDR elements take control on their own through legal processes, and that the reunified German state would be considerably stronger economically and politically. The only hope for an SED victory in the new Germany would rest in the prospect for a union of communist and procommunist forces in the West with the SED. Even at that, it would require much more than their combined strengths as of this time. Therefore, the prospects for an SED takeover would not seem to be too good. This leads to the major disadvantage of the plan, the prospect that the SED could lose everything. Not only would it fail to take control of the confederation if its union with the left wing elements of the Western part of Germany should prove weak, but it would also have lost its own

preserve in the East. The smaller population of the GDR and its relatively weaker position with regard to the FRG increases the likelihood of defeat and at the same time diminishes prospects for the implementation of such an option.

VIII. WEST BERLIN AS A LAND OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC

In this scenario, West Berlin becomes a full-fledged Land of the Federal Republic. In spite of the fact that the Berlin Constitution of 1950 and the FRG Basic Law proclaimed West Berlin a Land of the FRG,²⁶ West Berlin's membership in the Federation was never realized. The Constitution was more an expression of a wish than a statement of fact.

In order to effect West Berlin's membership as a Land of the FRG several steps would, of necessity, be taken. First, West Berlin would have representatives in the West German legislature who would be voting members, not merely observers. Prior to 1971, West Berlin sent representatives to Bonn, but they lacked the right to vote. After the conclusion of the Quadripartite Agreement in 1971, the practice of having representatives from West Berlin was terminated with the arrangement whereby the West German legislature periodically held sessions in West Berlin.²⁷ To make West Berlin's status as a Land a reality, both customs would have to be revived with the one modification regarding the voting status of the West Berlin

²⁶Brose and Kerr, p. 66.

²⁷Frankfurter Allgemeine, August 24, 1971, p. 3.

representatives. A second necessary step is that the Federal Republic would require extraterritorial rights on at least one corridor from West Germany to West Berlin. This, of course, would harken back to the experiences of the 1930s when Hitler demanded a German highway and railroad from East Prussia across Polish territory to the port city of Danzig. Hitler at the time insisted on German extraterritorial rights over the superhighway and the railroad which his country was to construct.²⁸ Yet, a West German controlled access route to West Berlin would be the only absolute guarantee of West German transit rights to the city. Finally, there would be the introduction of elements of the FRG military into West Berlin. The Four-Power status of the city would have been terminated out of recognition of the fact that West Berlin's status has been "normalized." This scenario is based on the assumption of agreement by the Western powers to a West German acquisition of West Berlin as a Land, therefore, their willingness to withdraw from West Berlin need present no problem. The USSR could refuse to assent, but since it has no troops in West Berlin, its refusal would be no bar to realization of this scheme.

Such a development as described above would be unlikely during the era of detente. It would require a complete reversal of present Western policy and, at the same time, a considerable weakening of the position

²⁸William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), pp. 455-457.

of the Soviet Union and its allies relative to the Western powers. The best chance for this happening is the chain of events described by Andrei Amalrik in analyzing the possibilities for the weakening of Communist power in Russia due to minority unrest and Chinese pressures in the East.²⁹ In short, this scenario requires the West to be able to act from a position of strength. In so doing it can force the Soviet Union and East Germany into making the concessions necessary for incorporation of West Berlin into the Federal Republic.

This development would have a deteriorating effect on East German-Soviet relations. The GDR would view the USSR as having failed to protect its interests on a particularly vital question. It might even feel impelled to pursue its interests without the aid of the Soviet Union. However, the USSR, feeling the threat of Western pressure, could be expected to view any deviations from its policy line much more seriously than as under normal circumstances. Even a small departure would become a luxury that the Bloc could not afford. As a result, while GDR-Soviet relations are subjected to a severe strain, the independence of the East Germans will likely be subjected to further restrictions.

While this development offers no advantages for the East Germans, it does present the SED regime with serious disadvantages. The GDR would suffer a tremendous psychological defeat as a result of what

²⁹ Andrei Amalrik, Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984? (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 62-65.

could be seen as the complete loss of West Berlin. Furthermore, the permanence of the GDR would once more be placed under serious doubt as the Pan-German role of West Berlin is reemphasized. This arrangement, however, is not likely to be final because of the doubt that it creates regarding East Germany's future. It has the effect of reopening basic questions concerning the future of Germany, questions which have lain dormant for almost two decades. Therefore, attention is immediately directed to the possibility of the reunification of the two Germanies.

There is, however, another possibility concerning this option. Should West Berlin become a Land of a Finlandized West Germany, the impact on the GDR and the requirements necessary for the implementation of this program would be very different. First, a union with a Finlandized FRG would be possible during the era of detente and would not require a weakening of the USSR and its allies. Second, under these circumstances there need not be a deterioration of East German-Soviet relations. The Soviets could present this action as part of a long-range program for advancement of the GDR's interests. Certainly, there would be no embarrassment as a result of an apparent defeat of major proportions for the Bloc.

IX. WEST BERLIN AS THE KEY TO REUNIFICATION

The loss of West Berlin to the GDR does not represent a direct challenge to the existence of the Federal Republic. The incorporation of West Berlin into East Germany would not inspire the SED to annex West Germany if only because it lacks the power to do so. The SED

would simply feel that it had taken what was rightfully its own by consolidating its territory and removing a foreign social and political body. The Soviet Union and East Germany's military impotence would restrain any further expansionist tendencies. Also, West German stability would serve to discourage the SED from harbouring any such ambitions. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that the FRG could probably endure the psychological defeat that would be brought on by the loss of West Berlin. While it might bring the downfall of a government, it would not likely lead to the overthrow of the system. The inability of parties such as the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) to take hold in the West German political climate is an indication of the basic stability of the system.

By contrast, the incorporation of West Berlin into the FRG as a Land would undoubtedly inspire the Bonn government to push for more. Such an event could only take place during a time of extreme weakness of the Soviet Bloc or fluidity on the part of the USSR. This weakness, coupled with the GDR's political instability, would make East Germany a tempting target for the FRG. Under these circumstances, the old dream of reunification on terms favorable to West Germany could be rekindled.

Thus, after West Berlin assumed membership in the Federation, Bonn might well begin to pressure for a truly "special relationship" with the GDR. It might suggest closer economic ties and intensified cooperation on certain projects. Proposals for some sort of political cooperation might also be advanced. Soviet weakness might make West German offers attractive to the SED. This would be especially true if those offers

gave the SED assurances of some satisfactory role in an enlarged Federation. The West Germans might even be able to rely upon anti-Russian attitudes to appeal to the East Germans as "fellow Germans." If the Western powers raised no objections, the West Germans could talk about the potential role of a reunified Germany in Europe. This development is, of course, highly dependent on either the willingness of the other Western powers to accept the idea of a stronger, reunified Germany or their inability to prevent it. If such a union should be effected, it would naturally mean a blow of immeasurable proportions to the USSR. This would be the Soviet Union's first really big setback internationally, its first significant territorial loss. While the idea of a reunified Germany might have fit in with Soviet policy twenty years ago, there seems to be no chance of its fitting in with the USSR's policy today. East Germany is too important to the USSR economically, militarily, and politically. Even a pro-Communist reunited Germany could hardly be considered good news for Moscow since such a Germany might well become a major rival within the world Communist movement as China has become.

The feasibility of such a development as this should not be dismissed lightly. In discussing the long-term question of the concept of the German nation, Professor Joachim Remak has observed that "every German frontier is artificial, therefore impermanent. . . ." His studies indicate that on the average, there has been one major change

in its borders and political organization every twenty-one years.³⁰ The last major changes, of course, took place over a quarter of a century ago, so it would not be unrealistic to anticipate some additional change in the years immediately ahead. A major change in the fortunes of the Soviet Union could be a factor which would contribute to such events. In examining the matter of a union between the GDR and the FRG, Professor Remak writes,

Yet the idea of a union is one whose time will come again; it is used to being recycled. How soon? Who knows? In what form? Who can guess? Perhaps it will be an association between the two German states, or a wholly new beginning, or a European confederation that will blur the old borders--no one can foretell the future's precise shape. But change there will be; it has been the law of German life. Federal Republic and GDR are no more likely to be the final stages in the development of German history than the Deutsche Bund or the North German Federation were.³¹

³⁰Ibid., p. 186.

³¹Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

East German foreign policy on the West Berlin issue since 1968 has moved toward the assertion of independence and subsequently returned to what must be regarded as a more traditional pattern. The last Ulbricht years witnessed a growing East German pride coupled with independent expressions on not only the West Berlin question but also a number of related matters. The West Berlin policy should be viewed essentially as a symptom of a larger pattern of resistance to Soviet desires. This trend began most conspicuously with the 1968 Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia which gave the GDR an opportunity to emphasize both its ideological firmness and its conception of itself as enjoying a special relationship with the USSR. This direction was reversed in 1971 with Ulbricht's replacement by Honecker, an action which clearly involved the support if not the actual participation of the Soviet leadership. Honecker's loyalty has been reflected in the SED's enthusiastic support for the major elements of Soviet foreign policy. This support has extended to active East German participation in the anti-Chinese polemics. The new leadership has made no claims of a special position in the Bloc during this time nor has it asserted the uniqueness of East Germany's example to Communist and developing nations as during the last Ulbricht years.

The insecurity of the East German regime has been reflected in the SED's strenuous efforts to develop its concept of the nation and to create a distinct developed socialist society in the GDR. These efforts have been coupled with the policy of Abgrenzung by which the SED hopes to cement its rupture from the western part of the former German Reich and the emphasis on the ideological struggle which is said to be intensifying during the period of detente. While there is no evidence of a desire for a military confrontation with West Germany, the GDR has not neglected military preparedness and has placed even greater emphasis on the military class mission of its youth. This program has involved the broadening of military training efforts and, at the same time, a new civil defense campaign. The idea that the GDR is being continually subjected to hostile attention from West Germany has been retained, thus preserving the element of tension that many observers feel the GDR needs to compensate for its lack of a fully developed sense of nationality. West Berlin's position as a Western outpost provides the SED with its most convenient opportunity for intensifying tension. For this reason, a renewal of conflicts between the GDR and West Berlin must be viewed, at least in part, as evidence of the SED's insecurity.

An evaluation of the apparent influence of the Soviet Union on East Germany's foreign policy relative to West Berlin during this period demonstrates the development of a relationship in which the USSR no longer has to dictate to the GDR in the manner assumed to be characteristic of the major power-satellite relationship. Enough shared attitudes have been developed that it is now possible to speak of an

essential community of interests between the GDR and the USSR on basic issues. While East German statements assert that this holds true for every case, it is reasonable to assume that differences do occur. Yet, these have not been nearly great enough to require a show of force by the Soviet Union. The GDR has apparently come to realize over the years that its fate is cast with that of the Soviet Bloc. Therefore, its perception of its self-interest has become such that it has been possible for the GDR to enjoy a status much more like that of a junior ally than a traditional satellite. There are differences, but the SED seems to realize the limits of tolerable diversity. Ulbricht's stands during his last years indicate that he failed to appreciate the fact that there were limits beyond which he could not go without incurring the serious disapproval of the Kremlin's leadership. Ulbricht's removal by his comrades in the SED indicates that his "revolt" was largely a personal one; he did not carry with him a majority of the SED Politburo. The fact that no other high-level removals followed his also indicates that he was largely alone in his defiance. The dismissal of Ulbricht illustrates the continuing importance attached by the Soviet Union to the maintenance of its hegemony within the East European system and, at the same time, it shows that Soviet conceptions have not changed enough during the nuclear age to permit a devaluation of the importance of a ring of "buffer states" between itself and the West.

Finally, the presentation of the scenarios for resolution of the West Berlin problem indicates the persistence of the question of West Berlin as a factor in the stability of the SED regime and in the

expansion or contraction of East Germany's independence from the Soviet Union. It is significant that only the extreme solutions, either a total incorporation of West Berlin into the GDR or complete loss of the city to the West with the possible reunification of the two Germanies, completely eradicate the problem and thus enhance the GDR's independence from the USSR. However, in the latter case, the question of independence becomes meaningless in view of the GDR's union with West Germany. The essential point is that those resolutions which are favorable to the GDR require either the active support of the Soviet Union or the successful continuation of a Soviet policy, such as detente, that facilitates the evolution of a favorable situation.

In discussing East German-Soviet relations, David Childs has written of a change which has come about largely as a result of the development of the economic power of the GDR. According to Childs,

Apart from the Soviet Union itself, East Germany is the most important industrial power in the Communist camp. It is the Soviet Union's biggest trading partner, being responsible for roughly one-quarter of Soviet imports and 75 percent of its import of machine tools. . . . In addition, . . . the GDR has the largest reserves of uranium in Europe, apart from those in the Soviet Union itself.¹

Childs also sees the GDR as being of value to the USSR militarily. First, the GDR's territory allows the Soviet Union to have an outpost of troops to keep hostile forces further from Russian territory. Second, the East German coastline is of interest for Soviet naval squadrons which lack ports that are open all year round. Finally,

¹David Childs, East Germany (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 272.

the East German armed forces themselves are probably, technically speaking, more efficient than most other WTO allies of the USSR.² Therefore, East Germany's status certainly seems to have risen considerably since the first years after the end of the war. Yet, there is little reason, based on an analysis of the West Berlin question, to anticipate a dramatic increase in its independence. East Germany simply lacks the ability to be a viable state, both in terms of its foreign policy needs and its domestic situation, outside of its membership in the Soviet alliance system.

East German dependency on its alliance with the USSR and the very definite limits on East German independence are demonstrated by several factors. First, the GDR is tied firmly to the Soviet Bloc by ideology and by its general orientation. The Marxist-Leninist ideology has had a profound influence on the GDR as on the other Bloc nations. As a result, they share numerous common characteristics that serve to bind them together. In addition, the SED has worked assiduously to orient its nation toward the USSR. As mentioned previously, East German cultural policy under both Honecker and Ulbricht was particularly close to the Soviet model. East German spokesmen have repeatedly stressed the need for alliance with the USSR as Honecker did in 1974 when he spoke of the alliance with the Soviet Union as the key to every success of the GDR.³ The GDR's close adherence to the Soviet Union in so many areas,

²Ibid., p. 273.

³Neues Deutschland, May 13, 1974, p. 2.

in spite of Ulbricht's brief "revolt," would make a rupture from the Soviet Bloc at this point probably as disruptive as its severance from the rest of Germany in 1945.

The GDR's lack of international stature also serves to bind it closer to the Soviet Union. Until recent years, the GDR had diplomatic relations with very few non-Communist states and enjoyed membership in also no non-Communist international organizations. While it has worked to improve its prestige through its technical accomplishments and now has diplomatic relations with well over one hundred nations, including the United States, the GDR still lacks the stature of West Germany. As a result, East Germany remains dependent upon the Soviet Union as its chief advocate in most international questions. The GDR is likely to retain a negative image as long as the Berlin Wall stands and GDR citizens in fairly large numbers still risk their lives to flee their country.

Finally, the GDR seems to lack the will as well as the ability to break away from the Bloc. Ulbricht's inability to stall detente on the Berlin question best illustrated the weakness of a GDR attempting to pursue an independent policy. Even more recently, the East German compromise on the minimum required exchange amounts, following the refusal of the Soviet Union to enthusiastically advocate the SED position, demonstrates the GDR weakness. Furthermore, the statements of SED spokesmen indicate, if anything, a desire to bring the GDR even closer to the Soviet Union.

In conclusion, it might be appropriate to consider the partition of Berlin and Germany in comparison with other partitions. The

best-known partitioned states, in addition to Germany, are Korea and Vietnam. A comparison of the situations of these states with that of Germany indicates both similarities and differences.

The Korean and Vietnamese cases are like the German case in that their divisions were not seen initially as permanent. No power is on record as advocating the permanent division of Korea at the 38th parallel. Officially, a line was arbitrarily drawn at that point simply to expedite the surrender of Japanese troops.⁴ Likewise, in Vietnam the demarcation along the 17th parallel was intended to be a provisional military measure.⁵ Just as in the German case, these divisions became permanent frontiers.

These three cases are also alike in that there was no internal justification for their division along the lines designated. In Korea there were no significant cleavages before 1945 which corresponded to the political division of the country today. Though there were regional differences between north and south, they were not extreme and communication between both sections was intense prior to 1945.⁶ While Vietnam contains numerous minority groups, there is no ethnic boundary there which corresponds to the north-south political division

⁴Gregory Henderson, "Korea: The Preposterous Division," Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 27, Number 2, 1973, p. 206.

⁵Harvey H. Smith et al., Area Handbook for South Vietnam (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), p. 257.

⁶Henderson, p. 205.

either.⁷ The Vietnamese, like the Koreans and the Germans, were essentially one people before they were divided by the major powers.

The hostilization of division which occurred as a result of the conflicts between the Communist and non-Communist blocs is a phenomena experienced by all three of these nations. Germany, of course, was seen as the front line for both blocs in Europe and confrontations in Berlin and elsewhere in that nation have frequently corresponded to the general mood of relations between the two blocs. In the same fashion, confrontatory groups were organized in Korea after the division in 1945 and were soon polarized against one another.⁸ In Vietnam hostility has developed as the two Vietnams became reflections of the Communist and non-Communist worlds of which they had become parts. The result was a North Vietnamese hostility to South Vietnam based upon a dislike for the general character of the southern regime rather than on negotiable substantive disagreements.⁹ The result in Korea and Vietnam was the outbreak of armed hostilities lasting for long periods and involving the direct participation of major powers. No such hostilities have occurred in Germany and this good fortune has undoubtedly contributed to the much better prospects for rapprochement between the two Germanies.

⁷Smith et al., p. 69.

⁸Henderson, p. 207.

⁹David C. Jordan, World Politics in Our Time (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1970), p. 179.

Unlike East Germany, the Communist regime in Korea, as well as in Vietnam, has followed a policy stressing self-reliance and independence.¹⁰ While both the Korean and Vietnamese regimes were integrated into the Communist world, neither assumed a position similar to that of East Germany. In short, they simply lacked the importance to the Soviet Union that the GDR seemed to enjoy. Also, because both regimes were subject to cross-pressures from the Chinese and the Russians, their integration became more difficult. At the same time, their independence was greater. As a result, the major powers today do not have such vital positions in the two countries that compromise becomes almost impossible. The Korean case has been the best demonstration of this major power flexibility in the era of detente.¹¹

The prospects for reunification have been affected dramatically by the major power stakes in these three countries. Because of the vital positions of the major powers in Germany, external factors make reunification of that country a virtual impossibility at this time. This is true in spite of the fact that the personal animosities between East and West Germans have never developed as in the Korean and Vietnamese cases where northerners and southerners were actually shooting at each other. The flexibility of the major powers has resulted in some fairly significant steps toward the advancement of detente in Korea. The most notable gain has been the decrease in

¹⁰Bruce G. Cumings, "Kim's Korean Communism," Problems of Communism, Vol. XXIII, March-April, 1974, p. 41.

¹¹Henderson, p. 210.

provocative military actions by the North Koreans.¹² The major accomplishment in Vietnam was the withdrawal of American troops from the south. Progress toward bringing North and South Vietnam closer together have been negligible. In the Korean case there has at least been serious talk, though little actual progress, about reunification.¹³

In summary, one must conclude that reunification is made difficult in the German case because of the positions of the major powers and the importance of the stakes involved. Both East and West Germany are important industrial powers. In the cases of Korea and Vietnam, while the partitions are much like the German partition in terms of their origins, the outlooks for reunification are affected differently. In both cases, the positions of the major powers are more open and less opposed to reunification. However, the internal factors make an elimination of the partition much more difficult. Even though there were no extreme differences separating the people in these nations prior to partition, the hostilization of division has been so great that armed conflict has been a result of the creation of separate states. While the prospects for reunification in the near future are slim in all three cases, more progress has been made in the German case toward bridging the gap between the people involved. Should the major powers' positions be altered, this progress would greatly ease the difficulty of a reunion. The Koreans and the Vietnamese, by contrast,

¹²Rinn-sup Shinn, "Foreign and Reunification Policies in North Korea," Problems of Communism, Vol. XXII, January-February, 1973, p. 69.

¹³Ibid., pp. 69-70.

in spite of a softening of the positions of the major powers, have shown an inclination to want to continue the old policies of open hostility.

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