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BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN: WESTERN TRAVELERS AND CORRESPONDENTS IN EAST GERMANY, 1945-1972

VOLUME I

By

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ABSTRACT

BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN: WESTERN TRAVELERS AND CORRESPONDENTS IN EAST GERMANY, 1945-1972

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My dissertation is a history of the Soviet occupation of Germany and the first two decades of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), based on the published travel stories of Western correspondents, journalists, and other visitors. I argue that perspectives on the social, economic, and political developments in East Germany have been overly restricted by scholarly preoccupations with the establishment, dysfunctions, and ultimate failure of the East German dictatorship and economy. While not denying the ultimate coercive power of the regime and its Soviet backing, I show that contemporaries viewed developments in the Soviet Zone/GDR, and East Germans' experience of them, within a larger ideational and geopolitical framework. In turn, by elaborating that framework, I try to add to our understanding of both the history of the GDR and the evolution of the "mental world" of the East German population. This involves firstly the uncertainty and open-ended sense with which the Western press evaluated the Soviet occupation of Germany, a stark contradiction to the received story in most scholarly accounts. Contemporaries mapped a "twisted road to the GDR" filled with more possibility, and more worry as well. Soviet motives, both within their zone and in Germany as a whole, were a matter of massive speculation, and strange as it may sound today, debate on them was most always based on the assumption that Germany would *not* be permanently divided. Nevertheless, in that same period visitors were beginning to describe a "different world" east of the "iron curtain." Their observations help reconstruct aspects of daily life and the "mental horizons" in which they existed. In particular, they suggest that East

Germans' resentment and disapproval of West Germany, along with their acceptance and even appreciation of Eastern social welfare policies (if not communist ideology itself), was creating in the Eastern population a sense of separateness and difference from West Germans *long before* the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961. They also show that a measure of social stability, based on that same general approval, was evolving from at least the mid-1950s -- the foundation of what later was called an East German "state identity." Along the way, however, I present other views on the GDR as well, many of them the work of West Germans, refugees returned to the region, or staunch anti-communists. These authors show how difficult it was for many contemporaries to believe East Germans truly supported "socialist achievements" (as the regime's social welfare system and state-run industry and agriculture were often called), or could freely choose to identify with life in the GDR in any way. But as the GDR became more economically and politically stable in the mid-to-late 1960s, even more critical visitors joined an emerging consensus among travelers that the GDR must at least tacitly be accepted in the West. I argue that many of them tried to make this idea more palatable to Western audiences (and perhaps themselves as well) in two ways: 1) by categorizing the East German economy *not* as an alien, communist imposition, but a rather weak, uninspiring and unthreatening *imitation of capitalism*, and 2) by describing the state and society as traditionally German, suggesting that the people and the regime were reaching a kind of symbiosis around the concepts of an orderly society and the celebration of skilled, productive work and labor discipline. Over the years, East Germany became less foreign to visitors than its foreboding barriers, the Berlin Wall and the "iron curtain" might suggest. Instead, it became a kind of alter ego of the modernizing Western world on the one hand, and (for most visitors) an emerging state and society that must be accepted and understood on its own terms.

for my parents, Harry and Beverly Machin,
and for Anja

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List of Abbreviations

CDU	*Christlich Demokratische Union* (Christian Democratic Union (East and West -- not affiliated))
DBD	*Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands* (Democratic Peasants' Party (DPP -- East))
DDR	*Deutsche Demokratischen Republic* (German Democratic Republic (East))
EDC	European Defense Community
FGDB	*Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (Free German Labor Union Federation (East))
FDJ	*Freie Deutsche Jugend* (Free German Youth (East))
GDR	German Democratic Republic (East)
KPD	*Kommunistiche Partei Deutschlands* (German Communist Party
LDPD	*Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Liberal Democratic Party of Germany (East))
LPD	*Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Liberal Democratic Party of Germany (West))
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDPD	*National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands* (National Democratic Party (East))
NWDR	*Nordwest Deutsche Rundfunk* (Northwest German Radio)
OMGUS	Office of Military Government of the United States Germany
RIAS	Radio in the American Sector (Berlin)
SAG	*Sowjetische Aktiengesellschaft* (Soviet Joint-Stock Company (in Germany)
SED	*Sozialistiche Einheitspartei Deutschland* (Socialist Unity Party (East German Communists))

SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces
SMAD	Soviet Military Administration of Germany
SPD	*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland* (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
VEB	*Volkseigener Betrieb* (People's Own Enterprise (ie. factory))
VVB	*Verienigung Volkeseigener Betriebe* (Association of People's Own Enterprises)

Introduction

In the 20-plus years that have passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall, debates on many key questions in the history of East Germany (the German Democratic Republic, acronym GDR) have engaged sociologists, political scientists, historians, politicians and others. One of the most important debates concerns the relationship between the East German state and society, and whether they can truly be understood as distinct entities, as we have traditionally understood them in Western democracies.[1] This debate has been joined by a number of authors who have made what might be called neo-totalitarian arguments,[2] claiming that state power in the GDR so dominated society that it penetrated all social, economic and cultural sectors to the point where no independent society could exist.[3] Other scholars who have shied away from explicitly totalitarian claims, nevertheless have argued that the power and reach of the state so molded East German society that social development was inseparable from Communist rule.[4] But another group of scholars -- mainly social historians -- have argued for the "limits of dictatorship."[5] For them, both historical structural impediments and the range of popular responses to the regime's directives and goals gave East German society a limited degree of autonomy.[6] However, some of them also have argued *against* a strict separation of state and society, conceptualizing the two as *overlapping* instead, and it was at their *intersection* -- that is, in factories, villages, offices, schools, etc. -- what one scholar has called the "grass-roots"[7] -- that dictatorial rule was "*socially produced*" -- that is, the regime enlisted the population in its projects and activities, and individuals, in turn, reacted to its plans and in various ways shaped the outcomes.[8]

While both groups of authors point to the general conclusion that state and society in the East German dictatorship can never be neatly separated, it is arguable that the

latter group, with their focus on the "limits of dictatorship" and the ways in which ordinary East Germans could influence and even modify the projects and goals of the state, presents a more complete picture of social transformation in the GDR over time. Though clearly a state-directed process, the "building of socialism" in East Germany was most certainly shaped by a variety of factors beyond the regime's control, one of them being what historian Alf Lüdtke has dubbed *Eigen-Sinn* -- which may be translated as "stubborness" or "sense of one's interest"[9] -- with which East German workers, farmers, students, and citizens, individually and in groups, articulated and defended their interests in response to the regime's directives. What is particularly noticeable about this paradigm -- which is sometimes referred to more simply as "negotiation," is its emphasis on the *seemingly inevitable conflict* between the regime's goals and individual interests. The following quote, in which Corey Ross discusses the research of labor historian Peter Hübner, political scientist Jeffrey Kopstein and his own study of the "grass-roots," makes this quite clear:

> Attempts to raise productivity showed little effect, not least because many factory managers were anxious to keep shopfloor discontent beneath the threshold of conflict even if this came at the expense of the planned economy. Shopfloor disputes over the introduction of 'harder' work norms or performance-related pay, the reduction of bonuses, crackdowns on extended lunch breaks, etc. were often settled *en locale* via informal mechanisms of conflict regulation that ultimately had to be tolerated to maintain the social peace, and thus also to uphold the appearance of a healthy and ideological relationship between the workers and 'their' state.[10]

This characterization of GDR state and society as a field of conflicting interests and negotiations explains a good deal about the history of the GDR. Perhaps most importantly, it sheds light on how the changed circumstances of the late 1980s -- the mounting economic difficulties, more widely organized protests, increased flight to the West, and the end of Soviet backing -- could so easily bring on the regime's collapse. In effect, "con-

flict management" progressively weakened the control of the Socialist Unity Party (the German Communists, German acronym SED) over time, and it finally became impossible. But the negotiation paradigm also suggests that the outward appearance of quiescence for which the GDR was so well known between late 1953 and the summer of 1989 was highly deceiving. Access to the regime's archives has revealed sporadic, disorganized and local resistance was common throughout the 40 years of the GDR's existence.[11]

But while analytical concepts such as "limits of dictatorship" and "negotiation" tell us much the relationship between the East German state and society, they cannot tell us everything. However much the relationship was based on incipient conflict, it had other bases as well. Studies that have attempted to gauge the views of East Germans themselves, rather than study the regime's documentation *about* those views, have suggested a somewhat *less* contentious set of relationships and assumptions.[12] In particular, East Germans born between 1920 and 1930, the so-called "Hitler Youth Generation," were believed to have had a more genuine commitment to socialist principles, made possible by the need for a new beginning after the traumatic experience of defeat and collapse in 1945, and opportunities for career advancement and some increased social status -- if not political power or economic privilege -- in the labor-short years of the 1950s and early 1960s.[13] But beyond that, interviews with workers in particular have suggested that the rhetoric of class struggle and building a "workers and peasants state" was not wholly dismissed as eye-wash; that in fact industrial workers of the aforementioned generation in particular did support the regime, if not all the tenets of communist ideology, because the SED placed them at the center of its plans.[14] A study of the divergent "political cultures" of the two Germanies first published in 1988 suggested as well that with no direct experience of other regimes and the passage of time, younger East Germans had come think of

themselves as GDR citizens, while even those less well-disposed toward the regime did come to have greater expectations of state support and tended to think of society in more collective terms.[15] None of this, however, suggested any sort of pride in the regime, or genuine identification with it.

The author of that study, Mary Fulbrook, in a later monograph discussed regime surveys from the 1960s through the 1970s that suggested general approval for the regime's career prospects and social welfare institutions, but was unimpressed because the surveys -- though this was surely to be expected -- noted income disparities and the better offerings of West German electronic media.[16] Fulbrook's work has focused only partly on incipient conflict, as she has investigated patterns of conformity and complicity as well, but most recently she has sought to understand how many East Germans, perhaps most of them, could describe their lives in the GDR as "normal."[17] A good deal of the answer returns us to the paradigm of the limits of dictatorship -- but the emphasis here is on active participation in social and cultural institutions. According to the author, the myriad complaints East Germans had with "the system" -- raised through proper channels -- suggested how the population shared with the regime the goals of social welfare. Negotiation, in other words, was part of a kind of social contract, however much it also may have been system-destabilizing.[18] Complementing such findings, to an extent, is the phenomenon of *Ostalgie* -- that is, former East Germans' nostalgia for the loss of community, social solidarity, and slower pace of life in the GDR, all of which contrasted so sharply with economic and cultural shocks brought on by the rapid transition to a free market capitalist system in the 1990s.[19]

I want to propose that these somewhat more positive aspects of life in the GDR need further integration into our evolving understanding of relationship between the East

German state and society. As important and useful as paradigms of "negotiation" are, the concept of "participatory dictatorship" suggests that a *broader shared political culture* came to underlie and back-ground the interactions between East Germans and party and state officials. I want to argue that a key aspect of this political culture in the first two decades of the GDR's existence was *a basic belief in socialist ideals* -- not so much Marxist-Leninist ideology as promulgated by the SED, but approval of socialized industry, a generous welfare state, and principles of social equality -- and that this basic belief created a certain skepticism for the political and economic system of West Germany. Mass flight to the West between 1949 and 1961, which of course necessitated building the Berlin Wall, not to mention the paradigms of neo-totalitarianism and "negotiation" themselves, make this conclusion seem counterintuitive. But I want to argue, as I have previously in my study of daily life in Halle, that East Germans' basically adversarial relationship with their rulers *coincided with* a general approval for the "social system," and as time passed, this translated to identifying with the GDR more generally as "our republic" -- as it was often called -- without approving of 'communism' or the leaders themselves. This complex set of East German values and assumptions is revealed most clearly and fully *not* in traditional archival sources, but in the published accounts of Western correspondents, journalists, government officials, academics, and others who traveled in the GDR between the mid-1950s and early 1970s. Their words offer new perspectives on East German political culture in the years of the regime's stabilization and consolidation, as they are virtually the only primary sources on life in the GDR *not* written for a communist audience.

Another important debate about the GDR concerns its origins in the Soviet occupation of Germany (1945-1949). This debate stretches back many years, but there has

been renewed interest since the early 1990s given the opening of East German archives and some Soviet archives as well. The center of this debate concerns the relative importance of the German Communists, Joseph Stalin, other Soviet officials, and the policies of Britain and the United States in causing the division of Germany and the creation of the GDR. Among the most basic questions to consider is the ultimate goal of the occu-pation. Did the Soviets set out from the very beginning to create a separate East German state? Or did the GDR arise out of various policy improvisations by different actors in Moscow and Berlin, and their reactions to political movies by the Western Allies?

Those who have argued over the years that the Soviets *did* determine from the end of World War II (or even earlier) to create a separate East German state have implied that the GDR was little more than an extension of Soviet imperial power, and that the interests of the German Communists were relatively unimportant given what appears a wholly dependent relationship with Moscow.[20] Other studies create a similar impression about their relationship while arguing that the ultimate Soviet goal was a unified, communist Germany.[21] In effect, these top-down views of the GDR's founding echo the totalitarian theses on the SED's relationship with East German society. Several alternative theses over the years have suggested conflict among different Soviet aims,[22] or between Stalin's goals and those of the German communists,[23] or even that Stalin ultimately wanted a unified, *parliamentary democracy* in Germany to guarantee access to the resources of the Ruhr, and resigned himself to a separate, "socialized" Eastern state only when the Allies refused his March 1952 offer of a unified, neutral Germany.[24] But a majority of historians have come to believe that while establishing the GDR was *not* Stalin's initial preference, he wanted instead some kind of *neutral*, unified Germany that would have given him access to Western reparations while keeping West Germany out of

the NATO alliance.[25] But if this is so, why the radical social and political changes in the Soviet Zone from early on? -- the merging of the German Communists and Social Democrats in the Socialist Unity Party, the transformation of East German agriculture through land reform, the expropriation of large businesses, and the creation of a centralized administration? The apparent answer, as Norman Naimark has written, is that Stalin was working *both* to secure Soviet interests *in the likely event of division* (by allowing the "bolshevizing" of the Soviet zone), and trying to remain flexible should an *opportunity* for a unified neutral Germany arise -- in other words, "Stalin kept his options open."[26]

Be that as it may, Naimark made another point about the bolshevizing of the Soviet Zone which suggests the *limits* to Soviet flexibility. As he put it farther along: "Soviet officers bolshevized the zone not because there was a plan to do so, but because that was the only way they knew to organize society."[27] These ideological limitations, coupled with the determination of the British and American governments to rebuild the economy of the Western zones of Germany from early on and *not* meet Soviet demands for reparations, have lent a certain aura of inevitability to the postwar division of Germany. In the following passage from American diplomatic historian Walter LaFeber, we see how clearly even the earliest postwar decisions of the victorious powers can suggest this very thing:

> At the Potsdam conference, held outside captured Berlin in July 1945, [U.S. President] Truman and Secretary of State James Byrnes offered Stalin a deal. The West would recognize the new Polish-German boundary. [effectively moving Poland's Western boundary 100 miles to the West, giving Stalin control of interwar Polish territory up to the Bug river] The Russians could also take reparations out of their own occupation zone of eastern Germany, an area primarily agricultural. But in the three Western occupation zones . . . the Soviets could have only 25 percent of the reparations, about half of those would have to be paid for with foodstuffs from the Russian zone. With considerable grumbling, Stalin accepted the deal. The United States had finally made the choice: it would not rush to dismember Germany but would hold tightly to the nation's western industrial heartland and me-

thodically rebuild the shattered German economy. Of course there was one other implication. An economic division of Germany could lead to a political one. The deal laid the basis for an eastern and a western Germany.[28]

John Gaddis, writing over a decade later, made division seem even more unavoidable.

> Germany was going to be divided at the end of World War II whatever else happened: invasion on several fronts by several enemies ensured different treatment from that accorded the Japanese. In this sense, Hitler himself--who collected enemies as avidly as he did bad art--was the architect of German disunity, as of so much else. Presumably, though, the occupying powers could have reunited Germany quickly had they agreed on what its character was to be. There were two reasons they were unable to do this. . . . The first had to do with lessons of the past. Would punishing the Germans more harshly than after the First World War provide the best protection against a third? Or had the Versailles Treaty failed precisely because of its harshness? Permanent partition would make sense if the punitive option were chosen; reunification if the goal was to be reconciliation. The problem here was not that the Americans, British, and Russians disagreed with one another, but rather that they were themselves unsure of what course to follow . . . . But of course there was a Cold War, and it became the second and more significant reason for Germany's division. What each superpower most feared was that its wartime enemy might align itself with its Cold War adversary: if that were to happen, the resulting concentration of military, industrial, and economic power could be too great to overcome. '[T]he Soviets have abandoned the policy to weaken Germany but are relying instead on their belief that a reasonably strong Germany is more to their advantage,' White House aide Clark Clifford warned President Truman in September 1946. That same week Soviet Ambassador Nikolai Novikov reported to Moscow: '[T]he United States is considering the possibility of terminating the Allied occupation of German territory before the main tasks of the occupation--the demilitarization and democratization of Germany--have been implemented. This would create the prerequisites for the revival of an imperialist Germany, which the United States plans to use in a future war on its side.'[29]

This sense of mutual mistrust and unavoidable conflict echoed John Gimbel's earlier description of the mutual suspicions surrounding the Western currency reform and Berlin blockade in June 1948. Gimbel surmised that the Soviet decision to blockade Berlin was based on the assumption that the United States had a master plan to rebuild the Ger-

man economy and menace Soviet security, while the U.S., in turn, divined *from the blockade* a Soviet master plan to menace Western Europe.[30] Of course, as the previous quote suggests, *neither side actually had a master plan.* Nonetheless, the end result of their mutual imaginings was respective moves that hastened the creation of a West German state and allowed the German Communists to increase their dictatorial powers in the Soviet Zone.

Earlier scholars expressing the traditionalist view that Soviet aggression triggered the Cold War, also insisted that German division was unavoidable. Predictably, this was because of the Soviets alleged plans to set up a unified Communist Germany. Samuel Flagg Bemis stated bluntly that division was a necessity to prevent a "communist Reich . . .[from becoming] an unchallengable menace to Western democracy,"[31] while Herbert Feis argued that it was the only alternative to a Soviet master plan to keep the German economy permanently weakened and thus enhance the allure of communism.[32] Those who countered these view by blaming the U.S. for the Cold War -- inspired by America's debacle in Vietnam and "crisis of confidence" that followed it[33] --also suggested that division of Germany was unavoidable. They argued that American economic imperatives -- the need to avert a postwar depression, set the U.S. on a course of economic expansionism -- more or less forced the division of Europe.[34]

But other authors who have blamed the U.S. for the division of Germany have stressed *not* inevitability, but "roads not taken": John Backer argued in 1978 that the U.S. could have funded Soviet reparations out of current production from the Western zones *and* successfully rebuilt the German and Western European economies, rather than reject Soviet demands and begin the process of building a West German state.[35] Carolyn Eisenberg,who wrote perhaps the sharpest critique of American policy in recent years, saw

Western German economic revival and Soviet reparations as more obviously clashing, but echoed Backer in pointing out that there was no serious interest among U.S. officials in considering the possibility of doing both. Fulbrook has also stressed that Germany need not have been divided, and, though not blaming the U.S. *per se*, followed the "revisionists" in stressing that the United States and Great Britain did take the initiative at every step along the way, and British documents clearly support her claim that the initial impulse to divide Germany came from London.[36]

Meanwhile, recent scholars who have returned to blaming the Soviets still hint at inevitability. Wolfgang Krieger, in effect, has offered a modified version of the thesis of Soviet expansionism in explaining the onset of the Cold War, and by implication, the division of Germany. For him, it was very presence of large numbers of Red Army troops in central Germany after the Nazi defeat which served to intimidate the Western Allies and leave them no choice except World War III or "containment" of the Soviets at the interzonal border.[37] Thomas Schwartz, meanwhile, has argued emphatically *against* the thesis of "missed opportunities" to create a unified, neutral Germany in the early years of division. For him, the unwillingness of Bonn and the Western Allies to take Soviet proposals on unity seriously is a moot point, most importantly because whatever his statements to the contrary, Stalin was absolutely determined to stay in Eastern Germany, which for him was the "greatest prize in the Great Patriotic War."[38] And finally, Michael Wala has recently offered a variation of Gimbel's "mutual imaginings" argument, but earlier, in the spring of 1947, when the Council of Foreign Ministers was meeting in Moscow. He writes that U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall could not persuade the Soviets to back a joint policy for the zones because . . . "each side, Soviet and American, feared that the other was seeking to gain a dominant position in Europe, lure Germany over to its

side, and win control of the region."[39] The author argues convincingly that the U.S. government proposed no further solutions to the "German question" that they believed the Soviets would accept.[40]

I will argue below that while Soviet motives in Germany were as much a matter of debate and speculation to contemporaries as they would be later to scholars, the postwar division of Germany looked *anything but inevitable* to contemporary observers, particularly those correspondents, officials, journalists and others who traveled in the Soviet Zone from 1945-9. It is well known that the presence of the Allies in Berlin limited the ability of the Soviets to impose absolute secrecy over developments in the Soviet Zone. However, access of foreign journalists and even Western allied officials to all areas *beyond* Berlin was usually restricted, and contemporary Western media abounded with complaints. But a small number of Western visitors have left behind eyewitness accounts of developments there that offer new insights into how open-ended those years appeared, in spite of increasing concerns of imminent East-West conflict.

In the years 1945-9, the future of Germany was a matter of massive speculation, and there was grave concern not simply about Soviet intentions or German nationalist revival, but also, odd as it may sound, the possible of the two phenomena *influencing and fueling each other*, particularly when they were combined in the Soviet Zone in a propaganda campaign against the creation of a West German state. Along with this, there was considerable interest among Western visitors and observers with the *methods* of the Soviet occupation. For approximately the first two years or so after the Nazi surrender, many observers believed the radical socioeconomic revolution in the Soviet zone and even the centralization of administration were progressive and useful changes in Germany, rather than signs of mounting zonal divergence or a "creeping communist takeover."

What follows, then, is *not* an effort to debunk newer conclusions about the East German state and society, or revisit again the question of responsibility for the division of Germany or the Cold War more generally. Rather, I intend to argue that our understanding of *both* the Soviet occupation *and* the first two decades of the GDR is incomplete without a more thorough assessment of the contemporary context, as revealed in contemporary print media and most specifically, the observations of eyewitnesses who traveled "behind the iron curtain." These authors attempted to enlighten the Western public on developments and processes that were the subject of relentless propaganda and distortion on both sides, but they can also enlighten us today on how different events seemed *as they were experienced* than they do in later evaluations of traditional documentary sources.

It is of course completely appropriate that the primary focus of scholarship on the GDR, both before and after 1989, has been on the installation, development, maintenance, and ultimate collapse of its one-party dictatorship, and likewise that the scholarship on the Soviet occupation has largely centered around the preparation for that dictatorship. The task at hand is certainly not to revise the basic understanding of the regime *as a dictatorship*, or backtrack from the important trend toward understanding that dictatorship as "socially produced" rather than thoroughly controlled in top-down fashion from the center. But its arguable that a large part of the explanation for the participation and conformity of most East Germans in the dictatorship -- at least in the first two decades, and likely for sometime thereafter -- lies in East Germans' attraction to some of the *basic ideals of socialism* on the one hand, and their rather more complex views regarding West Germany on the other. The travelers give us considerable information on both of these key sets of opinions.

Of course, using Western travel stories as alternative primary sources from which to draw conclusions about the history of the GDR presents certain difficulties. Not only the obvious and more subtle personal biases of the reports, but also their limited scope -- their "snap-shot" quality -- counsels against drawing broad conclusions from them. Moreover, the GDR in particular was a highly politicized environment, being a front-line Cold War creation which most Western states did not formally recognize until the early 1970s. If ever a state and society were designed to provoke strong and politically polarized reactions, surely it was the GDR. And as we will see, Western visitors inclined toward more social-democratic views were far more likely to emphasize the GDR's achievements than were more mainstream postwar liberals, while a minority of hawkish conservatives -- most of them West Germans -- could act as if the GDR was hardly a state at all. These accounts reveal a good deal about the uncertainties, prejudices, and blindspots of Western Europeans and Americans confronted with the global challenge of Soviet state socialism -- most particularly their inability or unwillingness to consider that certain benefits of the East German dictatorship might very well have been more important to many citizens than the individual rights or constitutional government guaranteed in Western countries. On the other hand, the fact that the travel stories were written for a non-communist audience means that unlike the documents of the SED, East German government, Stasi, or the mass organizations, all events and behaviors were not viewed through the lens of the regime's goals and ideology. These reports also have the advantage over memoirs and interviews produced *after* the regime collapsed because hindsight from such completely changed circumstances invariably colors all memories of the prior time, as the aforementioned phenomenon of *Ostalgie* makes clear. For all the potential pitfalls, the travel stories allow a reconstruction of the Soviet occupation and the early GDR *as events unfolded*, instead

of as they appeared later in the very changed context in which so much of the research on the GDR has taken place. Not only did the early years of the GDR look quite different from the hindsight of the rather settled era of two Germanies (1973-1988), but all the more so from the dramatically transformed context of the 1990s.

But, as it turns out, those who would consult stories of travel in the GDR for contemporary understandings of the *broader* East-West conflict, or reconsiderations of the basic premises of Western democracy or capitalism in the face of Soviet-style alternatives, will for the most part be disappointed. Most Western visitors in the GDR saw developments there in a rather more localized and specific context. In particular, there was always the question of *economic progress* -- whether there would ever be enough of it to make the regime a workable state in the face its richer, more attractive Western counterpart. But even though this was a struggle that the regime could seemingly never win, the GDR's economic achievements impressed quite a few visitors, even many of those predisposed against it. Part of the reason was that these achievements seemed to result from *typically German* energy and hard work. In naming these achievements as "German" the authors seemingly could avoid having to judge the relative merits of communist economic planning vis a vis Western capitalism. Another pressing matter concerned the educational and career opportunities the regime provided the emerging postwar generation. What did the popularity of these opportunities -- especially when they were extended to working class youth -- mean for the long-term "self-understanding" of East Germans? And to what extent were East German "self-understandings" a matter of individual and independent thought, versus state-sponsored indoctrination or implied coercion? Visitors disagreed strongly on such questions, but seemingly could not avoid addressing them. Their efforts, however, generally led to conclusions about the East German state and society *alone*. The

GDR seemed almost like a unique experiment in the travel stories, and, increasingly as time passed, *a uniquely German experiment*, which at times referenced German history, but *not* the larger Cold War struggle going on within and around it. Even its frustrating, tedious, and Kafkaesque bureaucracy -- represented most famously by border security, was surprisingly *un*threatening, considering the legendary tensions associated with the "iron curtain" border and the Berlin Wall. Despite pre-travel anxieties, foreign and West German visitors had virtually no experiences with the GDR's border controls or police forces to rival those of its own citizens.

But in spite of similar travel experiences, German and non-German visitors brought such different assumptions, experiences, and agendas to their reports that this study will be organized not simply chronologically, but further divided into chapters on German and non-German travelers. The years 1945-54 are the subject of Part I (Chapters One through Four); the years 1955-1972 of Part II (Chapters Five and Six). The emphasis on the early period is due to the fact that it must be divided even further: Chapters One and Two will deal strictly with English-speaking newspeople who strove to give unbiased interpretations of events in the Soviet Zone; Chapter Three concerns a variety of more politically-motivated authors who used their travel experiences to construct arguments to influence the Western Allies in their policies in Germany; Chapter Four deals with West German travelers who began to report from the Soviet Zone in 1946. Chapter Five surveys the writings of a wide range of international visitors of various political stripes from 1955 to 1972 and Chapter Six, the travel stories of West German and other German-*sp*eaking visitors over the same years.

To preview each argument in turn, Chapter One traverses the observations of Anglo-American newspeople from their first encounters with the Red Army in the spring

and summer of 1945 until the Berlin blockade began in late June 1948. The argument will be developed that contemporary media reflected a far more open minded attitude toward the Soviets for the first two years of the occupation than was held by the Allied governments, did not expect Germany to be divided, and speculated wildly about the motives behind developments in the Soviet Zone. Both correspondents and certain military officials held a flexible attitude towards "communism" that suggested its revolutionary energy and even positive potential for rebuilding Germany. Some authors and military spokesmen even hinted that the Soviets provided an example of efficient occupation that the Western Allies ought to emulate (!). But with a few exceptions, most of the early reports suggested that the socioeconomic changes in the Soviet Zone made the emerging system there more of a *worthy competitor* for Western liberal democracy and capitalism than an implacable foe. If anything, the fears for the future instead lay in the possibility, expressed by several different authors, that the defeated Germans might sow discord between the Four Powers and trigger another war based on their preexisting mutual suspicions.

Only in early 1948 did the media start to perceive the Soviet occupation as a menace to the Western Zones and Western Europe, but as late as the London meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers (December, 1947), there was speculation that the Soviets would seek compromise and eventual unification. Another reason for this speculation was the Soviets' toleration of a three-party regime (ie. the SED, the Liberal Party (LPD), and the Christian Democrats (CDU)) in what appeared to be an arrangement of limited consultative rule. It was not at all clear that the Soviet Zone was destined for one party rule -- even as late as 1949, which brings us to the subjects of Chapter Two.

The second chapter revisits the era of the Berlin Blockade and the eventual establishment of the two Germanies in 1949. While the blockade and the Western Allied res-

ponse, the Berlin Airlift and counterblockade, are traditionally seen as the breakpoint that guaranteed German division, the view of the contemporary media shifted from deep pessimism to renewed hope in the spring of 1949. The run-up to the Paris Foreign Minister's conference in May suggested that the Soviets had returned to the negotiating table in good faith, and might actually consider merging their zone with the now-unified Western Trizonia. The deadlock at Paris, of course, was followed by the first parliamentary elections for the Western Federal Republic, but contemporary media seemed far more interested in the "nationalist cards" being played in East Berlin that summer, appeals designed to discredit the new West German state and present the SED's "National Front" as the true guardian of German unity.

While recent research suggests that in the early years of the Federal Republic, the U.S. and its allies feared East German and Soviet overtures for a unified Germany,[41] the Anglo-American news media was quite a bit ahead of them -- not simply wondering about a nationalist revival, but also the deadly potential *combination* of Soviet expansionism and German nationalism. Travel to the Soviet Zone was severely restricted in this period, and only a handful of travel accounts were published out-side reports from East Berlin and the semi-annual Leipzig fair (of which more below). But many a commentator saw Soviet power and German nationalist frustrations, *not* as dual dangers that both required containment,[42] but interrelated problems, that might combine in different scenarios to menace both economic recovery and the already fragile balance of power in Europe more generally. In the end, the creation of the GDR, an event scarcely mentioned in many Cold War or German histories, actually *heightened* these fears. Though the new regime itself only briefly worried Western observers, it was quickly viewed as a Soviet instrument to weaken West Germany. While most scholars have long believed that it took a number of years

before the existence of two Germanies -- and with it a *modus vivendi* in divided Europe -- was secured,[43] the idea of Germany (read West Germany) regaining power under these conditions was especially troubling in the early days of German division. The media was full of disturbing scenarios, suggesting that the longer Germany remained divided (while West Germany regained its economic power), the more likely the formation of a Soviet-German partnership that could unravel U.S. plans to rebuild and defend Western Europe. For contemporaries, then, the creation of two Germanies seemed more like an *escalation* of the U.S.-Soviet conflict in Germany, rather than the first step in the process of "normalizing" the Cold War division of Europe.

Chapter Three looks at the occupation and early years of the GDR from the diverse perspectives of visitors with more obvious political agendas. This small group of authors used their experiences in the region as bases for passionate appeals to the politically informed in Britain and the United States. Some urged cooperation with the Soviets; others confrontation; some simply lectured Western leaders on their flawed understanding of events in the Soviet Zone. A number of these testimonials, however, were very pointed *warnings of imminent grave danger*. Soviet plans for Germany must be understood and responded to properly, they argued, or World War III would soon result! These "doomsday scenarios" were the handiwork of both leftist and rightist authors. Both "sides," in their different ways, suggest how the shadows of war and genocide cast by the Second World War shaped Western understandings of the East-West conflict which followed. More obviously, they demonstrate the range of hopes and fears provoked by the Red Army's penetration into Central Europe in 1945.

Initially, the Left celebrated the potential for "democratic transformation" implied by the Soviet victory, or, at very least, believed that they supported and promoted cer-

tain positive developments in Germany. *Their* warnings from the Soviet Zone stressed the danger of failing to cooperate with the Soviets and not following their example. Around the same time, the anti-communist Right chimed in with militant hostility. The rightists warned, predictably, that the Soviets meant to destabilize Germany and eventually dominate the entire region. Even the *failings* of the East German regime were interpreted as evidence of sinister designs, particularly during the tense period of the Berlin Blockade. The "doomsday era," however, was short-lived. By 1950, right-wing attacks focused mainly on domestic oppression in the GDR, while an occasional leftist report admired "socialist construction" -- which appealed to the youth and skilled workers -- while remaining critical of glaring oppression and mind-numbing propaganda. Strangely enough, even the workers' uprising of June 1953 did not provoke further doomsday scenarios. By the early-to-mid 1950s, the era of politically-pointed exposés on "danger in the GDR" was over.[44]

However, these writings, like those of the newspeople, demonstrate the uncertainty and speculation concerning Soviet motives in Germany and their potential consequences, as well as the potential, revolutionary openness of the early postwar years. While the archival record has suggested a fairly straightforward progression of Anglo-American moves and Soviet counter-moves (or as some have argued, vice versa) that culminated in the division of Germany and, from mid-1947 onwards, the gradual consolidation of Communist power in the Soviet Zone, the assumptions of Western observers regarding developments *as they happened* suggest a variety of possible outcomes, some tragic, some pointing toward widespread rejection of American-sponsored leadership in West Germany, some toward some vague resolution of the "German Question," some possibly toward both. But practically none of them assumed that a long-term division

was likely -- or even possible.

Early West German writers who visited the Soviet Zone and early GDR were far more ambivalent. Their observations and experiences are the subject of Chapter Four. They wrote in the early years as if division were a temporary misfortune, but at the same time expressed grave concern about obvious and growing transformation of life in the East. Their inability to conceive of East Germans in any other way than as countrymen combined uneasily with concern over the obvious and profound changes already manifest in the attitudes and language they encountered in their travels. Though some of them reported nothing but coercion, woe, and exploitation, quite a few already noticed that Eastern Germans were thinking and behaving in different ways, and that a "language gap" was actually making them harder to understand. In an era full of fears of totalitarian indoctrination, however, a few of these visitors were remarkably objective and astute in noting that this changed culture, mentality, and even language derived not from total repression or mass brainwashing, but rather a kind of contributory process where ordinary people took elite ideas and propaganda and to an extent gave their own meanings to them. Moreover, the visitors were beginning to understand that East Germans already had a sense of *themselves* as a separate group of people from West Germans. For many among them, part of that sense came from a noticeable defensive pride East Germans expressed in their own postwar accomplishments. Already in the late 1940s and early 1950s, they found that East Germans sensed their Western counterparts had an unfair advantage in "Marshall aid," and this translated not simply into resentment, but a sense of their own "honest poverty" and overall difference as well.

However, as suggested above, the tension between this sense of separateness and divergence on the one hand, and normative assumptions about a singular German national

identity on the other, was unresolved. Early West German visitors, for all of their sense of entering a "different world," implied in many ways that *one Germany* remained their goal and the back-ground assumption to all of their experiences. While the West German government was deciding, in effect, to "jettison" the East in exchange for integration into the NATO alliance,[45] Western German travelers in the East suggest some of the broader range of feelings about the Soviet Zone/GDR in the West German public. The authors most concerned with the well-being of East Germans often wrote for primarily Christian audiences, to whom they stressed the need to maintain contacts, and described subtle and more obvious discrimination against Eastern believers. But for the most part, such authors avoided exaggerated accusations about the threats of "communist indoctrination." Rather, they acknowledged that the regime, however reprehensible, had made some changes that were widely approved of, and furthermore that most Eastern Germans were not especially pleased with the approach taken by the West German government or the United States to undermine the SED.

All of the West German authors, of course, disapproved of communist rule, but most were neither militant ideological enemies, nor representatives of the allegedly widespread West German desire to "write off" the East in exchange for the material prosperity and security of a Western orientation. Instead, they were troubled but not completely dejected observers of an emerging separate society with its own set of rules, values, and even inequalities. But however much the region and its people seemed to diverge from the West, they were determined to relay the message that East Germans still wanted reunification, and expected the Bonn government to bring it about. At the same time, however, many of them sensed that East Germans often doubted the sincerity of Bonn's promises to do so.

Chapter Five analyzes the travel stories of non-German visitors to the GDR from 1955 to the early 1970s, the majority of whom were American, British, and French journalists. Their accounts suggest that common assumptions about the stabilization of the East German economy, the spread of a certain limited approval for the regime's social-welfare policies, and the emergence (or lack thereof) of "East German identity" require considerable qualification. They also suggest the high level of curiosity and even concern among many Western observers in an era when Soviet-style socialism seemed like a viable alternative to Western liberal capitalism. As in the postwar period, the GDR was never without Western critics and their exposés of life "under a police state." In particular the period from late 1960 to the end of 1962 -- the months surrounding the last wave of agricultural collectivization and building of the Berlin Wall -- produced many such accounts. Yet Western visitors saw another side to the GDR as well, particularly in the late-1950s and mid-1960s. In those periods of economic growth, the regime could be viewed in more neutral, economic terms, as a rather remarkable success story--*even before the Wall was built*. What's more, these visitors found numerous East Germans taking pride in "their" accomplishments in building this newly viable economy, and as noted above, approving the regime's social policies, if not the leadership itself. These observations suggest that in the late 1950s -- a period infamous for mass flight to the West via Berlin and widespread dislike for the German Communists -- a kind of identification with *some* "socialist achievements" of the GDR -- as they were often called -- was already fairly widespread.

Also, by shifting the focus to the observers themselves, Chapter Five argues that unlike postwar visitors, these later authors did not use the GDR as a "launch pad" for dire warnings about Soviet pretensions in Europe, nor did they view German communists as "New Nazis." Instead, a number of them, particularly but not only those with socialist

inclinations, viewed the GDR as a regime which, however disagreeable, most no longer be denied. The Western nations, they argued, must in some way accept the reality of two Germanies, and stop pretending the Eastern regime did not exist. While none of these authors admired the SED or its apparently overweening social control and media manipulation, they nonetheless characterized the "total view" of the GDR as a society and regime struggling toward economic security and, from 1959-mid 1960, even *heading towards modest prosperity*, which was especially notable given heavy initial economic disadvantages in comparison to West Germany. Even after more dramatic economic improvement in the mid-1960s, however, such praise was always qualified, most often with descriptions of bottlenecks and shortcomings, as well as the infamous long waiting periods for consumer durables. But with the exception of several brief crisis periods, visitors told tales of *gradual progress* which contributed a "look of permanence" to the East German regime.

Oddly enough (and completely opposite from postwar views) these developments were almost never understood as impacting events in West Germany or Western Europe. The "traveler's tale" of the Western visitor to East Germany in the 1950s and 60s was ultimately one of non-transferable observations of a unique entity which, though becoming clearly and recognizably German (and more specifically Prussian to some) seemed to reference no other contemporary place. While travelers clearly opposed its coercive aspects and detested the ideological fanaticism of its rulers, they analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the state and economy with surprisingly little reference to the Cold War events that had created (and sustained) the GDR.

Instead, the regime seemed to be muddling through on its own energies, with a population which, though often sullen and resigned, was "naturally" tough and industrious,

and leaders who were more or less there to stay. While the GDR's *ultimate* future was still uncertain, to visitors it was hardly a threat to the Cold War status quo -- that is, with the exception of two Berlin crises of 1958 and 1961-2. The oppressive nature of the dictatorship was becoming less of a sore point with foreign visitors as well. Though it has caused much scholarly and public discussion in the last 19 years,[46] to foreign contemporaries it was rather axiomatic. What engaged most authors more were efforts to tell a tale of "normalization": of how the GDR in the late 1950s, and even more so from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s was becoming a more or less permanent part of the European landscape -- and how in the process it was developing a distinct and separate society from West Germany. The idea of a separate East German "state identity" which emerged in these writings did *not* involve allegiance to or even approval for the regime; but involved something more than accepting the inevitable, trying to play by the rules, or simply "live a normal life" as well.

In Chapters 5 *and* 6 I argue that through the observations of visitors (first non-Germans and, as time passed, a smaller number of West Germans), beginning in the mid-1950s, a new perspective on what made East Germans a different people with a different orientation (if not allegiance) becomes apparent. And what is more, this perspective suggests an attachment to East German *institutions*, if not the regime and its ideology, that has been too easily dismissed, given the seemingly irresistible appeal of West German living standards and freedoms. The latter surely did cause mass outmigration before 1961, "inner emigration" to Western television in the years that followed, and clearly was chosen by the vast majority of East Germans in the changed circumstances of the opening of the border in November 1989.[47] But in retrospect, it is easy to forget that from the post-war years on into the 1960s there was a longing among most working-class people in all

of Germany for a measure of economic security within *some kind* of social-democratic framework, and in the GDR, this translated into sense among many workers that they were part of a system which, for all its faults, was believed to foster that security, along with a social unity that was lacking in the capitalist West. Indeed, many East Germans *did* think of themselves as part of a collective effort in the "construction of socialism" -- at least through the early 1970s -- a point in time from which they could look back and feel a certain sense of accomplishment due to the very humble beginnings of the postwar years. Pride in and approval for "socialist achievements" was apparent to many visitors in the GDR, both German and non-German.

This pride, perhaps not surprisingly was often *defensive* as well, and combined with resentment for West Germans' purported arrogant condescension towards their "poorer Eastern countrymen," it created a sense of identity *in contradistinction* to West Germans. None of these feelings, however, translated to loyalty to the SED state or party. The travelers' reports suggest that "feeling East German" was about the sense of *being part of an alternative* to the liberal capitalism and materialism of West Germany, but *not* belief in communism or allegiance to the state. This set of beliefs seemed confusing and contradictory to many who first encountered it in the 1950s, and they often blamed it on the regime's propaganda, which was odd given their assumptions on the limited impact of Marxist-Leninist indoctrination. After the Wall was built, it seemed even more obvious that such pride and identification were not based on anything like a free choice, but nevertheless, East German "state consciousness" as it came to be called, was theorized repeatedly -- in slightly different variations -- throughout the 1960s.

Eventually, and with even more mixed feelings, a small number of West German visitors began to describe the same thing. The evolution of their travel stories -- from out-

right denial of two German states to describing a distinct and separate Eastern society -- is the subject of Chapter Six. West German and other German-speaking visitors described many of the same attitudes found by foreign visitors, a combination of general approval for the social system, loathing of the regime and its leaders, and disapproval of the West. However, the loathing seemed more pronounced, and there were other criticisms, such as indoctrination of youth, which non-Germans now wrote less about. And importantly, West German visitors found the process of "accommodation" to life in the East more slow, conflict-ridden, and more obviously driven by a lack of alternatives. Nevertheless, the popularity of "socialist achievements" was noted in the late 1950s and 1960, and again beginning in mid-1963, when the positive economic effects of the New Economic System, made possible by the building of the Wall, were first felt. After that, a handful of them began to argue that an East German state consciousness was emerging.

The more slow and problematic recognition of 'Eastern identity' in these accounts suggests the greater "weight" West Germans placed on the regime's ideological intolerance and the continued potential for repression. The broader-overview style of non-German visitors often focused more on economic developments and more general indicators of political stability. But more important for the German authors were their own difficulties with the very idea of an Eastern identity, particularly given the attachments some of them had to both people and localities in the East. Their more intimate relationship with many of their East German "informants" gave them unique opportunities to witness the full complexity of East Germans' views, but often their own virulent opposition to the regime mitigated against an objective analysis.

However, the aforementioned handful viewed East Germans very much like their foreign counterparts did -- their "Eastern identity" actually occupied an *indistinct ideo-*

logical middle ground between East and West: rejecting the ethos of both communism and capitalism, but wishing to retain something of the welfare state and socialized economy of the East. Regarding their accommodation to life in the East, the West German "handful" (and many of the foreign visitors) described East Germans as engaged in something akin to *actively embracing what could not be avoided*. They quoted them excoriating the SED at one turn, then quickly defending the egalitarian nature of interpersonal relations in "our Republic" at another. One author described it as a timid and labile consciousness,[48] others sometimes noted certain behaviors or views without admitting that they constituted a distinct identity. If East Germans struck many *foreign visitors* as basically approving with "socialism" and "naturally" behaving differently due to the conditions under which they had to live, German-speaking visitors found both their attitudes and adjustments far less easy to categorize.

But eventually, some German *and* non-German visitors found a rather obvious trope for understanding East Germans, their emerging separate society, and in some cases even the regime itself. When it became clear in the mid-1960s that the GDR would endure for some time, the regime, its people, and they way they interacted were for the first time described as *traditionally German*. West German authors, whether they were struggling to come to terms with the reality of two Germanies, or in some cases denying it altogether, invoked the "Germanness" of the people and the regime -- or as some simply called it, the "normality of daily life" -- to reassure readers (and perhaps themselves) that the Wall had *not* broken all cultural, intellectual, and emotional ties, but also that the outdated view of the GDR as nothing more than a giant concentration camp had to be abandoned once and for all. Normalizing and "Germanizing" the GDR allowed more forward-thinking West German visitors (and presumably, their readers as well) to accept division as more

or less permanent, but at the same time, more conservative authors used "Germanness" to argue the exact opposite: that because East and West Germans still shared a common culture, it was the duty of West Germans to travel there, increase contacts, and always work to undermine the regime at the individual level -- through discussion, argument, and persuasion.

For non-Germans, the GDR's Germanness explained most of all its increasing *economic success* -- in effect, it was the result of traditions of skilled "German quality work" and labor discipline. But more generally it was also a way to put a human face on a regime and society that was still virtually unknown to Western readers, especially Americans. But it is important to note that neither foreign visitors nor West Germans used "Germanness" to argue for formal diplomatic recognition of the GDR -- indeed, even the most liberal-minded vocalized opposition to the idea. The reason is fairly obvious. Even though the GDR had become basically a permanent fixture in the central European landscape by the late-1960s, it remained, in the final analysis, an "unavoidable state" -- that is, unwanted, and illegitimate in any democratic sense, but bound to endure. Foreign visitors believed it was up to Bonn to make the first moves, and other nations should not undermine the West German regime by recognizing the GDR. And for the all talk about separate identities and diverging cultures, most West German visitors dared not moot the subject either. As suggested above, however, what foreign visitors did advocate was some kind of *de facto* recognition, particularly if it would lead to increased East-West trade, and perhaps some liberalization inside the GDR.

In many ways, the travel stories were intended to remind audiences on both sides of the Atlantic that Germany did not end, nor the Soviet Union begin, on the east bank of the Elbe River. Sometimes the GDR seemed a rather pale and weak imitation of the West,

sometimes it seemed a dynamic German success story -- a "second economic miracle."[49] But rarely was it portrayed as a dystopian nightmare or genuine menace to the West. What travelers to the GDR in mid-to-late 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s gave Western readers was not warnings so much as "proof of life." They reassured their audiences that East Germans were not being "remade" into a uniform "socialist personality," and that much about the society and regime remained recognizably German (and in some respects, even competitive and capitalist, as we will see). But at the same time, the differences were obviously crucial, for what made East Germans 'Eastern' was *not* indoctrination or oppression so much as *adaptation* to a radically different socioeconomic and political system that was indeed forced on them, but to a certain extent approved by them as well. Western writers began to interpret East Germans' experience of these changes even before the regime was founded in October 1949. But in the occupation years, they were doing so with no knowledge of where the changes would ultimately lead, or how they might affect the rest of Germany. In those early days, most Western reporters believed the initial socioeconomic transformation of the Soviet Zone, and the early heavy-hand of Soviet rule, were positive first steps toward eradicating Nazism and laying the basis for a new Germany. But there was reason for concern as well: not so much of Communist aggression or subversion, but as noted above, the possibility that recalcitrant Germans could breed misunderstandings among the Allies and spark a new conflict. Of course, that fact that such concerns existed at all was indicative of the pre-existing suspicions among the Allies dating back to the Russian Revolution, and that flared up again in the process of defeating Nazi Germany.[50] The story of reporting from "behind the iron curtain," then, begins in a time of both hope and fear -- the spring of 1945. There was great hope abroad for a new and more peaceful world undergirded with democratic principles and the United Nations,

but also nagging uncertainty about the prospects for cooperation among the victorious Allies. But what newspeople noticed most in their initial observations of the Red Army was their apparent head start in stabilizing and organizing the areas they controlled -- especially Berlin.

[1] See Gregory Witkowski, "The German Democratic Republic: State Power and Everyday Life," *History Compass* 5 (3), 2007, pp. 935-942; For a more complete overview of the various interpretations and theoretical questions involved, see Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (London, 2002), pp. 44-68.

[2] The classic defining texts of totalitarianism, which argued for a similarity between modern dictatorships of both the left and right in their efforts to mobilize the masses for millenarian goals, establish one-party rule, suppress all opposition, control completely the mass media, and make a "total claim" on the lives of their citizens are Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1951); Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA, 1956); and, though it concentrated on the Nazi Germany, Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship* (New York, 1970). Comparisons between fascist and communist regimes using the term "totalitarian" go back to the interwar period, as does the use of the term to both criticize and praise Italian fascism and later, Nazism. For a brief discussion and bibliography see Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* 4th ed. (London, 2000), pp. 23-6. Among the post-1989 interpretations of state and society in the GDR that emphasize totalitarian domination of society by the SED are Klaus Schroeder, *Geschichte und Transformation des SED-Staates* (Berlin, 1994); and K. Schroeder, *Der SED Staat. Partei, Staat, und Gesellschaft* (Munich, 1998).

[3] Most important and perhaps controversial among them is the argument of German sociologist Sigrid Meuschel, who made the case that the regime had so centralized and deeply penetrated all social, cultural, and political institutions that an independent and differentiated society had been virtually "shut down" (*Stillegung*). See Sigrid Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft. Zur Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR* (Frankfurt am M., 1992). A similar focus on the shutdown of East German society and institutions can be found in Rainer Lepsius, "Die Institutionenordnung als Rahmenbedingung der Sozialgeschichte der DDR," in Hartmut Kaelble et al. (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Stuttgart, 1994), pp. 17-30.

[4] Most notably Jürgen Kocka, among the most prominent social historians in Germany today, who described East German society as "ruled through and through" (*durchherrschte Gesellschaft*), while nonetheless insisting that the society was not totally determined by state. Jürgen Kocka, "Eine durchherrschte Gesellschaft," in Kaelble et al., pp. 547-53.

[5] Regarding GDR society, the term was coined by Ralph Jessen and Richard Bessel, who that while the regime heavily influenced the population, the citizens, in turn, influenced regime policies as well. See Ralph Jessen and Richard Bessel, "Einleitung: Grenzen der Diktatur," in Jessen and Bessel (eds.), *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR* (Göttingen, 1996), pp. 7-23.

[6] For studies seeking to define the dictatorship's limits and elements of social resistance, see Ibid and Detlef Pollack and Dieter Rink (eds.), *Zwischen Verweigerung und Opposition: Polistischer Protest in der DDR 1970-1989* (Frankfurt am M., 1997).

[7] That was Ross, in his important study of the construction of socialism in the GDR's first two decades. See Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-Roots: The Transformation of East Germany, 1945-1965* (Basingstoke, UK, 2000).

[8] The author who brought this focus to the study of East German state and society is Thomas Lindenberger. See T. Lindenberger, "Die Diktatur der Grenzen. Zur Einleitung," in T. Lindenberger (ed.), *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Cologne, 1999), pp. 13-44. The idea of dictatorship as socially produced he borrowed from the earlier work of Alf Lüdtke on German workers' shopfloor experiences and the history of everyday life. Lüdtke's exact formulation was "authority is socially produced -- society and individuals are shaped by authority." See Alf Lüdtke, "Die DDR als Geschichte. Zur Geschichtsschreibung über die DDR," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B36/98, p. 3.

[9] The translation is from Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, p. 50. Witkowski translates the term as a compound of "resistance to policy as well as the way in which people gave policies individual meaning." Witkowski, p. 938.

[10] Ibid., p. 57. The finding are from Peter Hübner, *Konsens, Konflikt, und Kompromiß. Soziale Arbeiterinteressen und Sozialpolitik in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1970* (Berlin, 1995); P. Hübner, 'Balance des Ungleichgewichtes. Zum Verhältnis von Arbeiterinteressen und SED-Herrschaft,' *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 19 (1973), pp. 15-28; P. Hübner, "Arbeiterkonflikte in Industriebetrieben der DDR nach 1953. Annäherrungen an eine Struktur- und Prozeßanalyse," in Ulrike Poppe, et al. (eds.), *Zwischen Selbstbehauptung und Anpassung* (Berlin, 1995), pp. 178-91; Jeffrey Kopstein, *The Politics of Economic Decline in East Germany 1945-1989* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1997); and Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass Roots.*

[11] Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR 1948-1989* (Oxford, 1995).

[12] Lutz Niethammer, Alexander von Plato, and Dorothee Wierling, *Die volkseigene Erfahrung : eine Archäologie des Lebens in der Industrieprovinz der DDR: 30 biografische Eröffnungen* (Berlin, 1991).

[13] See Wierling, "The Hitler Youth Generation in the GDR: Insecurities, Ambitions, and Dilemmas," in Konrad Jarausch (ed.), *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York, 1999), pp. 307-324; and von Plato, "The Hitler Youth Generation and its Role in the two Postwar German States," in Mark Roseman (ed.), *Generations in Conflict* (Cambridge, UK, 1995) , pp. 210-26.

[14] Niethammer et al., pp. 629-630. I found very similar views about the East German socio-economic system in interviews I conducted after unification, from May-July 1993 in and around Halle, Saxony-Anhalt. The result of those interviews is Bryan Machin, *Daily Life, Politics, and Victimization in Eastern Germany, 1933-1993*, Unpublished M.A Thesis, Michigan State University, 1994.

[15] See Fulbrook, "From *Volkesgemeinschaft* to Divided Nation," *Historical Research* 62 (148), 1989, pp. 193-213. A slightly altered version to account for the collapse of the GDR can be found in Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation: A History of Germany 1918-1990* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 299-317.

[16] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp. 137-9. The studies were conducted by the *Zentral-institut für Jugendforschung* and the *Institut für Meinungsforschung beim ZK der SED*. Despite clearly expressed general approval for the GDR's welfare state and educational system, the author suggested that the results showed nothing more than that "there was not simply a blanket condemnation of the East and adulation of all things Western" (p. 137). Rather, with all due caution in considering the answers people tend to give to oppressive regimes, the author believed they indicated that most East Germans were simply keeping their grumbling to themselves and passively conforming (p. 139).

[17] Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, CN, 2005).

[18] Ibid. See especially 'Part III: The Participatory Dictatorship,' pp. 233-298.

[19] *Ostalgie* is only briefly touched upon in most English-language studies of East German society, but one book that deals with it in the larger context of East German memories is Elizabeth A. Van Dyke, *Dresden: Paradoxes of Memory in History* (London, 2001); and an important article is Paul Betts, "The Twilight of the Idols: East German Memory and Material Culture," *Journal of Modern History* 72 (3), 2000, pp. 731-65.

[20] An early version of this argument was K. C. Thalheim, "Die sowjetische Besatzungszone Deutschland," in Ernst Birke and Rudolf Neuman (eds.), *Die Sowjetisierung Ost-Mitteleuropas* (Berlin, 1959); later versions include Stefan Creuzberger, *Die sowjetische Bezatzungsmacht und das politische System der SBZ* (Weimar, 1996); Manfred Wilke, "Es wird zwei Deutschlands geben," *Frankfurter Allegemeine Zeitung*, March 30, 1991; and M. Wilke, "Die Teilung Deutschlands was schon 1945 das Ziel der sowjetischen Außenpolitik," *Der Spiegel*, April 15, 1991.

[21] While the fear of Soviet expansion into Western Germany was on the minds of the Western Allied governments -- first and foremost the British -- from early on (particularly in regard to Soviet demands for reparations from the current production of the Ruhr), perhaps the earliest scholarly English-language appraisal to conclude that their primary goal was a unified communist Germany was J. P. Nettl, *The Eastern Zone and Soviet Policy in Germany, 1945-1950* (Oxford, 1951); A contemporary account with the same viewpoint which has been deemed less reliable due to its exaggerated anti-Soviet claims is Fritz Löwenthal, *News from Soviet Germany* (London, 1950); Later scholars concurred, including Fritz Kopp, *Kurs auf ganze Deutschland: Die Deutschland-politik der SED* (Stuttgart, 1965); Thilo Vogelsang, *Das geteilte Deutschland* (Munich, 1966); Henry Krisch, *German Politics under Soviet Occupation* (New York, 1974); Walrab von Buttlar, *Ziel und Zielkonflikte der sowjetischen Deutschlandpolitik 1945-1947* (Stuttgart, 1980); Karel Kaplan, *Der kurze Marsch: Die kommunistische Machtübernahme in der Tschechoslovakai 1945-1948* (Munich, 1981); Alexander Fischer, "Die Sowjetunion in die 'deutsche Frage' 1945-1949," in *Die Deutschlandfrage und die Anfänge des Ost-West Konflikts* (Berlin, 1984); Post-1989 works with the same basic argument include Hannes Adomeit, *Imperial Overstretch. Germany in Soviet Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev: An Analysis based on New Archival Evidence, Memoirs, and Interviews* (Baden-Baden, 1998); and John Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York, 2005), pp. 10-24.

[22] H.-P. Schwartz, *Vom Reich zur Bundesrepublik. Deutschland im Widerstreit der außen-politischen Konzeptionen in den Jahren der Besatzungsherrschaft 1945-9* (Berlin/Neudied, 1966), pp. 201-69; Rolf Steiniger, "Eine Chance zur Wiedervereinigung? Darstellung und Dokumentation auf der Grundlage unveröffentlicher britischer und amerikanischer Akten,"*Archiv fur Sozialgeschichte* 12 (Bonn, 1985); Dieter Staritz, *Geschichte der DDR 1949-1985* (Frankfurt am M., 1985), pp. 69-73.

[23] Wilfred Loth, *Stalins ungeliebtes Kind. Warum Moskau die DDR nicht wollte* (Berlin, 1994); Wilfriede Otto, 'Sowjetische Deutschlandnote 1952: Stalin und die DDR, Bisher unveröffentlichte handschriftliche Notizen Wilhelm Piecks,' *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 33 (3), 1991, pp. 374-89; Elke Schertzjanoi, "Die DDR im Frühjahr 1952: Sozialismuslosung und Kollektivierungsbeschluß in sowjetischer Perspektive," *Deutschland Archiv* 27 (4), 1994, pp. 354-63.

[24] Ibid, Loth. The author provoked broad criticism *not* for stressing that Ulbricht (and the "pro-GDR" Soviet administrator Colonel Sergei Tiul'panov) took the lead in realizing the creation of the GDR, but for suggesting the Stalin truly ever considered trading the GDR away for a unified German State. The critical reviews were Peter Zolling, "Mut ist oft sehr dumm," *Der Spiegel*, June 20, 1994; and Hennig Köhler, "Stalin ein deutscher Demokrat," *Frankfurter Allegemeine Zeitung*, August 2, 1994. The idea of the GDR as a "bargaining chip," however, has a much longer history. See for example Boris Meissner, *Rußland, die Westmächte und Deutschland. Die Sowjetische Deutschlandspolitik 1943-1953* (Hamburg, 1953).

[25] Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, p. 160.

[26] Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation 1945-1949* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), pp. 351-2.

[27] Ibid., p. 467.

[28] Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1996* 8th ed. (New York, 1997), pp. 23-4.

[29] Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 115-6. The quote of Clifford is from Clark Clifford, "American Relations with the Soviet Union, Sept. 1946," in Arthur Krock, *Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line* (New York, 1968), p. 467. The quote of Novikov is from "Novikov to Molotov, 27 Sept. 1946," in Kenneth M. Jensen, ed., *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts 'Long Telegrams' of 1946* (Washington, DC, 1991), p. 15.

[30] John Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-9* (Stanford, CA, 1968), pp. 201-6.

[31] Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States* (New York, 1964), p. 927.

[32] Herbert Feis, *Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton, NJ, 1960), pp. 619-20.
[33] Anne Deighton, *The Impossible Peace* (Oxford, 1990), p. 1-2.
[34] William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York, 1972); Bruce Kuklick, *American Policy and the Division of Germany: The Clash with Russia over Reparations* (Ithaca, NY, 1972).
[35] John H. Backer, *The Decision to Divide Germany: American Foreign Policy in Transition* (Durham, NC, 1978).
[36] See Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, pp. 160-167. The key study on British policy is Deighton, *The Impossible Peace.*
[37] Wolfgang Krieger, "Security through Deterrence? German-American Security Relations 1945-1968," in Detlef Junker, (ed.), *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War,* (hereafter *TUSGECW*) *1945-1990* (Cambridge, OK, 2004), pp. 181-196.
[38] Thomas A. Schwartz, "No Harder Enterprise: Politics and Policies in the German-American Relationship, 1945-1968," in *TUSGECW*, pp. 39-40. Schwartz based this view of Stalin's intentions on Constantine Pleshakov and Vladislav Zubok, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge MA, 1996). He noted that the authors were less certain about the intentions of Stalin's successor, "but their book shows the difficulties Soviet leaders had in changing from the great dictator's policies." The "missed opportunity thesis," is most prominently associated with Rolf Steininger, *Eine Chance zur Wiedervereinigung? Die Stalin-Note vom 10. März 1952: Darstellung und Dokumentation auf Grundlage unveröffentlichter britischer und amerikanischer Akten*, 2nd ed. (Bonn, 1986). Fulbrook agreed with Steiniger that Stalin's offer of March 1952 was genuine, that he would have been willing to trade the GDR away if he could have forestalled West Germany's entry into the NATO alliance. Fulbrook, 1992, pp. 178-9.
[39] Michael Wala, "The Marshall Plan and the Origins of the Cold War," in *TUSGECW*, p. 74.
[40] This conclusion is supported by Eisenberg's study of U.S. government documents. Both George Marshall's counterproposals to Soviet concessions at London (Nov.-Dec. 1947), and Acheson's position at Paris (May-June 1949) that there could be German unity only if the Soviet Zone were incorporated into Trizonia, were designed to be rejected, because the U.S. and Britain had already decided that despite their public pronouncements, they did not want German unity on any terms that might be acceptable to the Soviets. The key issue, of course, was the potential for Soviet interference in the Ruhr, which could endanger the larger American goal of Western European economic recovery. See Eisenberg, pp. 352-362; 477-484.
[41] See Herman-Josef Rupieper, "Die Reaktion der USA auf die Grundung der DDR," in Elke Scherstjanoi, (ed.), *Provisorium für längstens ein Jahr: Die Gründung der DRR* (Berlin, 1993), pp. 59-66. Cited in Christian F. Ostermann, 'Little Room for Maneuver: Relations Between the United States and the GDR,' in *TUSGECW*, p. 172.
[42] The idea of postwar containment of communism as "dual containment" -- that is frustrating Soviet expansionism with the help of the Germans while also guarding against a revival of German power and nationalism, is elaborated in Thomas A. Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, MA, 1991, pp. 299-291, cited in Ruud van Dijk, "Winning the Peace: The United States, Western Germany, and the Ambiguities of Containment," in *TUSGECW*, p. 83. See also Frank Schumacher, "From Occupation to Alliance: German American Relations, 1949-1955" and Steven L. Reardon, "The Dilemma of Dual Containment: Germany as a Security Problem," in the same volume, pp. 90-96, and 204-208, respectively.

[43] For example, Ross, 2002, pp. 163-4, suggested that from a Soviet point of view German division was not final until the spring 1952 when the Western Allies rejected Stalin's offer of a neutral, united Germany, Ann L. Phillips argued that for the Soviets division was not an established fact until 1955, but that in effect the policy shift toward "a uniform policy of support for East Germany" came in the wake of the June 1953 Uprising. See Ann L. Phillips, *Soviet Policy toward East Germany Reconsidered: The Postwar Decade* (New York, 1986), pp. 148-196; John Gaddis has argued that German division remained a 'convenient, perhaps even a comfortable option' to the former allies by 1955, but was gravely unstable due to the economic, political and military 'asymmetries' of the opposing sides. He noted that Kennan, now a private citizen, prophetically argued in 1957 that the precarious position of the Western Allies in Berlin by itself meant that "no one in the West should view the present division of Germany as a satisfactory or permanent solution." But his larger point about U.S. policy was on Germany was that in effect it was controlled by Adenauer: the need to preserve the American alliance with West Germany became more important than taking steps to reduce tensions with the Soviets over Germany. Therefore, he argued, only the building of the Wall allowed the U.S. to pursue its 'own' German policy -- by which he clearly meant acceptance of two Germanies and efforts to reduce East-West tensions in Europe. See Gaddis, 1997, pp. 113-151; Schwartz agreed that only the building of the Wall "ended German hopes for imminent reunification and began a slow adjustment to the reality of two Germanys." Schwartz, "No Harder Enterprise . . . ," p. 39. The author cited the conclusions of Manfred Görtemaker, "Germany between the Superpowers," pp. 115-17 in the same volume.

[44] Two notable exceptions, in a rather tense period from late 1959-1960, will be discussed in Chapter 5.

[45] The term 'jettison' was used in this regard by Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 164.

[46] The official public discussion of the meaning of the East German dictatorship took place in the *Enquete-Kommision*, a cross-party commission created by the German government in 1992, whose official title was "Investigatory Commission on the Appraisal of the History and Consequences of the SED Dictatorship in Germany." According to Ross, its purpose was both to demonstrate the GDR's fundamentally unjust nature and to offer some sense of historical justice to its victims. Ross, 2002, p. 197. A more detailed overview is Hermann Weber, "Rewriting the History of the German Democratic Republic: The Work of the Commission of Inquiry," in Reinhard Alter and Peter Montheath, eds., *Rewriting the German Past: History and Identity in the New Germany* (New York, 1997), pp. 197-221. Its results were published as *Materialen der Enquete-Kommission 'Aufarbeitun von Geschichte und Folgen der SED-Diktatur in Deutschland' des Bundestags*, 18 vols. (Bonn, 1994). it has been criticized for being predominantly an affair of academics and politicians while largely ignoring the perspectives of ordinary East German citizens. See Jennifer Yoder, "Truth without Reconciliation: An Appraisal of the Enquete Commission on the SED Dictatorship in Germany," *German Politics* 8 (1999), pp. 59-80; and Anne Sa'adah, *Germany's Second Chance: Trust, Justice and Democratization* (Cambridge, MA, 1999).

[47] Before the Berlin Wall was open on November 9, 1989, the majority of protesters took to the streets as a result of the emigration crisis, but did not demand immediate exit from the GDR, nor reunification with the West, but basic freedoms, most particularly the *right to travel* to the West, greater democracy, and mostly open discussion with the regime on how the GDR might be reformed. Demands for unification with the West only began to emerge in the weeks *after* the opening the Wall -- ie. in a completely unanticipated and changed circumstance when the immigration crisis grew more acute, the economic crisis mounted as well, the Western CDU appeared on the scene as the champion of unity and the extension of Western living standards, and it became evident that the East German economy could not survive with its borders open the Federal Republic. But most accounts of the end of the GDR point to the general lack of interest among 'the masses' in reforming the GDR after the opening of the Wall, forgetting that *beforehand*, the vast majority of demonstrators, though inspired by the emigration crisis, assumed the regime *would* endure and so naturally argued to reform it. Two early studies in particular that failed to account for this were Christian Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989* (Basingstoke, 1995); and John C. Torpey, *Intellectuals Socialism and Dissent: The East German Opposition and its Legacy* (Minneapolis, MN, 1995). Both suggest a kind of misdevelopment among East German intellectuals and dissidents -- that because of their experiences within the "antifascist" culture of the GDR they wrongly committed themselves to the hopes of some kind of "third way" of socialism, thus "missing the boat" in 1989 -- the seemingly inevitable movement toward parliamentary democracy and liberal capitalism. One account, published the very same year which was more faithful to the chronology of changing opportunities, demands, and political circumstances was Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp. 243-265.

[48] Andreas Kohlschütter, "Sie Sagen ‚Ja' zu ihrem Staat," *Die Zeit* 32, 7 August 1970, p. 3.

[49] The idea that there was any "economic miracle" in the GDR was dismissed by Western scholars from at least the early 1980s, if not earlier. See for example, David Childs, *The GDR: Moscow's German Ally* Second Edition, (London, 1988), pp. 140-164. But without getting into a detailed discussion about the issue, its rather telling Ross' recent discussion about the differing interpretations of the GDR's economy betrays the basic problem of even making such a claim. In effect, much of the debate has been about explaining why the GDR lagged behind the Federal Republic, and usually scholars conclude that at some point in time the initial disadvantages (lack of resources, Soviet reparations, reorientation of industrial production and trade away from their previous networks in West Germany) can longer be used to explain why the GDR's economy was not competitive. Beneath this debate, at least in the West, is the assumption that no "economic miracle" is worth identifying or discussing simply because the GDR never approached Western living standards, rather than comparing its performance to the planned economies of the Eastern bloc nations, which it more closely resembled. See Ross, 2002, pp. 69-96.

[50] The best short overview of difficulties within the alliance (as well as U.S.-Soviet relations *before* 1941) can be found in LaFeber, 1-29.

Part I: "Present at the Creation"[1]

Correspondents and Author-Travelers in the Soviet Zone and early GDR

The question of responsibility for the division of Germany after World War II is at the center of Cold War literature, but the socioeconomic and political revolution the Soviets and German Communists carried out in the Soviet Zone during the occupation years has seemed rather incidental to that debate. A number of the authors discussed in the introduction who blamed the Soviets for dividing Germany subsumed the revolutionary changes in the Soviet Zone within a larger narrative of Soviet brutality and exploitation in East-Central Europe, creating the impression that whatever progressive thrust may have come with the Soviet conquest was hardly worth mentioning, given the dictatorship, coercion, and virtual colonization eventually carried out in the process.[2] One recent critic of Soviet policy in Germany basically ignored the reforms altogether, save for the merger of the KPD with the SPD -- mentioning it only in the context of Stalin's efforts to win support from the West German Left.[3] But even authors who were more critical of U. S. policy-making in Germany have left basically the same impression. Both Gimbel and Eisenberg, for example, have also situated the revolutionary changes in the Soviet Zone within a larger picture of Soviet brutality and secrecy, in order to accuse U.S. policy-makers of looking the other way when it came to "Soviet misdeeds."[4]

This is not to argue that coercion and even more outright exploitation and abuse did not come with the land reform, nationalization of industry, the merger of the KPD and eastern SPD, and other reforms in the Soviet Zone. Of this, there can be little doubt. Nor would it be fair to say that most Germans *in all the zones* were not aghast at the mass rapes, looting, and large-scale dismantling of factories by Red Army personnel -- not to mention the brutal treatment of the expellees from Eastern Europe.[5] But while the story

of German division -- and the legacy of the Red Army's brutal deeds -- militate against any positive evaluation of the revolution inside the Soviet Zone -- or in some cases much consideration of at it all -- most contemporaries were awed by the sense of momentous change, and not a few of them found much of that change to be progressive as well. The reason? In spite of all the negative "pre-publicity" from the Soviet conquest of eastern Germany and the expulsions, at the time Soviet initiatives in their zone appeared to be virtually the *only positive program for reconstructing Germany* -- and in the early years, American and British occupiers, if not their French counterparts, felt considerable pressure because of them.

Such early reactions suggest, among other things, the problem of how this Soviet-led socioeconomic and political revolution might be reconciled with the more restorationist policies in the U.S. and British zones. If the Cold War had not intervened, it is arguable that the revolution in the Soviet Zone would have been among the greatest obstacles to reunifying Germany. Indeed, some observers in the U.S. State Department believed as early as November 1945 that the land reform and nationalizations in particular were indicators that the Soviets intended to obstruct the Potsdam accords.[6] But of course, by the spring of 1947 the Cold War *did* intervene, and because of it, the "different course" taken in the Soviet Zone was *not* a key factor in the struggle for Germany. At most, it simply reinforced *already existing concerns* about the Soviets' unwillingness to compromise and seek a common policy for all of Germany. In the event, the Western Allies and the Soviets clashed over reparations, economic revival of the Western zones, and Soviet demands for influence in the Ruhr -- Germany's industrial heartland -- but *not* about the socioeconomic revolution or political evolution within the Soviet Zone.

After the United States and the USSR failed to agree on a joint policy for all four

zones at the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Moscow in March-April 1947, the U.S. government shifted to a policy of rebuilding the economy of Western Europe without Soviet consent[7] -- the policy that soon became know as the Marshall Plan. The ensuing American-led effort to create a unified West German economy and government, and Soviet efforts to thwart those plans, has, over the years, been understood as the climactic act in the drama of German (and European) division -- particularly among those who blamed the U.S. or its British Allies. This struggle, which led to the Soviet blockade of Berlin and the Anglo-American airlift (June 1948-May 1949), and, that same May, the Allied approval of the West German Basic Law (preliminary constitution), seemed to reduce developments in the Soviet Zone to a mere sideshow. With the eyes of the world on Berlin, the dominant view of the Soviet Zone in this later period has suggested a more or less inevitable consolidation of SED rule, which went hand-in-hand, so to speak, with the widening of the East-West divide. From there, developments in the Soviet Zone (and after October 1949, the GDR) generally have not figured in the study of the Cold War, but instead have been deemed the proper study of German specialists.

The experiences of Western visitors in the Soviet Zone, along with a number of Western commentators in the British and American news media, call these traditional assumptions about the Soviet occupation of Germany into question. Because the majority of these writers did not anticipate the division of Germany (or if they did, believed it would be unworkable and therefore very brief),[8] they saw events in the Soviet Zone as far more important to the future (and in many cases more positively) than did contemporary policy makers or later scholars. Indeed, they seemed important precisely because they did *not* seem to point to a separate communist dictatorship. Instead, they provoked many alternative theories about Soviet goals in Germany. More broadly, the accounts we will dis-

cuss presently suggest that the postwar years appeared more open and changeable to the general public than they did to government officials and power brokers in Washington, London, and Moscow. And perhaps most importantly -- they remind us again of how unpredictable and *dangerous* American, British, Soviet *and* German actions appeared "on the ground" in postwar Germany.

In the following four chapters we will consider how contemporaries evaluated the revolution in the Soviet Zone *as it happened*, how they believed it was impacting the Western zones, and how it might factor into some four-power settlement on unification. It will become apparent that developments there did not appear as separate, inevitable or as wholly negative as they have appeared in the debate on German division and the emerging Cold War. Indeed, we will see that a number of correspondents and travelers to the Soviet Zone did *not* link the socioeconomic-political revolution there as tightly to the overall Soviet pattern of brutality and oppression as later authors would. Rather, quite a few saw the land reform, nationalization of industry, and the new German zonal administration combining with rather surprising economic progress to make the Soviet Zone appear the most successful of all four zones. The Western print media worried about the apparent "Soviet lead" in Germany at first, and criticized the policies of Britain and the United States there, characterizing their approaches as confused and defeatist by comparison.

If positive evaluations of the Soviet occupation did not continue after the fall of 1947, the speculation about their motives did. Even the inauguration of the GDR in October 1949 did not put an end to them. In this later period, perhaps the most important contribution contemporary visitors and others make to the historical understanding of the postwar era is illuminating the extent to which the West feared the Soviets' and SED's

appeals to German nationalism. Because of this fear, stoked by nagging concerns about the sullen, defeated German population, the division of Germany may very well have seemed the most dangerous scenario of all.

But in the beginning, when the first Western newspeople encountered the Red Army in Germany, the Soviet occupiers were heroes, and apparently, friends. However, the idea that the defeated, smoldering German Reich would very soon be divided by a new conflict was *not* completely out of the question, given the tendency of the Soviets to restrict access to the areas they had conquered, and their efforts to curry the favor of the defeated population. Our story begins, then, in the final days of World War II, with the first Western reports on the Soviet conquest of Germany. The initial focus, of course, was on defeating the German *Wehrmacht* and SS, not the future of Germany under Soviet occupation. However, it would not be long before the Red Army's presence in Berlin and the eastern half of Germany would raise important questions and concerns, and even initiate a kind of competition among the four powers. All of this, of course, was intensified two months later by the four-power occupation of Berlin, which made the former Reich capital both the new media center of Europe and the principle Western window onto the Soviet occupation.

[1] The title is borrowed from U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson's memoirs, which describe the creation of the containment policy, the NATO Alliance, the Marshall Plan, and the U.S. security state in the late 1940s. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years at the State Department* (New York, 1969).
[2] For example, Feis, and also Arthur Schlesinger, "The Origins of the Cold War,'" *Foreign Affairs* 46 (4), October 1967, pp. 22-52.
[3] For example, Gaddis, *We Now Know*, p. 116.
[4] See Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line*, p. 11; Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany*, p. 27.
[5] One result of the German peoples' reaction to the expulsions was the official West German documentation of the events. The English translation was published as Theodor Schieder et al., *Documents on the Expulsion of the Germans from Eastern-Central Europe* (Leer, Ost Friesland, 1960), 5 vols.
[6] Gimbel. The author noted also that the zonal administration caused a stir among U.S. military observers, who feared, in absences of any alternatives, that it might become the *de facto* government for all Germany (p. 45). There will be more on the U.S. reaction to the German administration below.
[7] Wala, "The Marshall Plan and the Origins of the Cold War," p. 74.
[8] One notable early exception was M. J. Bonn, a contributor to the center-right British weekly *Spectator*. Bonn argued in July 1946 that the "irreconcilable" economic philosophies of the Western powers and the Soviets meant there could not be economic unity in Germany, and therefore no political reunification as well. Even this author, however, believed that partition was "probably not history's last word, though it is clearly the end of an epoch." See M. J. Bonn, "The Partition of Germany," *The Spectator*, June 21, 1946, p. 629.

Chapter One: From Revolution to Competition to Menace

Western Newspeople and the Soviet Zone--May 1945-June 1948

Witnesses to History?: Correspondents in Conquered Berlin: May-June, 1945

In the spring of 1945, both American and Soviet commanders hoped to be first to conquer Berlin. Eventually, however, by four-power agreement, the U. S. Ninth Army halted its advance just west of the Elbe river on April 26, leaving the Nazi capital to face a vengeful Red Army. While this story is well known, a similar competition, between U.S. war correspondents, is not. At least six of them defied military rules and pressed onward, hoping to get the "scoop" on the final defeat of Hitler's Germany. Their efforts, of course, brought them face to face with Soviet forces in the chaotic final days of the war. Only two of them arrived in time to witness the last battle for the city -- John Groth of *American Legion Weekly* and Seymour Freidin of the *New York Herald Tribune* -- and they only succeeded with the help of several well-placed Soviet officers. Later, when they returned to American lines, Groth and Freiden, along with the other four correspondents, were stripped of their credentials. Within a matter of days, Groth and two of the others were on a ship headed back to the U.S.[1]

Their story is hardly known today. Contemporary American and British accounts of the conquest of Eastern Germany were based almost entirely on Soviet media sources, including Moscow's nightly war bulletins, articles in *Pravda* and the Red Army's newspaper *Red Star*, and translations of radio interviews with Stalin and Soviet generals. Later accounts utilized a variety of Soviet and German sources, which after 1991 included Soviet military archives, but their writers did not seem to know that the U.S. reporters were even there. Perhaps another reason Groth and Freidin are not remembered is that for both American veterans and readers on the home front, the historic link-ups of U.S. and Red

Army forces along the Elbe marked the *virtual end* of the war in Europe -- the fall of the Reich by then just days away. It is rather ironic, therefore, that the "lost story" of Groth and Freiden, the only two American reporters to witness the fall of Berlin, began at one of those first U.S.-Soviet link-ups. The war might have been over for the GIs of the 9th U.S. Army that day, but not for the correspondents.[2]

On April 30, 1945, while the Americans celebrated with troops of the Soviet First Ukrainian Army at the German village of Apollensdorf, Groth was advised by several Soviet soldiers that "the fighting toward the center of Berlin couldn't last more than a day or two now, and that if I wanted to get in before the fall, I'd better get started." Groth knew that two other correspondents had already reached the outskirts of Berlin, but "no one, as far as I knew, had penetrated to the center ring of the city." His chance to leave the U.S. forces didn't come until May 2, at a celebration between Soviet and American "brass" in nearby Wittenberg. There, he and Freidin took advantage of an offer from a drunken Russian captain to accompany him as "vodka friends" to Berlin. "We bundled him into my jeep before his brains had a chance to defume," Groth explained. Five miles down the road, however, as Groth's own brain "defumed," he realized it was the officer who had taken advantage. He had only wanted a ride back to his unit, and left the two Americans to fend for themselves. It seemed only a matter of time before a Soviet officer would order them to turn around, but as luck would have it, they fell in with a truck convoy heading northeast, and, because Groth had decorated his jeep with little Soviet flags and followed directions without asking questions, they were able to move on without incident.

Along the way, Groth encountered an entire Soviet army, which crossed their path heading south. His description of this massed, moving force is noteworthy, for it suggests toughness, simplicity, and concentrated power, but not the stereotypes of the backward,

crude, naive, or hot-tempered Russian that were so common among Germans and later visitors to Berlin. But the sheer size of the force, and variety of vehicles, weapons, people, and animals, creates the impression of an entire Asian civilization transplanted into central Germany.

> Forced by this oncoming traffic, I had a jeep's eye view of a Russian army on the march. We had known that it was largely a horse-drawn army, but even so, the hundred thousand horses we saw that day staggered us a bit. The army must have taken its horses from all of Asia and Eastern Europe -- its men and vehicles as well. All the wheeled conveyance of mankind seemed to be passing us: droshkies from cities, driven by blanketed, bearded drivers like those who had taxied me in Moscow in 1934; farm wagons, sometimes towed in threes and fours by trucks; two-wheeled carts: delivery wagons with German bread and milk advertisements still on them; German buses; cars, some of them very new and shiny, others camouflaged and beaten, as well as ordinary military transports and the mechanized pride of the Red Army -- its tanks and tractor-drawn guns, and the Ford, Studebaker, and Wilys-Knight trucks from America. In among these vehicles were men on foot, men on bicycles, men on horses. . . Every vehicle was covered with Red Army men and women. The huge tanks were covered with soldiers who hung as thick as grapes on every projection and every gun. The wagons were filled with sacks of grain, and atop the sacks rode men with their families, sometimes women with babies at their breasts. Under nearly every wagon trotted a dog. Herds of cattle were driven in fields alongside the columns on the road. . . . As each wagon or tank passed, Russians leaned out to look at us. Obviously they had never seen people like us before, in our type of uniform. They were reassured by the bright red flags that covered our jeep. Red Army men and officers gathered round us at every stop, exchanging cigarettes with us and admiring our clothes. Fortunately for us, they assumed that our presence in the column had been okayed by brass farther back. . . . The impression this great army on the move gave us was of a whole nomadic people out of Asia on trek. Among all the other vehicles, I was surprised to see sleds, mounted on wheels, drawn by dog teams.[3]

Groth actually expected both the U.S. and Soviet armies to be able to *leave* Germany now that the war was over, so it would be unfair to characterize this quote as any kind of speculation on future developments in Germany. Yet considering it was published later that year, during the joint occupation of Berlin, any reader skeptical of Soviet motives would surely have wondered how the Allies could have any leverage in the city,

surrounded by such a massive host of hearty and battle-hardened conquerors from the "depths of Asia."

Be that as it may, Groth and Freidin themselves had no trouble "among the Russians" until they neared the Berlin suburbs. When a truck in their convoy broke down, the captain in charge came to question them. But, as luck would have it, his queries actually *helped them* to their goal. For it turned out that he, like Freidin, was Jewish, and they were able to communicate in Yiddish: "The Russian captain was elated that one of the first Americans he should meet was a Jewish boy on his way to Hitler's Berlin. He would be happy to take us to Berlin."[4] The officer not only got them to the suburbs, but found a German home for them to sleep in upon arrival at 3:40am. The next morning they were visited by Soviet officers and soldiers bearing "gifts of wine." Though their departure was delayed, by 1:30 that afternoon they were driving past Tempelhof airport, and then through ruins, roadblocks, and burnt-out tanks to the government district. Despite the official end of hostilities the day before, Groth witnessed a last-ditch fire fight in the Tiergarten, just west of the Brandenburg Gate. Leaving Freidin on the Unter den Linden, he hurried towards the gate, and, climbing over a road block just in front it, "followed Russian soldiers toward the fighting." Here is how he described the scene:

> The famous park looked like the Huertgen Forest in the fiercest forest action of the war. Trees lay like matches over slit trenches and in pools in the bomb-excavated floor of the Tiergarten. I lay behind a small fragment of wall and watched the Russians charge forward in the smoke to end the battle of Berlin. It was quiet but for the scraping of branches that still floated downward and the dripping rain. This silence was presently broken by the exultant cheers of victory. A Russian officer lying near me turned and said, with a smile on his mud-and-rain-splattered face, 'BERLIN KAPUT'![5]

Groth truly had the scoop on the fall of Berlin. But unfortunately, he did not file his report until the next day. That was because he and Freidin felt compelled to spend the

night with young American POWs -- recently liberated by the Soviets -- in the Luckenwalde forest. The soldiers were so desperate for contact with Americans and news of their outfits that the two correspondents simply couldn't leave them. "I think our Berlin story seemed more important to them than to us," Groth remarked.[6] In the end, the delay didn't matter, because the U.S. military censors held up the story until after the German surrender on May 8, and for all intents and purposes, the two reporters disappeared from history.[7]

But Groth's early observations of the Red Army were echoed by many reporters who came in contact with them. "Positive reviews" by correspondents suggested their sense of humor, *joie de vivre*, their love of music, and their tireless energy. Some correspondents met them quite unexpectedly -- by rounding a corner in a German village only to find them blocking the way ahead, or in the momentary confusion of first contact between the two armies. But it seemed the meetings always *ended* in celebration. At the same time, however, correspondents could not ignore the *difference* of the Red Army from Western armies. Like Groth, Bill Richardson of the *New York Times* marveled at the huge numbers of horses and livestock the troops hauled along the road. But for him, this was only part of an entire way of life on display in the Red Army camps, one which recalled the toughness, simplicity and hardships of the armies of the past.

> It is perhaps the abundance of horses and forage, the wagons and the sometimes fantastically arranged uniforms that give the Russian army the appearance of our Civil War armies. Then, too the men sang by the campfires and brought their food up on the hoof. Then too, they made wide use of captured material, returned to the fighting line with bandages on their wounds. Glimpses here and there of the Russian soldiers are glimpses into our own past history. Even the faces--some of them--bear more than a slight resemblance. . . Perhaps the best description of the Russian Army and of its fighting men is the one given by an American sergeant to a lieutenant who had not yet met his eastern allies: . . . 'If you were to take the people that fought at Gettysburg and the people that fought at Normandy, and put in some that fought at Valley Forge, and they all spoke Russian--the you

would have the Russian Army.'[8]

Others encountered them at lavish 'parties' that Soviet commanders gave to honor their American counterparts. These banquets, reported from unspecified locations "east of the Elbe," featured many courses of traditional Russian fare, free-flowing vodka, and impressive displays of dancing, singing, and accordion playing by male and female Red Army troops. These correspondents too, noted the masses of horses and wide variety of vehicles in the Soviet convoys. But the horse was more than a necessity: like Richardson, Harold Denny believed the Soviet troops had a special love of horses, signified most particularly by the one Marshal Ivan Konev gave to U.S. General Omar Bradley, "a fine, swift war horse from the Don Cossack country, one shipped here from historic Stalingrad for that purpose."[9]

But for all the opportunities to meet and describe the Red Army and its leaders, and the apparent goodwill shown in return, Berlin still remained off limits to Western reporters. Supreme Soviet Commander Marshal Grigory Zhukov rejected their pleas to visit the stricken city on May 5,[10] and in the days and weeks that followed, the only exceptions made were for the formal German surrender (May 8), the first meeting of the Allied Control Council (June 5) -- both held at Soviet headquarters at Karlshorst, a suburb just east of Berlin -- and for a small group of American, British, and French corres-pondents based in Moscow who visited briefly on June 9. Unfortunately, none of these reports gave any indication of the widespread rape, violence and looting perpetrated by the Red Army in the first days of the occupation, suggesting the hand of Soviet censors.[11]

But even an *uncensored* report of June 3, from Swedish diplomats "safe" in Stockholm after enduring the first three weeks of the Soviet occupation of Berlin, made only an extremely oblique reference to the initial violence.

> During the first days of the occupation the civilians seemed incapable of any reaction. no [sic] new hardships being comparable with what they had endured in their overcrowded shelters without food, water, or fresh air. *After a few days relations with the Germans they* [the Soviets] *were put on a strictly correct basis*, although the regulations were rigorous. The Russians immediately took measures to get the machinery of the city going again.[12] [emphasis added]

The rest of the report discussed Soviet efforts to feed the population, their relatively harsh treatment of former Nazis and "traitors," and their fraternizing with German women, with no indication that *any* of these activities involved any unnecessary coercion.[13] Similarly, *Pravda* printed an exchange between one of the "June 9 correspondents" (from the London *Sunday Times*) and Marshal Zhukov (also at Karlshorst) that only *hinted* at the commanders' embarrassment with the Red Army's behavior:

> [Question]: 'What direct relations are permitted between the Red Army and the German population? What chances do you think there are of loyal co-operation by the German nation with the Allies?'
> Zhukov replied: 'I should like to answer the second question first. In my opinion our relations with the German nation and vice versa depend in the first place on the behaviour of the Germans. As to the first question, the relationship between the Red Army and the German population is governed by strict regulations.'
> *Sunday Times* correspondent: 'What we really want to know is whether the Red Army is allowed to fraternize with the population.'
> Zhukov: 'Our strict regulations on this point are quite unequivocal.'[14]

The Marshal's apparent ducking of this question might not have even been apparent to *Pravda's* editors, but it seems more likely that at the time, there was no overwhelming need to justify the Red Army's behavior in Berlin. While it is true that American opinion toward the U.S.S.R. was already declining rather sharply in this period due to the general perception that the Soviets were violating the Yalta accords, the lack of confirmed information from Soviet-held areas, combined with the recent shocking discoveries of the Nazi concentration camps, certainly kept public attention in the West *off* of the Red Army's misdeeds -- at least for the time being.[15] Indeed, given their sacrifices in the war, and, per-

haps, the widespread hopes for future peace, there was quite a bit of empathy expressed in this early period for the Soviet occupation forces. Another of the "June 9 correspondents" betrayed these sentiments in describing a meeting with the first post-Nazi mayor of Berlin:

> The chief burgomaster [sic] Dr. Werner, who gives the impression of being a sincere and earnest man, was probably speaking for many of his people when he said that Berlin felt grateful to the Red Army and that, painful as it was to him to confess it, its citizens had been for some time looking forward to defeat because it meant the end of tyranny. . . . The Russians listen to such statements wryly, for all are conscious of the fact that though there is devastation in Berlin the life of the average citizen is substantially easier than that of the inhabitants of the Russian cities along the trail of the German invasion. . . .[16]

The author went on to give a rather innocent "spin," to "fraternization," -- ignoring both the sexual aspect and questions of coercion as well -- while once again justifying the Red Army's resentment of the defeated Germans:

> Russian soldiers are permitted to visit places of amusement frequented by Germans, and have made many friends among the children. Conversation with Germans is not penalized, and there is an easy, natural relationship between the Russians and the local inhabitants. But the contempt of the Red Army for the Germans is too strong to permit of fraternization in the sense of friendliness.[17]

Yet there was another concern in the Western media regarding 'fraternization': one that raised the question of the ultimate fate of the four-power occupation itself. It was not the vengeful or abusive behavior of the the Red Army that worried Western observers and government officials, but continued reports about their friendliness with the defeated population -- men women, and children. The problem was that it was markedly different than the correct, aloof behavior demonstrated by Tommies and GIs in Western Germany, -- the former in particular -- as prescribed by Allied command. Odd as it seems in retrospect, there was considerable concern that the Red Army's fraternization, along with its efforts to returned shattered Berlin to a certain normality, might actually be swaying Ger-

man opinion in their favor! There were enough reported incidents of humane, helpful treatment *and* fraternization in a more positive sense to cause several correspondents to worry about the contrasting treatment of the Germans on either side of the Elbe.

One of the first correspondents to sound the alarm was an anonymous Briton who crossed from British-occupied territory into Soviet-occupied territory -- most likely in Mecklenburg -- in late May.[18] A friendly Soviet officer allowed the author and a passenger to drive to a nearby village, along a route which British 'brass' had apparently traversed recently, given the repeated "triumphal arches in bright red bunting, bearing the slogan "'Welcome to our valiant Allies' in both English and Russian." The author had heard many "wild stories" circulating among the British troops about rape and looting, but blamed them on "the aftermath of [Nazi] propaganda."[19] But even so, the author could hardly have imagined the peaceful, congenial atmosphere in the next village. Not just fraternization (in the sense of friendly visits), but the cultivation of a (non-Nazi) *German nationalism* was clear to see.

> From almost every house floated proudly a large red, white, and black banner. 'The flag of the German Republic' said a German policeman who noticed our surprise. We looked for the familiar sign of military occupation -- the untidy litter that surrounds a hastily looted house. Everything seemed undisturbed. German nurses, attractive in their white uniforms, walked the streets. Red Army men stood smiling in doorways, saluting in response to our greeting. Under a tree we glimpsed a group of soldiers and children. Non-fraternisation was evidently not as indiscriminate as it is elsewhere.[20]

The author never directly accused the Soviets of wooing the Germans to their side, and did not advise the Western Allies to alter their behavior. Instead, given the potential danger of "Nazi-inspired lies," the solutions offered were increased contacts between the armies and greater efforts by the leaders to produce a uniform policy on relations with civilians. Still the following passages implies a certain fear of the appeal (and effectiveness)

of Soviet policy:

> White flags in one part of Germany--Republican flags on the other side of an imaginary line. Ruthless purging, followed by human relations with the residual population, on one side; perfunctory purging and general non-fraternisation imposed on the rank and file, on the other. It is high time that the Control Commission got to the job of sorting out these divergences and produced a common constructive policy towards the problem of German occupation.[21]

C. L. Sulzberger, Paris correspondent for the *New York Times*, expressed the same fear -- and a bit more clearly. Noting a recent shift in Soviet propaganda from sweeping condemnation of all Germans to a distinguishing between "average Germans" and "bad Germans," and reports of the Red Army's great efforts to feed and aid the German population, Sulzberger worried that the Soviets were not simply wooing the Germans, but also, were themselves suspicious that the British and American armies were doing the very same thing.

> While the Russians seem often to voice anxiety that the British and Americans -- who have strict nonfraternization policies toward the Germans--are treating the conquered enemy too easily and urge them to stiffen attitudes, they seem to be applying less stern measures themselves, or they say so. Since observers are not permitted it is impossible to know. . . Certainly the Red Army was tough on the Germans as it marched to victory -- as tough as it is possible to imagine with every retributive right. But now it would seem as if an effort were being made to ease up on the defeated nation and perhaps even to cultivate friendship with some of its population groups. . . . At the same time fears are being expressed that just this is being done in the west [sic]. This is confusing and needs interallied agreement and full exchange of information from observers on the spot.[22]

Here we see even more clearly the frustration of Western observers with both Soviet secrecy and their surprising new friendliness toward the conquered Germans. Another London commentator suggested that a competition for German "hearts and minds" was already developing -- one in which the Soviets would benefit by restricting access to their zone while encouraging agitation by German Communist allies in the Western zones.[23]

Both of these worries -- the possible appeal of a "fraternizing" Red Army and the influence of German Communists in Western Germany -- seem counterintuitive in retrospect, particularly in May-June 1945. Not only did the German population fear conquest from the East and retribution for the behavior of the *Wehrmacht* in the U.S.S.R., but there seems no reason to suspect that Goebbels' anti-Communist propaganda of the last 12 years had been ineffective. But as the above quote suggests, the Red Army's treatment of the conquered Germans -- in some respects at least -- could have been *far worse* -- and the Germans knew it.[24] It also must be remembered that the great majority of German expulsions from Eastern Europe were yet to occur.

But the ultimate truth about the early days of the Soviet occupation of Germany was that the Red Army's behavior *varied widely*: Soviet troops could be brutal and vengeful -- particularly in groups at night when they had been drinking -- but also benevolent and helpful -- particularly in Berlin where every effort was made to assist and direct the German population in rebuilding and resupplying the city. Unlike the wanton destruction they wrought in their initial advances into East Prussia, Soviet troops *at war's end* exhibited a broader range of behaviors. As Atina Grossman has recently written of Berlin in the early days: "While the Red Army soldiers continued to rape and plunder, other troops were handing out bread and working to rapidly restore municipal and cultural services."[25] She could have added that from nearly the moment the last shots were fired, other Red Army personnel, in "trophy battalions," were taking all military machinery, scientific laboratories, printing presses, communications equipment, ships, barges, coal iron ore, steel, agricultural products, and livestock for shipping back to the Soviet Union as reparations.[26]

For at least two and half more years, German women experienced a "persistent

threat of rape" in the Soviet Zone.[27] However, during much of that same time period, the Western media continued to focus on (and sometimes worry about) other developments in Soviet-occupied Germany, many of which, at least initially, seemed progressive, and not entirely unwelcome. Initially, these worries were expressed in the context of an apparent competition among *all four* occupying powers -- a competition that was seemingly heightened by the joint occupation of Berlin, which began in July 1945. It was not long, however, before the Western media came to understand socioeconomic changes as revolutionary as well. Nevertheless, they did not tend to view them as portents of division of Germany. Rather, they were understood (rather generously in some cases) as "Soviet methods" designed to achieve the same goals as occupation policies in the West.

With the arrival of the British and American troops in Berlin there came a mass contingent of British, American, and other Western journalists who gained a critical window onto the Soviet occupation. However, by inter-Allied agreement, Berlin was *not* part of the surrounding Soviet Zone, and it was readily apparent that the Soviets strongly discouraged visits to the rest of their "domain." For the most part, then, the revolutionary changes there would be reported second hand. But the initial impression of Western writers in Berlin was that the Soviets had made the most of their two month "head start" in the city. Not only had they gotten Berlin "back on its feet," but had set the tone for basic civil policy, had appointed qualified non-Nazi Germans to staff as many administrative positions as possible, and were getting on with the conquered as well as could be expected.

The initial meeting of the Control Council in Berlin on June 5 had not formally organized the Council. This was because the Soviets insisted the Allies first withdraw beyond the Western borders of Mecklenburg, Thuringia, and Saxony-Anhalt, to what would

become the Western and Southwestern boundaries of the Soviet Zone. By June 10, the *New York Times* was sounding a note of cautious optimism on a number of international agreements that appeared to be firming up, among them: completion of the United Nations charter, resolution of the dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy over Trieste, the first meeting of Allied military missions in Vienna, and the agreement on zones of occupation in Germany. Yet the paper expressed concern as well: about Soviet secrecy and the amount of territory assigned to them, noting that the day after the Control Council met the Soviets had "published a map of the Big Three occupation areas which showed Russia's share as virtually the eastern half of Germany."[28]

As U.S. forces began their withdrawal from Thuringia in late June, and the Soviets prepared to take their place, reports there suggested widespread dislike of and even fear for the Red Army--as well disgust with the Allied decision to withdraw.[29] Initially, the Allied forces that arrived in Berlin on July 1 were not so much afraid of Red Army men as utterly befuddled and exasperated by them. There was the utter shock at the scope of destruction in the city as well, while the population seemed not simply destitute but interested only in personal survival.[30] A number of Allied officials wondered if their real problem in Berlin would turn out to be the Soviets, rather than the Germans. For the Soviet troops and many of their officers could be friendly, kind, and realistic, but could also be childish, callous, and irresponsible, especially under the influence of vodka. Above all else, they demanded acknowledgment for their conquest of Berlin, which they believed entitled them to leading role in the city.[31] The Western media continued to offer a fairly positive view of the regular Red Army forces, but concentrated more on Soviet policies than personalities. But these would prove dynamic and at times, confusing also.

The View from Four-Power Berlin: July--December 1945

By early summer 1945, the eyes of the Western world seemed focused on Berlin. The four-power occupation suggested it would become the testing ground for cooperation between the Allies and the Soviets, a crossroads of civilizations, and kind a of stage on which the great events of the day would be played out. As Grossman observes:

> The remarkable number of breathless memoirs, diaries, novels, and films produced by occupiers, relief workers, and journalists testify . . . to the great sense of mission and adventure that many found in postwar Berlin. At least until the Nuremberg trials began in the fall of 1945, the ravaged capital was the place to be for foreign correspondents. The *New York Times* had only two reporters in Paris [Supreme Headquarters of the American Expeditionary Force, or SHAEF] but four in Berlin.[32]

On the morning of July 1, 1945, more than 200 correspondents in 80 press jeeps set out for Berlin from Halle, Sachsen-Anhalt. They were delayed when they crossed paths with Russian forces moving into Thuringia to replace U.S. troops, but still arrived by mid-morning.[33] Like the Allied troops moving into the city, they would have daily access to Soviet-occupied East Berlin. Given the unpredictable behavior of Red Army troops, however, they would find night time visits a bit more risky. Meanwhile, despite their lack of access to the surrounding region, they would be able to gather all sorts of intelligence information and testimonials from German citizens under Soviet rule than would otherwise have been unavailable.

Though the majority of the correspondents wrote as if they anticipated an eventual unification of the four zones, they were most definitely not naive. They understood, almost intuitively, that the Soviets had very different understandings of basic concepts such as democracy and economics. They also knew that on a more practical level, the Soviets had a overwhelming need for reparations to rebuild vast regions of their country devastated by the German *Wehrmacht*. But what their political reform efforts, and, soon

enough, the socioeconomic transformation in the Soviet Zone would mean in the longer term could only be guessed. Whatever that might be, in 1945-7 it seemed almost certain it would profoundly impact the Western zones as well -- somehow, the two emerging systems would have to be merged in the end.

Among the main reasons they anticipated some kind of merger was the risk of war between the Soviets and the Western Allies. Disagreements over war strategy, the sudden cancellation of Lend Lease in the spring, and the Soviets' suppression of non-communist political parties in Poland, were some of the recent events that had exacerbated mutual suspicions. Now they were involving in the mutual occupation of the former Reich, their armies side-by-side. Compromise in Germany seemed essential to world peace. But the chances of new conflict haunted contemporaries as well, the risk made all the greater by Germans intent on stirring up trouble between the Americans and Britons on the one hand, and the Soviets on the other. One British soldier spoke for countless Anglo-American troops, writers, and others when he remembered:

> It was so universal a practice that it seemed almost as if someone had laid it down as a plan that every single possibility of causing trouble between the British and the Americans on the one hand and the Russians on the other should be seized. Most Berliners thought, and probably think today [1966], war between the two groups only a matter of time, and smiled disbelievingly if one denied it.[34]

Their hope, of course, was to join the Allies in a fight to push the Soviets back out of Germany. Many a nonplused correspondent replied that such a war would only result in the *total ruin* of Germany seemingly to no effect. Nonetheless, the correspondents generally assumed that all of the powers (with the possible exception of France) under-stood their purpose in Germany as *reconstruction of the German "nation."* In spite of the widespread hatred in Europe for Germans and revulsion over Nazi crimes, informed opinion assumed the German people would *never* accept partition -- another reasons coope-

ration was essential. It seemed an absolute certainty in 1945 that even a temporary partition could only sew the seeds of German revanchism. Therefore, there could be different and even competing *approaches* to occupying Germany, but the only one goal -- a unified state that was demilitarized, denazified democratized, and no threat to its neighbors.

If such impressions seem short-sighted in retrospect, they are indicative of a general mood in the West that was decidedly postwar, but also warily, rather than hysterically, anticommunist. It was "postwar" in the sense of a hopeful new beginning, and many writers were often more focused on how the Soviets and their Western counterparts were managing the difficult practical problems of military rule than considering their ultimate implications. It was warily anti-communist in that they expected the Soviets to try and spread their ideology and methods of socioeconomic organization, but believed the Germans would not provide a good opportunity. The main reason, of course, was the unpopularity of the Red Army -- especially once their behavior in the East and in Berlin became more widely known, but also the weak position of the German Communists *throughout* the defeated Reich. Indeed, despite widespread approval and even enthusiasm for land reforms and nationalization in the Soviet Zone, it was clear as early as September 1946 that the chances of the German communists in any genuinely free election were *not good.* This was the more reassuring because of the broad, unspoken assumption underlying most early reporting: that the joint occupation discouraged any sort of Soviet-sponsored coup in Germany--put simply, the Soviets could not seize the entire reigns of government as they had in Poland and would later in Czechoslovakia.

So, with partition unthinkable and a Soviet coup unlikely, correspondents in Berlin began instead to see an emerging competition in policymaking -- one in which the So-

viets took an early lead. For some time, most of them were willing to at least consider the U.S. military governments take on the situation -- that Soviet innovations did not exclude unification, and in any case, that they had a progressive intent. But even those who sensed danger lurking behind the innovations saw that danger is a problem for *all* of Germany, not the Soviet Zone alone. The few correspondents, Allied officials, and others who warned of the "communization" of the population of the Soviet Zone, feared the possibility that Western Germans might be enticed to "turn east" by promises of unity -- that they might in effect accept in a new dictatorship if it could restore one German nation. But this view was a clear minority before late 1947.[35] Criticisms of quadripartite rule in this period were very similar: the problem was *not* that four separate Germanies would result; rather, the divergent policies of the four Allies could only fuel nationalist frustrations *throughout* Germany, leading to a groundswell for the removal of *all* foreign troops.

But if the four powers would seemingly have to compromise in the long run, for the time being they each exercised total authority in their zones, and if Berlin was any indication, then the Soviets were not just in firm control, but were effectively managing their occupation as well. All outward appearances in the city indeed suggest to Western correspondents that they were running a more efficient and successful occupation than anyone else. As Australian correspondent Osmar White wrote of experiences in early July:

> All in all, I believe the Soviets in those early days did more to keep Berlin alive than the Anglo-Americans could possibly have done. I base that opinion on the performance of military government in the Ruhr and the Rhineland where lack of planning -- indeed lack of any comprehension of what military government would entail in such circumstances -- created chaos. The Russian method of maintaining order and achieving results in the essentials was not inhibited by humanitarian niceties. They understood mass psychology. They realised that the sooner Berli-

> ners could be encouraged to help themselves, the better it would be for all concerned. The sooner these stunned and aimless millions could be given some hope for a future, some interest beyond the immediate satisfaction of hunger or the avoidance of physical pain, the fewer demands they would make on the resources of the Red Army.[36]

But what exactly did this mean for the Allies? How much should the Allies fear a Soviet advantage with the defeated population? Though many Berliners were happy to see the Allied forces, it was apparent that most of them were not hopelessly at odds with the Red Army either. The locals seemed to alternate between faulting the Soviets for not doing more to help them and complaining about their low level of "civilization."[37] The best any correspondent would say about the situation, echoing the earlier surprise about Soviet-German fraternization, was that under the circumstances, the occupiers and occupied were getting along "fairly well."[38] This didn't mean that the initial wave of looting and raping had been forgotten -- it gradually became known throughout Western Europe as an "orgy of revenge."[39] -- nor continuing abuses in any way overlooked. It was more a simple matter of an exhausted and disoriented population desperately craving structure, basic necessities, and some sense of normality. Meanwhile, while a few in the Western media (and memoirists as well) confronted the dangerous and unpredictable behavior of Red Army troops in the coming months, a more general impression was conveyed of efficiency, and as noted, innovative policies, which, for the most part, the Allies found themselves scrambling to keep up with.

From the beginning, in Berlin the Allies had to follow the Soviet lead in regards to all basic civil regulations.[40] In this highly symbolic milieu, a pattern was quickly established in which the Soviets seized the initiative at each turn, and the Western Allies, attempting to restrain their concern and cooperate, hesitated to question them. Correspondents like Raymond Daniel of the *New York Times* justified the continuation of many Soviet

policies in the Western sectors of the city as way to avoid "sudden changes" that could result in "serious civil dislocation."[41] This was not true of "fraternization," of course, but it was clear to the correspondents that on the whole Berliners welcomed Soviet openness more than the correct but aloof behavior of the Americans and especially the British. A British correspondent already sensed the importance of the difference: "non-fraternization" suggested to him the clear *lack* of a Western response to early Soviet efforts to win over the population.[42] Even American officials who supported the ban on fraternization thought it was becoming impossible to enforce by that summer in any case, and it was officially terminated on October 1.[43]

Early political changes created an even greater sense of Soviet advantage. Even before the Allies arrived in Berlin, the Soviets had already legalized political activity for all non-fascist parties (and trade unions).[44] Then, less than two weeks into the joint occupation, the Allies learned that the reactivated parties in the Soviet Zone had joined forces as the "United Front of Antifascist Parties." The other three occupying powers, by contrast, still forbade all political organizations. Once again, as with fraternization, the Soviets were a step ahead. Not that there was widespread support for the German Communists; but continuing restrictions in the Western zones seemed punitive, or worse, suggested to correspondents the Allies, by contrast, had no real plan for political revival at all.[45]

The "United Front" in no way suggested a first step toward "communization," but was clearly not party politics in the traditional Western sense either. What it did do, however, was raise interests in lifting the ban on political organizations in the American Zone. The American occupation authorities wanted to first arrest all the Nazi "big fishes" (which by July 1945 amounted to approximately 70,000 "Nazis, their sympathizers, and

militarists"), before supporting a formal revocation of the ban. Late in July, sources close to the U.S. Supreme Commander Lucius M. Clay expected an official revocation at the upcoming conference of the Big Three at Potsdam.[46] A principle reason was clearly the early Soviet initiative in this area:

> Another reason for the proposed relaxation is undoubtedly the example set by the Russians who have allowed political parties to function and who, in this field as in others, seem bound to try to show that they are ahead of their western Allies in the technique of occupation.[47]

According to the *New York Times*, banning *both* political parties *and* fraternization had hindered the "preaching of democracy," while the Soviets apparently "preached" at will. This advantage already gave reason to fear for the cause of democracy, wrote a *Times* correspondent in Berlin, as did the influence of German POWs returning from Russian prison camps.

But for the most part, Western observers focused on the *limitations* placed on the political parties in the Soviet Zone. One correspondent heard from party officials that the Soviets treated all four parties more or less fairly, even if the communists were obvious favorites, but the key difference from Western democracy was in the restrictions of the United Front: "the parties are not allowed to engage in public polemics; but their representatives do express their views and do exert pressure on the German civilian administration."[48] In other words, there was *not* a genuine and open competition, but a kind of private, consultative rule based on certain unifying principles. One defender of this arrangement argued that "in the present political conditions in Germany, the only way to get things done was to hammer out agreed decisions" in private -- meaning that apathy, self-pity and lingering fascist attitudes were so widespread that the general population must be "led to democracy" by a kind of popular front, with all its (private) decisions based on

consensus.[49] This "administration behind closed doors" would soon enough raise questions about undue Soviet pressures on the non-communist politicians, but for the time being, its mere existence put pressure on the Allies to begin looking to the Germans' political aspirations.

But the most dramatic new policy initiative in the Soviet Zone did not begin until September 1945 -- the land reform, which began following a plebiscite in Thuringia. This popular approval became the justification for its extension to the other *Länder* in the Soviet Zone in October. All farms of 250 acres or more were confiscated and broken up into small plots to be redistributed to peasants, day laborers, and most importantly, large numbers of refugees from Eastern Europe. Because so much of this land had belonged to the *Junker* aristocracy, so in-famously associated with the history of Prussian and Nazi militarism, some kind of reorganization had been advocated in many quarters for some time. Not surprisingly, therefore, most observers did not consider the reform to diverge from the spirit of Potsdam; nor did they assume it was a prelude to collectivization. In fact, many in the West saw it as just punishment for Nazi supporters and 'militarists'-- many of whom had already fled in any case -- and some even argued that it was a necessary response to the the mounting in-flow of refugees from Eastern Europe. One correspondent writing at the end of October already believed what later visitors would confirm: that there was widespread approval in the Soviet Zone for both the land reform and the beginnings of nationalization of industry in Thuringia and Saxony -- "social reform" as he called it, even if did not add up to approval for the Soviet occupation itself.[50] More politically committed observers we will meet in Chapter 3 believed the reforms were part of a larger plan to win over *western* Germans as well. And indeed, the Allies contemplated a similar reform in the Western zones, but failed to develop a clear or the wherewithal to

see it through in the face of organized opposition from German landowners.[51]

This does not mean the land reform wasn't controversial in the West. One problem was that it disrupted prior agreements among the four powers providing for the transfer of foodstuffs from the Soviet Zone to the Western Zones. There were soon complaints in the West that the policy of allowing the "new farmers," as they were called (*Neubauern* in German), to sell their surplus produce for profit in local markets at 'free-prices' had derailed the entire plan, forcing the U.S. -- virtually on its own -- to feed the swollen populations of both the U.S. and British Zones. Others who visited the countryside of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg wondered if the small 15 acre lots were large enough to create a viable new peasantry at all. But it seemed that only one visitor who worried about the politics *behind* the reform, wondering if the non-communist parties had in effect been railroaded by Soviet pressure, was a correspondent/politician who in the long run would express a good deal of critical solidarity with the "socialist achievements" of the GDR, Richard Crossman.

Crossman was an important leftwing Labour MP who had served as the British deputy chief of the Psychological War Division of the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force, and who went on to become a sharp critic of what he saw as the incomplete efforts of the West German government to adequately instruct the younger generation about the dangers of chauvinism and racism. Over the years, he wrote extensively about his visits to the GDR in *New Statesman*, and served as its chief editor in the last years of his life.[52] The following quote gives a sense of frustration with both the favored status of the KPD and the way the land reform was carried out, but most important the sense of *insecurity* all non-communist politicians seemed to feel in Soviet-occupied Berlin:

> He [An S.P.D. "leader] explained how the Russians let each party publish its own newspaper . . . The S.P.D. was working closely with the Communists and the new Conservative Party, the Christian Democratic Union. Pressed for details, he admitted that the Communists naturally were much closer to the Russians. . . Did the Socialists agree with the Land Reform? In principle, yes. Confiscation without compensation of all estates over 250 acres would certainly smash the Junkers--and a lot of other people besides. But was it wise to split up these confiscated estates into 15 acre lots? And was it sensible to undertake this revolution now when the food situation in the Russian zone was already so desperate? Well, the Socialists had their doubts like the Christian Democrats. But what could they do? They had tried to print some mild criticism in their paper; but on that day the Russian censor had deleted six columns. Should the British permit a Socialist Party paper in their sector? Of course, that would be fine; *but editing it would be risky even if you lived in the British sector* [of Berlin]. *Had I heard of abductions? He was sure I would understand.*[53] (emphasis added)

Crossman, tried to qualify this sense of danger by insisting that rumors of "nightly marauding parties" were exaggerations, having more to do with memories of the early traumatic days of the occupation than the reality of autumn 1945, which, as we have seen, was not entirely true. Nevertheless, he conveyed a situation in which political resistance to Soviet policies was more or less futile. The difficulty with such assertions in this early period, of course, was that the Allies too were for the most part keeping the Germans in a strictly consultative role also -- if even that; one American correspondent described the French occupation as virtual colonization: exploitation of industries and resources to pay the salaries and house the families of occupation officials -- a policy that remained unchanged until the French zone was merged economically with Bizonia in early 1949.[54]

But the issue of the disadvantaging of the non-communist parties would not go away, and arguably became more pressing when the Soviets surprised the Allies with yet another policy innovation: the creation of German zonal government, announced in September, but in the works since July.[55] Though leaders of all the political parties, and the rank and file as well, seemed pleased with their "own government," German communists

were given virtually every critical post.[56] In the West, meanwhile, the new government was controversial: for some it suggested the Soviet's continued lead in the "technique of occupation"; others viewed it more negatively, as the latest in a succession of "*faits accomplis*" that the Soviets had presented the Allies, including the beginnings of nationalization of industry, and, most ominously the mounting expulsions of Germans from the Eastern territories.[57] Crossman speculated that it was part of a Soviet plan to more or less loot the Zone and withdraw, leaving the Allies to clean up the mess.[58]

But once again, Crossman's warnings went beyond mainstream media concerns. While the new administration *was* seen as a violation of the accords, which forbid the setting up of separate German zonal governments, the *New York Times* believed its real purpose was to serve as the nucleus of an all-German state secretariat -- from which an all-German government could then be formed, a government made up of bureaucrats with the experience and training to "hit the ground running"; bureaucrats who would not soon forget to whom they owed their positions.[59] The new administration, in effect, might in time create the impressions the Soviets offered the quickest path to German unity, while the Allies (once again) would seem hesitant and indecisive if they objected. This was perhaps the very first time a particular Soviet policy *in the Soviet Zone* raised concerns about their potential influence in *all* of Germany.

American occupation officials tried to quell these concerns the next day, explaining that there was nothing underhanded about the plan, and it had *not* created an actual German government. Germans would head each administration, but the Soviets would retain ultimate authority. The Soviets were indeed "preparing for the eventual transition from an occupation administration to a German administration," but there was *no executive power* in the departments. Moreover, American officials were confident that given the

Russian concept of democracy, "Germans appointed by the Americans in their zone will attain a degree of independence of action long before those in the Russian zone do."[60] The *Times* proceeded to backtrack from the troublesome implications of the initial report, assuring readers to that the Soviets were in fact doing the *same thing* in Germany as the Americans, but from the opposite direction: "the Russians . . . are building from the top down on a zonal basis, while Americans' general idea is to build from the bottom up on a local basis."[61]

But ultimately, their policies *were* different, and *competing*. The American strategy was more conservative: put off the creation of a zonal government as long as possible by building up local German administrations, and thus avoid the accusation of moving to break up Germany. But clearly both sides wanted governments based on their own traditions and belief-systems. The *New York Times* Berlin correspondent Gladwin Hill, however, believed the new admini-stration in the Soviet Zone was yet another example of Soviet initiative and Western inaction:

> If the Russian plan works out this way, it will be another of the many instances where the Russians, sometimes called slow and inefficient, will have got something going while we have been discussing niceties.[62]

Soon after, Hill also noted that in spite of their rapid progress in dismantling German industry, the Soviets were also ahead of the Western allies in *reviving* most basic industries, and that American officials were starting to wonder if the Red Army's more authoritarian methods were not a bad idea after all.[63] He reported that a growing number of U.S. officials believed that current conditions in the U.S. zone ought to be confronted with a bit more "Russian decisiveness"(!)[64] The term implied more than just taking initiative, however. Soviet "centralization" seemed to be preferable to American "decentralization," which in many instances was unworkable: "you cannot run the railroads in a big country

on a county basis, and . . . in carrying too far our basic policy of recreating Germany from the bottom up by local units we sometimes are hamstringing ourselves as much as the Germans."[65] Also part of "Russian decisiveness," was the implied threat of *violence*--rather than wrangle endlessly about how to reeducate Germans, they simply re-started various institutions "with the implicit warning" that any who "peddled any nazism [sic.] . . . might turn up missing."[66] Hill suggested that *authoritarian methods*, such as those of the Soviets, were better suited to "the immediate problems of an occupation," and that Americans had been learning this important lesson from them.[67]

If following the Russian's *methods* might not be a bad idea, another American correspondent, German-born Curt Riess, went even further, wondering whether cooperating with the Soviets in the rapid creation of a centralized German state might not also be advisable.[68] Riess argued that it would greatly benefit the "German worker," and *not* lead to a communist takeover. Part of the reason was that very same "Russian decisiveness": Riess's discussions with workers and communists in Berlin, (both German and Russian) convinced him that Soviet dismantling of industries had so alienated workers that there was *no chance* of them joining the communist cause. Therefore, if the Soviets did not want to lose all credibility in Germany, they must eventually improve conditions in their Zone and unite the country under a regime acceptable to the majority of the working population. Neither the latter nor the Western allies need fear cooperation, because the Soviets, despite their initial successes, were at a clear disadvantage. Like Hill, Riess wanted to calm U.S. readers, but also like him (and the U.S. military authorities as well), he suggested that the German administration in the Soviet Zone -- and the thinking behind it -- ought to be welcomed, not feared.

On September 12, reports from Berlin indicated that the German "cabinet" of the

Soviet Zone was up and running. It contained eleven departments including Agriculture, Education, Industry, Transportation, Communications, Coal and Fuel, Trade, Finance, Labor, Justice, and Health, each with a German director. *The New York Times* was sarcastic about the contrast between "Russian decisiveness" and the ineptness of the Western occupiers: "The Russians announced the establishment of a German Government for their entire occupation zone today *while their allies still continued to discuss when and how to hold local elections*" (emphasis added).[69] Moreover, "allied observers" confirmed the earlier assumption that the new 'cabinet' "would furnish most of the Ministers in the National Government."[70] The Soviet "advantage" in Germany seemed to have turned into outright leadership of the occupation.

Meanwhile, other, more ruthless Soviet behavior in German territory actually proved *less* controversial in four-power relations. Beginning in August, a flood of German refugees expelled from Eastern territories had begun washing into the Soviet Zone, or when the way was blocked, camping out on the borders in horrendous conditions. This was the first disorganized wave of what would become the largest population transfer in world history. Three million of these unfortunate people were in the Soviet Zone by November 1945, six months before a process of more "organized transfers" was initiated.[71] Millions would follow, most of them settling in the Western zones, and one estimate counts the deaths by disease, exposure and mistreatment at over 2,200,000.[72] Nevertheless, at the time, their plight did little to alter the course of occupation politics. Indeed, the misery of the expellees, which first became known to the Western public because of the Allied presence in Berlin, aroused surprisingly little condemnation.

Winston Churchill was one exception, and Crossman another. The latter believed the expulsions threatened to split the alliance. Both attacked the expulsions with unflin-

ching moral condemnation. Crossman's attack on Soviet "resettlement" policies demonstrates the crucial importance of Berlin as a Western window on the Soviet occupation of central Europe.

> The appalling scenes at the Berlin railway stations described by the correspondents are only a tiny incident in these mass expulsions. Berlin is officially a forbidden city for the refugees, and the 10,000 who arrive there daily do so in defiance of General Zhukov's orders. After 24 hours' pause they are forcibly moved on to reception areas in Mecklenburg and Brandenburg, already filled to overflowing. What happens there, or in Saxony, where the population has already been doubled by the arrival of 4,000,000 homeless Germans, remains invisible to Western eyes. *It is only because the seat of Inter-Allied Control happens to be a city inside the Russian zone that we have an inkling of this appalling human tragedy.*[73] (emphasis added)

Crossman went so far as to predict division of Europe into "antagonistic blocs" if Western acquiescence in the expulsions and the Soviet's "wholesale stripping of factories and fields" continued. But what sounded prophetic at first increasingly seemed to morph into the author's personal condemnation of Allied silence and inaction. If the Allies failed to make their protests clear, Crossman warned, they would be forced to "tolerate a solution which will be repudiated by the peoples of the West when they come to see its consequences."[74] In the long run, of course, "hostile blocs" were *not* repudiated. But what was most remarkable about Crossman's observation was that even he could not envision Germany divided along with the continent.

The "solution" which Crossman feared the Western Allies would have to accept, was "a Germany *united* in famine, disease and death . . ." (emphasis added), presumably *not* included in a Western bloc. According to the author, getting tough with the Soviets *might* result in partition, but even that was better than his worst-case scenario: *united* German wasteland, which to him seemed far more likely.[75] Crossman's warning, which he tempered somewhat in a report from Berlin a few weeks later,[76] suggests that in late 1945,

both those who worried about Soviet policy in Germany *and* those who were less critical still understood the future as containing a single German state. As we have seen, it was not yet clear to U.S. officials that the Soviets had determined to ignore the Potsdam accords, at least not technically.[77] At the same time, there was no doubt in the West that the Soviets expected to have a major influence over Germany for some time to come. This general background of assumptions meant that each new policy innovation in the Soviet Zone was evaluated through attempting to understand how it would impact the Western zones and therefore, Western Europe *as a whole*.

The following quote from a British pundit in the center-right weekly *Spectator* makes this more clear. After describing the contradictory policies in the Soviet Zone (social revolution) and the British and American Zones (restoration and resistance to social revolution), he argued that the current situation -- zonal division, on-going socio-economic chaos, and the 'gridlock' of inter-allied government -- prevented *any solution* -- even partition -- in the 'common wasteland' that remained of the former Reich:

> It is possible that each of these policies [Soviet versus Anglo-American] could be applied independently east and west of the Elbe. To a considerable extent this is being done. But it is typical of the Allies' attitude that this is being done under the pretense of treating Germany as an economic whole, and under the division of Germany into occupation zones that were *never intended to serve as a reasonable basis for partition*. Moreover, the machinery of Allied control does not permit even the advantages of two completely independent Germanys. That machinery requires that all questions affecting Germany as a whole should be subject to quadripartite decision by all four Allies. It is impossible to pretend that such subjects as transportation, finance, communications, a central German administration, do not affect Germany as a whole. It is equally impossible to pretend that any practical agreement is possible on such subjects. . . The consequence is that on the most urgent and vital subjects, such as transport, fuel, nutrition, which cannot be treated independently, no practical action is possible. And thus there has arisen that condition of affairs in Germany which is gradually becoming familiar; a completely disorganized area in the middle of Europe, crossed and recrossed by millions of refugees, who starve and perish on their way, supporting an enormous oc-

cupying force, but incapable of making any contribution to European recovery . . . .[78]

The extent of destruction, disorder, and misery limited the imagining of *any* future in Germany. This is not surprising, but given how different the Soviet Zone and the Western zones already seemed to be, it seems remarkable that most western observers *expected* four-power rule to simply blunder onward. Part of the reason for this was the fact that however much the Soviets seemed to be revolutionizing their zone, in 1945-6 it was the French, rather than the Soviets, who took the lead in obstructing efforts to treat Germany as an economic whole.[79]

The term "revolution" did seem appropriate for events in the Soviet Zone in the fall of 1945, but it was much more clear what was being overthrown than what would take its place, not to mention how all these developments would affect four-power rule and Germany as a whole. All the correspondents in Berlin -- and other Western observers -- who wrote about land reform or the first nationalizations of industry, or "Russian decisiveness," or even political repression in the Soviet Zone, saw it all as part of the dreary predicament described in the previous two quotes -- it could not be 'written off' -- at least not yet -- because no solution to Germany's postwar dilemma could be imagined without some sort of four power compromise. Perhaps an *Economist* correspondent was most accurate (and eloquent) in describing the Western sense of the Soviet Zone in the fall of 1945, approximately two months before the first Western correspondents got a first-hand look. Notice how the impact of the social revolution, both immediate and long term, reaches *beyond* the Soviet Zone itself, and yet still remains difficult to fully estimate:

> No matter how the [land] redistribution is carried out, it will certainly have a profound effect on German social history, even though it will lower food production in the immediate future. What is now being socially obliterated is the stratum which used to be the prop of the Hohenzollern empire and which reasserted itself

> under the Weimar Republic through Hindenburg, the gravedigger of the Republic. Together with land reform, nationalisation of industry has been initiated in Thuringia and Saxony, the old strongholds of German Communism. The scope of the nationalisations has, however, not yet been defined. All these sweeping reforms are more than a process of denazification. They represent not merely a political purge, but a profound and probably lasting social upheaval. In the short run the upheaval is already adding to the confusion and turmoil prevailing in eastern Germany. But the future historian will perhaps say that in the year 1945 the iron broom of Russia 'swept away the rubble of feudal survivals' in eastern Germany, just as another invader from the West [ie. Napoleon] swept away a great deal of political junk nearly a century and a half earlier. . . . Whatever the duration and the further policies of the Russian occupation, *it has already impressed itself on Germany's social structure to an extent that cannot easily be ignored even beyond the Russian zone.*[80] (emphasis added)

In the Soviet Zone: December 1945-September 1946

On November 20, 1945, General Dwight D. Eisenhower announced in Chicago that a "correspondent exchange" between the Soviet and American zones was imminent.[81] "He emphasized the good-will existing between American and Russian soldiers" as if the exchange was in part an effort to promote inter-allied cooperation. Eisenhower seemed confident as well that "communism" was not widely popular in Germany. He remarked that despite the domination of German communists in the Berlin government, surveys indicated that the majority of Berliners would support the Social Democrats, with second place going to the Christian Democrats.[82] While some voices in both the U.K. and the U.S. believed the "revolution" in the Soviet Zone held dire consequences for all of Germany and Europe,[83] on the eve of the first American correspondents' tour in December 1945, the dominant view was far more neutral: not only was there limited traction for communism in Germany, but the Soviet zone only posed a problem to the extent that it was part of the "original problem": the division of Germany into occupation zones.The "conflict" in Germany was not East versus West, but, as *New York Times*' pundit Anne O. McCor-

mick described it, a four-way competition centered in Berlin.[84]

This partly explains why an American correspondent could refer to occupation policies in the Soviet Zone as "totalitarian," while at the same time chiding the American occupation authorities *not* for their failure to protest them, but for their own confused occupation policies.[85] Perhaps other factors were more important, however. As mentioned, lack of cooperation by the French was dousing hopes of any sort of administrative or economic unification, and of course there were the overwhelming material problems, which at the time were worse in the Western zones than in the Soviet Zone.[86] The primary focus of all four powers could not have been anything other than the enormous task of keeping order and providing relief for millions of destitute residents and refugees, not to mention denazification and demilitarization. The above author who referred to the Soviet's "totalitarian system" reserved his greatest frustration for the seven different "typical" U.S. administrators in the American Zone with "different and often bitterly conflicting attitudes," the sum result being "confusion and chaos." It turned out only one of these "types" was anti-Russian: comprised of individuals who feared that General Eisenhower was planning a withdrawal that would leave "Radical Germans" who would make Germany a "Russian puppet state."[87] A Berlin correspondent, meanwhile, wondered if the Western Allies would not have been better off leaving Berlin entirely to the Soviets, mainly for practical purposes: "the inevitably quicker procedure that one-nation government would have ensured could have enabled the wheels of urgently necessary reconstruction to begin to function with more alacrity."[88] McCormick, meanwhile, complained that the U.S. really had no policy at all, simply a series of punishments:

> A purge [of former Nazis] is not a policy. It only clears the ground for policy. It is time that negative directives should be counterbalanced by something positive. No defeated nation of Germany's size and potentiality was ever so completely in the power of its conquerors. No nation, we have kept telling ourselves, is so easily

led. Where is it being led?[89]

The answer remained unclear. McCormick was certain that the "old economy is wrecked" and equally certain that pastoralization, recently advocated by U. S. Secretary of Treasury Henry A. Morgenthau Jr., was not feasible. McCormick only hinted at what must happen instead, and then only with reference to the U.S. zone, again reminding how discrete and compartmentalized zonal government remained. Only in Berlin did the competition between all four powers emerge into daylight. It was there, she wrote, that they constantly eyed each others' policies and tried to be "more drastic, more farsighted, more realistic, more efficient--always more something--than the others."[90]

An inkling of where all of this "outdoing" might actually lead became visible in the reports of the first correspondents' tour of the Soviet Zone in December 1945. Headlines in both New York and London ominously suggested "spreading Communism" and the use of "Soviet methods," respectively,[91] and, predictably, this involved introducing "Soviet methods in farming and industry," as well as compulsory teaching of Russian in schools.[92] Gladwin Hill, however, suggested both the Soviets' flexibility toward the occupied population, *and* their unwillingness to violate interallied agreements -- openly at least. In the unique circumstance of four-power occupation of Germany, it seemed that communism itself had to be a flexible concept as well, designed to appeal to German hopes for a national renewal:

> While the zone is far from 'communized,' communism is being organized as a positive political entity and is making more spectacular strides in the Russian zone than the institution of democracy in the Western zones. . . The Russian watch word is 'Potsdam'-- meaning the terms of the Potsdam Agreement--but the Russians are not letting quadripartite problems block the establishment of a regime designed to stand on its own two feet if necessary.[93]

The apparent progress toward a "stand-alone regime," if not communism itself,

might not have been entirely unwelcome in some quarters of the West given recent events -- including the apparent drift and chaos of four-power rule. But Hill was certainly expressing concern that the Soviets could use their early successes to gain control of -- or least major influence over in -- *all* of Germany, while at the same time maintaining their alliance with the Allies. A number of scholars later believed this was exactly Stalin's initial hope.[94] But in truth, the first correspondents to tour the Soviet Zone were more interested in the *practical effects* of the Soviet rule in restoring economic life. What they found was dubbed a "going concern," a workable system that, for the time being, might actually be *superior* to liberal democracy. In an editorial summarizing the findings of this first trip, *The New York Times* explained that "achievement toward Communist control, which was to be expected," occurred simultaneously with "achievement toward restoration, reconstruction and even self-government, [ie. the German zonal administration] which is winning German respect."[95] The comparison with the seeming inaction in the Western zones remained striking.

The correspondents, eight in all, spent eight days traveling in Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, visiting sites they had selected in advance, even if some had been "strongly suggested" by their hosts. They were accompanied by Soviet officers, "guides," every-where they went, but were free to talk to Germans on the street, as well as at "tour stops." According to Hill, there was no evidence that anyone interviewed had rehearsed their answers. What people told them indicated that the new German administration was far advanced of anything in the West, but somewhat contradictorily, was under far tighter control from the occupation authorities also, particularly in the managing of the economy.

Hill observed that this control was producing results: "greater abundance" in both industry and agriculture. Apparently "extensive" reparations removals had not perma-

nently hurt the essential economy. This did not mean that life in the Soviet Zone was significantly better than in the U.S. Zone, however; the edge was more psychological:

> The Russian zone looks much like the American; ruined cities and a bareboned economy and grim-visaged Germans plodding daily through the mire of their self-made misery. But there is a brisk if limited activity in commerce and reconstruction and the Germans seem to derive some stimulus from the Russians' vigorous, positive regime.[96]

Hill heard many a German complaint about "the Russians" nevertheless, along with the wishful thinking that the Americans might yet return and "save them." He dismissed such remarks as not unlike Germans in the U.S. zone who spread rumors that "the British are going to take over."[97] and in any case, he did not find the Red Army to be playing much of a direct role. Rather, they were basically a background presence to insure that all orders were obeyed. But Hill's most important observation was that Soviet practice derived from their *patience to remain in Germany indefinitely*: they were busy installing German-communist allies with a "direct line to Moscow," even as the Americans seemed to be making arrangements to "leave the Germans to their own devices." Soviet patience meant they could keep a "gun to the Germans back" indefinitely, and they could leave much more of the work to them than could the Americans.[98]

But the Soviet occupation also ran more smoothly because from top to bottom it was strictly the affair of the "fighting army"--unlike in the American Zone, there was no difference between combat forces and "military government specialists." This made for less debate and more efficient action. For Hill, once again, it was evidence that a more *autocratic system* was better suited for the tasks of occupation:

> One correspondent's perhaps naive question to a Russian general on whether there was any problem with the occupation troops about morale or a desire to go home elicited an ominously laconic: 'No; we don't have any trouble with that,' a reply that would whistle like a chill Siberian wind in the ears of any recalcitrantly disposed Russian GI. . . . Such a regime automatically yields more immediately an ef-

ficient military government than the more laissez-faire American methods.[99]

But there was more to their achievement than ruthless efficiency. In Saxony, industry and agriculture were reportedly at "normal levels," with actual surpluses in grains and potatoes, and 80% of the factories operating. Both advances had been accomplished through "a completely planned economy," unlike the looser U.S. system of "German managed price distribution controls." While the author acknowledged that the economic "advancement" of the zone was at least partly related to natural advantages over the Western zones (a point which was noted above, but qualified by Fulbrook with disadvantages caused by the loss of Eastern territories and the limitations on trade with the Western zones[100]), it was clear to him that the "tight economic planning" had led to a revival "farther advanced" than in the American zone.[101] What's more, the Soviets were apparently open to future revision of their plan. The correspondents were told that the planned economy was *temporary*: officials hinted that agriculture might be "return[ed] to private enterprise" once the "present emergency situation is over," and industry might also be "reprivatized" after "several years." Later research strongly suggests that none of this was ever seriously considered,[102] but Hill was confident that expropriation of Nazi-owned industries was *not* to be understood as a "broad program of nationalization." He could be confident of this at the time because the Soviets actually still held title to all expropriated industries; they had not yet been transferred to any German governmental authority.[103]

It seemed the communism the Soviets were "spreading" was more of a *mixed system*, both economically and politically: not only did the "social revolution" appear far from permanent, but communists did *not* dominate in the German administration either. In the randomly chosen working-class district of Merseberg, Saxony Anhalt, the German communists led the Social Democrats 3:2 in party membership, in the whole of Saxony

they led by 4:3. The zonal administration was similarly divided: as we have seen, Communists had been placed in many key spots by the Soviets, but the other parties were well represented also, and "many officials in the former American-occupied area are orginal American appointees."[104] One apparent result of this mixed government was a rather moderate view towards the Red Army itself, or so Hill gathered from German bystanders in random encounters.[105]

The correspondents' trip was big news in both England and the Western zones of Germany, but reports on it differed considerably. *The Times* of London emphasized the regime's popularity among the peasants who received their own land, but also factory workers' new say in the work process (if not in economic planning itself) due to the state-run "vertical union." But on the other hand, there was also more detail on the bitterness of the German populations to-wards living conditions and reparations: many felt "plundered" by the "Russians."[106] The Labour weekly *New Statesman and Nation* emphasized the workers' new voice as well, suggesting that they were finding life under Red Army rule tolerable, and were "being given increasing responsibility for managing their own affairs." German "complaints" were scarcely mentioned here, though Soviet denazification, compared to that in the British zone, was assumed to be ruthless.[107]

The German monthly *Die Gegenwart* extracted the same basic information from the visit, though it cited a correspondent from the *New York Herald Tribune*.[108] Like Hill, this author understood the immense Soviet advantage in terms of geography: "Even those of our people [U.S] who are not waiting to be sent home have no idea how long their country will have an interest in the difficult problems of occupying Germany. The Russians are not bothered by such uncertainties."[109] However, it was not at all clear to him that Soviet policies must lead to a competition among the occupying powers:

> After a comparison of the basic principles upon which the occupation politics of the Russians are based with those of the Democracies, the American newspaper came to this conclusion: 'If both [sides] would study the methods of the other more basically, the occupation of Germany could become a bridge, rather than an abyss between East and West. However, for this it is necessary that both [sides] recognize that a free flow of information is as wholesome as it is indispensable. One hopes that in Moscow, as well as elsewhere, the clear lesson of the contemporary situation will be learned.'[110]

Surely the inclusion of this quote suggests that Western Germans were also worrying about increasing divergence between the Soviet and Western zones, and the Soviet penchant for secrecy in theirs, of which numerous complaints would follow. Conversely, the London *Times* quoted Hill's observations of both Soviet staying-power and America's haste to depart, suggesting that a broad, long-term commitment ought to be the West's *first* priority, rather than learning from the Soviets.[111]

It was not long before *The Times* sent its own "Special Correspondent" to Saxony.[112] Over the years, the British press used this designation for anonymous contributors who gained access to the region without applying for entry as licensed newspeople. Because the Soviets (and later, the SED) rarely granted free travel to any Western journalist who lacked a proven leftist track record, and because they could refuse reentry to any critical author who identified his- or herself in subsequent reports, "special correspondent" -- from various British news services -- continued to report from the GDR as late as the mid-1960s, and even when attending the bi-annual Leipzig fair, the one occasion when virtually any Western visitor could obtain a visa. The first such author reported from the ruined city of Dresden on January 20, 1946, less than a year after it was destroyed in a firestorm created by American and British bombing.

The correspondent delivered three broad conclusions, phrased in different terms, but sounding about equally critical to Hill's. First of all there were "certain radical changes

. . . in the economic structure," which did *not* amount to a "nationalization program," because, according to official statements, they did *not* involve *all* of the zone's industry. The second impression was of revival and "reconstruction," which the author believed was "being pushed energetically by *the Germans*." (emphasis added)[113] The third was "that for the ordinary German, life in the Russian zone is much the same as it is for the ordinary German in the other zones."[114]

Also like the previous American visitors, Special Correspondent did not seem to link the prominence of German communists in key positions to any sinister plan to coerce the population. Indeed, the correspondent believed they owed their positions at least in part to the lack of qualified Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, or Liberals. Meanwhile, away from politics, the "ordinary German" was fairly well fed (at least as well as Berliners) and farmers were even better off, still able to produce and sell surpluses (that is, anything produced above the government-stipulated produce quotas) at "free market prices," which were generally twice as high as the cost of food rations. All in all, the correspondent agreed with Berlin correspondents of the previous fall that the Soviet occupation had been significantly milder than expected.[115] What complaints there were, however, seemed already to suggest the problem of contradictory Soviet goals in Germany--specifically whether they could continue present policies of reparations and land reform *and* also press on with economic recovery.

> Many peasants who have got land and little else are not entirely happy about land reform in its present stage, and the opinion is expressed among business men that the industrial recovery of Saxony would be much speedier but for the amount of machinery moved eastward.[116]

A Reuters correspondent was permitted to travel into Brandenburg, the predominantly agricultural hinterland of Berlin, about two weeks later.[117] After a week's visit, the

correspondent was fairly positive about the land reform, writing nothing about peasants' complaints. In Brandenburg alone some 220 large estates had been seized, totaling 754,000 hectares, and then distributed amongst 74,000 families. To the suggestion sometimes heard that the Soviets planned eventually to collectivize the new small farms, the correspondent strongly disagreed. The unsuccessful collectivization drive in Russia after the October Revolution argued against it, and in any case the presumed goal of breaking the power of the *Junker* class had already been achieved.[118]

This defense of the land reform fit in with a considerable expression of approval for the measure in the British and the U.S. Presses. However "socialist" land redistribution may have been, the *Junker* class was almost universally blamed for enabling the Nazi seizure of power, and breaking their economic and political domination of rural Eastern Germany was deemed a crucial precondition for establishing democracy. As suggested above, there was more controversy over how it should be carried out than whether it was justifiable or ultimately beneficial. This view fit in with the general sense that the Soviets were competing with the British and Americans to run the most progressive occupation, and that their methods would understandably be different, both in terms of ideology and strictness. But the sense of a Soviet advantage, particularly given their apparent determination to remain in Germany indefinitely, was bound to worry the Western media at some point --- particularly given the widespread misery and overpopulation in the Western zones. In February 1946, both American and British opinion on the Soviet occupation suddenly turned negative -- for the first time they described "communism" as something threatening and negative, rather than vigorous, energetic, or based on shared power or partial socialization. And it was a speech by Gladwin Hill, the very author who had initially hesitated to attack the Soviets, that led the way.

Over a month after his visit to the Soviet Zone, Hill made a speech in Times Hall in New York City, warning that it was "'only a matter of time' until most Germans in the Russian sector become Communists."[119] Meanwhile, his London *Times* counterpart was claiming Soviet occupation authorities aimed at "forcing [the SPD] into a united labour movement with the Communists . . . under Russian-sponsored Communist domination,"[120] while another British commentator sharply attacked the reports of "special correspondents," both in the press and on the airwaves, for giving a distorted picture of events in the Soviet Zone. His biggest peeve was with the reporting of the land reform -- he was not the first or last to allege that it was deliberately planned to fail and lead to forced collectivization.[121] At the root of these complaints and warnings was the fear that the Soviets might achieve a "communized society" in their zone *with genuine popular support*. However, what this would mean for the rest of Germany remained obscure, as did the appropriate Western response. Hill echoed the earlier complaints of McCormick -- that the Allies seemed to take only punitive steps against the Germans, while the Soviets offered a "reeducation moving forward in a straight line."[122]

The next tour of U.S. reporters took place in late March, just days before the announcement of the merger in Thuringia of the German Communists (KPD) with the Social Democrats (SPD). It was swiftly followed by similar announcements in the other four *Länder*. Within three weeks a "unification congress" in Berlin was held, and the Socialist Unity Party (SED) was formed on April 22.[123] As expected, the leaders of the Western SPD rejected the merger, and in return their party was declared illegal in the Soviet Zone. The March tour was the first since Winston Churchill's famed "iron curtain speech" at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri (March 5). U.S. President Truman did not give overt support, but his sharing the stage with the former British prime minister clearly in-

dicated sympathy. *Time* introduced its report on the tour on April 1 with the phrase "the iron curtain across Europe parted a little last week," giving a sense of the immediate resonance of the concept.[124]

New York Times correspondent Jack Fleischer, however, called the Soviet program in the zone "socialization" rather than "communization," and this was telling, for his report made a fair effort to look into the progress of what appeared to be a clear alternative to liberal democracy. Once again, "authoritarian efficiency" was clearly producing results. At the same time, however, the clear lack of any real democratic process was more worrisome than before. Fleischer brought it out into the open in two rather chilling statements, one by an SPD leader in Thuringia, and one by "a nearsighted professor" in the industrial town of Gera.

The former reported that the merger of the two leftist parties was basically a "done deal," and that there had been *no consultation* of the rank and file. Making no excuses, he said only that it was unwise to allow a general vote on an issue so important. Later in Gera, the professor stated that "in any case 'democracy is not the goal but the way to achieve the goal. As I have repeatedly said, the goal is socialism.'"[125] Fleischer, however, like Hill and others before him, went on to demonstrate that "socialist praxis" was deeply engaged with the concrete problems of the reconstruction and production:

> The nearsighted professor's ideas, in muted form, were everywhere in Thuringia. Farmers were tackling the problems of shortages, tractors, horses, oxen, fertilizers and seeds, not individually, but in collective groups and according to plan. Workers' advisory councils functioned in the factories, conferring with commercial and technical directors on all operations.[126]

And the results? Industry had risen from just 31% of prewar capacity the previous July to 91%. Though most products were still earmarked for Soviet use (such as the cars built at the revived BMW plant in Eisenach), and at least some factory managers re-

mained in favor of private enterprise, the overall effect seemed to be positive. Fleischer was generally impressed by how well-off the people appeared; food stores seemed fairly well stocked (as did "farmers' larders,"); and the population well clothed. True there was grumbling -- especially about the U. S. Army's departure the previous summer -- as one woman put it: "The sunshine left with the American troops." But once again, the bottom line was that "Russian decisiveness" gave the Soviets the edge in Germany where it mattered most -- in making the economy work again:

> The Russian zone is far ahead of other zones as a going concern. This is the reason: the Russians know just what they want in Germany. The Western Allies continue to be vague and confused.[127]

Time and again in the first year of occupation, progress in the Soviet Zone was a reminder of how little the Western Allies seemed to be accomplishing in their respective zones. Part of the problem surely *was* confusion: not only did the three powers lack a common policy for economic revival, but different arms of the U. S. government and military themselves disagreed on when and how quickly to revive industrial production. Though pastoralization was now clearly off the table, advocates of limited industrialization still had enough say in the U.S. government to force a compromise: sticking to the prescriptions of the military document known as JCS 1067, that left most industry idle in a period where the refugee crisis was mounting and the defeated population remained unemployed, hungry, and despondent.

Another reason for the limited progress in the Western zones was more philosophical. Inaction, as noted by contemporary U. S. political scientist Leonard Krieger, was rooted in the liberal democratic ideals of the U.S. and Great Britain. They eschewed any direct intervention in the political or social structure of Germany, believing that such matters must be left to the Germans themselves. *Nonintervention*, that is, concentrating on

basic law and order and the destruction of the country's military potential, seemed "negative" in that it only defined the outer boundaries of the permissible, while hesitating to offer programs for positive change.[128] "Laissez-faire" as noted above, was how some correspondents characterized it, implying a need for more active engagement with German officials and the broader population.

But as we have seen, American pundits *also* found denazification in the U.S. Zone to be symptomatic of a negative policy in Germany as well. There was something to this view, for the U. S. military in early July 1945 began a sweeping program of "mandatory removal" of Nazi party members from government and the private sphere as well, allowing former Nazis to work only in menial positions. One German historian referred to the results as "full internment camps and empty offices,"[129] and along the way there was clearly both individual injustice and a loss of badly needed expertise in government and administration.[130] This policy had been dramatically reversed just weeks before the March 1946 correspondents tour, placing responsibility for the fate of former Nazis into the hands of German tribunals (under U.S. supervision), but the sense that mainly small fry were getting caught and punished while the big fishes escaped was widely shared -- even after Germans took over the process. Recent research has suggested that the Soviets, despite their reputation for thorough and even ruthless denazification, had similar problems with "empty offices," which in turn forced them to make similar compromises. But the important difference was that their policies of social revolution existed alongside their early removal of Nazis in public and private life, while *nothing* seemed to exist alongside the initial, similarly thorough policies in the Western zones.

In Britain, meanwhile, there was also considerable criticism of the "defeatism" of Anglo-Allied policy. In the Spring of 1946, *New Statesman and Nation* correspondent

Kingsley Martin echoed earlier assertions this way: "the Russians have a social dynamic; while the British and Americans in Berlin only offer something vague called democracy."[131] Moreover, Martin found British rule in Germany as not just overly strict, but humiliating, likening the treatment of Germans to that of the "niggers" in India.[132] Meanwhile in the U.S. Zone, there remained the policy of recasting administration from the local level upwards, deemed slow and ineffective from on, as we have seen. What progress there was seemed much smaller-scale and dispersed compared to the more dramatic initiatives in the Soviet Zone.[133]

Three days after the second U.S. correspondents' tour, *Life* magazine published the "visual results": "the first good photographs of the Russian zone of Germany," as the editor called them.[134] The brief article again stressed the progressive nature of the land reform, describing how the Soviets had "struck . . . heavily at the feudalism" of *Junker* power.[135] A photograph of a humbly dressed "Silesian farmer" standing by a wood stake marking the boundary of his new 20 acre allotment did not even mention that he was refugee from the eastern territories transferred to Poland. The article referred to the Soviet Zone as "eastern Germany," also suggesting ignorance of the great loss of eastern territory.

The opposite page gave a different sense of old and new, conqueror and conquered, with a photo of a "fine China artist" at the Meissen porcelain works near Dresden, and two of his recent creations—porcelain plates with twin portraits of Dresden's Red Army commandant and his wife, which he had worked on for four months. The editors noted that the famous porcelain works was now state-owned and operating completely for the benefit of the Soviets--all its production being shipped to the USSR. Every indication, however, was that work went on in its traditional way, if not at full capacity.

Life's editors implied that both the land reform and control of the Meissen works were only to be expected, though there was no comment about economic progress or the popular mood in the Soviet Zone.

Not until the summer did a correspondent attempt to put Soviet policies and actions together and theorize a precise plan lying behind them -- for both the Soviet Zone and Germany in general.[136] Dana Adams Schmidt of the *New York Times* observed a plebiscite on expropriation of Nazi-owned businesses in the Saxon market town of Plauen. He witnessed a tremendous publicity campaign, and no outward signs of opposition. The vote was far from unanimous, but the purpose of the vote, as he observed, was *not* to measure approval for "socialization" of industry, but to ratify an *already completed expropriation*. Despite reports of "inequities" -- not only had non-Nazis been wrongly expropriated, but "former Nazis who have affiliated with the new Einheit party [SED] have insinuated themselves into control of plants listed for transfer" --Schmidt judged the results as a major Soviet success. All that remained to be seen was whether the expropriated enterprises would be "socialized or sold to politically unincriminated new private owners."[137]

Like others before him, Schmidt wanted to make clear that the Soviets were not proceeding on a straight path towards "socialization." He believed the their vagueness about ultimate objectives was *not* designed to conceal efforts to create a communist German state, but to win *indirect control* of Germany by quickly creating a nation of small holders and producers before their British and American counterparts were able to make the Germans a better "counter-offer." The "flood of propaganda" seemed designed to turn the vote into a referendum "of the general economic and political order,"[138] which would then give legitimacy to this larger plan. For all the problems surrounding the referendum --

including rumors spread by "disgruntled critics," who warned that semi-coerced signatures of factory employees would be used in the future to avoid plebiscites altogether[139] -- something that no reliable Western sources could confirm due to their "limited access" to the Soviet Zone.[140] Expropriation would eventually be approved by a wide majority of the zone's inhabitants.[141]

His final report on July 14, a kind of summary of an entire series penned over a week in Saxony, suggested that the Soviets' plan would invariably move their zone farther and farther away from the occupation objectives of the British and Americans.[142] But communism was neither the means *nor* ends of these developments. And because of the potential broad appeal of their economic plans they might gain "control" -- meaning greatest influence -- not just in their zone but "eventually perhaps in all of Germany." For the first time, a Western correspondent claimed to have an uncovered the Soviets' "master plan" for Germany, and it seemed both brilliant and seductive indeed.

Schmidt wrote as the Paris meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers was coming to a close, having made no progress on the 'German Question.' Though the public knew nothing about it at the time, by the opening of the second session of the conference in June, U.S. Secretary of State James F. Byrnes became convinced that the Soviets were *not* primarily motivated by security interests, and instead had imperial ambitions that had to be contained. Their demands for four-power control of the Ruhr came as the United States and Britain were already discussing economic unification and the possible unity of all three Western zones in a federated state.[143] Schmidt believed the Soviets already anticipated increasing unity among the Western zones, while their zone would continue on its different trajectory. However, this did not mean "communization"; rather, the Soviets seemed to be creating a *petit bourgeois* society -- made up predominantly of small pro-

perty holders. Looking ahead to the problems this would create for amalgamating the Soviet and Western Zones, Schmidt believed the contrast between this new "society of the small man" would seem increasingly attractive to Western Germans, given the conditions that prevailed there, and the Allies would be under pressure to extend this new social system "throughout Germany."[144]

Schmidt believed that because the history and conditions of Germany were so different than their own, the Soviets were wisely designing their new society accordingly. "Socialization": land reform, expropriation of businesses -- even the freezing of all bank deposits made before the Nazi surrender -- were all designed to create new property owners and investors who would be grateful to the new German administration. Only a small amount of property was actually in-tended to be socialized. He discerned a similar process in the political realm.

Neither the merger of the KPD and SPD, nor their cooperation with the bourgeois parties in in the anti-fascist bloc, were a prelude to the creation of a dictatorship, but part of a more cooperative regime, representing not simply a union against fascism, but a commitment to containing inter-party conflict and preelection "mudslinging" behind closed doors, "with the help of a Russian officer."[145] However undemocratic this "limited democracy" would seem to later visitors (not to mention the leaders of the Eastern bourgeois parties), for the time being its merits included a close coordination between party activists and "German officials," regardless of party affiliation, and a positive disposition among the "German elite" toward the Soviet authorities. The latter had apparently earned it by how they had treated them. Schmidt noted that while "ordinary Germans" had a more negative image of the typical Red Army soldier, the German elite and middle classes had reasons to be somewhat more favorably disposed to the occupation. Politicians from

all parties had been permitted "luxurious residences and auto-mobiles and ration cards in the highest category."[146] Meanwhile, the early revival of the arts noted by previous visitors was backed by the genuine affinity Red Army officers displayed for German cultural life, which "gained sympathy of many German intellectuals and artists."[147]

Schmidt also believed Soviet economic policies were a contributing factor to the slightly higher living standards compared to the Western zones--which by mid-1946 included an increased volume of consumer goods and lower unemployment. What some observers put down to the luck or geography Schmidt, like more sympathetic visitors we will meet in Chapter Three, credited in part to a Soviet "master plan":

> . . it is also due to measures for stimulating peasant initiative such as a free market for over-quota products and to the deflationary effect of freezing bank accounts, which also helped to keep the black market down, and to Russian assistance in reviving industry.[148]

Certainly these measures had helped in a most difficult situation, but a skeptic could argue with equal persuasion that they were designed to eliminate savings and channel money to the central government and through it the planned economy.[149] Schmidt apparently believed such assumptions were media distortions -- ultimately Soviet censorship was to blame. Raise the "iron curtain," he insisted, and much misrepresentation in the West would end.[150]

The "curtain," of course, was not raised. After an initial postwar revival of the spring Leipzig fair in March, 1946, there was no fall fair, and the Western media only gained access to the Soviet Zone again in September for district elections. Western reporters were stunned at this major defeat for the Soviets and their German Communist allies. The SED, given every advantage in terms of material resources, access to the airwaves, and even the arrest of some of their opponents,[151] and the rejection of some LDP and

CDU candidates by the military authorities "because of alleged Nazi links,"[152] managed just 57% of the vote throughout the Soviet Zone. In many constituencies, including the two largest Saxon cities Leipzig and Dresden, the SED did not even gain a majority.[153] Opposition leaders credited the stronger-than-expected showings of both rival parties, the Liberals and Christian Democrats, to the widespread knowledge of Soviet favoritism.[154] Naimark has argued that the strangely large vote for the Liberal Party (which advocated a more or less laissez-faire capitalism) was a protest by former SPD voters. A *New York Times* correspondent assumed the vote was a protest as well, but seemed to believe that only the 313,000+ voided votes represented frustrated SPD supporters.[155]

The elections were surrounded by a series of Soviet actions that suggested a new level of exploitation of German people, enterprises, and resources. If some Western observers already had been aware that policies to revive the German economy were in conflict with massive dismantling, the "new wave" of Soviet policies would make this all the more clear. First came the seizure or purchase at "distress prices" of some 200 of the "most important industrial works" in the zone.[156] These would become Soviet-owned enterprises, (German acronym SAG), operated by German workers to produce reparations for shipment to the USSR. This was followed in October by the deportation of some 3,000 skilled German workers to the USSR for periods of up to five years, and the announcement that industrial dismantling, which was supposed to have ended in May, was to continue until January 1, 1947.[157] Late in October, representatives of workers in the glass and optical factories in Jena sent a telegram to the Allied Control Council in Berlin, worried that Soviet reparations from Jena had triggered fears of "vast unemployment."[158] According to "an informed United States source in Berlin," Western reports on both the deportations of the 3,000 workers and dismantling were the reason the Soviets barred a

group of Western correspondents from visiting the Zone on November 12.[159] Coming in the wake of further electoral setbacks in October -- this time at the *Land* level -- the ban and announcements of massive troop demobilizations fueled speculation that a major revision in Soviet policy would be forthcoming.

The Soviet Zone Closed: November 1946-February 1947

Instead, there was a new theory about the Soviet strategy in the Western media, and an explanation for the correspondent's ban that seemed a bit too convenient. Soviet Commandant Marshall Vasiliy Sokolovsky told General Joseph McNarney, U.S. Supreme Commander in Germany, that troop demobilizations meant "transport facilities would be clogged, and it would be 'dangerous for correspondents to operate in the Russian zone.'"[160] If the Soviets were indeed trying to conceal their weakened position there, Sokolovsky was true enough about the demobilizations, reports of which reached Berlin in early December. News of them triggered the new theory: that the Soviets had given up their bid for political power in Germany, settling instead for a quick withdrawal and all the resources they could take with them. Curt Riess's original assumption that the Germans would never accept communism stood vindicated:

> It becomes apparent now, as suspected earlier, that the Russians had written off the Germans as bad material for communism long before the Berlin elections. Accordingly the Russians apparently have made plans to drop their efforts to conciliate the Germans and instead drain all possible resources out of the country as quickly as possible. . . . Had the Russians hoped any longer to form a profitable association with the Germans it is unlikely that they would have gone to all the trouble to transport workers, machinery, etc., to Russia. This practice has disrupted production a long time, caused unrest among the workers and wrecked a large segment of the German economy.[161]

In truth, the Soviets had *not* given up on the Germans. Instead, they were pondering new approaches to "winning over" the population, even as they continued to "drain off" re-

approaches to "winning over" the population, even as they continued to "drain off" resources.

One new approach they considered was reinstating the SPD in the Soviet Zone, much to the chagrin of the German Communists. In a critical meeting in January, 1947, Stalin worried that the ban of the SPD "by the occupying power" made the SED look weak, and encouraged Ulbricht and company fearlessly to confront Kurt Schumacher and the Western SPD through "counter-propaganda." Ulbricht countered that the SED must first "strengthen our ranks" before even contesting the SPD in Berlin.[162] Stalin did not insist on the point, but it was clear from the encounter that the Soviet leadership desired a German-wide struggle between the SED and Western SPD, the ultimate goal being an all-German government -- as soon as possible. Failing that, a worst case scenario "in the near future," would be a separate East German state.[163] In the meantime, the SED was promised an end to dismantling and reduction of troop levels, with reparations "deferred to a later date," all in the hopes of winning over "German workers."[164]

Of course, all of this was unknown in the contemporary West. The Soviet Zone remained closed to Western visitors until the first week of March 1947. However, enough information was available in Berlin for the Western press to speculate about a coming Soviet political offensive to regain momentum in Germany. Around the turn of 1947 reports reached Berlin of mounting desertions from the Red Army, but stranger and more worrisome was news from Dresden that demobilized soldiers were being put in plain clothes and dispersed amongst the population, "with no visible means of support." Unconfirmed reports suggested more of the same through-out the Soviet Zone, apparently part of a ruse to conceal actual troop strength in Germany. These rumors and the return from Moscow of "chief assistant" Colonel Sergei Tui'lpanov, a man far friendlier with the

Western Allies than his former boss, Major General F. E. Bokov (whom he replaced), suggested to at least one American correspondent that the Soviets wanted to make a push for unification before their troop levels declined markedly.[165]

Further provocative evidence came in new initiatives by the Soviet Command toward the SED's political rivals -- the Eastern CDU and LPD -- suggesting that the Soviets were attempting to strengthen both the SED *and* the bloc parties. The SED would remain the majority, while the CDU and LPD would play the role of "loyal opposition." According to *New York Times* Berlin correspondent Delbert Clark, all three parties were being given more leeway to criticize openly the occupation authorities, while leaders of both the CDU and LPD were spending more time at Soviet headquarters in Karlshorst, receiving "frequent conciliatory kisses."[166]

In February 1947, as the Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference drew nearer, *Newsweek*'s Berlin correspondent James P. O'Donnell combined the kernel of previous speculation on Soviet motives with more recent developments and divined out of them a sophisticated plan to maintain Soviet strength in Germany regardless of the conference's outcome.[167] Should an agreement on unification be achieved, he believed the Soviets were equipping the SED for "the great political battle for the Reich"; should the conference fail, he believed they were equally prepared to separate the Soviet Zone from the West permanently and integrate it into "the Russian system."[168] Once again, it was movements of key personnel to and from Moscow, including feared NKVD secretary Lavrenti Beria, that indicated a major reorganization was underway in the Zone--this time not just in terms politics, but of the government bureaucracy and the economy as well.

The announcement of the end of dismantling on January 15, marked the beginning.[169] According to O'Donnell, it was intended as a gesture of goodwill to both the Ger-

mans and the Allies. The monthly averages of Soviet reparations out of current German production had been enormous, but the Soviets now had access to so much more production through plants they had "purchased" in the Zone (the SAGs, 40% of the total), that they could apparently cease requisitions from German-owned factories with-out any real cost to themselves. A dramatic political "reorganization" followed. O'Donnell defied earlier speculation and insisted, correctly as it turned out, that the Soviets, despite grave doubts, had determined *not* to abandon the SED, but give them "one more chance" instead. Now they were instructing Ulbricht to "begin talking and thinking like a German and to forget that he had ever been in Moscow." This was why he was given the privilege of announcing both the end of reparations and the Soviet promise "to raise the level of zonal industry to half again what it was at the height of Hitler's power." But there was more still--the SED was even permitted to "intimate" that the Soviets might restore some of the eastern German territories lost to Poland![170]

The reorganization would not touch the structure of the German zonal government, however. The "solid" representation of the SED there gave the Soviets "reliable cadres in all branches of the government" in the event of unification. The question O'Donnell did not ask or answer, though, was how the reorganization would play to the popu-lation of the Soviet Zone. Clearly the Soviets were attempting to strengthen the SED and its rivals so they might meet representatives of the Western Zones on an equal basis, but barring a military coup, their strength had to be based ultimately on popular appeal.

The question of the popular mood in the Soviet Zone in the winter of 1946-7 was difficult to answer, not simply because of the ban on Western journalists, but because of the disjuncture between popular support for economic reforms, and apparent dislike of

the SED. One American correspondent who attempted to gauge it was J. Emlyn Williams of the *Christian Science Monitor*. "Through events and conversations with Germans from this area . . ." Williams surmised that the population was not truly accepting "Rus-sian ideas," and that a negative, even cynical attitude was abroad in the Zone.[171] Despite "strenuous efforts" to improve material conditions, the Soviets had clearly not won the Germans over.

It wasn't just the election results of the previous fall, but the more recent reaction of the population to the Soviet concessions. All these "official announcements" were understood as empty, and even if they proved to actually have benefits, they were only expected to be temporary. The end of dismantling meant little to the population: "Unfortunately the Germans knew that in the majority of cases there was no more to be taken away from these factories, so that it was a rather a hollow concession."[172] The land reform seemed at last to be doubted also: "When the German peasant receives a few young pigs or other animals he is not too happy because he fears that when they are big and fat enough they will be taken away from him."[173] And no one was buying the attempt to improve the SED's image either:

> It has become something of an ironical joke to read the announcement that through 'the intervention of the S.E.D.,' the Soviet authorities have decided upon a certain beneficial policy. Most Germans see in this only an attempt to boost the Russian-sponsored party.[174]

The author believed that all these recent efforts demonstrated just how far the Soviets were from bolstering the party's image. Regarding the Oder-Neisse line, however, Williams, unlike O'Donnell, was certain the Soviets would *never* change their minds. Not only did Polish opinion mitigate against giving the Germans "what they most desired . . ," but so did American and British support for the return of some eastern land. Williams

was among the first to see the potential advantages the occupying powers could gain by stirring German nationalism, but for the time being such feelings seemed to be working mainly *against* the Soviets.

But Williams most important observation (and advice) for American readers grown anxious about the Soviet position in Germany had more to do with economics than nationalism. He did *not* believe the West should try to and match the Soviets' reforms through "state control and a planned economy," as several left-leaning English pundits had. Williams' counseled readers not to confuse the "leftist trend[s]" in Germany and Europe with support for the Soviets.[175] Following O'Donnell, he believed Germans had grown skeptical, due to their failures to "deliver the goods" or back up their "empty promises." But neither he nor O'Donnell tried to predict how their "strenuous efforts" at winning over the Germans might effect the outcome of the upcoming Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference, which began just days after Western reporters were again allowed into the Soviet Zone -- the occasion being the Spring 1947 Leipzig Fair. By that time, the U.S. and Great Britain had created Bizonia, the joint economic administration of their occupation zones, which included a German Economic Council, "to all intents and purposes actually . . . a West German political unit . . ."[176] Soon after the fair, East-West tensions would escalate dramatically over the announcements of the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, and the failure of the Foreign Ministers to reach agreement over the future of Germany.

The Soviet Zone in the Early Cold War: March-December 1947

This second postwar edition of the fair was considerably larger than the first, both in terms of exhibits and visitors, and drew much more media interest as well.[177] For Western

correspondents it provided a much more differentiated view of life in the Soviet Zone, including a rather striking surge of hopeful German nationalism leading up to the Moscow conference. For many Western Germans, as we will see below, it was also a rare opportunity to legally cross the zonal boundary to visit friends and loved ones.[178]

Jack Raymond of the *New York Times* was clearly impressed with the both the exhibits and the great crowds.[179] The former "were fit demonstrations of the resurrection of the industrial life of eastern Germany."[180] Officials claimed the output of the Soviet Zone in the last quarter of 1946 doubled the region's output for the same period in 1936, and for Raymond the sheer growth of the fair as compared with spring 1946 seemed to confirm these this. The considerable achievements of the zonal economy, however, had yet to translate to increased comfort or happiness for Leipzigers. True, there was a pleasing absence of Soviet banners and Red Army troops compared with the first edition, but there remained the overall drabness and threadbare appearance of both city and people: dirty streets, prewar vehicles, ragged clothes, and locals exchanging "meat and bread ration points" for the "hot dogs in rolls made of black bread." It struck Raymond as very different from "any town fair in the United States," most basically in the lack of "gay laughter."[181]

American visitors were deluged with complaints, but Raymond was not particularly sympathetic. He wondered why these Germans, whom all sources judged to be better off than their Western counterparts,[182] had so much to complain about. To an extent, he believed, they were "victims" of the Zone's success: their complaints were *not* about failure to receive rations on time (which happened so often in the Western zones), but about the "exactness" of their rations--having received the minimum, their "needs" had expanded. The black market clearly was not picking up the slack either, as it remained

small and "hidden in fear of the authorities."[183] Raymond did find some satisfaction among "householders" with the fuel supply -- private citizens verified claims by city officials that adequate brown coal *had* been distributed. Meanwhile, strict price controls, and the lack of an "alternative currency" of cigarettes (missing in the Zone since the previous September) meant a higher exchange value for the mark than in the West.

But none of this translated into political consolidation: in Leipzig there was a noticeable political distance between city government officials and "most Germans," particularly given the continued influence of the banned SPD. Raymond detected a clear split: the officials, predominantly former left-wing Social Democrats, embraced the SED as the best hope for maintaining a "Socialist front," while "ordinary" Germans, as was previously surmised, wanted an independent SPD to return. Showing how open the future of the Soviet occupation (and of Germany in general) appeared on the ground, the officials suggested that given the broad support of the SPD in the zone, it was *very likely* that representatives of that party might soon return.

They were also not especially hostile to the West. Raymond believed one of them spoke for the majority of city officials when he said: "I would prefer the freer atmosphere of the British and United States zones, but as for social order ideas, I would favor the Soviet zone."[184] A taxi driver, who rejected the Soviet occupation, disagreed: "It is true we are making a living, but no credit to them."[185] He believed things could not be as bad in the Western zones as he had been told, and would have preferred to live in the American Zone. Raymond gave no number of the Leipzig officials or private citizens he interviewed, but believed this man spoke for the majority.

A meeting with the Lord Mayor of Leipzig, Dr. Erich Zeigner, also confirmed the sense of a city bureaucracy that disapproved of the *means* of the Soviets, but appreciated

the expected *ends*. Zeigner, a former Social Democrat and now "one of the leaders" of the SED, also showed sympathy for Anglo-American policies, going so far as to predict that a future all-German government would be organized along American and British lines, "rather than that [sic] of the Soviet Union."[186] He told Raymond that "the Russians" had indeed caused resentment by the manner in which they carried out their reforms, such as forcing locals to give up part of their already low rations to expellees from Poland, but that the reforms had resulted in a "far superior" quality of life in the Soviet Zone when compared with the British zone. The mayor remained vague about just how a Western-style government would emerge in Germany, but like the others, believed the SPD would be reinstated in the Soviet Zone and that many former members not "properly indoctrinated" would return to its ranks.[187]

The most interesting observations made by Raymond in Leipzig, however, were of a "unity rally" staged two days before the opening of the Moscow conference.[188] For the author, this "moment" of the occupation seemed not simply open, but absolutely *volatile*. 3,000 "visitors" overcrowded the Leipzig Congress Hall "to participate in a plea to the Allied powers on the eve of the Moscow conference . . . to assure the unity of Germany and her people." Leaders of all three parties spoke in turn from the same platform, and "every mention of German unity and every strong demand on the occupation powers was greeted with passionate acclaim."[189]

To Raymond, this was clearly *not* a Soviet propaganda exercise, but a striking -- even chilling -- display of German nationalism:

> At the close of the meeting, a resolution was adopted with a unanimous raising of right arms startlingly reminiscent of the days when 'Sieg heil' was the German battle cry. The resolution called upon the Foreign Ministers to conclude a peace with Germany that would permit the re-creation of a unified Reich along democratic lines.[190]

The only "plug" for the Soviets came when SED President Otto Grotewohl noted that Soviet Foreign Minister Viacheslav Molotov "had called for a unified German government," while the Western foreign ministers all favored some kind of federalist state.[191] Otherwise, the meeting appeared to be equally critical of *all* the powers--that is until Jakob Kaiser, Chairman of the CDU in the Soviet Zone, raised the taboo issue of Germany's eastern border:

> 'The German people follow the decision as to their Eastern frontier with more passionate interest than the West.' . . . But his [Kaiser's] solution was an anti-climax felt by all. He said he hoped the Foreign Ministers would decide on the Eastern boundary in a 'big hearted good mood.' The silence that followed what some had expected to be the first demand by any party in the Soviet zone for the return of the territory temporarily awarded to Poland at Potsdam was significant.[192]

Williams seemed vindicated in his belief that the one "concession" that could win over the population the Soviet Zone was the one thing *no* politician dared request or expect. Whatever prior intimations there had been about reconsidering the Oder-Neisse border were not repeated this night. Yet the overall sense of this report was that neither the Soviets *nor* the Western Allies had managed to convince the population of the Soviet Zone that they had German national interests at heart. Meanwhile the striking assertiveness with which *other demands* were made and received testified to the audiences' awareness that a battle for their favor was already underway, and might be approaching a climax.

The months that followed the Leipzig Fair revealed continuing disagreement over the future of Germany and the order of the postwar world in general. At the Moscow Conference Soviet proposals for the equivalent of 10 billion U.S. dollars in reparations were rejected by the Allies, mainly because the United States government feared both Soviet influence in the Ruhr industrial area and the wrath of U.S. taxpayers over a second financing of postwar reparations.[193] While the conference, conference, U.S. made the deci-

sion to give military aid to the governments of Greece and Turkey, enunciated in President Truman's speech of March 17, which proposed that the U.S. offer military aid to *any* country resisting dictatorial pressures from without or internal subversion within.[194] This "Truman Doctrine," as it came to known, along with the deferred settlement of the "German Question" (until the London Foreign Ministers' Conference, scheduled for November 1947) formed the background to Raymond's second--and rather fortuitous--visit to the Soviet Zone in April. By the time of the next American correspondents' tour in the third week of June, the Marshall Plan had been proposed as well.

Raymond gave no details on how his second trip was arranged, but it was a rare opportunity for an American to interview Germans east of Berlin in the Brandenburg countryside.[195] In the village of Meuchenberg (pop. 3,500) he found less nationalistic fervor, and instead a sense hope and slow improvement mixed with a certain political disaffection. Politically, the area seemed firmly in the control of the SED, but the author found locals divided over the land reform. While a member of the local "opposition party" (probably the CDU) denounced it, an ex-farmer-turned-policeman declared that conditions were improving dramatically because of the town's purchase of livestock and horses from Saxony, and that "he would like to return to farming."[196]

Raymond, however, was less impressed by the state of local agriculture. Food rations were low, compared to Berlin -- though he admitted it was not a fair comparison since Berliners were by far the best fed of *all* Germans -- and the situation in the village was made even worse by spring floods and the arrival of 2,000 refugees from the East. The townspeople had handled the situation fairly well, but the refugees could only be fed "by establishing road blocks and seizing the wares of farmers and others heading toward Berlin." Local officials claimed most of the "victims" had been black-marketeers anyway,

"so the blockades and seizures served a double purpose."[197]

Raymond described this mixture of collective effort and vigilante justice without political overtones, but soon after he was describing an emerging dictatorship. Now, seemingly for the first time, "communization" of the Soviet Zone was *not* as a Soviet-sponsored "positive entity" with broad appeal, but a coercive, *and German*, dictatorship. An anonymous political party leader, "interviewed surreptitiously after nightfall when care was taken that an American auto-mobile license plate would not attract attention," explained the situation. Notice in this passage how the "ghost" of the SPD continued to dog the German communists:

> ' . . . [They] call themselves anti-fascists but are no better than Nazis.' Land reform he said, had cut down farms so small that no one can make a living off them.'. . . 'Everyone is demoralized,' he said 'We still get rule from above, not democracy.'. . . Although he never was a member of the Social Democratic party, he declared that this party must be permitted to operate in the Soviet zone as an entity, not as part of the 'shameful' coalition with the Communists in the Socialist Unity party.[198]

But the limited reach of the SED power was still apparent in this region. For one thing, the above remarks were made in the presence of the aforementioned policeman *at the police station* (!) --hardly the place for "surreptitious" interviews. It seemed, actually, that conditions in the countryside were not that different than in Leipzig. "Exclusion" of the SPD had clearly soured public opinion on the regime, but the political situation did not seem completely determined, and there were still reasons to hope for continued economic revival. But Raymond's fear of *creeping dictatorship*--and the danger to non-Communist politicians implied by their meeting, were themes that would increasingly crowd out the narrative of success and social revolution in the Soviet Zone. Reports of economic decline and even crisis would follow soon after.

The June correspondents' tour featured some of the first reports of outright fear

among the German population -- of war more than anything else -- suggesting the impact of mounting East-West tension. The correspondents too seemed to anticipate a more general danger: not of partition, but of a Communist threat that might soon menace *all* of Germany. They were followed later in the year by a several "special correspondents" from Britain who continued to focus on some more positive developments in the Zone, even after reports of a marked economic slump began reaching the West in August. Their American predecessors, however, no longer wrote of "Russian decisiveness" or Communism as a "positive entity," but of an imposed, *German Communist* dictatorship, and they argued, on rather impressionistic evidence, that the entire population "burned with hatred" for the Soviets and the SED.

The tour produced photos that emphasized the thoroughness of the "stripping" of factories and the frailty of elderly expellees waiting to be resettled. Also, there were less innocuous but apparently telling photos of a "Soviet manager" now in charge of the synthetic oil plant at Leuna, seated in a spacious office by a gigantic photo of Stalin, and an American soldier, one of the drivers on the tour, besieged by a crowd of children hoping for chewing gum and chocolates.[199] The claim that these photos were the "first exclusive pictures from inside the Russian Occupation Zone in Germany" was, as we have seen, incorrect. So too was an initial report that a Soviet officer was shadowing the group's photographer, Henry Riess, taking pictures of everything he photographed. Apparently one incident was fabricated into a Soviet plot.[200]

Jack Raymond and James O'Donnell were both on the tour, and both reported instances of growing Communist strength. While Raymond attempted to let the facts speak for themselves in the case of the "indoctrination" of young people in the new (and as yet voluntary) Free German Youth (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*), O'Donnell engaged in wild spe-

culation about both the extent of dictatorship and the political opinions of Germans in the Zone. Raymond learned in Dresden that young people were being taught in special FDJ schools that the "Democratic Unity" of Germany would be realized in the struggle against "monopoly capital" and "imperialism." FDJ membership in Saxony -- and with it, negative imaging of the West -- "already embraces 23 percent of the population," he wrote.[201] O'Donnell, however, painted a more vivid picture. His time in several Eastern cities convinced him of widespread hatred for a "foreign tyranny" imposed by the Soviets and "carried out by German Communists and a few thousand collaborators."[202] The potential consequences of this "hatred" seemed to threaten all of Europe:

> When the cavalcade of five American automobiles carrying United States correspondents swept into a German town--into the Zwinger in Dresden, by the former Kaiserin Augusta Hotel in Weimar, or into the *Marktplatz* in Jena--an excited crowd began to gather. Although we were escorted by half a dozen Russian 'accompanying officers,' soon these were swamped in the multitude. In less than five minutes more than 200 would gather. The kids wanted, naturally enough, *Schokolade*. But the grown-ups chorused, as in one voice: 'In the name of God, when are the Americans coming back?' . . . That simple question packs an atomic wallop. Even the dullest German realizes this could not happen unless there were a third world war--a war likely to be fought over Germany's already bomb-wracked soil. In my opinion, in Western Germany about 25 percent of the population hope for such an eventuality, and about 50 percent regard it as inevitable. In the Soviet zone about 90 per cent appear to be eager. . . . Only during these five-minute interludes in the journey through the Eastern zone did one even begin to get a whiff of the popular political atmosphere behind the Iron Curtain. Otherwise we were escorted at meals, escorted at interviews, escorted every single mile of the way throughout the zone. . .[203]

The popular mood of desperation and the controlling behavior of the "guides" (who forbade reporters to leave the group at any time), both seemed very different from Gladwin Hill's experiences a year and half earlier, let alone the experiences of more politically engaged visitors we will meet in Chapter 4. On the other hand, O'Donnell was clearly not describing a "reign of terror": the correspondents were besieged with com-

plaints, *despite* the ever-present Soviet "guides." The latter even had to silence some of the more critical Germans, who nevertheless got their points across. But for all this, the sense of crisis, of Eastern Germans' apparent desperation and hope for war, and the re-categorization of the Zone as a "political tyranny" betray the impact of mounting Cold War tensions on both observers and observed. But they also imply, however indirectly, that frustrated German nationalism lay behind this increased volatility.

In the month that followed (July 1947) the Soviets and countries under their occupation rejected the Marshal Plan: the Kremlin believed it was an American plot to gain control of the internal affairs, but also that it would delay their consolidation of control of Eastern Europe.[204] And in the Soviet Zone it led to the formation of the German Economic Commission, an administrative agency designed to centrally coordinate the economy. But in the months that followed, word came that that economy was faltering. The initial signs of a dramatic decline were first noticed by a traveling businessman in August, and then in September a British "special correspondent" for the London *Times*, very likely traveling on a permit to visit the Leipzig Fair, found industry in decline in Saxony, highways everywhere deserted, and a palpable gloom settling over the land.[205] By then, there were also reports of isolated instances of hunger in Saxony,[206] hints of impending political transformation, and mounting, widespread fear. The "slump" was soon believed to have turned into an outright economic meltdown.

The initial word came from a man identified only as a "foreign trader," recently in Dresden, who told *New York Times* Berlin correspondent Delbert Clark on August 16 that the "crisis" was induced by Soviet mismanagement. All the enterprises producing goods for export in return for hard currencies had been instructed to continue accepting orders even after the flow of raw materials from the USSR and Eastern Europe had dried

up. To make matters worse, the goods were offered at prices too high to be accepted by most importers. Neither the "trader" nor his contacts could explain why the raw materials had been cut off, but it meant that "the German manufacturers were processing their last scraps and that production would come to a dead stand-still in a very short time."[207]

During his first visit the previous May, the man had been in Berlin seeking purchasing opportunities, and talks with Soviet officials and a visit to Saxony had left him highly optimistic:

> He declared manufacturers were able to fill almost any size order and that it was not too difficult to get them to modify their prices to suit the prospective market. . . . His report after his second visit was entirely different. 'Since I last talked with you the situation has deteriorated badly,' he said.[208]

The report gave no further details, but the suddenness of the turnaround seems to explain the bleak overview by the *Times* correspondent just over a month later. This author took the same dim view of a recent halt in Soviet reparations as had the American Williams: that it signaled was that "there is little left that can profitably be taken."[209] But beyond this, "special correspondent" was perhaps the first visitor to state categorically that dismantling and reparations from current production was having *an overall negative effect* on the Zone's economy.[210] The lack of raw materials had become so acute that production figures had sank a third lower than the year before. Part of the reason was the resumption of railway track removals in mid-summer. By September, most cities of the Zone were only connected by a single track, while rural areas in the north were becoming particularly isolated. Coal shortages were also expected in the coming winter, unlike the first two postwar winters, in which allotments of brown coal had allowed the population to fare much better than their counterparts in the Western zones. According to the correspondent, dismantling of some plants and the over-working of others was part of the reason

for the coming shortage.

But did this mean that the economy as a whole was on the verge of collapse? The correspondent seemed to think it was, and most interestingly, believed the Soviets really didn't care. The author suggested that the unlikely prospects of an agreement on unification at the upcoming London Conference meant there was no urgency for the Soviets to revive the Zone's economy, much less agree to a plan to integrate it with the Western Zones -- as "many British observers" thought they might. Neglect and indifference better characterized the Soviet approach: *not* be-cause they were looking for an early end to the occupation, but, as Germans seemed all too aware, the Allied deadlock gave them a free hand there.

> Germans, on the other hand, tend to see the permanent division of Germany as inevitable and near at hand. The hurried departure from the Russian zone of many Germans more or less prominent in political life—though some of them have their own good reasons for leaving—is one current sign of the reality of this fear.[211]

This was one of only a handful of predictions of impending division, and perhaps the only one in the mainstream media that projected *permanent* division. But as it turned out, the correspondent offered no other evidence for a coming divide. Moreover, just which "Germans" expected it were not named. Indeed, even the increased "fear" seemed to have its limits. Certainly the extension and coordination of the AntiFa bloc in July had put more pressure on the Eastern CDU and LDP to be more "disciplined,"--that is, more in unanimity with Soviet wishes as expressed through the SED.[212] But this "political tyranny" -- as O'Donnell put it -- had not brought the end of non-Communist political activity. The "hurried departures" certainly did not include a majority of non-communist politicians, and the SED remained on the defensive due to the worsening economic conditions. Reports of the day suggested that a demoralized party rank and file still confron-

ted an "indifferent" working class.[213]

Another correspondent for the London *Times* received a guided tour in October to prearranged sites, and filed a far more favorable report.[214] Yet, this correspondent spoke to the continuing frustration of the Western press by framing his report as an *exposé*: he saw his task as *demystification* of the Soviet Zone. At the same time, the author shaded towards travelers of the political left we will meet below in his effort to *devilify* the Zone: "The picture that emerged from these inquiries bore little resemblance to the ugly silhouette so often imagined in the west."[215] Needless to say, this take was radically different than those of O'Donnell or the other *Times* correspondent. Indeed, this writer found conditions and public opinion to be even more positive than Raymond had the previous April.

This discrepancy had to do not simply with differing opportunities or political inclinations, but with *sources*. The correspondent appeared to have conferred more with German politicians of the various parties, rather than relying on general appearances, published statistics, or individual complaints. Also, though many of the problems the previous correspondent mentioned were noted, such as raw material shortages and reparations, the second correspondent took a more generous view of them, suggesting the problem was technical and transportation difficulties, *not* Soviet exploitation. The following quote conveys, however vaguely, a sense that these problems were more or less unavoidable, derived from actions the Soviets either had to take, or were justified in taking.

> The inability to get deliveries from western Germany and from neighboring countries weighs heavily on the whole economy, as does also the steady volume of reparations drawn by the Russians from current production. Some of the unfortunate effects of rail-way dismantlement were discussed lately in an article by your Berlin Correspondent.[216]

The SAGs were given a somewhat more positive "spin" as well. While the first

correspondent saw the SAGs as depriving German-controlled industry of much needed machinery and the population of vital consumer goods, this author noted that "Germans of all political parties say that they prefer this method to complete dismantlement."[217] It was not clear whether these "Germans" included employees of the SAGs, but apparently so, for the correspondent believed a "social outlook" was gaining ground in the Zone, and this was the most misunderstood achievement of the Soviet occupation.

The author continued this generous view of Soviet policy by arguing, as observers had in the winter of 1945-6, that Soviet dismantling, denazification, expropriation, and land reform were not violations of the general principles of Potsdam, but simply carried out by a very different choice of means. The SED was "a powerful instrument of socialist change at the expense of the middle class,"[218] and the correspondent defended this "transfer of management" -- ie. the Soviets handing over control of the economy to the German Communists -- arguing that it had made life seem more structured, predictable, and hopeful, in contrast to the "political uncertainty" of the West. Moreover, he insisted that there was no dictatorship in the Zone, reminding readers that the SED must still operate in consultation with the opposition parties, and carry out all directives on the *Land* level, *not* through a centralized state. Finally, the correspondent took issue with those who worried that the "structural changes" in the Soviet Zone would make unification difficult. However, all he could offer against such concerns were the hopes of all the Zone's political parties: for unity and a breakthrough at the upcoming London Foreign Ministers' Conference.

If the correspondent was overly optimistic about unification prospects (and perhaps to some extent about the "social outlook" in the Soviet Zone as well), predecessors in the spring and summer of 1947 were certainly overly negative. No doubt there were

reasons to be pessimistic, not just about the economy, but the gradual loss of independence by the opposition parties as well. Nevertheless, the Soviet Zone was hardly a police state by the fall of 1947, and still some-what better off economically than the Western Zones. Most importantly, however, the future of the socioeconomic and political revolutions underway in the Soviet Zone -- and amounts of future Soviet reparations -- was still largely undetermined. As we will see presently, most of the Anglo-American media, and arguably the European public more generally, hoped for a solution to the deadlock in Germany at the approaching London Conference,[219] even if the American and British governments had already decided to proceed with the creation of a Western state, what-ever new proposals the Soviets might offer. Under these circumstances, the correspondent's remarks on the "socialist change" in the Zone are not as naive as they appear in retrospect. Rather, they are much in line with the "left-leaning inclinations" abroad in Europe, as the American Williams noted earlier in the year. If historians have since argued that the London Conference was basically doomed to fail,[220] we will see shortly that this was not anticipated in the media of the day.

London and After: Reporting an Emerging Police State: November 1947-March 1948

The failure of the Council of Foreign Ministers to reach any agreement on unification or reparations at London was closely followed by the end of any real political pluralism in the Soviet Zone, and its economy continued to decline rapidly. Most visitors there from late 1947 to the spring of 1948 described a land of misery and fear. Meanwhile, in the Western Zones, plans for a separate West German government accelerated, as the U.S. and Great Britain persuaded the French (and Germany's Western European neighbors) that the three Western Zones must be joined economically and politically in order to re-

build the economy of Western Europe and curb Soviet "expansionism." A handful of Western newspeople were allowed in the Soviet Zone again in January 1948, and for the spring Leipzig Fair in March, but worsening inter-allied relations meant the virtual closing of the Zone once again soon after.

The Foreign Ministers' Conference began in late November 1947, amidst growing anxiety throughout Europe about the unresolved situation in Germany. Grim photos of ruined Berlin were published by the *Illustrated London News* on December 13, communicating the sense of urgency felt in the West about the impasse. The paper argued that "unless a working agreement can be reached within a reasonable period of time, the consequences for Europe, and perhaps the world, could be serious."[221] Delbert Clark of The *New York Times* claimed that living conditions were now worse in the Soviet zone than in the West, that the "semi-Socialistic system," was widely unpopular, and therefore "the Russians" were ready to cooperate in reunifying Germany.[222] The weakness of the Zone's economy had once again been exaggerated: a day later, an official report of the U.S. Military government concluded that living conditions in the Soviet Zone *were* still better than in the Western Zones, though not owing to Soviet policy.[223] Nonetheless, the Soviets were assumed to be in dire straits in Germany; in an economic and political dead end.

At London, the Soviets reiterated their demands for increased reparations out of the current production of the Western zones, and proposed once again that a provisional German government be formed out of a coalition of all legal political parties (save the Western SPD) and "mass organizations"--in other words an all-German equivalent of the Anti-fascist bloc they had created in the Soviet Zone. The British and Americans reminded Molotov in their counter-proposals that at Potsdam and again at Moscow he had agreed that economic unity ought to *precede* political unity. Here is Marshall's statement

on the American position given to the Foreign Minister's Council on December 5:

> Let us consider for a moment the basic decisions of the Potsdam conference to which Mr. Molotov has so often referred. Under this agreement provision was made for the establishment of central German agencies which were intended to carry out the economic unity of Germany to which the three powers had subscribed. The creation of such agencies was, of course a preliminary step toward the establishment of a German government. At our Moscow session all four delegations formally agreed that: 'any decision on the political organization of Germany is conditional upon the *prior establishment* of German economic unity.'[224] (emphasis added)

The Soviets could, of course, argue that the United States and British governments had also violated Potsdam with the creation of Bizonia at the beginning of 1947, that is, by making decisions on German reconstruction without Soviet consent (the agreements had called for unanimity on all major decisions).

But there was more behind the U.S. counterproposal than Potsdam. The Soviet economic demands apparently threatened to disrupt the economy of the Western Zones, which, as mentioned, would ultimately force U.S. taxpayers to finance Soviet reparations. Moreover, any such agreement would invariably involve increased Soviet influence in the *Ruhrgebiet*, and provide an avenue for greater communist propaganda in the West. On the other side, the Soviets were loathe to share information on the extent of reparations taken out of their zone as well. In effect, both sides feared influence of their counterparts in the economic life (and therefore political future) of their respective occupation zones. Even before U.S. Secretary of State Marshall left London, "highly placed members" of the U.S. delegation let it be known that a "trizonia" would soon be formed as a precursor to a Western German State.[225] As we will see, however, the Western media did not lose all hope in a German settlement.

The SED had hoped to use the London conference both to revive its fortunes in the Soviet Zone and weigh in for German unity. In November they had announced that a

"People's Congress" would form in Berlin, representing all political parties and social groups in Germany (excluding the SPD, of course). The Congress would send delegates to wait on the Foreign Ministers and plea the case for creating a provisional German government. But the Congress betrayed cracks in the Antifascist bloc. When the leader of the eastern CDU, Jakob Kaiser, refused to participate unless the SPD was included in the Congress, he came under enormous pressure to either reverse himself or step down as party head. The executive board of the CDU refused to consider his ouster, leaving it to the Soviets, who subsequently "removed the credentials" of both Kaiser and his right hand, Ernst Lemmer, in December.[226] For Western observers, it was proof positive that the Soviet Zone had become a "one party system."[227] It was in this period of a widening of the divide between the Soviet and Western zones that American correspondents were again permitted in the Soviet Zone. After a three month delay, word came that another tour -- supervised as before -- was tentatively scheduled to begin January 8, 1948.[228]

Early in the new year, reports of massive political rights violations in the Soviet Zone seemed to confirm the view that all opposition was being gradually suppressed.[229] Meanwhile, the British and American occupation authorities took another step toward political integration of Bizonia by broadening the powers of the German Economic Council in cooperation with "leading German officials of the bizonal area." Not only would the council take on the powers of a "quasi-government," but would also have powers to allocate labor throughout Bizonia.[230] The Soviets responded with a campaign for the end of the joint occupation of Berlin and the Allied Control Council itself. In effect, a pattern established at London was continuing: Soviet proposals would be deemed unacceptable by the Western Allies, who would follow with policy initiatives for Bizonia, which allowed the Soviets to claim, not without a certain logic, that the West was driving Ger-

many towards partition.

Reports from the January correspondents' tour of the Soviet Zone described the virtual end of a free media and increased political coercion, but also living conditions that were clearly no worse than in Western Germany. Edward A. Morrow of the *New York Times* met with the editors of four different Weimar newspapers, representing the views of both the SED and the "opposition parties," but could find no difference of opinion between them: "all held identical views on questions of major importance."[231]

> Pressed to explain in what way the papers that were supposed to represent the different viewpoints did differ editorially, the editors had to sit back to recall the last major difference. They brought up the fact that the Christian Democrats editorially had fought the two other parties over the question of whether abortions should be legalized. The law was passed.[232]

There actually were a "minimum" of Western newspapers available; so few that some newsdealers assumed papers from the U.S. zone were contraband, while others who *did* sell them "complained they didn't get enough to meet demand."[233] Morrow also noted that even with virtually identical views, the Liberal and CDU papers still received only a fourth of the newsprint given the SED papers. Soviet officers questioned claimed allocation was based solely on party affiliation.[234] Be that as it may, Morrow was certain the one-sided news media was having the desired effect--increasing the view that the Marshall Plan "is nothing but a device designed to allow United States capital to split up Germany and Europe."[235] He did not elaborate on how he reached this conclusion, instead offering a CDU editor's explanation for the difference of opinion between the Eastern and Western branches of the party over the Marshall Plan: "[he] explained that fact itself demonstrated that the Christian Democratic party [sic] had not yet reached the stature of a national party representing the views in all four zones." Morrow did not bother to unpack a remark that almost certainly implied the need for "national" resistance to American "impe-

rialism."

The correspondents' tour was the first to mention the growing number of Germans employed in the mines of the *Erzgebirge*, along the Czech border. There were 25,000 well-paid miners there at the time (nearly 5 times the prewar number). It was suspected, but could not be confirmed, that the goal was uranium for the "atomic race"--not confirmed because the reporters were denied access to the region by Soviet officials who insisted all the while it was *not* a "forbidden area." As we will see in Chapter 3, the uranium mines would among the greatest liabilities to critics of Soviet rule in Germany.

In Dresden, meanwhile, Red Army officers took their own dig at the Marshall Plan, telling the correspondents that the "occupation policy of the West . . . was fostering a resurgent Germany," and that "the Germans 'are not our friends.'"[236] Morrow did not read these remarks as defensive, however. To him, they were more indicative of the growing police-state atmosphere, most clearly manifest in the German populations' lack of basic physical security:

> 'When the Americans were here (Weimar) they arrested people too, but at least we knew why and we knew the received a trial,' a young housewife said. 'But now?' she shrugged. 'Friends and relatives just disappear in the night. We never hear of them again.'[237]

Though previous visitors had noted popular frustration and indignation with the "removal" of workers to the East, or the kidnapping of Germans from the Western sectors of Berlin, Morrow's observations were clearly part of a trend: the random disappearance of a colleague or family member, the fear of "footsteps in the night," or even random conscription by a Soviet officer into a low-skilled work detail were experiences that West Germans and other observers noted increasingly during 1948 and 1949.[238] There were even a few travelers in this period who expressed fear for their *own* safety, but practically no

one did in the ensuing decade.

The January correspondents' tour would turn out to be the last of its kind in the Soviet Zone, and unfortunately for future research, the writers offered no sense of an overarching Soviet strategy. For all the "bad news," the reports failed to indicate whether a separate "sovietized" East German state was being planned or even considered. In the following months, however, tensions mounted in Germany and Europe. The brutal Soviet-sponsored coup in Czechoslovakia in February brought the Western Allies closer together, making the French more amenable to an economic merger with Bizonia, and by March the first real warnings about possible separation of the Soviet Zone from the Western zones appeared in the Western media. Sources in Berlin speculated that the newly completed "reorganization" of the Eastern German Economic Commission -- which gave the SED more direct control of the zonal economy -- would lay the foundation for a future "eastern zone government, though a German spokesman denied it."[239]

Then, the second "German People's Congress" met in Berlin. Once again, it was composed of members of the three "Eastern" parties plus representatives of the "mass organizations." It elected 330 representatives to an executive "German People's Council," 100 of whom claimed to represent the Western zones. On March 22 The London *Times* reported that the Council contained "in embryo those political offices which the Economic Commission still lacked to make it the complete Government for the eastern zone," and would pave the way for "formal separation."[240] the *Illustrated London News* concurred that "a future Communist Government was the goal."[241]

But for all of this discussion of imminent separation and empowerment of the SED, the *ILN*'s correspondent brought back a spread of photographs that suggested *Soviet* domination and the *humbling of the Germans*, <u>not</u> an emerging, self-standing regime.

Like other recent visitors and observers, the author stressed how rare such photo ops remained: "Correspondents rarely obtain permission to visit it, so our recently taken photographs are of exceptional interest."[242] What the photos and captions suggested was not simply Soviet rule, but the grafting of communist iconography onto the German landscape. In Weimar, the former headquarters of the Nazi Party had been taken over by the Russian Commandant, and a large Red Star hung from a tower facing the central thoroughfare. In an adjoining photo that street had been conspicuously renamed *Leninstraße*. According to the author, such naming was "a constant reminder to the inhabitants that they are under the rule of Soviet Russia."[243] Finally, a German was observed cleaning the boots of young Russian officers. With a certain *Schadenfreude*, the author found the scene indicative of the fall of the "*Herrenvolk.*" The notion of Communism as a "positive entity" in the Soviet Zone had now totally disappeared from Western reporting. But on the other hand, if a separate Eastern state was now a clear possibility, there was nothing in these reports on whether the German Communists would ever be in a position to rule it without direct Soviet support.

The Leipzig Fair also suggested a new sense of Soviet domination.[244] Morrow found nothing there to fire the nationalism of the Germans, no speeches or propaganda; even the purported successes of the SED were not advertised. Rather, the Fair appeared to be a blatant attempt by the Soviets to obtain cash reparations by selling German goods to Western buyers for hard currency. A British correspondent, less critical of the Soviets, noted how *German* officials emphasized the need for more exports of finished products and foreign credits "without political conditions," not implying that the lion's share of profits went to the Soviets.[245] The Fair was the largest since the war, with over 6,000 exhibitors, 65% of whom were based in the Soviet Zone. But all those who had products

"for which there appeared to be a current demand" were con-trolled by three Soviet companies--all three of which had never before appeared on the "world trade scene . . . in such open fashion." The three companies were paying "German manufacturers" in German currency for these products and apparently marking them up and taking the profits for themselves. A fourth Russian company was supplying all "non-indigenous raw materials" to the German firms.

Morrow made no mention of the place of the SAGs in this constellation, but assumed that the scale and variety of German wares offered for sale suggested a similar flow heading to the USSR as reparations from current production. German firms not represented by the three Soviet companies were encouraged to participate in "world trade" as well. Incentives to do so included the promise that the Germans could keep 7.5% of the hard currency thereby obtained, a similar scheme to those already introduced in the Western zones the previous year. British and U.S. "trade observers" noted "a marked increase in the availability of goods for export, compared with previous fairs" with immediate delivery available upon payment. But for all the expansion and apparent incentives for German firms to trade their own products, there were many German exhibitors whose *entire production* was already earmarked for reparations! Their representatives did not not know why they even bothered to display their wares.

Neither Morrow nor his British counterpart speculated about the symbolic value of the fair, nor did they offer any summation of the economic progress. The British correspondent only noted rather obliquely that the "clever propaganda" there was "no substitute for true prosperity."[246] Continued Soviet domination and even exploitation of German industry was obvious, but high levels of reparations alone said very little about Soviet desires for the *future* of Germany, one way or the other. It all seemed a strictly *busi-*

ness venture, with no other benefit to the occupying power. Indeed, there seemed little interest in this Fair in the media generally. Though the Soviet attempt to drive the Western Allies from Berlin was about to begin in earnest, and SED domination of zonal government was becoming more obvious, reports from the fair did not even hint that a critical crossroads was near.

One British observer of events in the Soviet Zone, Peter Nettle, suggested reasons for this relative calm in the Zone. For him, it was a curious mixture of lack of anti-Soviet feeling there, plus the perception of lack of economic progress in the Western Zones.[247] The following quote seems remarkable in retrospect, given that the piece went to press in the months leading up to the Berlin Blockade (See Chapter Two). But it suggests that however great the anti-communist feelings of the Eastern population, it was precisely their *lack* of political commitment, the continued uncertainty about the future of Germany as a whole, and, arguably, the sense that one way or another Germany would again be whole, that left them *undecided*. Notice also that stereotypical assumptions about Germans' work ethic, love of order, and preference for authoritarian rule play a key role in the author's conclusions.

> Whatever a German may think of the Russian personally there seems no doubt that he has a high opinion of him as an administrator. The hard work and energy of the Russians appeals to the similar qualities of the Germans and the somewhat flamboyant nature of the Russian Military and Civil administration as well as its totalitarian spirit seems to call forth an echo of approval. Among many Germans the feeling exists that if the prove themselves deserving the Russians will help them rebuild Germany. They seem to contrast favourably the attitude of the Russians who, they feel, do not at the moment help them with that of the British who apparently cannot help them. . . . This does not mean the Germans in the Eastern Zone are in the majority pro-Russian. Present circumstances and the general environment have made many both anti-communist and anti-Russian. The political organisation of the Eastern Zone, which benefits only those who are either professing communists or else for one reason or another are useful to the Russian authorities, is not calculated to endear Soviet rule to the great majority. Those non-

> communists who understand the full implications of the political and economic policy of the occupation are its determined enemies. It is, however, a dangerous fallacy to suppose that everybody in the Eastern Zone, except for convinced Communists, are violently and openly anti-Russian and would willingly exchange Russian rule for that of the Anglo-Americans. It is more a policy of sitting on the fence; having in many cases little to lose, the Germans are not declaring themselves openly, but are waiting for future political developments to take shape before coming to any decision, In this respect their attitude is similar to that of the population in our Zone.[248]

As we will see in Chapter Three, Western Germans in this period found the mood of Eastern population to be somewhat more gloomy, and more possessed of a sense of increasingly isolation from the West. Indeed East German opinions over the years consistently suggested their lack of faith that the Allies would even stay in West Berlin, let alone work for any settlement with the Soviets on unification. On the other hand, the point about their having "little to lose" is important, because if individual economic circumstances remained difficult everywhere, the next most important consideration for many was indeed unification (a fact that would become alarmingly clear during the launching of the West German government the following year), and though the Allies and the Soviets were further apart than ever, "future political developments" remained unknown.

Nettle's ultimate conclusion is a case in point: to him, the Soviets remained torn between keeping most of their economic stake in the Zone through a puppet government ("on an even less popular basis than the present one") or offering their economic interests there (most importantly the SAGs) as bargaining chips in exchange for a unified German government "predominantly under Russian control" plus extensive economic concessions. According to the author, their inability to reconcile these opposed policies meant that for the time being they would not propose "either a detailed and comprehensive zonal *or* national policy." (emphasis added) In effect, he saw them maintaining the occupation for some time, *proposing neither unification nor separate regimes*.[249]

But by June 1948, maintaining the Soviet occupation meant fighting a war of nerves with the West, as the issues of a Western currency reform and access to Berlin pushed the impasse over Germany closer to direct conflict. With no agreement possible on a new single currency for all of Germany, the Allies determined to reform the currency in the Western zones and West Berlin unilaterally--an exchange of the old and nearly worthless *Reichsmarks* for a stronger, less inflated mark -- to consolidate the economic unity of Trizonia, dampen the black market, and spur the stalled economy. This they did on June 20. The Soviets, fearing the impact of the new currency in Berlin, used the reform as justification for launching a currency reform of their own and blockading of all land and water traffic between Berlin and the Western zones. On June 24, the Western Allies responded with an airlift of supplies from Bizonia to the Western sectors of the Berlin. The impasse in Germany had reached its most dangerous crescendo.

But in the "battle for Berlin," the Soviet Zone itself actually seemed to recede into the background of Western imagination, as somewhere "deep in enemy territory." The news from the Zone, reaching besieged Berlin, suggested relentless consolidation of a political dictatorship, and the first reports of the creation of heavily-armed German police units. The Soviet Zone, in very vague terms, became a kind of distant menace to the West, and a much more immediate one to many Germans living there.

In a report written five days after the airlift began, the conditions in the Soviet Zone were dramatized by Curt Riess, reporting covertly from "Somewhere in Soviet Occupied Germany." The irony, of course, was that Riess, as noted above, was German-born, indeed was a native Berliner, but had to take on an assumed Berlin identity to enter the Soviet Zone.[250] He believed that only by posing as a local could he hope to learn "how the average German is living behind the Iron Curtain." The problem, he wrote, was that

Germans feared telling the truth to Americans even when Soviet officers weren't present. But apparently, they feared talking to other Germans almost as much: even his false identity papers, German clothing, and subsistence on German rations failed to convince locals that they could trust him:

> . . . most people were wary of talking. And the German 'new look'--a glance over the left shoulder before starting a conversation--which actually came into being under the regime of the Gestapo[--]is still being practiced. Every conversation dealing with anything but the weather begins: 'But I really don't know you at all. You may have me arrested for all I know.'[251]

Riess's "Plan B"--revealing his American citizenship--served him somewhat better. Even then, however, many people on the street still believed he could be "Russian secret police in disguise."[252]

One German shopkeeper "in his middle forties" who actually did take Riess for a Berliner, was more forthcoming. A local himself, the man told Riess how the terrible bombing had forced him to relocate to a Saxon village. He had much more to say about making a living there than about fear of arrest. In Saxony he had been selling "toys and other items." "Business was booming," and profits were good, but what of it? Extra food above the rations was prohibitively expensive--80 marks for a loaf of bread at "free price," and there was almost no black market. But there was more -- there was the *creeping control of the SED*. The man told him private food stores were disappearing in the town, replaced by consumers' associations "sponsored" by the SED. There one could get goods more cheaply than in retail stores, as well as many items unavailable elsewhere. This, along with "free prices" for food above the ration, was how the SED was attem-pting to control the currency supply. What the man ultimately feared, then, was losing his *economic independence*. Sooner or later the authorities would shut him down. "He has not the slightest inkling of what he will do then," Riess added.[253]

The man's wife occupied the rest of the report. Here the struggle for survival was even more immediate, and implied something far more sinister than simply postwar difficulties:

> 'You cannot wait for the newspapers to announce that this or that foodstuff is about to be sold,' she explains. 'Before the paper prints the news, the goods are all gone. You have to run around, listen to rumors, ask several shopkeepers every day if anything has come in, get up at 5, stand in line at 6 so you'll be one of the first when the store opens at 8. Because by 9 o'clock in the morning everything is sold out.' . . . 'Sometimes you read in the paper that large stocks of hoarded food have been confiscated here or there. You think now we will get something. But we get nothing. I often wonder: if they want us to die, why do they let us starve slowly? Why don't they give us arsenic?'[254]

The passage offers a preview of the sort of complaints Western visitors would hear for years to come -- as late as the early 1960s. What the author wanted most to emphasize was not simply exhaustion and demoralization, but an overwhelming atmosphere of repression. In the middle of this tale of woe, the two women abruptly fell silent as two Red Army soldiers passed by. "There was hate and contempt in the women's eyes--but there was also fear."[255]

Fear, along with an increasing sense of isolation, was the stuff of many reports from Berlin over the next nine months, as neither the Soviets nor the Allies would back down from their respective positions. But like Morrow and other recent visitors, Riess could offer no sense of what the growth of an East German dictatorship meant for the future of Germany, or the more immediate predicament of blockade and airlift. The question of Germany's future remained "on hold," only to reemerge dramatically in May 1949. During the Berlin blockade and airlift and the summer that followed -- a period generally remembered for ratifying the East-West divide in Germany and Europe -- the Western media was actually gravely concerned the emerging regime in the Soviet Zone might induce even greater instability. As we will see in Chapter Two, the "Soviet threat" that led to the

creation of the Western Federal Republic, and, in turn, the Eastern Democratic Republic, was intertwined with a continuing, muted "German threat" -- a threat that has too often been considered as separate from, or secondary to, the threat of Soviet expansionism.

[1] Gladwin Hill, "SHAEF Showdown on Press is Likely," *New York Times*, May 14, 1945, p. 5, c. 5.
[2] The following narrative of this journey is taken from Groth's collection of war reports and drawings, published within a year of the war's end as John Groth, *Studio: Europe* (New York, 1945), pp. 257-283.
[3] Groth, pp. 275-277.
[4] Ibid., p. 277. This early meeting suggested the importance of Jews in postwar Berlin as linguistic intermediaries. In most cases however, it was *German-speaking* Jews in both the Red Army and the U.S. Army who communicated directly with the Germans. In particular, Atina Grossman has noted the important role Jewish Soviet officers played in reviving German culture in Berlin, and bringing German Jews, who had hid from the Nazis both in and outside of Germany, back into public life. See Atina Grossman, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton, NJ, 2007), pp. 21-25. The incident with Groth, Freidin, and the Soviet captain is also important because it shows how "special connections" were often critical for those wanted to get an inside look at the Soviet occupation. We will learn more about some of the "well-connected" visitors to the Soviet Zone in Chapter 3.
[5] Groth, p. 279.
[6] Ibid., p. 282.
[7] The condensed version of the narrative appeared as John Groth, "U.S. Writer Tours Shattered Berlin," *New York Times*, May 9, 1945, p. 14, c. 1.
[8] Bill Richardson, "Ivan is Joe in a Different Uniform," *New York Times Magazine*, May 27, 1945, p. 61.
[9] Harold Denny, "Bradley, Writers in Visit to Koneff," *New York Times*, May 6, 1945, p. 15, c. 1.
[10] Ibid.
[11] For example, Eddy Gilmore, Associated Press Bureau Chief in Moscow, in Eddy Gilmore, "Populace Returns to Berlin's Ruin," *New York Times*, June 10, 1945, p. 15, c. 1.
[12] "In Occupied Berlin. Life Under Russian Rule," *The Times* June 4, 1945, p. 3. c. c.
[13] As this discussion will show, the term 'fraternization' could mean anything from frequenting German social venues to visiting German homes to having sex with German women. Robert Haeger correspondent for *Newsweek*, wrote that "Fraternization was the word for sex in Germany," but that was clearly not its only meaning. Robert Haeger, "No More Conquerors," in A. Settel, ed., *This Is Germany* (New York, 1950), p. 15. The U.S. War Department's Pocket Guide to Germany, which was distributed to troops only after they entered Germany, defined fraternization far more broadly. Its instructions on 'non-fraternization' specified that soldiers should "not visit in German homes or associate with Germans in terms of friendly intimacy, either in public or in private." However, it also stressed the dangers of marrying a "foreign girl," even though marriage to German nationals was banned outright at the time, suggesting that for many soldiers the term did imply sexual relations with German women. *Pocket Guide to Germany* (Washington, D.C., 1944). Cited in Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven,CT, 2003), pp. 46-51.
[14] Quoted from *Pravda*, June 10, 1945. Cited in Erich Kuby, *The Russians in Berlin,1945* (New York, 1968), pp. 268-9.
[15] Ralph Levering, who studied American opinion regarding the Soviets during the war, concluded the peak of positive feeling toward the USSR was reached in 1943, followed by a slow decline through the next year and a more steep decline beginning in March 1945, when many Americans concluded the Soviets were not living up to the Yalta accords. See Ralph Levering, *American Opinion and the Russian Alliance, 1939-1945* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1976), pp. 200-209. On the mounting anti-German opinions of the U.S. public in the spring and summer of 1945, see Office of Public Opinion Studies, 1943-1965, *Public Attitudes on Foreign Policy*, Special Reports no. 63, July 2, 1945, in National Archives, College Park, Md., Record Group 59. *Special Reports on Attitudes Toward Foreign Policy*, 1943-1965, box I: National Archives, College Park, Md., Record Group 59, Office of Public Opinion Studies. Cited in Thomas Reuther, "In Hitler's Shadow. American Images of Germany," *TUSGECW*, p. 602.

[16] "Dead Heart of Berlin. Conditions under Soviet Administration. The Chance of Revival," *The Times*, June 13, 1945, p. 5, col. F-G.
[17] Ibid., col. G.
[18] "In the Russian Zone," *New Statesman and Nation*, May 26, 1945, pp. 334-5.
[19] Ibid., p. 334.
[20] Ibid., p. 335.
[21] Ibid.
[22] C. L. Sulzberger, "Russia's Attitude on Reich Unclear," *New York Times*, June 1, 1945, p. 9, c 4.
[23] See Clifton Daniel, "Joint Control Plans for Germany Delayed," *New York Times*, May 27, 1945, p. 50. The author mentioned, who stressed the lack of Allied access to Soviet occupied Germany was the editor of the *The Economist*. See "Divided Germany," *The Economist*, May 26, 1945, pp. 686-688. The exact extent of the areas the four powers would occupy were not yet agreed on at this point.
[24] As Grossman has written, the first edition of the official SMAD newspaper, *Berliner Zeitung*, on May 21, made this point quite explicitly. However, they did so not just to emphasize Soviet magnanimity, but to encourage ordinary Germans not to dwell on their shared responsibility for Nazism, and instead to view themselves as victims "cruelly misled and betrayed" by Hitler, who had to move forward with rebuilding their reputation in the world. Grossman, *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, pp. 34-5.
[25] Grossman, p. 18.
[26] Naimark, p. 167.
[27] Ibid., p. 79. The author notes that this was not the case until the main army was "confined to strictly guarded posts and camps during the winter of 1947-8."
[28] "Spirit of Unity," *New York Times*, June 10, 1945, sec. 4, p. 1, c. 1.
[29] "Germans Flee Area Russians Will Enter," *New York Times*, June 22, 1945, p. 5, c. 4; Raymond Daniel, "Soviet Occupation Alarms Thuringia," *New York Times*, June 25, 1945, p. 5, c. 4.
[30] Grossman, pp. 20-21.
[31] Ibid., p. 21
[32] Ibid., p. 28.
[33] Osmar White, *Conquerors' Road: An Eyewitness Report on Germany 1945* (Cambridge, UK, 1996), p. 119. The delay was apparently due to a communication problem only, not any intentional Soviet foot-dragging. See Robert Powell, "Berlin Today," *The Fortnightly*, October, 1945, pp. 236.
[34] Richard Brett-Smith, *Berlin '45: The Grey City* (London, 1966), p. 158. The same basic point was made by White, p. 127; Wiiliam Peters, *In Germany Today. The Diary of a Soldier* (London, 1946); Harrington, "How Berlin Looks," *The Spectator*, July 27, 1945, p. 78; Gorony Rees, "Problems of Germany ," *The Spectator*, November 2, 1945, p. 401; Gordon Schaffer, *Russian Zone* (London, 1947). More will follow about Peters and Schaffer in Chapter 3.
[35] Drew Middleton of the *New York Times*, who we will meet presently, was one correspondent who was especially worried about this scenario in the summer of 1948. But neither he nor those who agreed expected a prolonged division of Germany, as we will see.
[36] White, p. 126. This text was drafted over the course of the entire year of 1945, passed over by publishers in 1946, revised by the author in the early 1980s, but not published until 1996, after his death. His editors insist, however, that his later revisions did not remove the "original tenor" of the work, because in the intervening years he neither wrote about nor researched the war (p. *x*).
[37] The first opinion was expressed by Daniel, "Europe, Asia Meet in Ruins of Berlin," *New York Times*, July 5, 1945, p. 5, c. 1; the second by Peters, pp. 23, 70-71.
[38] Tania Long, "This is Berlin without Hitler. An Eyewitness Account of Life Today in the Battered Capital of Germany," *New York Times Magazine*, July 22, 1945, VI, pp. 9, 31-2.

[39] The term comes from the *Economist* "special correspondent," apparently reporting from Berlin, in "East of the Elbe," *The Economist*, October 27, 1945, pp. 592. Some more sympathetic authors would soon try to create the impression that order and discipline were restored almost immediately thereafter, or that the pattern of abuse was no different than in the Western zones. Several of these authors will be discussed in Chapter 3. Others, such as the *New Statesman* correspondent in endnote 19, continued to insist that Soviet misconduct was exaggerated by ex-Nazis or other anti-communists.
[40] Daniel, "Berlin Administration Working Smoothly," *New York Times*, July 22, 1945, IV, p. 4, c. 3-4. There *were* exceptions to this trend early at the start. One noted by Daniel was limits Americans placed on the number of persons who could attend political rallies. But the Americans clearly remained *more flexible in Berlin than in the U.S. Zone* -- where meetings by more than five persons were prohibited -- because of the different pressures of four-power rule. Raymond Daniel, "U.S. Control Group in Berlin Offices," *New York Times*, July 14, 1945, p. 4, c. 1.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Harrington, "How Berlin Looks."
[43] Goedde, p. 76. Unfortunately, the author does not indicate whether the Soviet policy on fraternization or the four-power occupation of Berlin played any role in the decision.
[44] The official date was June 10, five days after Allied Control Council officially took power in Germany.
[45] Harrington, "How Berlin Looks," and "East of the Elbe." *The Economist* correspondent agreed that the Soviet policy, "at least in theory if not actual execution, is sounder than the rather timid and distrustful attitude of the British and Americans."
[46] Drew Middleton, "U.S. to Lift Ban on Reich Politics," *New York Times*, July 28, 1945, p. 3, col. 1.
[47] Ibid.
[48] "East of the Elbe."
[49] Schaffer, pp. 71-2.
[50] "East of the Elbe."
[51] Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 158.
[52] Crossman was chief editor from 1971 until his death in April 1974.
[53] R. H.S. Crossman, "Germany Revisited. I--Berlin," *New Statesman and Nation*, October 13, 1945, p. 240.
[54] Haeger, "No More Conqueror," pp. 4-5.
[55] Crossman, "Germany Revisited. I--Berlin."
[56] "East of the Elbe," This has been confirmed by many scholars, but Naimark made the important addition that the German administrators tended nonetheless to be "micromanaged" in even the most innocuous matters by Soviet officers. Naimark, pp. 45-6.
[57] Crossman, "Why Germany Matters," *New Statesman and Nation*, September 22, 1945, p. 188.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid. The same article noted a newspaper competition in Berlin, in which the Soviets led the Western Allies six to two, though a second American paper was set to debut on October 1. "Nowhere else in Germany can the German pick and choose among newspapers controlled by the United States, the Soviet Union, and Britain."
[60] Gladwin Hill, "Soviet Plan to Use Germans is Upheld," *New York Times*, September 4, 1945, p. 9, c. 1.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., c. 3.
[63] Hill, "Remaking of Germany is Proving Slow Work," *New York Times*, September 9, 1945, p. 5, c. 2.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid. A British observer, though much more concerned with "Soviet methods," particularly regarding the expellees, nonetheless agreed that Soviet methods, in particular socialization measures, ought to be seriously considered by the Western Allies. See Rees, p. 402.
[68] Curt Riess, "Will Germany Go Communist?" *New York Times*, September 9, 1945, VI, pp. 14, 39.
[69] "Russia Gives Zone a German Cabinet," *New York Times*, September 13, 1945, p. 10, c. 5.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Naimark, pp. 148-9.
[72] Gerhard Ziemer, *Deutscher Exodus: Vertriebung und Eingliederung von 15 Millionen Ostdeutschen* (Stuttgart, 1973), pp. 94, 227. Cited in Ibid., p. 148. Estimates of the total number of "Expellees" from the Eastern German territories and Eastern Europe in general vary widely, from a low 11 million to as many 18 million. These figures are analyzed in Alexander von Plato and Almut Leh, *"Ein unglaublicher Frühling": Erfahrene Geschichte im Nachkriegsdeutschland, 1945-1948* (Bonn, 1997), chapter 1, cited in Fulbrook, *The People's State*, p. 63.
[73] Crossman, "Why Germany Matters."
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Crossman, "Germany Revisited. I.--Berlin," *New Statesman and Nation*, October 13, 1945, p. 240.
[77] This was the basic view of American Military Governor Lucius Clay late in November 1945, as he was struggling to get the U.S. State Department to put pressure on the French to accept central German agencies and the supervision of the Allied Control Council. He believed the Soviets would not agree to central agencies so long as France demanded a direct share in the control of the Ruhr and the Rhineland. Moreover, he argued that the socioeconomic revolution in the Soviet Zone, plus their restrictions on interzonal travel and trade *and* the population transfers from Eastern Europe did not necessarily imply the Soviets' unwillingness to be limited by the Potsdam accords, but instead were within their rights to carry through: ". . . in the absence of central administrations, every zone commander could take unilateral action in his own zone, as the United States commander had also done." Gimbel, p. 27.
[78] Rees, p. 401. A similar sense of the unworkability of division, in which, however, a unified "disaster area" was not contemplated, can be found in Ann O. McCormick, "Germany is Still a Problem," *New York Times*, December 16, 1945, VI, pp. 5-6, 28-9. For this author, Germany had become a political problem because it "can neither exist in segments as at present constituted and ruled nor can it be expected to die or be absorbed, this ridding the world of a chronic headache." (p. 29) This quote demonstrates that in the early occupation those most worried about zonal division did so out of fear of what a *reunited*, rather than divided future would look like. Another Berlin correspondent who fretted over the inefficiency of four power rule was George Bilainkin. One most obvious problem he noted was the lack of qualified interpreters, and he was clearly dismayed to find so little fraternization *among* the Allied armies. Like Crossman, he also expressed concern over Soviet "removals" of perceived enemies from the British sector, though he did imply that those seized were "Nazi mischief-makers." George Bilainkin, "The Allies in Berlin," *Con-temporary Review*, December, 1945, pp. 343-48.

[79] One of the early commentators who detailed French intransigence in Germany as the key problem was James P. Warburg, an American official who traveled in all four zones in mid-1946. His thoughts on the Soviet Zone and events in Germany more generally will be among the subjects of the next chapter. James P. Warburg, "Germany: Nation or No-Man's-Land," *Headline Series* 60, November-December, 1946, pp. 39-41. See also McCormick, "Rule in Germany Leaves Much to Be Desired," *New York Times*, December 5, 1945, p. 24, c. 5. Crossman also noted the apparent French preference for "dismemberment" in his first article, and more recently Mark Mazower has reminded that DeGaulle, not invited to Potsdam, "doggedly opposed the idea of a central German administration operating under the control of the Control Commission, . . . wanted to annex German territory and break up the old central state," and obstructed unity long enough for the "increasingly divergent social and political regimes" to take root in the various zones. See Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York, 1998), p. 238. It should be clear from the observations presented so far, however, that the some of the Soviets' different "social policies" were known about in the West *even before* Postdam, and others within a month or two of the end of the conference--in other words before French veto power had made its impact.

[80] "East of the Elbe."

[81] U.S., Russia to Trade Writers in Germany," *New York Times*, November 21, 1945, p. 1, c. 1.

[82] Anthony Leviero, "Eisenhower Fears Reich Inflation; Says Berlin Vote Would Oust Reds," *New York Times*, October 16, 1945, p. 1, c. 2; p. 9 , c. 1.

[83] "Eastland Hits Russia on Policy in Germany," *New York Times*, December 5, 1945, p. 9, c. 1. James O. Eastland, a Senator and Southern Democrat, believed the Soviets were trying to create hunger and chaos in Germany through the "de-industrialization" of their zone, in the hopes of creating a "Soviet Germany." Its clear from the brief report on his statement that he feared this Soviet "satellite" would include *all* of Germany.

[84] See Anne O. McCormick, "Aboard; Powers Ruling Berlin Compete to Do the Best Job," *New York Times*, November 10, 1945, p. 10, c. 5. McCormick, who had spent time in Berlin, noted increasing efforts by the Red Army to increase discipline and give Germans more freedom, to "regain ground" lost by whole-sale stripping and the fear and uncertainty their harsh rule had caused previously. Also, as later visitors would note, the Soviets were taking the lead in reviving the arts as well. She said nothing to indicate that ideology was playing a role, and moreover, as noted below, emphasized that all four powers were competing with each other, primarily to be known as the best rulers to the German people. McCormick empha-sized that the competition was less acute in the four zones, which according to Leviero was matched the greater apathy of the populations there, which he believed could be traced to "subnormal diet and fear of winter hardships," which made them more interested in forming trade unions than political participation.

[85] Frank E. Mason, "Diverse Ideas Seen in U.S. Rule in Reich," *New York Times*, November 11, 1945, p. 9, c. 1.

[86] Fulbrook noted initial advantages in terms of less destruction than in the West from aerial bombardment and higher industrial capacity relative to population, while noting that the refugee situation did initially make the food situation *worse* than in the Western Zones. Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 153. Contemporaries, however, as we will see, seemed to believe that through at least mid-1947 the food situation was somewhat improved by the rapid resettlement of refugees via the land reform, and the ability of farmers to sell their excess produce at "free prices." They almost universally agreed that in the early years residents in the Soviet Zone were better fed than in the Western zones. Not that there wasn't widespread hunger, homelessness, dislocation, and poor sanitation everywhere, multiplied by the pressure of millions of Eastern refugees, the majority of whom continued on to the Western zones.

[87] Mason, "Diverse Ideas Seen in U.S. Rule in Reich," p. 9, c. 2.

[88] Bilainkin, p. 344. The author referred to material difficulties in Berlin as "primitive questions of prime importance."

[89] McCormick, "Rule in Germany Leaves Much to Be Desired," *New York Times*, December 5, 1945, p. 24, c. 5.
[90] McCormick, "Powers Ruling Berlin Compete to Do the Best Job."
[91] The latter remark is quoted from "Soviet Methods in Germany. U.S. Correspondents Tour," *The Times*, December 28, 1945, p. 3, c. C.
[92] Mason, "Diverse Ideas Seen in U.S. Rule in Reich."
[93] Gladwin Hill, "Russians Spread Communism and Efficiency," *New York Times*, December 27, 1945, p. 1, c. 6.
[94] For example, Henry Krisch, a student of both Soviet policy and the GDR, who believed the Soviets in tended to use the German communists to "gain political leadership throughout Germany" and nonetheless maintain "the wartime alliance." Krisch, pp. 200-201.
[95] Hill, "Russians Spread Communism and Efficiency," p. 6, c. 1-2.
[96] In a subsequent "delayed" report, Hill did note however, than an example of "positive" policies was distribution of coal to the population, a benefit American occupation forces were unable to match. Hill, "Russian Germany Not Nationalized," *New York Times*, December 31, 1945, p. 4, c, 2; and "U.S. Army Disliked in Ruined Dresden," *NYT*, January 3, 1946, p. 5, c. 1.
[97] Hill, "Russians Spread Communism and Efficiency," p. 6, c. 1-2.
[98] Additional stories by Hill in the following days suggested that the "gun at the back" gave the Soviets the ability to deNazify their zone in a more simplified fashion also, leaving the lion's share of the job to the Germans in the bureaucracies and work places. While Americans were trying to apprehend all those involved in Nazi organizations, the Russians divided Nazis up into "war criminals" and "the less objectionable," whom they left to the Germans. Hill, "Denazification Found Simplified in Russia's Zone of Occupation," *New York Times*, December 29, 1945, p. 7, c. 2-3. Days later, he gave even more details of how much of the process was left to the Germans. In Saxony, the Soviets even authorized the German government to create a war crimes court of its own, which tried and convicted "five Gestapo men and Elite Guards" of the Raderburg labor camp for murder. "Steps to Revival Pushed in Saxony," *NYT*, January 3, 1946, p. 5, c. 3-7. The Russian military governor of Saxony-Anhalt had no large apparatus for checking the work, "but one gets the idea from talking with him and seeing his organization that, if one were a German charged with that work, one would not let much grass grown under one's feet." The governor told Hill that the occupation would last "at least ten years." Hill, "Political Officer Governs in Saxony," *NYT*, December 28, 1945, p. 8. c. 4-5.
[99] Hill, "Russians Spread Communism and Efficiency," p. 6, c. 4.
[100] See endnote 86. Other scholars, particularly those who focus primarily on the development of the GDR or Soviet occupation have stressed instead the *absolute devastation* of the region at war's end, which they emphasize was compounded by Soviet requisitioning and looting, as well the continuing flow of thousands of refugees from the Eastern territories. For examples, see Naimark, pp. 142-150; Gareth Pritchard, *The Making of the GDR 1945-1953* (Manchester, UK, 2000), pp. 11-15. Considering the initial chaos caused by the flood of refugees into eastern end of the Soviet Zone -- in Brandenburg especially -- its perhaps no surprise that the correspondents were not permitted to see that area. For the refugee crisis in that region, see Gerald Christopeit, "Die Herkunft und Verteilung der Evakuierten, Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen in Mark Brandenburg und ihr Verhältnis zur der einheimischen Bevölkerung," in *Sie hatten alles verloren: Flütchlinge und Vertriebene in der sowjetischen Bezatzungszone* (Wiesbaden, 1993), pp. 86-109.

[101] Hill, sounding more critical of both sides in a mid-February speech in New York City (which was also aired on radio), put the difference, not just in terms of American "fumbling", but in the context of a failure to find a common policy : [in the Russian Zone] "erstwhile airplane parts plants are now humming away making pots and pans, while in the American zone we have been blowing up wartime explosives plants." Nevertheless, the American zone's deficit of economic reconstruction was not yet discussed in threatening, competitive terms, at least not directly. Anne O'Hare McCormick spoke at the same gathering with cautious optimism about U.S.-Soviet relations: "you learn in the Soviet orbit that the United States has no reason to be afraid of Russia, militarily, economically, politically, unless we deliberately abdicate our power." Hill, "U.S. Seen 'Fumbling' its Job in Germany," *New York Times*, February 15, 1946, p. 6, col. 2.

[102] While the Soviet policy did evolve and change during the occupation, the trajectory, both because of Soviet tradition and the desires of the German communists, was clearly toward "bolshevizing," meaning collectivization and nationalization. Both agricultural and land policies initially reflected the politics of an "antifascist democratic transformation," designed to minimize class warfare, gain local support for the German communists, and, eventually, not alienate the Western German population or create support there for a separate West German state. The Soviets and their allies were prepared to go slow, and at times lessen persecution of enemies or even returned individual confiscated properties, but never reversed policies designed to "democratize" the economy of the Soviet Zone. Part of the reason was that they believed wholeheartedly that centralization wasn't just ideology correct, but would best address economic shortcomings. See Naimark, pp. 141-204. But for present purposes, its important to remember that most Western observers, however much they did or not expect bolshevization, tracked these developments without any certainty about what the Soviets wanted in Germany, or even what they might be capable of achieving given the Germans' general anticommunism and four-power rule.

[103] Hill explained this in an additional report. There were no plans as yet to official transfer titles, nor were profits as yet withheld from "any legitimate equity holders whom it may eventually become feasible to pay." Hill, "Russian Germany Not Nationalized," *New York Times*, December 31, 1945, p. 4, c. 1. In addition, a side trip to a Saxon-Anhalt village revealed first hand information on the dispossession of a *Junker* and the redistribution of his land. The process involved the election of a land reform committee from among the workers; only Nazis were excluded, and five of the seven committee members had no party affiliation. The actual dispossession proceeded with no violence or property damage. The author was told there were even plans to compensate the dispossessed. Hill, "Russians Split Up Junkers' Estates," *New York Times*, December 30, 1945, p. 6, c. 1.

[104] Hill, ""Russians Spread Efficiency and Communism in Germany," p. 6. c. 5. The author actually gave numbers rather than percentages: in Merseberg the estimate was 32,000 Communists to 22,000 Social Democrats; in Saxony as a whole, 100,000 to 70,000.

[105] Given this assessment, it was strange to read that in his aforementioned February speech in midtown Manhattan, Hill warned that given the "positive, explicit program" of reeducation, it was "'only a matter of time' until most Germans in the Russian sector became Communists." It seemed that the American occupation forces were too busy lecturing Germans on the evils of Nazism, while the Soviets were introducing "Communism" as an alternative to Nazism. But why this dark forecast? Where were the German "complainers"? And were all those who were "not particularly unfavorable" sure to become regime supporters? It seemed that to gain support for more purposive U.S. action in Germany, Hill was giving a darker interpretation of his findings of late December.

[106] *The Times* gave a general summary of the five correspondents on December 27, 1945, while focusing more specifically on Hill's report on December 28. "Life in Soviet Zone. Land for German Smallholders. An American Tour," *The Times*, December 27, 1945, p. 3, c. e. "Soviet Methods in Germany. U.S. Correspondents' Tour," *The Times*, December 28, 1945, p. 3, c. c.

[107] "The Russian Zone," *New Statesman and Nation*, January 5, 1946, p. 2. Recent research has qualified assumptions that Soviet denazifcation was more thorough or brutal than in the Western Zones. According to Timothy Vogt's study of denazification in Brandenburg, for example, there is little evidence that an adequate purge was carried out, or that previous assumptions that the purges were part and parcel of a "master plan" to impose one party rule, or as East German historians themselves argued, "laid the groundwork" for an "antifascist state," are correct. Not only is their a lack of solid evidence that "those dismissed from their positions were actually fired," there was also not enough "networking" to insure that those who were dismissed did not find similar work elsewhere. The Soviets and their SED allies in Brandenburg ultimately ended denazification because they believed it had failed at the level of the local commissions, made up of all three parties but dominated by the SED. A large part of the explanation of this "failure," however, had to do with the unclear goals laid down by the Soviets and lack of centralized control. The central contradiction emerged out of a debate about ultimate ends. Would denazification be primarily used to gain control of "state power," or to promote a "long-term transformation of German society and culture?" Ultimately the former was deemed more critical than the latter, but a "complete political purge" proved incompatible with both a "smoothly functioning administration" or a viable economy. The purge had to be ended so reconstruction could continue. What this meant was a gradual shift away from "retribution" to "reintegration," not simply for practical purposes, but to prevent "active opposition" among "a large segments of the population." This transition, as Vogt notes, meant that from October 1947 Soviet denazification began to mirror the policies in the Western Zones, particularly the U.S. Zone. The pressure of the Cold War meant that in the Soviet Zone as well as the Western Zones, denazification became "a means of bringing closure to the Nazi period" and rallying Germans to the new "confrontation," even as the concept of "antifascism" was continued to demarcate the East from the West. In effect, denazification had many similarities and suffered from similar deficiencies in all for zones. As for "ruthlessness," the German commissions that decided most cases, more often than not showed a sense of "fairness, compassion, and a sense of justice," and because of decentralization "proved impervious to control from above." Timothy Vogt, *Denazification in Soviet Occupied Germany* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), pp. 232-241.

[108] "Aus den Zeitungen der Welt. In der russische Zone," *Die Gegenwart*, 1(2/3), January 24, 1946, p. 8.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid.

[111] "Soviet Methods in Germany. "

[112] "Russian Rule in Germany. Saxony on the Way to Recovery. A British Survey," *The Times*, January 21, 1946, p. 4, c. g.

[113] The author seems to have meant only German *administrators*. The reference is to bold plans he saw for the rebuilding of bombed-out Dresden.

[114] Ibid.

[115] See for example "East of the Elbe" and James P. Warburg, "Report on Germany," *The New Statesman and Nation*, August 10, 1946, p. 62, discussed in Chapter 3.

[116] Ibid.

[117] "Aus den Zeitungen der Welt. Agrarreform in Brandenburg," *Die Gegenwart*, 1(4/5), February 24, 1946, p. 4. As mentioned in endnote 103, Gladwin Hill was "fairly positive" also, noting that "important elements" in Germany had been demanding the expropriation for a century, and that it was a "new deal" for the peasantry. See endnote 104.

[118] It is not clear to me what is meant by the "failed collectivization" of 1917, unless the author is referring to the fact that the Red Army had to allow the "kulaks" to remain independent to preserve the food supply, even as they did away with the nobility (*pomeshchiki*). According to Naimark, the Soviet and SED launched an indirect "war" against the influence of the larger farmers in the countryside (most of whom supported the CDU), but continued to resist collectivization. So long as there was a possibility of preventing a separate West German state, they hesitated, fearing they would alienate farmers in the Western zones. Only with the announcement of the construction of socialism in the GDR in the spring of 1952 did collectivization begin in earnest. See Naimark, pp. 150-170.

[119] U.S. Seen 'Fumbling Its Job in Germany," *New York Times*, February 15, 1946, p. 6, c. 2.

[120] "German Parties: Communist Pressure for Fusion," *The Times*, February 16, 1946, p. 3, c. c. Cited in F.A. Voigt, "Eastern Germany," *Nineteenth Century*, DCCCXXIX, March 1946, p. 97-101.

[121] Voigt, p. 99. In the same month, a German traveler had nothing but praise for the reforms and insistence that none of the measures amounted to "sovietization" (He pointed out that the land reform, for example, bore no resemblance to Russian collective farms). It was absolutely necessary, he argued, particularly given the influx of refugees. *Die Gegenwart* published the account with a group of brief reports from various locations in the zone on March 24. introducing them as "a few first notions of the reality of every day [life]" (author's translation). The anonymous author was described as a salesman (*Kaufmann*) who traveled for a long time in Saxony and Thuringia. However, reading through his impressions left me with the feeling that he was very likely a resident of the Soviet Zone. "Bilder aus dem Ostem: Aus dem Berichte eines Kaufmanns," *Die Gegenwart*,1 (6/7), March 24, 1946, p. 21. The first published reports from the Russian Zone that can definitely be attributed to Western Germans, however, did not appear until December 1946.

[122] Hill, "U.S. Seen Fumbling in Germany."

[123] Naimark, pp. 275-284. The process of achieving unity was marked by much persuasion and also coercion of SPD leaders, and no general party referendums, with the exception of Berlin, where the presence of the Western Allies could not prevent one. Though the Soviets forced the closing of the East Berlin voting stations a half hour after they opened on March 31, the vote proceeded in the Western sectors, with 82% of SPD voters opposed.

[124] "Germany. A Peek through the Curtain," *Time*, April 1, 1946, pp. 35-6.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Apparently a UPI reporter agreed. On March 28, *Die Basler Nationalzeitung* quoted him as describing "the machinery of occupation" as running smoothly and without friction. The paper also noted similar observations on industry, going so far as to describe Thuringia as "prosperous." Quoted in *Die Gegenwart*, 24 April, 1946, p. 7.

[128] Leonard Krieger, "The Inter-Regnum in Germany; March-August 1945," *Political Science Quarterly* LXIV(4), p. 515.

[129] Fulbrook, The Divided Nation, p. 146. The author here paraphrases Lutz Niethammer, *Entnazifizierung in Bayern* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1972).

[130] Ibid., pp. 146-7.

[131] Kingsley Martin, "A German Diary," *The New Statesman and Nation*, April 20, 1946, p. 277. As mentioned, Rees agreed. Rees, "Problems of Germany ."

[132] Martin, "A German Diary."

[133] Warburg, who visited all four zones in mid-1946, believed the U.S. occupation was making "interesting and constructive contributions to the political rehabilitation of the German people" through their work from the village level upward, helping them to "hold elections, and at least begin to understand the process of democratic self-government. Warburg, p. 30.

[134] "Russian Zone. War and Occupation Have Changed Eastern Germany," *Life*, April 4, 1946, pp. 36-7.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Dana Adams Schmidt, "Saxon Plebiscite Reveals Dissent," *New York Times*,July 5, 1946, p. 9, c. 2.
[137] Ibid. In truth, the SED had already decided to expropriate the property of factory owners in the spring, and the CDU and LDP were semi-coerced by the Soviet authorities into assenting to the Saxon plebiscite. Furthermore, it was established in advance the referendums would not be held elsewhere. In the other provinces, expropriation would "proceed by administrative measures." This led to the expropriation without compensation of "1,760 factories and enterprises and parts of 101 others" that had belonged to "the Nazi party and its affiliates and the factories and enterprises of war criminals, leaders, and active proponents of the Nazi Party and Nazi state, as well as the factories and enterprises that served [the interests of war criminals . . ," all of them becoming the property of the Saxon state. This was not a total "socialization" measure, and for political reasons was not presented as such. Naimark, pp. 183-6 (The quote is directly from the expropriation law). The private sector remained fairly substantial, about 40% of gross industrial product in 1948, but "detrimental tax, price and planning measures" reduced it considerably between 1949 and 1955, such that it accounted for only 15% of industrial product by 1955. Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, pp. 155-6.
[138] Schmidt, "Saxon Plebiscite Reveals Dissent."
[139] Kathleen McLaughlin, "Berlin Properties Reported Seized," *New Your Times*, July 7, 1946.
[140] Schmidt, "Saxon Plebiscite Reveals Dissent."
[141] Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 155.
[142] Schmidt, "Russians' Zone Found Different from Others," *New York Times*, July 14, 1946, p. 5, c. 1.
[143] Edmund Spevack, "The Allied Council of Foreign Ministers Conference and the German Question," in *TUSGECW, 1945-1968*, p. 46.
[144] Schmidt, "Zone Found Different from Others."
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid. *New York Times* Berlin correspondent Kathleen McLaughlin summarized the Soviet lead in industrial recovery and cultural revival on July 19. While agreeing with Schmidt that political notables could not openly express discontent, she noted that the rest of the population could do so and "attract virtually no attention," even if the Germans considered the U.S. zone the "freest." All zones, however, suffered from "zonal barriers" which "paralyzed" trade. Kathleen McLaughlin, "Germans Whisper U.S. Zone is Freest," *New York Times*, July 19, 1946, p. 5, c. 1.
[149] This basic argument was expressed in a speech five days later in San Francisco by Karl Brandt, an American official recently returned from Germany. Brandt's position and his extreme and inconsistent views, however, make his speech a proper subject for Chapter Three.
[150] Schmidt, "Russians' Zone Found Different from Others." The same sentiment was offered a year later by sympathetic British visitor Heinrich Fraenkel, who we will meet in Chapter Two.
[151] Childs, *The GDR: Moscow's German Ally* Second Edition, (London, 1988), p. 19.
[152] Dirk Spilker, *The East German Leadership and the Division of Germany* (Oxford, 2006), p. 98.
[153] Ibid., p. 99. Spilker cites West German scholars Günter Braun, "Wahlen und Abstimmung," in Martin Broszat and Herman Weber, eds., *SBZ-Handbuch: Staatliche Verwaltungen, Partein, gesellschaftliche Organisationen und ihre Führungskräfte in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschland* (Munich, 1990), pp. 386, 396; and Herman Weber, *Geschichte der DDR* 3rd. ed. (Munich, 1989), pp. 139-140.
[154] McLaughlin, "Big Protest Vote in Germany Seen," *New York Times*, September 3, 1946, p. 5, c. 5.
[155] Naimark, p. 298.The correspondent is McLaughlin, Ibid.
[156] A Berlin correspondent for the *Sunday Observer* believed the takeovers were a sign that the Soviets had "lost faith in the German Communist movement". "200 German Firms Seized by Soviet," *New York Times*, August 26, 1946 p. 7, c. 1.

[157] Naimark, p. 181.
[158] "Germans Report More Removals," *The New York Times* October 27, 1946, p. 32, c. 1.
[159] "Bar U.S. Newsmen," *New York Times*, November 14, 1946, p. 18, c. 6.
[160] "Deportation of Germans. Talks at a Dead End," *The Times*, Nov. 22, 1946, p. 4, c. C.
[161] "Germans Report More Removals." The opinion expressed in the quote was seconded by Anne O. McCormick, "Life Rises in the Carved-Up Ruins of Berlin," *New York Times*, October 28, 1946, p. 26, c. 5.
[162] Naimark, p. 300. The author's account of the meeting is taken from "Beseda u tavorishcha Stalina, I.V.," January 31, 1947, 9 to 12 p.m., *Rossiiskii Tsentr Khraneniia i Izucheniia Dokumentov Noveischei Istorii* (Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Contemporary History), folio 17, opius 128, doc. 1091, lines 43-53.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid., pp. 300-301.
[165] Clark, "Russians Revise German Policies." Clark mistakenly referred to Tiul'panov's former boss and predecessor as "General Bovdov."
[166] Ibid.
[167] "Trojan Horse in Berlin? Stalin's Trouble Shooter Prepares for Russia to Swallow its Own Zone or Create a Red Reich," *Newsweek*, February 24, 1947, pp. 40-41.
[168] Ibid.
[169] This promise was reneged upon by the Soviets, as was a later one, and dismantling did not end until 1948.
[170] O'Donnell was completely wrong about this last concession. The Soviets firmly refused a request for "small corrections" in the eastern border, as recorded in "Beseda u tovarishcha Stalina, I. V." Cited in Naimark, p. 301.
[171] J. Emlyn Williams, "Is Soviet Winning Germany," *Christian Science Monitor Monthly Magazine*, March 1, 1947, p. 3.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 157.
[177] *Newsweek*, for example, published just one photo of the first postwar fair in May 1946, noting only that dancing Germans were able to "cavort as freely as in the days before the war." "Foreign Affairs," *Newsweek*, May 27, 1946, p. 40.

[178] Travel by Germans into the Soviet was dangerous until August 1945, not because of policies and policing against it, but because the Red Army still basically remained on a war footing. From then until the spring of 1946, travel there was actually easier for Germans than for Allied troops -- one needed only some of document of identity to be let through by most border guards. In the spring of 1946, interzone passes were introduced, but unauthorized German visitors were usually not arrested or deported until the summer of 1947. See Nettl, *The Eastern Zone*, pp. 260-262. The reason there were so many unauthorized visitors between spring 1946 and summer 1947 was that many Germans crossed the inner-German border in thinly guarded rural areas. But even after the Soviets stepped up controls in mid-1947, refugees and other clandestine border-jumpers were fairly common in rural areas through the early 1950s, as we will see below. Passholders continued the early practice of traveling on a Western German train to the border, exiting and proceeding on foot across the border to a waiting Soviet-Zone train. According to one anonymous passholder, this transfer often occurred in the midst of bewildered and hungry refugees. "Der Interzonenpaß, Legende und Tatsachen," *Die Gegenwart* 1(20/21), 30 October 1946. The author noted also that the passes were restricted to those Germans whose freedom of movement was deemed most critical by the Big Four. Several classes of people were allowed to apply for the passes, including businessmen and small traders, clergymen and other church "dignitaries," doctors, technicians engaged with in rebuilding tasks (*Wiederaufbauarbeiten*), and those in the service of the military governments. "Interzonenpaß auch in Bayern. Nur für beschränkten Personenkreis zugelassen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 April, 1946, p. 4.
[179] Jack Raymond, "Battered Leipzig Opens 757th Fair," *New York Times*, March 5, 1947, p. 10, c. 5.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] The assumption that the Soviet Zone was not just farther ahead due to natural advantages in good farm land, but also in terms of progress in industrial recovery was stressed by Warburg, "Germany: Nation or No-Man's-Land,"; His views were partly restated in James P. Warburg, "Report on Germany," *New Statesman and Nation*, Aug. 10, 1946, p. 92; This view was also confirmed by Kathleen McLaughlin, "Germans Whisper U.S. Zone is Freest."
[183] Raymond, "Germans Fare Best in the Soviet Zone," *New York Times*, March 6, 1947, p. 18, c. 3.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Raymond, "West Seen Model for New Germany," *New York Times*, March 7, 1947, p. 12, c. 2.
[188] Raymond, "Rally Shows Rise of German Politics," *New York Times*, Mach 8, 1947, p. 6, c. 5.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Backer, *The Decision to Divide Germany*. Of course, the "first scenario" was *privately* accomplished through the Dawes and Young Plans of the 1920s, but the author notes that both President Roosevelt and President Truman feared the wrath of U.S. voters should they undertake to "finance the transfer of reparations from Germany directly or indirectly" (p.46).
[194] The text of Truman's famous speech has been reprinted as "Recommendation on Greece and Turkey: Message of the President to the Congress, March 12, 1947," in U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1941-1949: Prepared at the Request of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations by the Staff of the Committee and the Department of State* (Washington, D.C., 1950), pp. 1253-7.
[195] Raymond, "Germans Progress in Soviet District," *New York Times*, April 9, 1947, p. 3, c. 4.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid.
[199] The photo of the American driver was published in *The New York Times* on June 22 (p. 31, c. 2). All the others appeared under "First Exclusive Pictures from Inside the Russian Occupation Zone in Germany," *New York Times* June 17, 1947, p. 3, c. 2.
[200] "Russian Double Exposure Keeps Tabs on Times' Man", Ibid. Riess's denial was published a week later. "Russian Check Denied," *New York Times* June 24, 1947, p. 8, c. 4.
[201] Raymond, "Youth Unit Grows in Russian Zone," *New York Times*, July 1, 1947, p. 4, c. 2.
[202] O'Donnell, "Glimpses of Tyranny Behind the Russian Zone's Curtain," *Newsweek*, July 14, 1947, p. 35.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Gerd Harbach stresses the former rationale, based on Soviet views expressed at the Paris Conference in late June-early July 1945 in which British, French, and Soviet officials worked on a common response to Marshall's speech. The documents of the conference are collected in Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres, *Documents de la Conference des Ministers des Affaires Etrangeres de la France de Royaume Uni et de l'URSS tenue a Paris du 27 juin au 3 juillet 1947* (Paris, 1947), cited in Gerd Harback, "The Marshall Plan," *TUSGECW*, p. 302. Dirk Spilker, on the other hand stresses the latter rationale, based on several later works on the Cold War, the most recent being Scott D. Parrish and Mikhail M. Narinsky, "New Evidence on the Soviet Rejection of the Marshall Plan, 1947: Two Reports," *Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 9* (March 1994), pp. 1-51, cited in Spilker, p. 130.
[205] "In the Russian Zone: The Decay of East German Industries," *The Times*,September 25, 1947, p. 5, col. e-f.
[206] An American official investigating the border region in Bavaria was told that 800 Germans a week were crossing into the U.S. zone near Rottenburg, presumably to avoid conscription into the uranium mines near Aue. As it turned out, the majority were crossing over in search of "better food", and then returning to the Soviet zone. According to German officials, these people were saying that "the food situation is much worse in Russian territory." Flee Mine Conscription," *New York Times*, August 14, 1947, p. 10, c. 3.
[207] Delbert Clark, "Slump is Reported in Saxon Industry," *New York Times*, August 17, 1947, p. 36, c. 1.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] "In the Russian Zone . . .". It will be recalled, however, that James Warburg believed already in mid-1946 that the reparations and dismantling was hurting the *entire* German economy.
[211] Ibid.
[212] The Antifa-bloc, as it was known, became a clever means for overruling potential objections to major legislative proposals. The bloc elevated representatives of the SED-backed mass organizations, alliances for workers, women, and farmers, to positions on an executive council with representatives of the three political parties. Decisions on major issues that came before the Soviet zone government would be voted on by the bloc, which must give unanimous consent. Thus the Liberals and Christian Democrats were outnumbered 5-2, and would face more pressure to back Soviet demands. Clark, "Russians Plan End of Liberty in Their Zone," *New York Times*, July 7, 1947, p. 1, c. 6.
[213] Naimark, p. 304
[214] "Divided Germany II-Structural Changes in the Soviet Zone," *The Times*, October 21, 1947, p. 5, c. e-f.
[215] Ibid. I use the masculine possessive here because, as will be seen shortly, the author refers to the archetypical traveler to the Soviet Zone as "he," which leads me suspect the author is a man.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid.

[219] See for example "Hitler's Legacy to the German People: Hunger and Destitution in Post-War Berlin," *Illustrated London News*, December 13, 1947, p. 657.
[220] See Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, pp. 160-7, and Backer, pp. 149-170. The latter does not make the point explicitly so much as argue that division of German was confirmed at the previous Conference in Moscow from March-April 1947.
[221] "Hitler's Legacy to the German People."
[222] Clark, "Russians in Germany Show Hope for Accord," *New York Times*, November 9, 1947, IV, p. 4, c. 6.
[223] Raymond, "German Goods Net Soviet $1 1/4 Billion," *New York Times*, November 10, 1947, p. 1, c. 7; p. 8, c. 4-5. Raymond quoted the report thusly" :The zone . . . has one outstanding advantage over the three other zones: its agricultural potential is approximately sufficient to take care of its own food requirements."
[224] Cited in "Text of Statements by Marshall," *New York Times*, December, 6, 1947, p. 5, c. 2.
[225] Drew Middleton, "Partition Regimes Seen for Germany," *New York Times*, December 16, 1947, p. 2, c. 2. (Marshall arrived back in the U.S. on December 19)
[226] Childs, p. 23.
[227] See Clark, "Soviet Zone Waits for Party Shuffle," *New York Times*, December 14, 1947, p. 3, c. 5,"Russians Harden Rule in Their German Zone," *NYT*, January 4, 1948, IV, p. 4:7, and "Russian Control Likened to Nazis'," *NYT*, January 10, 1948, p. 11, c. 1. The latter article contains quotations from Kaiser himself. It was noted that the "Russians" hoped to make the People's Congress permanent and use it to spread their influence throughout Germany.
[228] "Soviet Zone to Be Visited," *New York Times*, p. 10, c. 1.
[229] See Edward A. Morrow, "Abuse of Justice in the Soviet Zone of Germany is Charged by U.S.," *New York Times*, January 7, 1948, p. 10, c. 3.
[230] Raymond, "U.S., British Zones Plan Merged Rule," *New York Times*, January 7, 1948, p. 3, c. 2.
[231] Edward A. Morrow, "Soviet Press Curbs Lead Germans in East to Fear Marshall Plan," *New York Times*, January 22, 1948, p. 1, c. 6; p. 16, c. 6.
[232] Ibid, p. 16, c. 6. Interestingly enough, "abortion on demand," introduced in the GDR in 1972, would be the only measure not passed unanimously by the GDR's *Volkskammer* before 1989. Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 239.
[233] Morrow, p. 16, c. 6.
[234] There was more to the politics of newsprint than the correspondents were aware, however. During that same month, a German visitor to the Soviet zone noticed that while "mass editions" of certain newspapers were being shipped to the Western zones from the Soviet Zone everyday, those same newspapers, curiously, had not been delivered to residents of the SBZ since November 1, 1947, but only to large industrial enterprises! The author speculated that the authorities had chosen to divert them from subscribers to the Western zones. He also noted that these newspapers were missing from the newsstands of smaller towns. He was unable to purchase a paper during an eight-day stopover in a small town near Magdeburg, though he later bought one on the street in Weimar. This information, for which unfortunately I have found no confirmation elsewhere, does suggest a stepped-up effort by the Soviets and SED to communicate their point of view to the Western population, even to the point of stretching their propaganda machine in their *own* territory to the limit. Unfortunate also is the fact that the author did not elaborate on living conditions in the zone, or the level of popularity of the SED there at the time. "Zeitungen in der Sowjetzone," *Der Ruf* vol. 3, n. 3 (January 22, 1948), p. 12.
[235] Morrow, p. 1.
[236] In a subsequent article based on an interview with a Russian officer and his wife in Dresden, Morrow noted how the Soviets seemed to maintain very little contact with the Germans socially, and how they preferred their occupation personnel to remain military, as opposed to the American tendency to transfer many functions to civilians. Morrow, "Army in Germany Favored by Soviet," *New York Times*, January 26, 1948, p. 31, c. 1.
[237] Morrow, "Soviet Press Curb . . . ," p. 16, c. 7.

[238] Correspondent Kingsley Martin spoke about kidnappings and persons held for questioning that were never seen again as if both remained a fairly common Soviet practice in Berlin even after the initial "excesses" at the war's end. Martin, "A German Diary," *New Statesman and Nation*, April 20, 1946, p. 277. January 1948 brought the first apparent Western eye witness confirmation of the detention of "political prisoners" in the former Nazi concentration camp of Buchenwald, near Weimar. A correspondent of the Munich weekly *Echo der Woche* published a lengthy article by a correspondent who had made "personal observations" and interviewed "inhabitants of adjacent villages," as well receiving a letter "smuggled out by an inmate." The correspondent maintained that the Soviets kept a "constant level of 12,000 inmates" in the camp, and when inmates escaped, innocent locals were abducted to replace them. The inmates wore the same blue and white striped uniforms and suffered many of the same terrible living conditions of the Nazi era, and "their physical and psychological condition was deteriorating daily," according to the writer of the letter. The inmates were reportedly in total despair a separate women's camp, the inmates "wore trousers and their hair had been shorn like a man." While the two camps were not directly connected, the women were visited "nightly" by Soviet soldiers and NKVD men stationed in the area. The letter writer was "designated" as a former Social Democrat, and asserted that "few of those confined had ever been tried for an offense. . . they simply had disagreed with the Soviet-sponsored Socialist Unity party program." Kathleen McLaughlin, "Buchenwald Held a Camp of Misery," *New York Times*, January 25, 1948, p. 29, c. 1.

[239] "Russian Move in East Germany," *The Times*, February 14, 1948, p. 4, c. e. The idea that the commission was "a government in all but name" was widespread in Berlin, according to the same corre-spondent. "German Unity Party. General Robertson's Denunciation," *The Times*, March 11, 1948, p. 4, c. d.

[240] "The Future of Berlin," *The Times*, March 22, 1948, p. 4, c. f.

[241] Life in Russian-ruled Potsdam and Weimar: Historic German Cities in the Soviet Zone," *The Illustrated London News*, March 27, 1948, p. 339.

[242] "Life in Russian-ruled Potsdam and Weimar."

[243] Ibid.

[244] Edward A. Morrow, "Soviet Seeks Funds by German Sales," *New York Times*, March 4, 1948, p. 12, c. 3.

[245] "Leipzig Spring Fair Opened," *The Times*, March 3, 1948, p. 3, c. b.

[246] Ibid.

[247] Peter Nettle, "Inside the Russian Zone, 1945-1947," *The Political Quarterly* XIX (3), July-October 1948, pp. 201-233.

[248] Ibid., p. 204.

[249] Ibid., p. 233.

[250] Curt Riess, "Germans Behind the Iron Curtain Fear to Tell of Their Suffering," *New York Times*, June 30, 1948, p. 8, c. 4.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Ibid.

[253] Ibid.

[254] Ibid., c. 5.

[255] Ibid.

Chapter Two: "A Period as Explosive as a Bomb"[1]

The Soviet Threat, German Nationalism, and the Division of Germany in the Western Media: June 1948-December 1949

The post-World War II occupation of Germany did not officially end in October 1949. In both the Federal Republic and Democratic Republic of Germany, it lasted until the middle of the next decade. Nevertheless, the launching of two rival German states marked the beginning of a kind of new era in German, European, and international politics. By the mid-1980s, hindsight revealed that the creation of two Germanies had laid the groundwork for an East-West status quo in Europe. German division -- despite the undemocratic means by which it was carried out and the international tensions it repeatedly caused -- had meant 40 years of peace, and superpower domination of Europe, ironically, had led to more "durable arrangements" in continental politics than any peace settlement in modern times.[2] Post-unification scholars of Germany and German-American relations, however, have seen German division and the immediate aftermath as a period that was anything but peaceful.

For them, the "new era" that began with the founding of the two Germanies in 1949 signaled *not* acceptance of the status quo, but a new level of struggle between the superpowers for control of Germany. Recent scholars have rightly noted that the early years of German division were wrought with danger and instability, because a substantial minority of West Germans were willing to consider negotiations with the Soviets if they might result in reunification,[3] and, as noted, have shown that American officials feared nationalist appeals to West Germans from the young GDR.[4] It has also been argued that "containment" -- the U.S.-led efforts to check Soviet power in Europe -- was actually "dual containment," in that West Germany was incorporated into the Western Alliance not simply to block Soviet expansionism, but to prevent "Germany from ever again be-

coming a threat to world peace."[5]

This reexamination of U.S. and Allied concerns and policies in the early Cold War shows that contemporary officials and observers feared the potential of resurgent German power should West Germany become unmoored from the Western Alliance, but also suggests the slimmer possibility of some sort of West German alliance *with the Soviets*. While such an outcome was never very likely, the Soviets *did* hold the key to German unification should the Adenauer government ever consider meeting their demands, and apparently Stalin's successors briefly considered trading away the GDR for a neutral Germany -- if not an allied one -- as late as January 1955.[6] Later that year, of course, Adenauer visited Moscow and established formal diplomatic relations with the USSR (without agreeing to recognize the GDR), while the GDR was integrated into the Warsaw Pact and West Germany into NATO. The danger of *any* kind of German resurgence was thereby greatly diminished. But U.S. concerns about West Germany drifting into the Soviet orbit were high in 1949, especially *during and just after* the founding of the GDR. As Christian Ostermann has written:

> Whereas some observers within the American military government interpreted the founding of the GDR as the start of a radical transformation of the Soviet zone [sic] into a 'German people's republic,' there were others who warned that Stalin was still pursuing ambitions for Germany as a whole, that his sights were still set on the Western occupations zones with their greater economic value, and that he would use the new GDR merely as a pawn in future negotiations on German unity. The greatest fear of the American government was that Moscow might manage to establish a noncommunist yet pro-Moscow government with aspirations for all of Germany that would extend Soviet influence to encompass the entire country.[7]

Part of the reason for this, as we will see presently, is that the nascent GDR did *not* appear to Western observers (or the rare Western visitor) as a completely communist dictatorship. Its government grew out of the "People's Congress," an organization claiming to represent all Germans and their "natural' longing for unity, and there appeared to be at

least some role for debate and compromise with its non-Communist representatives. Moreover, with the its capital in Berlin and its access to Eastern European trade, there was concern in the West that the GDR, like its more prosperous Western rival, could offer a certain magnetic appeal.[8]

Such concerns did not fade nearly as quickly as might be expected. The U.S., in fact, did not back off from propaganda offensives aimed at destabilizing the GDR until after the June 1953 uprising, which apparently convinced the American National Security Council that further efforts should be discontinued, due to the risk of war with the Soviets.[9] These early policies, (and the reasons for their ultimate cancellation), help remind us how potentially destabilizing and worrisome the establishment of two Germanies appeared to many contemporary political actors and observers.

The historical processes that *led* to German division also seemed more complex and contradictory to contemporaries than the "aura of inevitability" suggested by many later scholars.[10] While there can be no doubt that the period of the Berlin blockade and Allied airlift (June 24, 1948-May 12, 1949) hastened the drive of both the Allies and the Soviets to create separate German states, contemporary reports of developments in the Soviet Zone during the airlift suggested wild swings between pessimistic expectations of a separate East German state and perhaps even war, and optimistic hopes for an eleventh hour settlement in Germany. But there was also considerable hand wringing about the impact of nationalist appeals from the SED and the People's Congress in the Western zones. Following the lifting of the blockade and the willingness of the Soviets and Allies to hold another meeting -- and as it turned out the final one -- of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris, hopes were rekindled one last time. It seemed the crisis had passed and there were reasons to believe the Soviets might at last be willing to make a deal that would

extricate them from Germany. Those hopes faded again very quickly when the Allies balked at Soviet proposals to return to four-power rule circa 1945, and were replaced in the summer of 1949 (once again) by mounting fears about frustrated West German nationalism and the appeals to it emanating from the Soviet Zone.

The Anglo-American media, then, actually *anticipated* the concerns the Allied governments would develop about the East German regime, worrying about how Soviet and SED propaganda would impact the mindset of West Germans confronting the division of their fatherland. But most interestingly, their warnings linked the "Soviet threat" and "German revival" *together*. Whereas the strategists of "dual containment" would see the two problems as different but related -- anchoring West Germany in Western Europe would deter both Soviet expansionism and prevent a revived "German threat" simultaneously -- a number of observers of the division of Germany in 1949 saw them as far more *intermingled*: the SED's aspirations to extend its power (and Soviet influence) into the West did not only raise the possibility of the Soviets thwarting the revival of Western Europe, but of a latent German threat *within the Soviet threat*. If a genuine Soviet-German partnership was not likely, Germans nationalists in time might be able to exploit Soviet interests in Western Germany for their own ends. But, of course, division itself remained a problem: if it checked Soviet expansion, it kept Germans "unnaturally" divided, and as the Western German economy gained momentum, it could only create more tensions on the eastern side of the iron curtain. Thus the founding of the GDR was considered the start of a "new phase in the struggle" *for* Germany, but also *against* a German nationalist revival. In a period where American public opinion (if not its British counterpart) had turned very much in the Germans' favor, the Anglo-American media continued to express concern about frustrated German aspirations, especially given the seemingly inevitable

"return of Germany" as a European economic power.[11] To these authors, the "German Question" suggested a further complicating of the Cold War -- particularly at the moment the GDR was founded. That announcement actually made the attainment of a status quo seem less, rather than more likely.

But this "New Germany" they feared bore surprisingly little resemblance to the recently conquered Third Reich, nor were the aspirations of its citizens evaluated in the context of any sort of culpability for Nazi crimes. Oddly enough, the same writers and pundits that feared a possible German revival spoke of such developments in traditional, power-political terms: for them, the iron curtain was a dangerous fault line for dividing Germans, but no more so than if it had divided *any* nationality in Europe. It seemed that even those who worried about a future German threat did so in the traditional context of *Realpolitik* -- as if another Bismarck, rather than another Hitler, might seek to unify the German people. But whatever the future held, two German states seemed unworkable, almost bound to provoke greater danger. As the era of four-power rule in Germany gave way to official partition -- the final endpoint in the drama being the launching of the GDR in October, 1949 -- that endpoint initially appeared more like a trigger for new crises than a conclusion to the occupation.

The process of dividing Germany, if not public acknowledgement of that process, actually began months before the Soviet blockade of Berlin. Work on a West German constitution, as well as the process of economically unifying the three Western zones, had been underway for some time. Meanwhile in the East, the People's Congress, created by the SED to purportedly represent all Germans, was being readied, if necessary, to become the basis for an East German parliament. Also before this blockade, denazification was ended: first in the Soviet Zone, and then the Western Zones. In both cases it failed to

remove all Nazi bureaucrats and administrators from office, or punish all those guilty of war crimes. Despite long-held assumptions of a more thorough "cleansing" in the Soviet Zone, recent research suggests that in both East *and* West, it was hurried to conclusion both to garner popular support and retain those same bureaucrats, administrators, and business and industrial managers deemed indispensable to government and economic recovery.[12]

But all these trends did not convince the Anglo-American media that partition was imminent. What *did* raise the possibility was tensions over Berlin, which became apparent late in March, 1948. Increasing minor restrictions on the flow of people and traffic between the city and the Western Zones were, in effect, the Soviets' response to the London conference, a meeting of the Allies, western Germans, and representatives of the Benelux countries struggling toward a workable plan to economically unify the Western zones. But the Berlin crisis, obviously, raised an even more dangerous possibility. Correspondents and other observers had often wondered about the chances of direct conflict between the Allies and the Soviets, but as Berlin became increasingly isolated, and four-power rule collapsed there, the threat seemed far less hypothetical. The central irony, of course, was that any war between the Allies and the Soviets would surely destroy the basis for the Eastern state which the Western media was speculating about. But a perceptive British correspondent noted that even without a Berlin, an eastern state was hard to imagine -- so long as the Allies occupied Berlin. He noted that the city would become the "natural centre" of SED attempts to rally the population to the new regime, "but only if the Western Powers were no longer there."[13] However, as the Soviet Zone and Western Zones moved further apart in the spring of 1948, speculation about both war *and* an imminent Eastern regime continued apace, as did reports of mounting political coercion in

the Soviet Zone. The most immediate concern, of course, was Soviet efforts to isolate Berlin.

The Coming of the Blockade (and Counterblockade): April-June 1948

The Soviets walked out of the Allied Control Council meeting on March 20, 1948, and by the beginning of April it was clear that four-power government in Germany had ceased to exist. Equally disturbing were mounting Soviet "irritations" -- hindrances to Allied traffic on the approved rail and highway access routes to Berlin. At least one British correspondent there wondered if all of this might escalate into a dangerous confrontation, possibly even war.[14] It seemed the Soviets were willing to use not only "humiliating pinpricks" -- petty restrictions and rule changes -- but even "Goebbels-like propaganda" to weaken the Allied position in Berlin, to turn the locals against them, and convince them that remaining was not worth the "difficulties."[15] Before the end of the month, *The New York Times* editorial page was arguing that an Allied withdrawal from Berlin would be interpreted throughout Europe as a major political defeat for the Western powers, and would mean that "the separation of Germany into Eastern and Western zones will soon be an accomplished fact."[16] The Truman administration was determined to remain in Berlin, believing that the Soviets, when confronted with determined resistance would back down and not risk war.

As the Soviets tightened their stranglehold around the city, negotiations in London focused on the future of the *Ruhrgebiet*. They were not concluded until mid-June, when the French Parliament narrowly approved the "Six-power Accords," which provided for international control of the German industrial heartland. This cleared the way for the complete economic merger of the three Western zones into "Trizonia," and, ultimately,

the Western currency reform. The same night as the French vote, the Soviets again walked out on an Allied Control Council meeting in Berlin, making it clear they would not return.

Already in early June, British intelligence was reporting an acceleration of terror against "political opponents" in the Soviet Zone, as well as increasing interference by Soviet authorities in the meetings of state and local governments, sometimes to the point of shutting them down altogether.[17] The British "survey" suggested that "virtually no opposition can now be expected to any major items of Russian policy there,"[18] and that the "neutralization of so many political opponents" had so demoralized the population that most of them believed "nothing short of war" could improve the situation.[19] But "demoralization" extended beyond political repression to the realm of daily life as well. One British visitor to East Berlin around this time noted how lower-level Soviet personnel still interfered in random and menacing fashion with the general population, producing a climate of perpetual uncertainty.

> A friend of mine goes to a station to fetch a parcel. A Russian demands help from all people in the queue for the unloading of wagons. They cannot give a message to their relatives, they have just to stay and unload for eight hours without payment. The women are afraid. One says: 'There is a train under steam, they will bring us to the labour camp in Custrin.' 'They' do not, but nobody ever knows anything for certain. A party goes by a wrong footpath to a film studio and is immediately arrested.[20]

An anonymous West German contemporary believed *another* fear was growing in the Soviet Zone: namely, that a Western currency reform would break the last ties with the Western Zones.[21] In the short run these concerns proved justified: the Soviets halted all rail and highway traffic between Berlin and the Western Zones on June 24, four days after the new Western currency was introduced. The Soviets claimed this valuable Western mark would cause economic chaos in their zone.

Because the new currency was also issued in West Berlin, the Soviets did have le-

gitimate concerns. They feared the Western mark would draw huge numbers of the old marks out of their Zone and into West Berlin, and thereby disrupt the entire zonal economy. Of course, the opposite was bound to happen as well: a flood of Western marks (and Western economic influence) would wash over East Berlin and the Soviet Zone proper. Such a scenario became the pretext for a speedy Eastern currency reform, soon to be followed by a Western "counterblockade" of most commercial traffic heading from the Western zones *to* the Soviet Zone, and, more famously, the massive Berlin Airlift, which brought food and necessities to two million West Berliners and the Allied forces in the city. The Soviet blockade would last nearly 11 months, the airlift even longer, but direct confrontation was avoided. During these months, the SED continued its evolution toward "a party of a new type," meaning increased party discipline and large-scale purges. This, according to later scholars, allowed them to gradually achieve virtual domination of the Zone, making it "in practice" comparable to the other Soviet bloc states by 1949.[22] At the same time, however, the economy plummeted, apparently to new postwar lows.

The Western media, gathering whatever information it could about the Soviet Zone through West Berlin, found the march toward one-party rule rather halting and incomplete, and given the unpredictable outcome of the blockade, hesitated to predict complete economic collapse. They theorized a state of *incomplete* domination in the Soviet Zone, and, despite all economic difficulties and popular disaffection, speculated that lifting the blockade could trigger a rebound, both in the economy and the SED's political fortunes. The uncertainty about "domestic developments" in the Soviet Zone was matched by major speculation about the ultimate goal of the Soviets and their German clients. Would they use the blockade as a pretext to launch a separate German state, or would they lift it and launch a new campaign for a unified German state? And if the latter, would the goal

be Communism or neutrality? The Western media seemed to cycle back and forth between these possible scenarios throughout the fall and winter of 1948-9. The following spring, when the blockade was lifted, and West German politicians were proceeding to create the Federal Republic, the ultimate Soviet goal still remained a mystery.

German Hopes and Allied Fears -- The "German Question" during the Blockade

On August 30, 1949, at the opening of the fall Leipzig fair, SED co-chairman Walter Ulbricht gave a speech calling for "open zonal frontiers, the lifting of all frontier barriers and the resumption of normal trade relations in the country."[23] According to Drew Middleton, now *New York Times* Berlin bureau chief, "Western political observers" understood the speech as having "laid the groundwork for the easing of the Russian blockade of Berlin."[24] On the same page was a report from the U.N. on Western Europe's dire need for "pre-war imports from behind the iron curtain": it seemed there could be no economic recovery without a resumption of inter-German trade. Meanwhile, on the *front page* that day, an article anticipated an agreement on the unequal "currency situation" in Berlin.[25] The Allies insisted that willingness to discuss the "currency problem" did not amount to a *de facto* acceptance of the blockade. Indeed, the purpose of the discussions was to induce the Soviets to *lift* the blockade, and the Allies were prepared to defer all other issues in Germany until the Soviets renounced the blockade. Though the London *Times* expected an agreement on "how to go about the problem of dealing with the Berlin situation" before week's end (September 4 or 5), the Allies clearly were in no any hurry. As discussions dragged on, the Allies moved to further tighten the counterblockade, eventually cutting off *all* shipments that came *from* the Soviet Zone *to* the West.

Nothing in this difficult period suggested that the Soviets had reason to be con-

fident about their position, yet on September 6 Middleton summarized the views of both a "United States political observer of long experience in Germany" and refugees from the Soviet Zone, concluding that the Soviets were preparing to transfer formal control there to "Communist officials" and withdraw from Germany.[26] The U.S. informant believed it might be a response to the planned West German state -- that is, a kind of diplomatic *coup* to be presented to the Western Foreign Ministers at an upcoming meeting. The following quote demonstrates that despite the accumulated difficulties in the Soviet Zone, at least one Western journalist still believed a dramatic departure there might upset plans for a West German state. It also shows the extent to which Germans in *all four zones* still understood the occupation as a teleology of national renewal:

> A Russian withdrawal, announced by the Russians at an international conclave, would be an important Russian weapon in the battle for Germany. For the freeing of Germany from the occupation armies is a dream entertained by almost all German politicians. Most of them view it as a prerequisite of true German unity and a rebirth of the German state.[27]

Days later, a resolution of the People's Council (the East German organization created to sponsor elections for the People's Congress) played to these same hopes in the West with an appeal "to all four powers" to return to the principles of Potsdam to resolve the "Berlin conflict." The Council had been merely a background presence in all-German matters, and had had little real influence in the West. But now, claiming to speak on behalf of all Germans, it warned that they "would not give up the rights which the victor Powers granted . . . in the Potsdam agreement." These included "economic and political unity . . . the conclusion of a peace treaty, and the withdrawal of occupation troops."[28] The impact of these appeals could not be known, but it was clear that calls for national unity and a return to Potsdam were the Soviets' and German Communists' primary weapon against a West German state. The London *Times'* Berlin correspondent

did *not* speculate about a *unilateral* Soviet withdrawal, however.[29]

But withdrawal or no, Western observers took both the resolution and rumors as evidence of Soviet determination to extend their influence into the Western Zones. Yet this did *not* preclude the possibility of their launching a separate Eastern state. Contemporary thought suggested that such a state was simply another strategy for pursuing Western influence. It seemed quite possible that the Soviets wanted to simultaneously block a West German state *and* set up an Eastern satellite regime. The American press, more so than the British, emphasized that *both* strategies were part of a larger plan to eventually win *all* of Germany. This strategy seemed far less paradoxical if one considers that the Soviets could take such actions and still blame the West for dividing Germany, given the earlier efforts of the Allies and West Germans politicians. In effect, they could mobilize German nationalism against those *already deemed responsible* for German division even as they launched their own separate state. And, if need be, they could also still trade away that state for more influence in the West. As we have seen, recent research suggests such a Soviet strategy: trying to keep their options open, even after the founding of the GDR.[30] In a sense, the movement toward creating a West German state freed the Soviets to prepare themselves for either eventuality.

Part of the process of creating the West German government was the lengthy negotiations for an "occupation statute," which continued through the winter of 1949. The statute would limit the sovereignty of the new regime, subjecting it to the supervision of a Western Allied control council, while an analogous statute would provide for international control of the *Ruhrgebiet*. On February 1, 1949 the "executive committee" of the Eastern People's Council issued a manifesto urging "the German People" to protest against both.[31] The "manifesto" came shortly after Stalin's "four points" for agreement on ending the

blockade and resuming four-power discussions on German unification. The timing of the manifesto and the four points was clearly intended to give pause to Western German public opinion. Perhaps the SED, despite its unpopularity in the West, might still appeal to Western Germans' wounded pride over the imminent limitations on their sovereignty.

The Allies, however, saw the two announcements as signs of desperation. The reason was the SED's recent admissions about grave production problems in the Soviet Zone. They believed the real goal was more immediate and tangible: once again, it was a ploy to simply get the counterblockade lifted.[32] Lack of raw materials from the West, combined with Soviet reparations, seemed bound to sabotage the German Economic Commission's plan to revive the zonal economy. But these assumptions provided little comfort to the Western media, which still insisted that a breakthrough on the blockade could have far reaching (and unintended) consequences for the planning of the Western state. A British estimate of February 5 that the Soviet Zone's economy had virtually collapsed, also predicted that in the event of resumed interzonal trade and the end of Soviet reparations, the way would be open for "the economic and political unity of Germany."[33] However farfetched this prediction appears in retrospect, it reminds how tentative plans for a Western state appeared in the tension and uncertainty of the blockade months. The report also noted increased alienation of the Eastern workforce in the face of higher and higher work norms -- a situation that might make the Soviets more amenable to compromise.

Yet plans for separate states continued to go forward -- on both sides of the Elbe. Word reached West Berlin in early March that a final draft of a constitution for "a 'German Democratic Republic'" was being revised by the People's Council. The London *Times*' Berlin correspondent called it a "counterblast" to the Western German Basic Law,

and remarked that . . .

> . . the 'people's council' claims to to be the only representative German body now existing, and the constitution which it will issue soon will be announced as for the whole of Germany. This is of course pure propaganda, and there is no suggestion yet of an eastern German State being set up. For the time being the purpose is to denigrate the [West German] basic law [sic] as the work of a clique of Germans subservient to the western allies [sic] and to represent the ['people's] council's document as based on popular wishes. Fifteen thousand suggestions from the 'broad masses' in city and country in the Soviet zone are said to have been considered, and some reports speak of even high schools having contributed amendments to the original draft.[34]

Of course, the "amendments" were an easy means to legitimize a process that was not democratic, but the importance of the quote is that it again assumes a sense of urgency in East Berlin: the People's Council and its Soviet backers seemed hard-pressed indeed to rally Western Germans with appeals to nationalism and "national self-determination." Such appeals would become increasingly shrill -- and to a number of Western observers, dangerous -- as winter turned to spring. A sign of things to come was the propaganda at the spring 1949 Leipzig Fair, which opened March 6.

The fair showed the trajectory of economic planning in the Soviet Zone as clearly away from private enterprise, while promoting German nationalism more than ever before. Nationalist decor was everywhere -- especially where speeches were given. A year before, Western reporters had believed the Fair amounted to simple and blatant Soviet exploitation of German production. The previous fall, as mentioned, it had been a forum for the German Communists to demand the reopening of interzonal trade. Now in the spring of 1949, blatant appeals to German unity suggested not simply increased competition for German allegiance, but a dangerous revival of iconography associated with the recent German past:

The city was plastered with posters and banners proclaiming nationalist slogans--

> against 'separatism' for a 'united, strong and free Germany' or against the Ruhr statute. They are of course the Communist as well as nationalist slogan of today. . . . Other posters attacked the United States. One showed an American soldier lurking in the shadow of a Nazi uniform to destroy the German people. . . . There was a third kind of slogan typified by the admonition across the railway station, 'You too act like a German.' A German-born British visitor guiding us around the fair said wryly as he saw this banner, 'If it were not for the flag you could not tell the difference between this and the Kaiser's time.' . . . 'The Germans always thought they were the best behaved people in the world and that others just could not live up to their code of conduct,' said an Englishman who lived in Germany during much of Hitler's regime. 'They have not changed a bit.'[35]

The quote expresses the English informants' contempt, both for the propaganda and Germans' seemingly unrepentant chauvinism. But how dangerous was the "unchanged nature" of the Germans in the context of the blockade and Communist sloganeering? The correspondent did not speculate on what Soviet moves or media campaigns might follow, but only suggested the potential threat to the West that the SED might muster through manipulation of (apparently) unreformed German nationalism. This sort of strategy would alarm many more Western reporters in the summer and fall to come.

Meanwhile in Berlin, Drew Middleton called the new Eastern constitution part of a strategy of "political civil war, against Western Germany and the Western powers."[36] Though SED co-chairman Wilhelm Pieck claimed the new strategy was *defensive*, combating the "new war" the *Western* powers "were plotting in *their* zones of occupation," (emphasis added) Middleton took his words to mean, once again, that an Eastern state was imminent, and that "civil war" would be fought through it. But in truth, Pieck sounded less like a strident nationalist and more like a Soviet ally. He had reminded listeners at the opening of the Leipzig fair that the People's Council was "the only group in Germany 'which represents all German interests.'" Now, he added that no German could avoid making the choice "between Russia and the West," and that "in time of war" German

Communists must support the Red Army.[37] In effect, he was trying to present the People's Council as both pro-German *and* pro-Soviet (read anti-Allies), the only antidote to "Western aggression."

More singularly nationalist, however, were the actual proceedings of the People's Council on March 20. The Council called recent steps by the Allies to include Western Germany and West Berlin within the "the geographical limits" of the Atlantic Treaty "a national emergency'" which must be met with adoption of a "constitution of 'a democratic German Republic.'"[38] The London *Times* Berlin correspondent believed the constitution was designed to incorporate *all* of Germany "in the Russian system," by way of the council's nationalist rhetoric: "All the speeches at the conference of the 'people's council' [sic] were marked by that nationalistic egoism which colours most Communist propaganda today and echoes the Goebbels technique."[39]

But the correspondent, like others before him, also saw progress towards a Western state providing "cover" for the SED's own plans for a separate state: the People's Council could attack "the western allies [sic] and their credulous German servants," while in Berlin "the view is being expressed that one of the next moves will be the setting up of an eastern government claiming to speak in the name of all Germany"[40] Days later, German sources in Berlin suggested that this imminent Eastern state was prelude to "the introduction of a new mark currency for the whole of Germany," suggesting another means by which the Soviets could preempt the economic unity of Trizonia.[41] But no further speculation on the "next move" of the People's Council was printed before agreement was reached in the West on the occupation statute.

Approval of the statute came with the signing of the North Atlantic Pact in early April. According to *New York Times* columnist Anne O. McCormick, the occupation sta-

tute was a "shift from absolute military rule to a mixed regime of Allied supervision and German government . . ."[42] In spite of these restrictions, many observers in the Atlantic community (including Americans) would have preferred to "keep Germany down." There were also the "objections and reservations" of many German politicians and administrators who had played the Allies off against each other, hoping to delay establishment of a federal government and get a more centralized state instead.[43] For the time being, the nascent West German state would *not* be armed, and therefore not participate in the newly formed NATO Alliance. Moreover, the Allies would remain with minimal occupation forces and a "carefully defined veto power." McCormick believed that NATO was basically unthinkable without recent cooperation on Germany. France's support in particular had been important, but all three Allies realized that failure to agree on Germany might have endangered the whole "structure" of common defense.

But despite these dramatic breakthroughs, McCormick's views reminds us that the Western media still retained hopes for continued progress toward German unity. She believed the Allies had not changed their goal of unification, but simply changed tactics in the face of Soviet intransigence:

> It is unfortunate that [the Western Allies] joint statement contained no mention of their efforts to create a unified Germany. In opening the *new road* [ie. creating a West German state then appealing to the Soviets to merge their zone into it] the blame for blocking the natural approach to peace should be put where it belongs.[44] [emphasis added]

McCormick was far from alone in hoping for a settlement in Germany that spring.[45] But as April wore on, British and U.S. intelligence became aware of further Soviet attempts to counter the momentum toward a Western State. Reports suggested they were even contemplating return of territories assigned to Poland, including parts of industrialized Lower Silesia. Once again, there was grave concern that a Soviet initiative

might, in the event of the blockade's end, turn Western German opinion against the new Western state.[46] Western "diplomats" warned that this "information" about possible Soviet moves must be treated with "greatest reserve," but nevertheless seemed to confirm prior speculation that Stalin, in spite of guarantees to the Poles, might redraw the eastern German border if it would gain him a "communist Germany."[47]

More skeptical U.S. and British officials also began to wonder when a cryptic article in a small German Communist newspaper, written by Ulbricht himself, essentially blamed the Allies for the postwar German border with Poland, while claiming the Soviets had simply "awaited developments in Germany."[48] This basically false accusation (the Allies certainly *acquiesced* in the border's relocation, but the Soviets were the instigators) came with criticisms of the West German political parties, alleging they had been too reactionary to "influence" the territorial transfer in 1945, whatever that meant exactly. Sidney Gruson of the *New York Times* believed Ulbricht was "holding out to the Germans the tempting bait that a 'democratic' Germany in the Communist sense of the word would get the question of the eastern frontiers reexamined."[49] The unnamed officials saw a more primary economic motive behind the piece as well: perhaps Ulbricht was hoping to mitigate the economic woes of the Soviet Zone by reconnecting it to Silesian coal. In response to the blockade, trade had already had to be doubled with Poland as an "emergency measure." But a "territory card" in SED hands might still dissuade West Germans from supporting the new Western state.

When these rumors faded quickly, they were replaced by very different ones. By mid-April, the talk around Berlin was that the Soviets might soon lift the blockade, *and* "set up" an Eastern state -- within current borders.[50] The London *Times* Berlin correspondent was skeptical, however, believing *all* of Germany remained the communist goal. Lif-

ting the blockade would allow the Soviets to save face before German opinion, which, because of the airlift, counter-blockade, and "spirit of the Berliners" had turned so strongly against them, and also allow the resumption of trade and one last chance for the SED improve its image in West Germany.[51] On April 19, another wave of rumors anticipated a major Soviet announcement. It was believed they would soon offer to lift the blockade, but only in return for "weightier concessions" from the Allies.[52] Whatever their demands might be, hopes arose that a proposal acceptable to the Allies was imminent.

Days later, as the long process of negotiations on the West German state came to conclusion, TASS, the official Soviet news agency, announced willingness to lift the Berlin blockade on condition that a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers be held soon after. The announcement came just *hours after* the way was cleared for ratification of the West German Basic Law. The *New York Times* editorial page expressed relief and hope, but like its London counterpart, advised against accepting any offers that would mean "retreat" from the launching of the Bonn government.[53] The next day the U.S. State Department announced that if the offer was indeed the "correct" Soviet position, then the blockade and counterblockade could soon be ended. The eventual four-power agreement, restoring full access to Berlin, went into effect just after midnight on May 12, 1949. The Foreign Minister's Conference was scheduled to begin on May 23 in Paris.

The Soviet Zone "from West of the Blockade": June 1948-May 1949

In the period just discussed, the English-speaking media devoted less attention to the internal situation in the Soviet zone than to the heroism of the airlift and the above speculations on Soviet motives and tactics. Nevertheless, from the beginning of the blockade, reports on the Soviet Zone were also filled with speculation: if a new eastern state was in

the offing, were the German Communists building up a "People's Police" and purging their ranks to prepare for it? Could the Soviets actually risk a withdrawal form the Zone given the unpopularity of the SED? was the economy of the Soviet Zone approaching collapse? All that seemed certain was that economic problems, Soviet reparations, and the blockade of Berlin had brought communist fortunes to their all-time low. Information reaching the West suggested increasing, though scattered resistance. In the first months of the blockade (June-September 1948) the initial reports bespoke of an overwhelming defeat for the Communists. For a time, the Western media was quite pleased. It seemed no amount of new economic planning or efforts to rally the population could reverse the sinking fortunes of the SED. Indeed, the more responsibility the Soviets gave them, the more they bore the brunt of popular discontent.

Not that this period was much better in the Western zones. The currency reform of June 1948 caused considerable short-term pain -- both there and in West Berlin -- by destroying the savings of most of the population and increasing unemployment. The stronger currency *did* mean the end of hoarding and barter, the return of consumer goods to store shelves, and better facilitation of Marshall Plan aid, but all of this would only gradually benefit the working population. Meanwhile in the Soviet Zone and East Berlin an analogous currency reform, plus lack of trade with the West, continuing reparations, shortages of raw materials, and no Marshall aid, meant an increased cost of living and longer-term economic difficulties as well. Speculation in the West suggested that the Zonal economy was quickly nearing exhaustion, and the counterblockade had scored a great victory in the struggle for Germany. Here is how the leading article of *The Economist* described the situation on September 4, 1948:

> Quite apart from such issues as the Oder-Neisse frontier and the expulsion of the Germans from Eastern lands, conditions in the Soviet zone have made nonsense of

> any Russian claim to be friend and liberator. Politically, the imposition of Communist rule has proved so unpopular that this year the Russians dare not risk elections, even faked elections. Economically, the systematic stripping of the Soviet zone has led to an acute food shortage and to a lack of consumer goods that no propaganda can cover. *Even if the Western Allies had done nothing to improve conditions in their zones, they could hardly have failed to profit by the contrast with Soviet policy.* (emphasis added)[54]

The turnaround could not be more complete: the litany of criticisms against that the occupation policies of the Allies now paled in comparison to the apparent economic ruin and political disaffection in the Soviet Zone. This new perspective on the occupation surely had much to do with the simultaneous political watershed reached in the Western Zones, where West German politicians were becoming increasingly more receptive to Anglo-American proposals for the creation of a West German government. Indeed, the idea of a Western state became more palatable to a great many West Germans *precisely because of* the Soviet blockade. And, as we will see below, U.S. proposals (however disingenuous) to merge the Soviet Zone into that state allowed hopes to continue that a Western government need not imply permanent partition.

The SED had already responded to the beginnings of the Western "Economic Miracle" (*Wirtschaftswunder*), by announcing two economic plans in July, the first for the remainder of 1948 and the second for 1949-50. The ultimate goal, according to the London *Times*, was to sow "disillusion and alarm" among their Christian Democratic and Liberal rivals.[55] Neither of the two parties, nor the *Länder* Parliaments had been consulted by the German Economic Commission in the planning process. Both the Eastern CDU and LPD had recently complained about their limited say in "zonal policy,"[56] but now the Christian Democrats went even further, warning in an article in the party daily *Der Tag* that the SED had called "an open resistance movement" into being in the countryside with its "wishes" to strike at the independence of larger farmers.[57] The SED's countermove

was the launching of a "Democratic Peasant's Party," formally constituted on July 18.

The DPP (German acronym DBD) was designed to rally both old and new farmers (beneficiaries of the land reform) to the new economic plans, as well as the aims of the "anti-fascist bloc."[58] A second satellite party, the National Democrats (NDP), designed to appeal to former Nazis, was approved around the same time and launched soon after. The name implied a blatant appeal to German nationalism, which, as we have seen, was becoming an increasingly important (and in the West, disturbing) element of SED propaganda. In the mean-time, however, the London *Times* believed these gestures were failing to quell "growing bitterness" all over the Soviet Zone--now increasingly directed at the SED, which, because of its virtually independent control of the German Economic Commission, had become a lightning rod for popular complaints about the "rigours of work" and "meagreness of rations." As the zonal economy seemed to reach its nadir, the regular flights of British and American aircraft to and from West Berlin were assumed to have a "heartening effect" on peasants working in the fields,[59] further eroding the little popular support the SED had still retained in the spring of 1948.

Amidst this continuing stream of 'bad news' for the SED, the West received word of a growing political transformation in the Zone. Not only were SED party members and employees of the "German administration" being "closely scrutinized" for "weeding out," but more cracks in the anti-Fascist bloc were apparent, this time in the disaffection of a wing of the LDP. This faction accused the party's leadership of "too marked a complaisance to Russian purposes." On August 16, the *Montag Echo*, organ of these "mavericks," claimed the Soviets were moving to "sovietize" the SED and eventually, all of Germany as well:

> . . . on orders from Moscow the organization of the Socialist Unity Party is to be transformed. The policy hitherto pursued of building up a bloc is to be dropped

> and with it the appeal to 'democracy' and 'unity.' Instead . . . there is to be only a cadre of proved and trusted Communists who will prepare the way for the seizure of power by legal or illegal means. The newspaper also takes the view that after Berlin the next move will be 'to set across the Elbe.'[60]

The transition of the SED to a "party of a new type" in this era is well known,[61] but in the popular media, this transition was not described as just another step in the increasing divergence and isolation of the Soviet Zone from the Western zones, but as a sign of future possible subversion in the West. The most shrill warning of this type came from Werner Knop, a clandestine traveler in the Soviet Zone we will meet in Chapter 3. He argued that the increasingly desperate domestic situation in the Soviet Zone would not deter a Soviet offensive in the West, but actually encourage one.[62] The London *Times*, was not as vocally concerned as either Knop or the LDP about threats to the West, agreed that the eastern population had turned completely against the SED.

> Communist fortunes have touched their lowest ebb yet. In the eastern zone itself the party is publicly criticized and in private still more vigorously denounced. The reason for the postponement of the communal elections in Berlin in October is only too apparent. The Socialist Unity Party has lost caste with the people and is fast losing it with the Soviet military administration.[63]

As we have seen, the SED used the fall 1948 Leipzig fair as a platform for demands for the reopening of trade with the West. Its important to bear in mind the turnaround from the previous spring -- recall how the Western media had viewed the fair as a virtual Soviet hard currency shop. Now all energy seemed focused on *reviving* the economy, and with it, SED fortunes. The American and British military authorities actually considered temporarily lifting the blockade to allow West German firms to participate, but on August 23 announced that all freight intended for the fair would be banned.[64] For all their protestations about this and the counterblockade in general, one thing the German Communists did *not* demand at the fair was Marshal aid. While trade with the West was

deemed vital, "participation" in the Marshall Plan, according to Chairman of the German Economic Commission Heinrich Rau, would mean "the end of our independence."[65]

Once the fair got underway, the news in the West focused on how much the "once-famous industrial show" had declined. The few foreign buyers who did make the journey found no guarantees that the "sparse goods on display" could be delivered.[66] Amidst "huge signs," some proclaiming a new Soviet-sponsored "two-year plan," others rejecting the Marshall Plan as destroyer of German industry, Western journalists found businessmen complaining about the exhausted economy and hinting at the continued fear American Curt Riess described two months before:

> A German exhibitor was asked why he had so few wares for sale. He looked carefully up and down the street to make sure no one could hear him. 'No materials.' he said. 'But even when we have materials they don't let us make goods. We have no stocks. I don't even have an order book here. What's the use. I can promise no deliveries.' 'Why is that?' he was asked. 'The Western powers are reviving industry to end the economic drain of occupation. It must be a drain on Russia, too.' 'Quite the opposite,' the German said. They are bleeding Eastern Germany. Economically they are forcing us to hang ourselves.'[67]

The Soviets seemed here to be pushing economic exploitation to the limits of endurance, a view shared at the time by Knop. The author of the above quote didn't speculate on the ultimate ends of this "hanging," but whatever the reason, the Soviets could and did blame the flagging economy on the Western counterblockade and the economic unification of the Western zones. In this way, they could pursue their nationalist strategy in the Western zones, without taking responsibility for the declining economy in theirs. Ulbricht's speech calling for "the lifting of all frontier barriers and the resumption of normal trade relations in the country," suggested the same thing in so many words.[68]

Of course trade was not reopened, but restricted even further. Paradoxically however, both Ulbricht's demands *and* the Soviets refusal to lift the blockade were viewed in

the West as a sign of deepening economic and political crisis. Perhaps the counterblockade and resulting popular hostility would provide them an excuse to further extend dictatorial control. When in October the SED finally began to hint at severe domestic trouble (through a report from the German Economic Commission) the Berlin correspondent for the London *Times* believed the Commission's report might be a "prelude to the finding of scapegoats," but was more likely an effort to prepare the public for the failure of the 1948 economic plan. In other words, it was another victory for the cooperation of the Allies in Germany, though the extent of the trouble could not precisely be gauged. The correspondent described the zonal economy, however, as "crippled."[69]

Around the same time, signs of even greater popular disaffection began to reach Berlin. On the same day that the city government was officially split by the relocation of the City Council from the Soviet to the British sector,[70] "economic deterioration" and disillusionment with the SED, due to "empty promises" (in particular regarding the return of some eastern territory) were described as creating widespread rejection throughout the Soviet Zone.[71] Drew Middleton credited U.S. and British "political observers" with the belief that "a drastic decline in popular support for the Socialist Unity . . . party [sic] throughout the Soviet zone has been the most important development in German politics during the last six months." Disaffection had led to further police build-ups in volatile areas, which in turn created fears of imminent "complete communization." These sources believed the Soviet authorities were in a difficult position: not only must they rule by force, but they must quickly train *German forces* to shoulder the burden. They believed these forces would come from the POW camps in Russia: "trained in the Soviet Union for their new duties," they would replace Red Army personnel and hopefully minimize "anti-Russian incidents." This new "People's Police," according to rumors, was linked to for-

mer *Wehrmacht* generals who had been imprisoned in Russia and converted to the Soviet cause. Though this could not be confirmed, the force was assumed to be set up as "a finely tempered instrument of the ruling minority,"[72] designed to take control of the Soviet Zone if the event of a Red Army withdraw.[73]

But "anti-Soviet incidents" aside, the key finding for Middleton was popular resentment against the *SED*. Informants in Berlin told him the last straw had been its decision to stand firmly behind the Berlin blockade. Add this to the aforementioned broken promises regarding: 1) the Eastern territories; 2) a failed economic plan for which the party had taken all credit, 3) its domination of the German administration; and 4) the failure to raise production levels in the "people's plants" -- recently returned to German control -- and the SED had become a lightning rod for any and all discontent and disillusionment. Meanwhile, within the party itself, purges had left only "a small, fanatical Communist group dependent on force to retain power over a mass of sullen, embittered persons."[74]

Nevertheless, predictions continued about the imminent launching of Eastern state. Middleton, as noted in the previous section, reported the same week that the Soviets were planning a transfer of formal control of the zone to German "Communist officials."[75] Apparently the plans for a West German state had emboldened the Soviets to prop up the SED in spite of all its difficulties, and the German communists would use their new independence from Moscow to try and gain more leverage in both Eastern and Western Germany. A new constitution was nearing completion for that eventuality, intended to "virtually represent" all Germans (just like its Western counterpart), and therefore "containing promises aimed at the people of the Western zones as well as those of the Soviet zone."[76] Oddly, then, when popular support for the SED had seemingly bot-

tomed out, the Western media believed it was about to become sovereign in the Soviet Zone.

Concerns about this emerging new state led to continuing speculations about the size and possible military potential of the "People's Police" during October and November. The Soviets, for their part, denied it was a "Red *Wehrmacht*," a term used by a number of the SED's detractors.[77] Major-General Walter Schreiber, recently escaped from the Soviet Union, declared on November 3 that there were no German armies being trained in the USSR, as had been alleged for some time, and no German Generals returning from the East to take over the new force. However, he *did* assert that the "police" were being armed with tanks and artillery, and that they were the "first stage in the development of a Red Army of Germans."[78] But once again, the primary mission of this new force was assumed to be *domestic* control, rather than external aggression. Reports described increasing "popular resistance," in the Soviet Zone, which, though "minor" and "disconnected," appeared to reflect resentment deep enough to produce a large-scale movement. Unfortunately for the SED, the resistance was growing *because of the new police force itself.* A "veteran Western intelligence officer" believed that this discord would prevent the Soviets from risking withdrawal:

> Opposition to the police force within the Soviet zone is taking the form at present of thousands of written notes to members of the police from Germans in areas in which the formations are quartered. Other notes are being sent to workers in the Eastern zone who have volunteered to join the police. The notes show a strong nationalist sentiment and usually end with a phrase that say in effect: He who works with the Russians works against Germany.[79]

Ironically then, the unpopularity of those groomed to replace the Red Army was forcing it to remain. A free-standing Eastern state, in the estimation of the Eastern population, still appeared as an illegitimate tool of the Soviets.

Finally, a series of reports in the London *Times* at the end of November seemed to end *all* speculation on an early Soviet withdrawal.[80] According to the *Times*' Berlin correspondent, they would remain because of too many accumulating problems, both political and economic. The correspondent predicted the Red Army would stay on to back up the People's Police -- many of whose recruits were of doubtful reliability -- and the People's Congress would eventually become a zonal parliament, all of which did eventually come to pass. In the meantime, however, the correspondent emphasized the "abnormality" of the situation: the SED stood virtually unopposed at the head of the German Economic Commission and People's Congress, but had no popular support, and no assistance from the Soviets with the flagging economy either.

But if a Soviet withdrawal was not imminent, in December 1948, observers were still predicting the inauguration of a separate East German state. And once again the rumors came along with hints of *worsening problems* for the SED. The new speculation, however, differed in suggesting that the SED was planning to take a "go-slow" approach to state-building in the face of popular disapproval. Statements by Wilhelm Pieck in *Neues Deutschland* that expropriations had ended, that the Zone was emphatically *not* a people's democracy, and that the People's Council would *not* become an East German government, were interpreted as a tacit confirmation of independent reports that "the process of political and industrial communization has been pushed beyond the limits of popular support."[81] But if the SED was "going slow" out of necessity, the London *Times* Berlin correspondent believed that contemporary, halting progress toward a West German constitution was buying them time, allowing the People's Council to demand unity even as it was being groomed as an Eastern government. The SED's control of the Ministry of Interior and German Economic Commission fit nicely into this theory, as they could

quickly become the administrative arms of the new regime. Even in the face of popular rejection and economic failure, then, the SED seemed well-positioned to assume power -- precisely because the West had taken the first steps toward partition.

Early in the new year (1949), the SED continued to use the People's Congress to protest progress toward a Western state -- as well as the limitations the Western Allies planned to place on it. The Western media continued to interpret such protests, in part, as evidence of continuing desperation over the grave domestic situation facing the SED -- regarding industrial production and the zonal economy in general. The same constellation of difficulties: lack of raw materials from the West and continued Soviet reparations, seemed bound to doom the plans of the German Economic Commission to revive the zonal economy:

> It is held that the two-year plan for the eastern zone exists only on paper, and cannot compete with the continued suction of essential materials, machinery and equipment outwards in an easterly direction as 'reparations' and the stopping of the flow of replacements from the west which the counter-blockade has imposed.[82]

The same report also hinted that increasing alienation among workers in the Soviet Zone might make the Soviets more amenable to compromise. The central frustration for the workers was the Hennecke movement, which urged and cajoled them to ever higher productivity through the celebration of the super-productive worker-turned-folk-legend Adolf Hennecke--modeled after a similar "living legend," Stahkovite, in the Soviet Union.[83] Apparently many workers saw the movement as the reintroduction of "the system of sweated labor."[84] But more importantly for this argument, linking workers' resistance with a new Soviet flexibility marks a shift among at least some voices in the Western media: declining communist fortunes, long associated with an imminent Eastern state, now inspired renewed hopes -- possibly of reopened trade and even new talks on the German

Question itself.

Yet the grievances of workers also suggested stepped-up economic pressure in the Zone, and pressure on a different social group--East German businessmen--was in evidence by their complete exclusion from the spring 1949 Leipzig Fair, which opened on March 6. Lightly attended due to snowy weather and the counterblockade, the fair was notable not simply for appeals to German nationalism, but an outright ban on *all* private manufactures from the Soviet Zone. A long-time "furrier" from Leipzig told an American correspondent "in another year or so, . . . there will be no private enterprise left in Eastern Germany."[85] Economic Commission Chairman Rau attempted to quell such speculation by promising at the opening ceremony that "'certain compulsory measures' restricting private enterprise would be eliminated to speed up the zone's foreign trade."[86] He then proceeded to stretch these apologetics into a rather obvious appeal to West Germans. Standing before a backdrop of nationalist decorations, he proclaimed: "we highly value the widest possible development of private enterprise."[87] But observers were skeptical about communist demands for economic reconnection with the West. Many continued to wonder if the SED could more quickly regain momentum in the Western zones from the propaganda value of an independent Eastern state.

As we have seen, however, April 1949, brought rumors that they would do both: lift the blockade *in conjunction with* setting-up an Eastern state.[88] The American-licensed Berlin daily *Der Abend* reported a planned separate peace treaty, the end of reparations, and the withdrawal of all Soviet personnel save an ambassador to advise the new government. Meanwhile, Rau, in a speech for SED officials in Potsdam, called for reopening trade with the West -- undoubtedly be-cause the German Economic Commission would have to again revise the two-year plan -- but insisted as well that "with the lifting of the

[counter]blockade . . . [the SED] must seek to secure greater influence in the west."[89] With the new Western state restricted by the occupation statute and international control of the Ruhr, such a scenario suggested a significant relative status gain for the SED. But like earlier rumors, this one soon lost traction, and most Western observers had dropped speculation about an Eastern state by the end of the month. As the Soviets became more willing to discuss lifting the blockade, it was increasingly assumed they would *not* create a separate state and thereby risk locking themselves out of the Western zones.

Nevertheless, they surely *would* continue to appeal to West Germans' nationalism as a means of blocking creation of the West German state. In late April the Western media became increasingly worried about the impact of these appeals in West Germany, because of the assumed longing there for unity and independence. May Day celebrations in East Berlin suggested how the SED leaders might tap into that longing -- almost in spite of themselves.

Drew Middleton, keenly observing the audience at a parade marking the International Day of the Worker, noted not simply their rejection of Communist ideology, but nationalist impulses that the regime had begun to play upon.

> Down the street came the police led by Paul Markgraf, the former *Wehrmacht* officer who commands the Soviet sector police, in a bright new blue uniform with heavy gold epaulets. After him came wave after wave of police marching with the smooth swing of veterans. They are big men, well fed. But the contrast between the gauntness of the people and the evident well being of the police was lost on the spectators. They were seeing something else, something in the past and perhaps in the future. 'Our soldiers could not have marched better,' a man said nearby. 'We marched just as well before the war,' a prematurely aging man with a slight limp murmured. The first ranks carried carbines. All marched well. They did everything but goosestep. Above them waved their banners inscribed with 'Long live the Soviet Union,' and 'Beside the Soviet Union for peace.' There was a ripple of cheers among the spectators. But they were not cheering these slogans. They were cheering the marching men and with them much of Germany's violent past. These marching men seemed to evoke enthusiasm stronger than that awa-

kened by Communist speeches and banners.[90]

Middleton ultimately did not know what would become of these frustrated, and partly nostalgic impulses, but certainly the display was unlike anything contemplated or permitted in the West at the time, as was the status of Markgraf. And it was in the Western zones in particular that observers increasingly feared the impact Soviet and SED appeals to nationalism. If the SED and communism itself were all but discredited in the Soviet Zone, the lifting of the Berlin blockade would bring increasing concern, from Middleton and a host of other observers -- mostly Americans -- of the potential appeal of the Eastern regime *in the West*, especially if it appeared to have more independence from the Soviets than the Western German state had from the Allies, or if the Soviet Zone's economy began to recover. Throughout the late spring and summer of 1949, there was little evidence that the SED would gain real independence or much improve the zonal economy, but nevertheless, its continuing appeals to German nationalism in the Western Zones occupied considerable attention, precisely because of the ambivalence of West Germans in the face of approaching partition.

Renewed Hopes for Unification?: Covering the Paris Conference, May-June 1949

In the run-up to the Paris meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, the most basic, and most perplexing question turned out to be why the Soviets even wanted the meeting. Given the apparent determination of the Allies and West German politicians to launch a Western state (and prevent Soviet participation in its development), there seemed very little left to negotiate. Anne O. McCormick believed they had called the conference primarily to try one last time to derail the Western State, even if the chances were not good. More broadly, she believed it was a sign of new confidence, but paradoxically, despera-

tion as well: confidence due to the imminent Com-munist victory in China; desperation due to the economic stagnation in the Soviet Zone. If China increased their "wiggle room" in Europe as a whole, the frustration of Germans in the Soviet Zone had badly undermined their standing locally. Only by reviving the economy could revive their prospects in Germany as a whole.[91] But other Western pundits saw things differently. Some believed the Soviets -- all public announcements to the contrary -- were looking to cut their losses in Germany, and therefore would honestly seek unification. In a period that in hindsight has seemed to most scholars as little more than a confirmation of prior steps toward the division of Germany,[92] contemporaries saw developments as far more fluid, and many viewed the end of the blockade with renewed hopes that Germany might yet be spared partition.

Among the reasons was a leak to *The New York Times* that the U.S. was considering a plan in which all four powers would limit their troop deployments either to port cities or adjacent frontier regions.[93] The news of this plan so shocked the British and French governments that the U.S. State Department dramatically altered it to guarantee a large Allied military presence in the country, and additional demands for concessions that the Soviets would almost certainly not accept.[94] The report oversimplified the U.S. plan, but the author, James Reston, *did* make the point that it would be offered only if the Soviets would agree to unification on terms acceptable to the Western Allies.[95] The Soviets, meanwhile, were expected to counterpropose a *total* withdrawal. They had already offered a "draft peace treaty" to the SED leadership and would likely present it to the Foreign Ministers.[96] In effect, both sides were expected to "pitch unity" to the Germans.

And American Thomas J. Hamilton took both sides at their word: he believed the Soviets truly desired a centralized state, while the Allies were equally desirous of a merger

of the Soviet Zone into West Germany. He called the Western plan for a federal, rather than centralized administration evidence of continued hope for a settlement, rather than partition. It was also a means of curbing potential German menace in the future:

> Secretary of State Acheson, British Foreign Secretary Bevin and French Foreign Minister Schuman agreed in Washington earlier this month that Western Germany must have a federal structure. This decision was taken largely in the belief that a federal regime would be less strong, and therefore less likely to launch a career of aggression, than a centralized government. The same considerations, it was learned, apply to the Anglo-American proposal that Soviet occupied Germany should be added to the Western German government, thus creating a federal regime with authority over all of Germany. One official suggested that, in view of the fact that the Soviet zone had been completely shut off from the Western zones, a federal regime would reduce the difficulties in the way of reestablishing a single government.[97]

Hamilton believed the Soviets would agree to the Western proposals because of their weak position in Germany. Progress toward a Western state had surely forced them to lift the blockade, and he believed they must now agree on a zonal merger or risk accusations of obstructing "the only kind of German unification to which the Western powers will agree."[98] The American and British governments, meanwhile, were apparently unconcerned about French hesitations regarding troop withdrawals -- "those sponsoring the proposals" believed they would come around, precisely because the NATO Alliance offered France assurance against *both* the Soviets *and* a reunited Germany.[99] "Dual containment" seemed to offer not just security in the West, but diplomatic flexibility as well.

This is not to suggest that the Western Allies weren't privately doubting the wisdom of merging the Soviet Zone into the new Federal Republic. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that key players in the American State Department actually feared the Soviets would accept a merger,[100] hence the new tough conditions loaded onto the plan. Viewed in this light, media speculation of Soviet openness at the time does not seemed so

far fetched: at least one author even echoed the private concerns of U.S. officials that Soviet acceptance of Western terms contained dangerous potential.[101] This was because he, like Hamilton, assumed both sides were dead serious about unification. Indeed, even before the lifting of the blockade, McCormick was urging speedy conclusion to negotiations on a Western state precisely because it would be a *path to unity* that could compete with expected Soviet proposals:

> Russian plans to offer a unified state to the Germans, with withdrawal of all occupation forces, made it imperative for the Western Powers to set up without delay *their own framework of unity*--a Federal German Republic to which the Eastern states could adhere if they had the opportunity.[102] [emphasis added]

Soviet appeals to unity were also not dismissed by A.J. Fischer, one of the few Western correspondents allowed access to the Soviet Zone in the period after the blockade was lifted. Well aware of the Soviets' alarm with the prospect of a West German state, he discussed their efforts to counter that state, up to and including the "trump card" of total withdrawal:

> Could the Soviets offset this appeal of the West by offering the withdrawal of their occupation forces? An unoccupied Eastern Germany with its own police force under the prospective leadership of General von Seydlitz might prove to have a strong attraction to Germans in the West and appeal to their nationalist impulses, regardless of the political system that would be in power.[103]

As these comments suggest, hopes in the media for a breakthrough at Paris were balanced with careful wariness. If the Soviets *did* agree to a merger, the London *Times* warned that they would seek to overthrow the fledgling democratic government at some point in the future. But the assumption that the struggle for Germany remained "winner take all" worked both ways: speculation to the *contrary*, that the Soviets would *reject* the merger, likewise assumed their ultimate goal remained all of Germany -- which they would attain by building up their zone as a kind of "entry card" into the Western zones. While

earlier correspondents and pundits had anticipated some kind of peaceful allied *compromise* to reunify Germany, the authors who followed them in 1948-9 generally anticipated reunification might come through confrontation and struggle. If threats to the "peace of Europe" had made partition hard to imagine in 1945-7, "winner take all" made it almost as hard to anticipate in 1948-9.[104]

Almost a week of ineffective and uncompromising meetings had passed when reports suggested that the Allies were readying a new proposal for unification, not surprisingly on their own terms. "Authoritative sources" disclosed that the U.S. and Britain would ask the Foreign Ministers "to agree upon a merger of Soviet-occupied Germany with the nascent Western German Government to form a single federal state . . ."[105] This was hardly unexpected, as we have seen. U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson had made it clear on the day the blockade was lifted that the West German government would not be dismantled in the name of unity.[106] Western sources expected the Soviets to counter-demand the creation of a more centralized German state for all four zones. Neither side, however, could be certain of French cooperation with their proposals.

Nevertheless, speculation continued that the Soviets would agree to most Western demands, precisely because they could use a unified and independent German state to lessen American influence in Western Europe and "forestall the coalescence of United States and European opinion in a solid psychological front." While other observers continued to believe they would "use the conference merely as a propaganda forum seeking to thwart the development of democracy in Western Germany . . ."[107] *The New York Times* offered four reasons to believe they would grudgingly meet Western demands: 1) a unified, democratic Germany could reduce East-West tensions and thereby support for the NATO alliance; 2) it would foster pressure in the U.S. for a withdrawal of American

troops from Europe; 3) Soviet compliance in a "federal unification" would improve the position of the SED in Germany as a whole, and 4) it could lessen support for the Marshall Plan in the United States, thus freeing the Soviets to pursue their interests in the Far East.[108] In other words, the possibility of a deal in Germany was both real, and increasingly, a source of grave concern to the Western media -- as it was to officials in the U.S. State Department. In effect, it appeared that a spirit of compromise might yet revive So-viets momentum in Germany. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Vyshinsky therefore surprised his three Western counterparts by proposing not unification, but a return to four-power rule and unanimity on all major decisions.[109]

"The Russians are not easy to understand," wrote American Edwin L. James, noting how the Western Allies had expected "a big and bold try for German sentiment" at Paris.[110] Instead, the Soviets seemed to have ignored German opinion.[111] McCormick believed their did *not* reflect lost faith in the SED; rather, she assumed their persuading the Allies to "turn back the clock to 1945" would be prelude to further proposals. She suggested that the Soviets' immediate problem was loss of place among the Big Four. The Berlin counter-blockade had hurt them not just in Germany, but in Europe overall -- both politically and economically:

> When Vyshinsky spoke of the 'great difficulties' experienced in the Soviet Zone because trade with the West was cut off, he admitted that Russia suffers also from political isolation. Nothing is more evident here than the Soviet desire to recover lost ground. If we cannot rule Europe, Vyshinsky is saying in effect, we insist on a voice in it.[112]

As expected, however, the "Western statesman" were cautious. Such an undaring Soviet policy, coming in the wake of Communist victories in China, made them wonder if they were "being taken for the biggest ride in history." And in any case, as James reminded, their new "Western concern" [the Federal Republic] was doing quite well, and "they

did not intend to give up the advantages they had obtained."[113]

The Allied counterproposal was, predictably, given a glowing review in the Anglo-American press. Most important for this argument, however, was the sense, expressed by McCormick, that uniting the Soviet Zone with the Western zones under the Bonn constitution was the necessary and best way to prevent a future German "menace to the world."[114] McCormick believed the western government was neither a final arrangement nor an "ultimatum" . . . "submitted on a take-it-or-leave-it-basis." She instead repeated Acheson's rather disingenuous view that it was "designed to serve as a basis of discussion for initiating a new phase in Germany during which foreign control would be steadily reduced in favor of German self-government and freedom." She went on to argue (not without a certain logic) that the Western plan fit "squarely" into the Potsdam accords, in that it created both political and economic decentralization, as well as "political rights and freedoms of all democratic parties."[115]

But despite her protestations, McCormick's advocacy of unity on Western terms did begin to sound like an ultimatum. Her explication of how the Eastern *Länder* would "accede" to unity sounded quite uncompromising:

> This calls for the end of the Soviet police state in the Eastern zone and the holding of free elections under joint Four-Power guarantees and presumably supervision. It means in particular that the Western Powers proclaim their determination to stand by the new German Republic, and that Germany will either be united as a free democracy, as it is understood in the West, or it will not be united until conditions change.[116]

On May 31, Vyshinsky's reply to the Western proposals was that they "included decisions which had been taken without assent of the Soviet Union," violating the "principle of unanimity" and therefore represented a "*Diktat*" which could not be accepted.[117] Nevertheless, the press did not concede that division had become inevitable--or at least, *a com-*

plete and final division. If McCormick still saw an inevitable movement toward unity, however slow it might become, British correspondents pointed to limited, smaller successes at Paris, given their prior assumption that Soviet acceptance of any Western offer was unlikely. The London *Times*, whose Berlin correspondent had long forecasted the creation of an eastern state, also understood the importance of maintaining whatever small inter-German links and common institutions the Soviets would allow. Most particularly, the correspondent urged reconsideration of the part of Vyshinsky's original proposal which argued for the creation a central inter-German trade agency. He believed such high-level contacts would inevitably produce "some political influence and would, as a result, serve as some sort of bridge between east and west [sic] Germany."[118] The British press had clearly been less optimistic than the American regarding a settlement. Nonetheless, these arguments for minimal goals *did* suggest a certain revising of the optimism of mid-May.

In the next week or so, the London *Times* grew even more critical of prior optimism, its editorial page lamenting how much time had already been lost in dealing with the seemingly intractable question of German unity, and wondering what issues might have been raised instead.[119] These other "issues" however, had to be dealt with by the Foreign Ministers *precisely because* they would allow some gradual advancement toward unification. The editor noted that lower-level western negotiators had indeed begun discussions on establishing an "interallied coordinating body," to deal not only with trade, but also interzonal travel, newspaper exchanges, and currency problems.[120] Even the "hard boiled realists" seemed hopeful that whatever the outcome at Paris, the two halves of Germany would not be allowed to drift any further apart.

The Paris Conference lasted until June 20. There was progress on an Austrian

peace treaty, and plans were made for further trade talks, but there was no real progress on any of the main issues in Germany. The London *Times* believed a kind of *modus vivendi* was in the offing -- for one the thing, they expected the Soviets to curb the nationalist propaganda. But the editor seemed more resigned than ever to a fairly lengthy division of Germany "for some time to come." While this certainly did not mean future negotiations with the Soviets were futile, the editor warned they would "have a much better chance of success" if the great unlikelihood of a major breakthrough was accepted going in.[121] The concluding communique of the conference suggested even less progress than the "realists." While there would be further consultations in Berlin on trade and interzonal travel, there was nothing in the communique about any kind of central German agency or even guarantees of the rights of the Allies to remain in Berlin.[122]

American observers had let go their optimism as well. Merely frustrated at first, they eventually engaged in significant revisionism -- as if they too had long agreed that the gulf between the Allies and the Soviets had been unbridgeable. As early as June 12, the *New York Times* was expressing great frustration that even "economic arrangements which would tend to make an entity of Germany" had not been concluded,[123] though Edwin L. James, like his British counter-parts, remained hopeful of a last minute economic agreement based on "Russian concessions." The same day, C.L. Sulzberger was already engaged in a kind of *post mortem* for the conference, recounting "three theories" then current on what the Soviets had really wanted at Paris.[124] The first theory was that they had never really wanted a conference, and that Western officials had misread their signals. The second was that they *did* want a conference, but only to have an opportunity to "set the record straight." The third theory echoed James--that the conference was only about "making last-minute concessions" to improve East-West trade.

Sulzberger did not entirely discount the first two theories--the second in particular made sense because reaffirming four-power rule (however ineffectual it had been), would preserve the Soviets only hope for gaining influence in Western Germany. But like his contemporaries, he seemed most persuaded by the likelihood of last-minute concessions on trade, because the issues surrounding trade were not directly related to "the political dispute now bisecting the world."[125] The *New York Times* editorial page agreed the next day. If Western access to Berlin was guaranteed, an agreement on trade, presumably the primary Soviet goal, could then be achieved.[126] The next day, McCormick agreed as well: the best the Allies could hope for was inter-German trade and "a hard and fast guarantee of . . . rights to access to Berlin . ."[127]

Yet both the editors and McCormick wondered whether such an agreement would be accompanied by a new "diplomatic and propagandistic offensive designed to snatch a moral victory from [the Soviets'] defeat, restore their own position in German, and perchance split the West anew."[128] A trade deal seemed to present no real *modus vivendi* at all: McCormick stressed that under no circumstances should it be understood as an improvement in four-power relations. While she did not want to totally discount the value of a "trade for-access-deal," she had finally joined the chorus of English authors who argued that the chasm between the Soviets and the Western Powers had been too large from the beginning to expect anything more.

But also like her British counterparts, McCormick's modest hope came with a sense of urgency about German division itself: contacts and trade were critical because "a divided Germany can never be self-supporting."[129] If trade was critical to some potential *future* improvement of East-West relations (or alternatively might contain a potential new Soviet threat), it also ap-peared critical more basically to economic survival, and the So-

viets surely understood this as well. Working out trade, therefore, implied an implicit "agreement to live" -- after the expression of British Foreign Minister Ernst Bevin -- if no other agreement was possible.[130] McCormick, then, had seemingly changed her mind a second time -- at least in part. A trade agreement meant a kind of *temporary* truce, if not a genuine armistice.

Two days later, however, she seemed to swing back to greater pessimism. While other writers were describing the "last minute search for some measure of agreement," she called the conference a "sham," in which there had been a complete lack of effort to find even points of genuine discussion, let alone agreement.[131] Progress toward a "small scale agreement" on trade did not mean the Soviet's had changed their policy, and the American public must not be swayed. McCormick now subscribed in part to Sulzberger's second theory: the Soviets had called the conference merely "to keep Four Power consultations going," but with the larger ultimate purpose being "to stage a show of cooperation calculated to allay the world's fear of war."[132] In effect, it was a move not so much towards genuine cooperation, but towards *détente*, a French term that would be used in the 1970s to describe a relaxation of tension between the superpowers. She cautioned that if any agreement beyond *détente* were reached, it must *not* appear to signify a "developing harmony" between the Soviets and the West. Diplomatic breakthroughs were less important than retaining the strength the West had won during the blockade of Berlin.

In essence, McCormick had gone from believing that the West might still get the big "diplomatic breakthrough" (ie. German unification) through compromise, to believing that *any* East-West breakthrough, whatever its terms, could bring with it a threat to Western unity and security. In surveying this change, however, its easy to forget that underlying it was a steadfast unwillingness to offer *any* important concessions to the

Soviets. McCormick's disillusionment with the Paris conference, like her uncompromising stance toward Moscow, was ultimately based on her fear of Soviet influence in West Germany, *but also* fear of the impact of a long-term division of Germany. Quite literally, the "Soviet threat" for her cut across Germany. So long as Germany remained divided, she believed that Western unity, though essential, could never create a genuine *modus vivendi* in Europe. The day before the conference ended she warned that despite imminent agreement on access to Berlin, there remained *no sense of normality* in Europe.

> A return to pre-blockade conditions in Berlin is not a return to normality. No participant in this conference pretends that political or economic life anywhere in Europe can be normalized while Germany remains divided. All an agreement for free access and resumption of trade between the isolated sectors of Berlin means is recognition that some means of communication is a practical necessity for both sides. And this in turn means a small step back from the road leading to disaster.[133]

That "small step back," if nothing else, at least implied the Soviet's willingness to "keep the cold war cold," [sic] according to the *Times* editorial page.[134] But for McCormick, German division, an unnatural suspension of normality, implied "dark implications" that would continue for "years to come." The Cold War in Europe was not simply a standoff between the Great Powers, but an artificial compartmentalization of Germany and Europe. All that seemed to have come out of Paris was establishment of a liaison across this unnatural divide. But was German division so worrisome and unnatural because *any* 'divided nation' would chafe under outside control and partition, or did the particular history and culture of the former German *Reich* suggest an even more explosive potential in the context of the emerging cold war? Different commentators would offer different answers to this question, but *none* would argue that German division offered any permanent solution to cold war tensions in Europe. A principle reason for this view was the growth of nationalist appeals in both Eastern and Western Germany throughout this

period in which independence as the first elections to the West German *Bundestag* approached. if West Germans could be counted on as staunch anti-communists, they also longed for unity and independence, longings that the SED might yet exploit if the Soviets were to grant them a greater amount of self-government than the Western Allies were allowing in the new Federal Republic.

Summer of Nationalism: The "National Front" and West German Elections: June-September 1949

On June 5, 1949 the Soviet-led Cominform announced its new "national front" strategy for Germany. The Third People's Congress issued a manifesto, which "called for a widening of the struggle for peace via the creation a 'National Front For Unity and a Just Peace.'" Apparently it was the brainchild of Stalin himself, and the SED leaders were far less enthused.[135] Nevertheless, the goal was to turn all patriotic western Germans, regardless of their political pasts, against the new Western state and upcoming elections. To Drew Middleton, now back in Paris, the new strategy clearly demonstrated the SED's failure to build popularity in the Soviet Zone, let alone beyond it. He called this "failure" the most significant defeat in all Western Europe for "inter-national communism," and declared that "German Communism" posed no real threat to West Germany -- that is, so long as Marshall aid did not run out.[136] But Middleton seemed far more concerned two weeks later. By that time, he was predicting a number of possible scenarios for soon-to-be-divided Germany, all of which seemed to contain potential hazards. His observations and other American and British reports from the summer and early fall of 1949 are a window onto a period that in retrospect has seemed far more settled, even predetermined, than it appeared to contemporaries. Lingering skepticism about the character and trust-

worthiness of the German population played a role, but the basic sense of divided Germany as "unnatural," or in McCormick's phrasing, a "suspension of normality," was the most important stimulant for these grave concerns.

While virtually all Anglo-American commentators considered the political and economic integration of West Germany into Western Europe as vitally important, most also predicted that continuing division would produce a longing for unity in Germany that would be a "burning issue" for years to come, allowing German politicians to compete for Allied favors, even as they were forced to pay homage to public longing for unity and frustration with long-term military occupation. Not surprisingly, these authors believed future demagogues would try to take advantage, especially in the event of economic crisis. But an economic *boom* in the West could *also* be dangerous. Middleton argued that a widening economic gap between the Western government and the Eastern rival that was sure to follow would leave Bonn at liberty to use "threats of reunification and concessions to the East whenever the government finds itself in conflict with the West."[137] He argued that the Allies must therefore mitigate the longing for unity (and political uses of it) by working with the Soviets to increase inter-German trade, and more importantly, gradually equalize the relationship between Bonn and Washington. In effect he was charting a plan to "normalize" a situation that most contemporaries found profoundly (and dangerously) abnormal.

Middleton's feature on July 17 on a German "small man" (*kleiner Mann*) followed up on these concerns, but also revisited his earlier suggestive remarks about the Nazi past. The enthusiasm he had witnessed for marching, uniformed formations of German police on May day in East Berlin found an echo in the opinions of a "typical German" in the West. This time, however, Middleton found a few more clues about German

hopes for the future as well. Like the author and his colleagues, 55-year old Hans Schmidt was certain division would *not* be permanent, and that Germany would again be a great power. But this view seemed especially ominous because Schmidt lacked any sense that democracy ought to play a role in Germany's "renewal":

> To Hans and to many million others this republic represents not the ultimate goal but the first step along the road to recovery of Germany's political position. That recovery will only be achieved, in his mind, when Germany is whole again. But that he concedes is a long way in the future. And he finds that the methods by which he is expected to obtain it are depressingly slow for one accustomed to the brisk and spurious efficiency of a totalitarian state.[138]

And, as it turned out, Schmidt was a bit more than simply "accustomed" to life in the Third Reich: "He is willing to believe that National Socialism was a good idea badly carried out . . . ." A self-styled "patriot," he equated Western Germany democracy with disorder, visible in all the "flouting of authority," and wondered if a "strong hand" was not again necessary.

Middleton was once again suggesting that as a group, Germans had yet to establish the connection between a "strong hand" and their "violent past." Clearly, Schmidt understood Nazi rule as having been a top-down phenomenon, for which "ordinary Germans" like himself bore no real responsibility. This was particularly worrisome in the current situation because Schmidt's "patriotism" allowed him not simply to criticize the Bonn government, but speculate on possible alternatives. He clearly was presented by Middleton as the prototypical German nationalist to which the Soviets and the SED wished to appeal.

> . . . there is always that thought of partition in his mind. Hans wishes his party's leaders were not quite so complacent about it. Of course, he doesn't want communism to run Germany. His objections to communism as a political faith long ago were sublimated to his bitter hatred for Russia, the country that sponsors communism in Germany. But after all, he thinks, German Communists are still

> Germans. Perhaps something could be worked out. Hans reflects that since these men are in authority they must, like him, be disturbed by all the disorder in Germany. And as Germans they must want German unity just as much as he does. If only the Russians, Americans, British and French would leave, then Germans could settle things to their own satisfaction.[139]

However threatening this may have sounded to Americans in the depths of the Cold War, Schmidt was clearly *not* worried by the prospect of compromise with the SED. This was because of his confidence that the Western part of "Germany" would soon be restored to power and eventually absorb the Soviet Zone. In effect, he foresaw the same outcome for Germany as the Allies had offered the Soviets at Paris. But unlike them, he did not see the Basic Law as a means to that end. Instead, he expected the shear economic power of the Western state to be the foundation of future greatness, a possible development that also worried Middleton: "We are not as strong as we were . . . but we will be stronger than the East and perhaps the Communists will accept our terms."[140] "Restored Germany," in his opinion, would also come to dominate any Western European alliance against the Soviets, *without* threatening its neighbors. Its not clear whether Middleton was using Schmidt to warn readers of a coming Fourth Reich. But he clearly imagined, through him, a Western Germany that might easily break out of the NATO alliance and produce a kind of triangle of power politics in the midst of the East-West divide -- and that state might easily toss aside democracy in the process.

In the meantime, however, there was the issue of nationalist appeals from *outside* the new Western regime. On July 26 Walter Ulbricht gave further expression to the plans for the "National Front." Before "project[ing]" its influence into West Germany, however, he emphasized that the Front must first be solidified in the Soviet Zone.[141] The London *Times* paraphrased the nationalist plans there as ". . . employing in the administration of the Russian zone nationally minded men and women belonging to no party, mem-

bers of the National Democratic Party (the satellite party designed to appeal to ex-Nazis) . . and others." From early August and on into September, commentators began to worry about the impact of this strategy in the West, while they worried almost equally about the nationalist rhetoric of Western politicians.

In the back of many minds were concerns not unlike those Middleton raised in his portrait of Hans Schmidt -- the possibility of some kind of compromise with the SED Yet, like Middleton, observers stressed that dangerous scenarios could materialize in the event of both eventual unity *and* continued division. Some commentators echoed earlier assumptions; in effect, the longer the divide, the more politicians in both Germanies would be able to use nationalist appeals to gain concessions from the respective occupying powers. Others worried that with eventual reunification Germany, whether capitalist *or* communist, would come to dominate Europe. One American correspondent in Berlin, C. L. Sulzberger, believed the Soviets shared such concerns--even of a unified *communist* Germany! Unnamed U.S. sources intimated to him that the Soviets would keep the country divided rather than risk a unified communist state, in fear that it might be-come the "communist tail that wagged the Soviet dog."[142] Not that Moscow didn't want to control all of Germany for *economic* purposes; political control, however, seemed a different matter. Sulzberger had to admit that all this was "highly theoretical" given the dim prospects for any early unification, but it certainly was the case that the Soviets risked little in the meantime by pushing the "National Front," since the Allies could be blamed for splitting Germany.

By early August, the National Front's strategy in Western Germany was becoming clear. The SED invoked its roll explicitly as a defense against the "aggressive forces" of the United States which were "seeking the destruction of the German nation" through

the occupation statute.[143] "Defending Germany," naturally, called for the participation of all patriotic Germans, East and West and regardless of "former party membership," but it also allowed the SED an opportunity to criticize those not towing the line in the Soviet Zone:

> . . . with good will, we must go forward shoulder to shoulder with every nationally minded German who desires the unity of Germany, a just peace, and thereafter the withdrawal of the forces of occupation. . . . We have in the Russian zone not a few former active Nazis who are carrying out responsible work. In any case, *they are showing certain qualifications, which is more than one can say about some members of the Christian Democratic Union and the Liberal Democratic Party, who cast their eyes towards Washington and London, and who busied themselves with the 'No' propaganda in the recent elections.*[144] (emphasis added)

As the last sentences suggest, the "Front" was an attempt to reverse SED fortunes in the Soviet Zone, which had been in further decline since May (see next section). The correspondent, however, did not dismiss these pronouncements as desperation, believing instead that the appeals were *highly dangerous*—not unlike Nazi methods that helped bring Hitler to power and paved the way for German rearmament.

"Enrollment" of former Nazis was officially endorsed by Wilhelm Pieck several days later.[145] Without naming the U.S., Pieck expressed the same sense of threat to national survival from the "wreckers of Germany and organizers of a new war," and he was even kinder to former Nazis, referring to those who "loved [their] . . . homeland," but were "temporarily led astray by the chauvinism and nationalism of Hitler." This propaganda, however, was actually believed to mask SED hopes for setting up a *separate Eastern state*, which the Soviets were presumed to oppose due to the unlikelihood of an electoral triumph.[146] While there is a good deal of documentary evidence to suggest both assumptions were correct,[147] in late July 1949, as the first West German Bundestag election approached, there was also reason for journalists to believe the SED's agitation could

have broad appeal in Western Germany.

Early in August, the London *Times* editor would not dismiss the potential danger of the "National Front." The leading article of August 2 had much to say about the strategy, particularly its appeal to "Germans in the western zones who are at present debarred from public life or who feel dissatisfied with the shape of politics in a German democracy."[148] The editor referred to the long-term possibility of "an alliance between German nationalists and Russian Communists" as "perhaps the greatest threat to Europe." When West German elections finally took place, however, such an alliance was shown to be highly unlikely. The overwhelmingly anti-communist, status quo vote in the first *Bundestag* election on August 14 backed the two parties most committed to the new West German state (Christian Democrats and Social Democrats). Three days later, the *Times* was reporting the Soviets apparent determination to calmly persevere in the face of this latest setback, in a quote from the SMAD's daily newspaper, *Tägliche Rundschau*:

> The National Front, which unites all forces that have the unity and independence of their fatherland at heart, defends the true national interest of the German people. To it belongs the future, and sooner or later, it will triumph.[149]

The same article added, however, that the National Front was *not* hampering progress toward an *Eastern* state -- indeed, it seemed the Soviets and the SED were closer to agreement than ever.

But "owning the future" -- which apparently meant sometime after the creation of one or even two German states -- did not imply the National Front's irrelevance in the present. Instead, its propaganda, along with the rise of West German nationalism during and after the August election, suggested to contemporaries an unresolved "German question" -- one that would not necessarily be answered in the West's favor. French fears at the time were indicative of multiple dangers. U.S. correspondents noted on August 21

that while they feared a Soviet-dominated Germany most, wanted U.S. policies designed to prevent possible war with the Soviets to apply to Germany as well.[150] Their concern was that economic revival in Western Germany was proceeding too quickly, and they wished to prolong the occupation as a principle safeguard. Meanwhile, despite apparently greater domestic problems (as we will see presently) the SED's appeals through the National Front remained worrisome *precisely because* the West German elections had guaranteed at least temporary division.

Wherever that division might lead in the future, as it was becoming reality many Western observers intuitively understood it as unnatural and destabilizing. As speculation began five weeks later about the election of another People's Congress in the Soviet Zone, one which was expected to "become the basis for a zonal Parliament,"[151] there was even greater cause for concern. The problem was not so much that West Germans (or even East Germans for that matter) would flock to support this new government. The SED and the Red Army had virtually guaranteed the opposite with four years of economic exploitation and political manipulation, along with the more recent acceleration of political repression, and worst of all--according to the London *Times* at least--the party's determined support of the Oder-Neisse border.[152] Under those circumstances, not even the eventual first signs of economic recovery in the Soviet Zone since the lifting of the counter-blockade did much to help their cause.[153] Instead, the "German problem" was the *mere existence* of two German states, each attempting to rally the other's citizens through nationalist appeals, each on the front line of the Cold War, and each currying the favor of its respective superpower patron. Before discussing how the Anglo-American media reacted to launching of the GDR, however, we must first consider how the post-blockade Soviet Zone appeared to Western observers (and the occasional visitor) in the spring and sum-

mer of 1949.

Situation (Nearly) Unchanged: Reporting the Soviet Zone: May 12 -- late September 1949

With the lifting of the blockade, there were once again a few opportunities for Western journalists to visit the Soviet Zone. However, no further guided tours for American correspondents were permitted, so most information reached the West indirectly, from various German and Allied sources in Berlin. The general sense in the Western media was that grave economic difficulties remained, and continuing popular disaffection as well. As we saw earlier in this chapter, the Western media believed increased SED responsibility over the zonal administration had caused more frustration and anger to focus on them. With the blockade still in force, speculation had waxed and waned about a Soviet troop withdrawal to bolster their position. Then with the end of the blockade on May 12, the new speculation was that the Soviets might more or less dump the SED in making a deal to unify Germany.

It was in this period of renewed, yet guarded Western hopefulness of a German settlement that the SED announced the first "single-list election" in the Soviet Zone, designed to give them a propaganda victory, if nothing else, on the eve of the Paris conference. Their apparent defeat in that election was prelude to seemingly unending reports of political and economic bad news, as disaffection even led to small-scale resistance. For all the concern we have just seen for the SED's capacity to make trouble in the West with nationalist propaganda, the western media believed they were almost completely discredited and ineffectual "at home" in the Soviet Zone. At the same time, however, there were occasional reports that suggested that SED rule was not yet complete, nor completely dictatorial. But if SED rule *did* endure -- an outcome that was far from guaranteed in the

summer of 1949, it was now widely assumed that its control *would eventually* be total, like that of its Soviet patrons in the USSR.

The People's Council had just concluded a vociferous attack on the West German Ruhr and occupation statutes as a plan to "make a colony of western Germany," when it announced an election for a third People's Congress, to begin three days after the lifting of the blockade and continue through the next day.[154] The election was preceded by a massive publicity campaign throughout the Soviet Zone and East Berlin, stressing that a vote for the approved single list of candidates would also be a vote for peace, unity, and a withdrawal of *all* foreign troops.[155] The timing of the vote was clearly designed to impress the Allies. As the London *Times* correspondent remarked, a "Yes" vote was an affirmation of all outcomes that virtually every German desired.[156]

The actual Communist victory, however, was *very far* from overwhelming. The 33.9% "no" vote in the Soviet Zone (41.9% in East Berlin), was interpreted by Western sources as a more general rejection of communism, since single-list elections were designed to produce majorities of well over 90%. There was also a very small percentage of disqualified votes -- less than 1 in 12. Western observers believed the voters had "sent a message": "the swing to the western democracies . . . has begun."[157] But like almost every development in Soviet-occupied Germany, this one generated alternative explanations as well.

The thinking of some observers was that the Soviets could offer the large "no vote" as evidence that there *really were free elections* in the Soviet Zone -- something the Allies were bound to eventually demand in any case. The very size of the "no" vote could in fact be used to enhance the authority of the majority "yes" vote.[158] The London *Times'* opinion page reported that some Western observers even believed the opposition vote

had been "invented," though the editor was highly dubious, given the "dismay and anger" over the "noes" in the "German Communist Press."[159] The *Times'* Berlin correspondent believed in a simpler, "more significant" explanation:

> The lifting of the blockade is regarded by most Germans as the first spectacular check to Russian plans, and this interpretation is accepted, not only in western, but also in eastern Germany. The people in the Russian zone have taken fresh heart and have felt encouraged to express their opposition to the Communist-dominated régime by voting "No." In the circumstances, the strength of the opposition is impressive.[160]

The opinion page also believed the Western Powers should be greatly encouraged.

> It proves, what was already suspected, that freedom still exerts a powerful attraction within the iron curtain and that four years of Russian occupation have utterly failed to win the German people over to Communism. It greatly weakens any claim which the Soviet Government might have made that the People's Congress enjoys overwhelming support in their zone and is therefore a suitable body to unite Germany.[161]

Predictably, the SED blamed traitorous elements within the CDU and LDP, and insisted that the People's Congress and People's Council still represented "the overwhelming majority of the people . . ."[162] Yet despite this obvious dissembling, the apparent Western victory was *not* all it seemed. If the vote might convince the Soviets to dump the SED, Western observers were more inclined to believe it would be easier for them to "prop up by force the crumbling Communist administration" (presumably by strengthening the People's Police in the name of "threats from the West"). In this manner, they could keep democracy out while still playing the "nationalist card" against the nascent Federal Republic.[163] This view seemed confirmed the day after the election, when Ulbricht appealed to German nationalists and former Nazis for support -- the most overt appeal of its kind to date.[164]

Under the circumstances -- not simply the "no" vote, but the flagging economy,

lack of democracy, and continuing Soviet reparations and dismantling, (despite repeated promises that both would end), and mounting political repression -- there seemed little reason to worry the SED's influence in the West. But as we have seen, the National Front could still stir resistance to the new Western state, and one scenario that seemed particularly worrisome was a post-blockade economic upswing bolstering its nationalist appeals. However, one of the few correspondents to visit the Soviet Zone in the weeks after the lifting of the blockade concluded that no economic upswing was possible. This correspondent from a British news service, A. J. Fischer, *did* note communist successes virtually excluded from mainstream Western media. Among them were the variety of benefits for skilled and factory workers, the number of farmers benefiting from the land reform, dramatic improvements in some production processes, the new education system (in spite of its discrimination and ideological rigidity), and forums for relatively free and open dialogue -- even about such sensitive issues as dismantling and German POWs. However, he was certain the "positives" in the Soviet Zone couldn't possibly outweigh the "negatives."[165]

In the latter category were, above all, the style of Communist rule and the regime's unavoidable predicaments. However much the economy might improve, the majority of production continued to go to the USSR as reparations. Meanwhile, there was an undisguiseable trend toward one-party rule by the SED, in which the "opposition" CDU and LDP shared some of the blame.[166] The excessive willingness to compromise in the early years of occupation -- or so they told him -- had led to a pattern of compromise so ingrained that "some opportunist" within the organizations was always willing to denounce as reactionary any colleague who became part of ". . . occasional attempts to show vigour."[167] But far more serious than "spineless politicians," according to Fischer,

was the random and brutal coercion of communist domination. The overriding Soviet penchant for secrecy meant that in spite of open dialogue, the German population was largely left "in the dark": about the fate of concentration camp inmates, the extent and timing of future reparations, the productivity of Soviet-owed enterprises (also for reparations), the numbers of workers to be temporary deported to the Soviet Union, and worst of all, what the author called "jungle law" -- the random, unexplained disappearances of ordinary persons.[168] Like earlier visitors, then, Fischer found the greatest communist liability to be the *perpetual uncertainty of daily life*, making the civilian populations experience with the Soviet occupation overwhelmingly negative. In this most important sense, little of substance had changed with the end of the counter-blockade.

Other reports, however, suggested a more *active opposition* to the emerging communist dictatorship. In July 1949, the West Berlin-based "Committee of Action against Inhumanity," described a new technique of a "passive resistance movement."[169] Buildings and walls in cities all over the Soviet Zone were being daubed with an "F" for freedom. Apparently the "movement" had "broadened and strengthened" during the Berlin blockade. The extent of organization could not be known, but certainly "the spirit of resistance to the Communist regime is growing." The London *Times* did not find it coincidental that the same day of the "Committees'" report, the SED was meeting and discussing "new steps to tighten up their own organization and at the same time to extend "the national front" [sic]."[170] Several days later, Ulbricht spoke in more detail about the latter, specifically the bringing into the organization of non-Communists, even those without party affiliation, while assuring that "progressive forces" would retain decisive "influence." This careful wording suggested the party's lingering doubts about the broad majority Eastern population, and its ultimate fear of losing control.

As we have seen, the period leading up to the West German *Bundestag* election of August 14 was one of shrill nationalist rhetoric in both East and West. The failure of the National Front strategy to aid the electoral fortunes of the West German KPD or prevent overwhelming votes for the two parties most dedicated to the new West German state -- the CDU/CSU and SPD -- apparently led to a shift in priorities in East Berlin. Middleton reported on August 27 that according to U.S. officials, the SED and the SMAD had begun a "careful inventory" in the Soviet Zone in mid-to-late August.[171] The situation apparently remained grim indeed, with "deep hatred" of the occupation spawning more widespread "anti-Communist activity," while economic growth continued to lag behind the West.

Though the author repeated his sources' cautions that there was "no well organized resistance movement,"[172] there appeared to be enough small scale operations to give rise to one. For example, there was evidence of secret groups working with the "Fighters Against Inhumanity," -- short for the aforementioned committee -- attacking the SED's economic plans with "pamphlets and posters." There was circumstantial evidence for their success as well: for one thing, the Soviets had issued their first public denunciation of the Fighters as "'one of the greatest spy centers' of the post war era," suggesting their need to deny the existence of "home-grown" resistance. More importantly, their efforts coincided with Ulbricht's complaints about "the party's inability to "convince" the people of the importance of the economic task," suggesting to "Western experts on this sort of activity" that passive resistance might be spreading to both industry and agriculture.[173]

But in the days that followed, the Western media was much more interested in speculations about the election of another People's Congress than about organized resistance, or, for that matter, the fall Leipzig fair, which opened August 31.[174] While the na-

tionalist propaganda there was as conspicuous as ever, it did not seem to worry reporters now that the blockade and airlift were in the past. Instead, as before the blockade, their principle interest was the ways in which the event drained hard currency from all Western visitors. Indeed, American correspondent Michael James described all activities at the fair as well designed to "fleece" Western visitors.[175] In the end he only hinted at the political story behind the "fleecing." One encounter with a waiter at an *Intourist* restaurant suggested East Germans' divided sympathies -- defensive regarding their dependence on the Soviets, but craving inclusion in Western "prosperity." When the waiter brought a sumptuous feast, he remarked to James: "you see the Russians *do* send things to Germany" (emphasis added); but when time came to pay the bill, he clearly delighted to accept James' "terrible capitalist dollars." As for the fair itself, it seemed to verify all reports of continued economic troubles: "the goods Eastern Germany could offer on the world markets were scarce and of poor quality . . . ,"[176] though Reuters reported at fair's end contracts signed amounting to more than $12,770,000.[177]

After the fair, reports indicated the first signs of true economic recovery, and speculation about upcoming, and competitive, *Länder* elections, which suggested, however briefly, some new openness on the part of the SED. But those elections were soon postponed until 1950 (and after the GDR's founding, indefinitely) and for most of September, the focus again returned to the regime's liabilities. New estimations of the total number of German prisoners held in former Nazi concentration camps were followed later in the month by new interest in the plight of semi-coerced labor in the mines of the *Erzgebirge*. The sensational news of the detonation of a Soviet atomic bomb was the catalyst for increased interest in Berlin about the apparently abysmal working conditions in the Saxon mines, and the semi-coercive process of recruiting the workers, both of which had been

graphically described in the American media by Werner Knop many months earlier.[178]

But September ended *not* with more reports on the regime's myriad problems, but with the rather farcical tale of two young American cyclists who had strayed into the Soviet Zone and paid for it with two months of internment, interrogation, and, apparently, beatings from Red Army personnel. Back safely in Hamburg on September 30, they refused to condemn their capturers. Instead, they assailed the Western media for sensationalizing the missteps of "a couple of dopes in going past a boundary line."[179] In one sense, they were wrong to deny the political nature of the incident: it was fairly clear example of the Soviets' obsessive secrecy and exaggerated fear of spies, both of which were particularly heightened by the East-West struggle in Germany. But on the other hand, the detention offered no opportunity for any kind of objective evaluation of the Eastern regime, let alone daily life experience there. Less than a week before the founding of the GDR, it was a kind of sideshow at a time when the SED and their administration seemed impotent and unimportant. But all this would change rather suddenly as the first concrete steps toward launching an Eastern state were reported in the West.

Two Germanies: "A New Phase in the Struggle": Early October 1949

The founding of the GDR was a foregone conclusion by late September 1949, and the regime was not seen as politically or economically attractive in the West. However, the announcement revived and even strengthened earlier fears about instability in Central Europe, and, strange as it may sound, a German nationalist revival as well. The state that was tagged as illegitimate and soon to be seen as unwanted -- even, according to some, in the communist world itself[180] -- actually was inaugurated amid considerable anxiety in the Western media, especially in the United States. The analysis of the potential problems

the new regime might cause was extremely complex: for some, as suggested above, its *mere existence* was a threat; not simply as a challenge to the legitimacy of the West German state, but also as a continual reminder to West and East Germans that their desire for national unity would have to be indefinitely postponed. For others, the rather obvious *weakness* of the GDR, as compared to the larger and increasingly prosperous Federal Republic, could lead to an early unification and rapid restoration of German power (and very likely, dominance) in central Europe. Still others wondered if continuing nationalist propaganda from the new GDR, if it met with a sudden dramatic economic downturn in West Germany, could fuel a new pro-Soviet movement for unification.

What all of these concerned writers shared as they speculated about the future of divided Germany was a curious tendency to *not* reference the Nazi past or the incomplete and inadequate processes of denazification that followed. Indeed, at most they only hinted at the violent and murderous legacy that German nationalists aspirations had so recently wrought in Europe, even as they imagined the dangers of division or, possibly, reunification. For most Anglo-American commentators, the "danger" of German nationalist aspirations -- whether they would be rapidly or more slowly satisfied, whether they would result in a neutral, communist, or Western-oriented state -- was part of the world of power politics and Cold War division of Europe, but was not pointing toward any sort of fascist revival. But then, as we have seen, this fit in rather well with Allied perceptions --particularly American ones--of Germans as a defeated people that must be helped to regain their place in Europe,[181] and American concerns about making the West German economy self-supporting. Also noticeably absent from these warnings was any sense that German division could become a permanent, stable arrangement in central Europe. Even as the GDR was founded, achieving a status quo remained basically unthinkable.

On the eve of that founding, *Economist* correspondent Barbara Ward did not believe the impending division of Germany was dangerous because of Soviet designs on Western Germany (at least of the premeditated sort), or because frustrated German nationalism involved a rather obvious lack of reflection on the Nazi past. Rather, she declared divided Germany a menace to the peace merely because of conditions *thrust upon the Germans* by events since 1945.[182] The "German Problem" was in no way a desire to normalize or obviate prior support for a criminal regime, but a natural desire for unity and autonomy in the midst of the Cold War. Because the Soviets and the Americans feared each other more than the Germans, they had become more interested in making allies of their respective German clients than considering the trouble their seemingly normal natural ambitions would surely cause.

True, Western observers had rightly been "shocked" by the "virulence of nationalist propaganda" in the August West German election campaign, but Ward assumed that an overwhelming vote for the two main parties supporting the Basic Law meant that *truly dangerous* German nationalism was no more. Rather, the German people were in a predicament that would outrage *any* divided people: not one, but two *artificial divisions*. It was not simply the East-West divide, but the detachment of the territories east of the Oder-Neisse line and the expulsions. All of this had created an unavoidable reaction:

> Given these two divisions, the Germans would need the patience of Job and the serenity of angels not to seek by every means to upset the present situation, to seek to secure re-union, to recreate a united Reich and to recapture the 'Eastern lands.' The most moderate, the most public-spirited, the least nationalist German is bound to support a program of reunion and recovery. What then must be the outlook of the lunatic fringe of un-rooted refugees? Of the young people trained in the Hitler Youth? The soldier drilled in Nazism? The returning prisoners of war? The unemployed? Germany is dynamite, not because Germany is German but because it is divided and every German must in his heart desire to bring the divisions to an end.[183]

Here, Ward tries to insist that the issue is not one of a inherited national character defect, and she clearly is aware of the residual impact of Nazi propaganda, or alternatively, the impact of widespread deprivation, on my subgroups within the population. Nevertheless, any sense of larger responsibility is not seriously considered. This allows the author to invoke a kind of a "silent majority" (to borrow a phrase from Richard Nixon) of "moderate," redeemable, basically good Germans who only want what they ought naturally to want. Ward's subdividing of German society allowed her to separate a "healthy" nationalist outlook from rabid militant nationalism *and* imply that Nazism somehow evolved outside and above the social milieux in which German nationalist feelings reside, and tainted only those more or less forced into its clutches. With the NSDAP gone, then, the drive for unity and independence must inevitably proceed, "naturally" and untainted, whatever the plans of the Soviets and Americans. She argued that such a movement might draw the superpowers into a civil war (probably by a para-military invasion from the East designed to foment revolt against the Bonn government), but more likely, both East and West Germans would gradually obtain "a decisive influence for their own policy" by "play[ing] their 'protectors' off against each other." Like an earlier commentator worrying about nationalist appeals in the GDR, War believed that given the "fear and distrust" between the U.S. and the Soviets, the Germans (on both sides) could be the "tail wagging the dog": the respective patron would become convinced that what was good for their client would benefit them as well--such as revising the Eastern border or creating a German army for service against the other side.[184]

Ward stressed over and over again that none of this had anything to do with "any special German sin." Rather, it was the "natural" problems of a nation divided into two states, sponsored by rival patrons. It was almost as if she herself, like the U.S. authori-

ties in Germany, was attempting to reach out to Germans and overlook their past behavior. And since division of their nation was a violation of the "natural order," there was only one way to ensure the peace of Europe:

> It is vital to face the fact that only one cure exists--the peaceful reunion of the two halves of occupied Germany. There should be no other aim in Allied policy and Western states-men should not at any time lose sight of their ultimate goal--the creation of a united democratic Germany, whose neutrality would be underwritten by all its neighbors, Eastern and Western, and whose armaments, like those of Switzerland, would be sufficient only for frontier defense.[185]

Ward also believed that despite the obvious difficulties, some revision to the Oder-Neisse line must come as well, mainly to resettle refugees. This aside, however, Ward, like a previous author, was proposing roughly the same sort of "new Germany" Acheson proposed to the Soviets at Paris--one in which they had to make nearly all of the concessions. Free elections must mean restoring the SPD in the Soviet Zone, and disbanding the "militarized" East German police. And troop withdrawals could only take place if the Soviets recognized the Atlantic Pact and the West's need to maintain U.S. troops in Western Europe. If the Soviets did all this, negotiations were possible, but there could be no change regarding the Bonn government: unity, once again, could only come through merging the Soviet Zone into West Germany.

As we have seen, there is considerable evidence to suggest that Washington never truly wanted a merger. However, it is clear that Ward was not merely paying lip service to German unity. Caught between two dangers -- prolonged division and a communist takeover of the West, she ultimately feared the latter only slightly more. But at the same time, from the perspective of autumn 1949, it seemed possible that prolonged division could also lead to a communist *victory* in the West, not a takeover by force. For as the GDR was founded, it was feared that SED could utilize it newly-acquired status as gover-

ning body to unite German nationalists in a drive for a merger of its own. A number of other authors, most particularly Drew Middleton, soon contemplated that very possibility.

The publication of Ward's warning coincided with reports in Berlin of "demands" for the establishment of an "eastern German regime as a counterpart of the new western German Government . . ."[186] These demands were said to have originated from meetings of workers at major factories in the Soviet sector of Berlin. Once again, the plan of the Soviets and German communists was to make important policy decisions appear to have emanated from the people, and once again, the Western media was highly dubious. The call for an eastern state was full of the usual nationalist recriminations against Bonn (that it was "the tool of American capitalism") but also a defense of the Oder-Neisse border equating Western demands for its reconsideration with a call for "the occupation of Czechslovak and Polish territory."[187] As expected, the People's Council would be entrusted with the formation of this government, supported by the eastern political parties and "mass organizations" -- the latter set up by the SED to "represent" various social and occupational groups, but actually serving to bring all social activities under the regime's control.

The "demands" were carefully worded by the SED, however, so that all-German traditions would undergird the new regime: "It is demanded that this government . . . should have its seat in Berlin, as 'Berlin must be again as it always was the capital of our Fatherland.'"[188] Also, as Western sources had predicted, the government would appeal to West German nationalism by supporting the Soviet-sponsored "Warsaw Programme," which called for a peace treaty and the withdrawal of all foreign troops. To emphasize the danger this new regime posed to the West, the London *Times* was very terse about its ul-

timate "domestic objective": "Internally the Government would be expected to make an end of the division of Germany."[189] To that end, the nationalist appeals continued.

On October 3, 1949 the "People's Council" adopted a resolution "asking the Foreign Ministers of the Four Powers for joint reconsideration of the German question and of measures 'calculated to lead to the accelerated conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany.'"[190] The purported reason for this resolution was that the "German people" had demanded "the formation of a German Democratic Republic" which would bring about "peaceful democratic reconstruction." A further "manifesto" from the National Front called for this "German Democratic Republic" specifically to *replace* the government of the Federal Republic.[191] The manifesto called for a level of independence and autonomy that the Federal Republic lacked, including an independent foreign policy and trade, as well as unity and the "normalization" of life in Berlin. Four days later, October 7, 1949, the "People's Council" met in East Berlin, turned itself into a People's Chamber (*Volkskammer)*, and proclaimed an "all German government."

Scholars of the GDR and postwar Germany in general, as well as students of U.S. Foreign policy and Soviet Foreign policy, have described this founding moment as nothing more than a ratification of already accomplished division. Some students of U.S. Foreign Policy do not even bother to mention the event at all. They have rightly noted its limited appeal for the general population on both sides of the iron curtain, particularly in the West. Yet the American media immediately understood it as an *alarming escalation* of the competition for the hearts and minds of Germans, especially in the West: A "challenge to Western Germany" was how the *New York Times* editorial page put it.[192] The SED surely could not compete with the West's promise of a "a free and decent future," wrote the editor, not to mention the obvious economic disparity. However, there remained some worry

that the Eastern "democratic bloc" was being "groomed as a genuine popular coalition . . ." The power of nationalist appeals could not be discounted either, given so many Germans' expectation of an eventual return to great power status. And the author was certain such appeals would be followed by more aggressive strategies: infiltration, sabotage, and should such strategies fail, perhaps even "more drastic solutions."[193] The new GDR was both "evidence that Russia is losing the cold war in Germany,"[194] and a reminder that fight was far from over.

Anne O. McCormick described the National Front's manifesto as more than easily dismissed propaganda. Despite Western anti-communism and the progress of the Bonn republic, its message was both seductive and dangerous in a climate of rising nationalism:

> . . . on the whole it is a campaign platform on which any German could run on -- which, indeed, one German did run very far, for while the manifesto was obviously written in Moscow it is closely modeled on the list of grievances with which Hitler shouted his way to power.[195]

Here, in a rare reference to the Nazi past, McCormick implies that democracy -- *as* in the past -- might not be as important to Germans as ending their sense of international humiliation. The quote also implies a closer relationship between Hitler and the great mass of the German people than Ward had indicated. But most important for present purposes, McCormick raised again the question of whether West Germans might yet consider unity within "the Soviet system." Though the SED's many attempts to play the "nationalist card" -- from support of the Western KPD to its single list election of the previous May -- had gained it no traction in Western Germany, the People's Congress, according to British sources, was a seductive means to convince West Germans that living under a "Communist autocracy" would be a tolerable price to pay for unity. McCormick believed the West would hard pressed to dissuade them.

The London *Times*, apparently with more sensitivity to Soviet security concerns, took a slightly different view.[196] The paper did not dispute the Soviet's ultimate goal, but found the motive behind it less sinister, arguing that their desire to unify and control Germany was *not* essentially imperialist, as McCormick believed, but based on insecurity: "Russia fears that without her participation western Germany will be allowed to grow once more into an aggressive, militarist State." But the editor, if hinting to readers that a Soviet presence in Germany must be tacitly accepted, clearly believed that the East German government was dangerous, and believed the Soviets had certain tactical advantages over the Allies in Germany:

> They [the Soviets] have already announced that, unlike the west German State, there will be no occupation statute and no Russian High Commissioner; and they have promised that as soon as a peace treaty is signed all Russian troops will be withdrawn from the country. Whether this will happen must remain doubtful, but it is certain that the Soviet Government will do its best to give the new régime an appearance of freedom and independence which will inevitably have some value for propaganda.[197]

This "value," however, in the editor's opinion, was not enough to destabilize Western Germany or effect the "western orientation" of most Germans. Therefore the Allies would be wise *not* to compete with the Soviets by offering the West German state "premature and dangerous concessions," nor build up a "military police force . . . " Rather, they must trust that the "good sense of the German people" would prevent them from being lured by any Soviet "conjuring trick," and let them find their own way, gradually, towards a reunion. In a sense, this view represents a culmination of the strategy of supporting and encouraging the Germans to rebuild from, rather than reexamine, their past culpability. Notice also, however, that this less dangerous scenario still assumes division is unworkable and bound not to last, due to an enduring sense of a singular German national identity:

> It is at least possible that the east and west German governments will in the long run find it very much easier than the Russian and western authorities to find some *modus vivendi* between the two halves of Germany. They have already shown their readiness to reach a trade agreement and there is no reason why they should not be encouraged to go farther. *Since the division of Germany will never be accepted by the German people, and since it is unlikely to last for many years, it would be short-sighted to allow the Russians to pose as the only champion of German unity*[198] [emphasis added]

The creation of the GDR, then, actually could provide "cover" for the Western Allies; no longer burdened exclusively with the blame for division, they could quietly encourage the Germans to feel their way back together again. The author called the new regime "an advantage" in this regard. Two months earlier, the same page had expressed concern about the durability of the German commitment to the West in times of crisis. Now, the existence of two Germanies, however paradoxically, meant that German nationalist aspirations presumably should proceed (on however limited a basis) without gravely endangering Western security. Indeed, the quote indicates they *must* proceed, because there was no way to stop them.

In the days that followed, the point was further driven home for American readers that two Germanies ultimately implied a continuing struggle and ultimately and inevitably, some form of reunification. The U.S. media bucked conventional wisdom by interpreting the founding of the GDR as the latest Soviet effort to unify Germany on its own terms:

> . . . this latest step of the Russian empire builders does not in any sense represent a Soviet acceptance of a German partition between East and West, to which many in the West had resigned themselves, and which many had even come to regard as a possible basis for a new European order. Rather, it marks the resumption of the Soviet offensive for the ultimate control of all Germany as the key to the control of the whole continent.[199]

The new "offensive," however, unlike its predecessors, was not a *direct* challenge.

Instead, the Soviets were attempting an *indirect assault* through their "German dupes." But the problem for the West was the limited autonomy of the Federal Republic, which might make the formally sovereign GDR enticing to some West Germans. The *New York Times* hoped few of them were fooled, its editor stressing that the East German government was ultimately subject to "total if hidden control," while the Western occupation statute amounted to "supervisory control openly retained." However, this author seemed far more concerned than the London *Times* editor about the impact of Soviet propaganda. It would almost surely embolden "nationalist demagogues to join in opposition to the West," and worse still, the Bonn government would be pressured to "espouse many of the same aims, and thus drive it into ostensible support of the East German Government."[200] In effect, frustrated German nationalism, manipulated by the Soviets through their SED mouthpieces, could gravely endanger both West German freedom and "the whole Western program." In this reading, East and West Germany could most certainly not be permitted to feel their way back together again.

The same day, McCormick was sure the Cold War had entered its "most critical phase."[201] To emphasize the complexity, danger and seeming contradiction of two Germanies, she referred to the GDR's founding as "division of Germany *in the name of unity*,"[202] (emphasis added) and linked it to other communist victories, such as the Soviet atomic bomb or Mao's triumph in China, the sum of which seemed to shake American optimism. Ultimately, she blamed both the U.S. and U.S.S.R., in their mutual mistrust, for the existence of two Germanies, and the possibility of nuclear war. And she was even more explicit about the great challenge posed by GDR's creation.

> The construction of the German Soviet state . . . puts a kind of period--a period as explosive as a bomb, because it doesn't end anything -- on the long process of deadlock and frustration which produced the two republics, each created in the image of the sponsoring Powers, one by a slow and orderly series of free elections;

> the other slapped together as a countermove, regardless of the popular will. . . . The two governments have one thing in common: both are designed for a unified Germany and each starts out by inviting the separated states to come in. From now on, therefore, they will be strong competitors for control of Germany, its body and its soul, which means that the Germans will be active elements in the competition between Russia and the West. *In retrospect, it looks as if the Soviet government planned the split in order to lead the fight for unity that was bound to follow.*[203] [emphasis added]

Recent scholarship suggests that McCormick was not exactly right. Neither the SED nor the Soviets had so much planned a split as *lost hope of preventing one* -- as early as the summer of 1946, when they came to grips with their limited prospects in the Western Zones. However, the efforts of the German Communists to consolidate their power from 1947 onwards (even while they championed German unity in public) were based on the belief that their planned economy would surpass the economy of the Western Zones, and after the founding of the two Germanies, they still believed that their regime, and not Bonn's, would become the "German magnet."[204] The "split," then, though unplanned, hardly dampened the fight for unity -- in either the minds of the SED leadership or in the Western media. Indeed, a *modus vivendi* in Germany seemed farther away than ever.

But the situation was ultimately precarious *not* because the SED was getting any traction in West Germany, or would dare "speak up" to its Soviet patrons, but simply because its leaders now had a state to call their own. Not that most Western observers expected these circumstances to generate broad appeal; quite the contrary. The problem for the SED, in spite of their increased propaganda, was that on the one hand, they could only offer unity under a Soviet-style regime; and on the other, the first meeting of their new parliament, the *Volkskammer*, had already ruled out reconsidering of the Oder-Neisse border. Because of these limitations and Western control of the Ruhr -- the most important part of Germany -- McCormick believed that in the long run the West would almost

surely win the struggle for Germany -- that is, so long as Bonn and the Western powers remained united. But the "long run" now seemed quite a bit longer indeed.

Throughout the middle of October, descriptions of "nationalistic" displays and appeals dominated Western reports from the new GDR. While announcing that the new government would be taking over "administrative duties" from the SMAD, Soviet Commandant General Chuikov joined in personally, characterizing the GDR *not* as a *rival* to the Federal Republic, but its *antithesis*--the western government had *created* disunity, and the GDR would "*restore*" unity:

> The Soviet Government . . . was convinced that the German people would find ways of restoring the unity of Germany. Since the Bonn puppet régime was an obstacle, there was no choice but to recognize as just the effort of German democratic circles to restore unity and to take into their own hands the rebirth of the country on a democratic and peaceful basis.[205]

In his inaugural speech, Herr Pieck made basically the same point. He implied that a separate Western government was a mere tool of the Western powers and that the representatives in the Western *Bundestag* ought to "wage the struggle for unity and national independence" in cooperation with the new eastern government.[206]

For a time, at least, the new leadership had reason to be optimistic. Despite a pronounced lack of enthusiasm among East Berliners for the leaders themselves,[207] the founding of the GDR seemed to have given a "bump" to Soviet fortunes in Germany, and the sense of a long struggle ahead was repeated by correspondents like Middleton and Kathleen McLaughlin. The former reiterated the fear that the founding of the GDR almost certainly portended civil war in Germany or conditions very near it. The widespread desire for unification would recruit "extreme nationalists" to the cause on both sides.[208]

But the size and duration of "the bump" were hard to gauge. For one thing, October 1949, like the months before, brought news of widespread popular rejection and even

resistance in East Germany. And even as Middleton fretted about the dangers of German division he had to admit that the postponement of local elections there was a major hindrance to rallying indigenous support. It might work as intended -- that is, give the SED time to increase its strength relative to the "opposition parties," -- but it might also foreshadow the creation of a one-party state, which would amount to the negation of all nationalist appeals.[209] Like many contemporaries, Middleton's observations could cycle between grim warnings and guarded optimism.

As for the founding ceremonies themselves, their nationalist iconography, huge red banners emblazoned with slogans such as "For German unity and freedom,"[210] were more worrisome to media observers for their impact in Bonn than on East Germans. Surely a "nationalist drive for unity" would emerge in the West in response, even if only gradually. But like the London *Times* editor, Middleton believed these apparently unavoidable aspirations could and must be channeled: *not* by efforts to undermine the GDR, but by allowing the two regimes to gradually work out their own relations:

> Although the illegality of the Eastern German state is obvious and should be stressed by Germans to Germans, in Berlin at the moment it appears to be a mistake to discount either the effect which establishment of a fervently nationalist Government will have on Germans East and West, or other attractions which the new German state can offer Western Germany. Western Germany, despite all attacks made by its political leaders on the new Government in Berlin, already has extensive trade relations and a brand new treaty with Eastern Germany. These ties with the East are apt to prove more powerful aids to cooperation and perhaps eventual German unification than any amount of denunciation by Germans or Americans or Russians.[211]

The "nationalist attraction" of the GDR at this key moment has been almost completely overlooked in histories of Germany, the GDR, and the Cold War, as have the contemporary expectations of a relatively short division of Germany. But part of the explanation of this oversight seems visible in the above quote (and others previously): in spite

of all hostilities and nationalist rhetoric (on both sides), the early existence of economic ties, the more obvious legitimacy of the West German state, and various difficulties for the SED, served to dampen concerns somewhat. Middleton and many of his colleagues (both Americans and Britons), for all their fretting over the possible impact of the new Eastern government, often expressed cautions optimism: if West Germans and the Allies disengaged from the "nationalist propaganda game" it seemed that with time, they could maneuver the GDR into inclusion in the West German state.

But at the same time, its important to remember that these authors invariably cycled back to grave concerns. They believed West German politicians and "demagogues" could easily be provoked by the nationalist "baiting" of the SED: Indeed, now that the German communists had their own state, some spoke of the trap as virtually unavoidable. If that happened, the slow, prudent process of "federal unity" -- that is, merging the GDR into West Germany -- could be easily upset. But then, the authors usually regained hope (seemingly *as they wrote*), by stressing that the way to *gradual* unity had actually been *clarified* through division. They were also "hopeful" for another reason. Its apparent that virtually all of them believed that "federal unity," when it finally came, would represent *a restoration of order*, a solution to the "German Question," and that once reunited, Germans and their nationalist aspirations would not in and of themselves be a threat to European peace. These authors did *not* portray the Germans as victims of the Cold War, in the sense that many American military authorities came to regard them in the early post-war years. But from late October 1949 to year's end, they continued to report on SED and Soviet nationalist strategies with *only occasional reference* to the destruction and violence which so recently had been part of the German "national mission." Meanwhile, the new Soviet initiatives and appeals aimed at West Germans eventually changed.

As the relatively weak and restricted status of the GDR became increasingly apparent, the Soviets pursued influence in the West through nationalist propaganda designed to *limit* direct references to the eastern regime.

Diminished Potential? The GDR in the "Struggle for Germany," mid October-December 1949

The GDR quickly began to look like a less formidable challenge to the Federal Republic than its founders had claimed. Part of the reason was that the Soviets kept the regime on a somewhat tighter leash than advertised. The Soviet military had receded into the background in a "control commission," and the new Eastern government had taken over "the main tasks of administration," yet there was no signing of a peace treaty, no troop withdrawals, no official recognition of sovereignty, no end of reparations -- not even a promise of POW repatriations. The London *Times* editor assumed the German Communists would only get more concessions when their regime was more "firmly established."[212] This led the editor to the rather insightful conclusion that the appeals to nationalism emanating from East Berlin, directed at West Germans, were providing convenient cover for the consolidation of a Communist revolution in the GDR. Given these circumstances, the nationalist appeals were not especially worrisome, but the potential *future strength* of the GDR should not be underestimated.

> It is true that they dare not risk elections at present, but it would be surprising if they could not produce a satisfactory result by next October, when rationing will be removed--and the police enormously strengthened. . . . In the meantime the Government will put on weight as Governments do by the simple process of existing. Even Herr Pieck and Herr Grotewohl will appear bigger men as President and Prime Minister of the 'German Democratic Republic' than they did as bosses of the Socialist Unity Party. Many Germans will take a pride in their 'State' quite apart from those who have a vested interest in its continuing. All these favorable factors will be enormously increased if the Soviet Government feels able to grant

such concessions as the recognition of sovereignty and the appearance of independence.[213]

The point, then, was *not* that the GDR would actually rally West Germans, or draw the West into some new conflict--that is, providing future difficulties in Berlin could be avoided. Rather, what the West needed to understand was that the new regime was fairly established. Its existence alone made it "a challenge to the Western Powers and the West German Republic," but *not* an immediate threat.

The U.S. military government did not seem especially alarmed either. U.S. High Commisioner John McCloy announced on October 18 that the U.S. "will not try to match Russian moves in Eastern Germany that appeal to fanatic nationalism . . ."[214] The American authorities had apparently given much thought to German policy following the founding of the GDR, but determined basically to stay the course in Berlin, make no proposals on troop withdrawals from West Germany, and make no changes in response to "Russian propaganda moves." But to counter "new Soviet offensives against Western Germany," McCloy announced that "exchange of views between the Western German Government and the High Commissioners must be more complete in the future . . ." Secondly, he emphasized the need to create some "method of contact . . . between the Western powers and the Eastern republic[,] although this should not be extended to diplomatic recognition and an exchange of ambassadors."[215]

U.S. officials were generally pleased with McCloy's statement, but reserved judgment on the ultimate impact of the GDR's propaganda on the West. So far, however, they believed it to be negligible, as did the British. One clue to the *potential* effect, though, was Bonn's response to the creation of the new GDR Foreign Ministry. West German Chancellor Adenauer had quickly followed it with a statement that a "State Secretariat for International Affairs would be set up in Bonn."[216] In other words, however much the Al-

lies encouraged dialogue, there was no way that some level of competition between the two states could be avoided. Just where this competition might lead was suggested in McCloy's use of terms like "fanatic" and "violent" to describe SED propaganda. The words themselves of course implied *destabilization* -- of the Western state and the entire plan of Western integration as well -- and the ultimate uncertainty U.S. officials had about the future of West Germany. A number of contemporary commentators concluded, in so many words, that West Germans seemed to alternate between accepting their state as a protection from the Soviets, and viewing it and the presence of foreign troops as a national humiliation, an undue limitation on their sovereignty, and even a hindrance to their prosperity. However limited the appeal of the GDR, communist propaganda could only reinforce these sentiments.

The new eastern state, then, was yet to become a rival for the Federal Republic, but its leaders and their patrons were adeptly mouthing West German frustrations. According to McCormick, the SED's nationalist propaganda was helping make the "struggle between Germans" into a conflict nearly as decisive as the superpower struggle itself.[217] She joined McCloy, British High Commissioner Brian Robertson, and the London *Times* editor in stressing the importance of "in-corporat[ing] . . . Germany into the structure of international cooperation," while continuing to worry about the problem of volatile West German nationalism in the face of the "campaign in the East for unity, a peace treaty, and the end of occupation, everything all Germans want . . ."[218] The real question was how such appeals would impact West Germans in an economic crisis. Slowing economic recovery (particularly in West Berlin), disagreements over further industrial dismantling, and millions of expellees who had voted for either the SPD or "extreme right parties" could create scenarios in which the adherence of the West German population to Allied policy

was far from guaranteed, particularly if the SED could consolidate its power and improve the economy of the GDR.

McCormick believed the SED's postponement of elections had bought them time to do these very things. One of the few English-speaking visitors to the GDR at the time, seemed to agree, arguing that as the GDR became further integrated into a trade network with the Eastern bloc countries, the region, over time, would surely gain a degree of "political integration" as well.[219] But McCormick went so far as to argue that with Soviet help, the German Communists could eventually become a kind of vanguard of both German aspirations and Soviet expansionism. She believed a period of harsh oppression and indoctrination was coming to deal with the current "state of sullen rebellion" in the GDR, but after that, the SED could play the role of national savior.

> . . . it is safe to predict that from now on the Germans as a whole will be much better treated than the other people in the Soviet empire. They will be given a treaty, governed entirely by Germans, encouraged to rebuild their industries -- the Russians finished their sweeping dismantling long ago -- and to think of themselves as a 'partner' in the Soviet program of 'liberating and uniting' the continent.[220]

But in early November, there was again evidence that the GDR's future, even its *immediate* future, was far from certain. Drew Middleton took the lead in speculating about the possible reopening of the "German Question" by the Soviets. A "sudden flurry of meetings" among the foreign ministers was the occasion for his new theory that the Soviets were about to make another attempt to gain a toehold in the Western zones, and were willing, in effect, to trade away the Eastern regime to get it. Middleton argued that after "a brief burst of sovereign glory" the GDR had quickly become a "Russian pawn in the struggle for Germany."[221] His contemporary in Berlin from the London *Times* confirmed the apparently diminished status of the regime without speculating on an imminent Soviet offer.[222]

Middleton, however, posited an entirely new Soviet plan of attack in Germany, one that would *not* depict the GDR as the agent of German unity, but instead make more general, compromising appeals to West German nationalism and their dislike of foreign occupation.

> . . . henceforth the Russians and their Communist stooges are *not* going to say: 'We have a stronger, freer, more powerful state than you do in West Germany. Join us.' They are going to say: 'Each of us has a state but the whole is greater than either half. Let us work together for a united Germany and the solution of our common problems. After all, the Russians are our friends, just as the Americans are yours. We can get things from them just as you can get things from the United States. And together we will be smart enough to become again the dominant power in Central Europe.' To many here this appears to be a much more dangerous threat than the one inherent in competition for supremacy in Germany between the Eastern and Western states.[223]

Middleton wrote elsewhere about West Berliners' anti-communism in the face of the Soviet blockade,[224] and later would be a media ally in U.S. efforts to build friendships between American and West German elites.[225] As the Cold War progressed, he clearly lost his initial skepticism about the German people. But in late fall 1949, he remained on the alert about both "Soviet political offensives" in West Germany (which he now described with very little reference to the SED at all),[226] the possibility that West Germany might become more assertive *on its own* as it emerged from Allied tutelage, and, in the end, that it might be lured into the Soviet orbit by promises of unification.[227] No doubt the recent announcement of negotiations between the Allies and Bonn over the future of reparations, indicating a new, higher status for the West German government, fed Middleton's speculative fears about the future independence of Bonn.[228]

In this way, Middleton seemed to eliminate the East German government from the "German Question" altogether. There seemed to be no scenario in which its fortunes might be revived. Other authors, however, continued to believe the Soviets might yet bol-

ster the SED and their fledgling regime. In mid-November, they revived speculation about a unilateral withdrawal of the Red Army. Such a move seemed to promise a great propaganda victory for the Soviets, given the fact that the Allies would never dare match them with a withdrawal of their own.[229] The imbalance thereby created could only lead to widespread agitation in West Germany for a total Allied withdrawal, and the Bonn government would be hard pressed not to demand it.[230] Both West Germany's position in the Western Alliance, and the seeming irrelevance of the GDR, seemingly be reversed in a single stroke.

But when no Soviet withdrawal came, the Western media seemed to quickly and finally put away all concern for the GDR's disruptive potential. The would-be "saviors of Germany," and all talk of Soviet troop withdrawals -- were completely absent from the "German Question" by late November. The London *Times* Berlin correspondent referred to the new government as "on probation,"[231] and its unpopularity in the West -- which had been so obvious from its very founding -- was now invoked to make the same prediction about Soviet strategy that Middleton had weeks earlier: that they would *not* abandon the GDR outright, but deemphasize its place in the coming struggle for German unity and independence.

> For the time being, Germany is a sphere for political offensive. For this the east [sic] German Government alone seems a poor instrument. It has few influential supporters and contacts in west [sic] Germany, and it pursues an embittered propaganda that will not convert the west.[232]

So much for the danger of SED propaganda. The correspondent expected the next "Soviet offensive" to involve both attempts to foster West German political contacts, and a more long-range strategy to turn the clock back to four-power occupation, just as their diplomats had proposed at Paris in May. The latter seemed a more promising strategy

than the former. But in the meantime, the correspondent believed that the Soviets would continue to limit the sovereignty of the GDR, and perhaps consider trading it away, if they could get a unified Germany that was politically neutral, but tied economically to the eastern bloc.[233]

In the last week of November 1949, the American and British presses continued to discuss the "German Question" with great urgency, but echoed the words of the last correspondent, suggesting that the GDR had become almost completely irrelevant.[234] Internal developments there--such as increasing oppression of the eastern CDU and strengthening of the People's Police--were barely a footnote to the critical situation in "Germany."[235] The very use of the term "Germany" under the circumstances implied an ongoing struggle for *West* Germany, and the completely artificial nature of the GDR. As the following quote of McCormick from November 30 demonstrates, however, the "struggle for Germany" was about *dual containment* as well:

> Europe's terrible dilemma is that it will fall under Soviet domination if *Germany* turns to Russia and under *German domination* if *Germany* is allowed to rise again on her own power, unanchored to Europe. The essential problem is one of 'containment'--of Russia by keeping her out and *Germany* by taking her in![236] (emphasis added)

In either dangerous scenario -- Germany's return to great power status *or* Germany's incorporation into a Soviet empire -- the GDR seemed reduced to a cipher, and "Germany" -- meaning the part of that nation capable of exercising any sort of power on the European stage -- had to remain aligned with the West.

Apparently the East German population was becoming equally unimportant. As the Bonn government and the Allies pursued Western integration (while still giving lip service to unity, of course) the fact that the West held the most economically important part of Germany made it easy for Western officials to think of the battle for German

"hearts and minds" as primarily a West German affair. On November 29, a report in the *New York Times* on the views of General Walter Bedell Smith clearly shows that the "prize" (ie. West Germans) dictated the target audience as well. In negotiations over the Berlin blockade, Smith had seen how desperate Stalin and Molotov had been to prevent formation of West Germany, and . . .

> . . . observing at first hand the enormous value Moscow places *on Germany*, General Smith concludes that 'the importance of integrating the economy of Western Germany into that of Western Europe can hardly be overestimated.' The solution to the problem, he adds, 'will depend inevitably on the Westward economic and political orientation of *the Germans*, as fostered by the common policies of the Western occupying powers, and on integration of Western Germany into the Western European community.[237] (emphasis added)

Of course, all this still *implies* a future merger of the GDR into West Germany, but until then it represents a tacit acceptance of the status quo. For, as the general notes, "the problem" to be solved is *Western integration* alone. Within a period of six weeks, the predicament of two German states had fallen from the center of the "German Question" to the status, so to speak, of a *half-issue*. Had the Soviets been bold, and extended genuine features of sovereignty to the GDR soon after its founding, Western observers' greatest fears --of West Germans' rising nationalism and their rejection of Western integration -- might indeed have been realized, or least become more critical. While West Germans' complete acceptance of a Western orientation was as yet far from guaranteed at this point, the GDR no longer seemed to worry anyone in the West.

When Middleton next considered the GDR on December 11, the regime seemed gripped in turmoil.[238] Disputes "at the very top" of the SED seemed directly related to "the failure of the economy . . . to live up to the quotas imposed on it by its two-year plan, except the output of very few commodities."[239] The author expected SED President (and former Social Democrat) Otto Grotewohl to "take the rap" in some kind of show

trial -- as a "capitalist spy" or something of the sort. This would follow the pattern of purges that had strengthened the Communists' grip "throughout Eastern Europe." In the GDR, all non-Communists, even *within* the SED (ie. former Social Democrats) were "being increasingly restricted," while "the arbitrary power of the courts is being increased." Once again, the author speculated that it was all prelude to a Soviet troop withdrawal -- he expected it within the next 18 months.[240] The SED, in effect, was being equipped with sweeping powers, fanatically loyal cadres, and complete control over its own military force -- the People's Police -- so it could stand on its own and attempt (once again) to appeal to West German nationalists.

But *none* of these changes could solve the GDR's continued economic woes. Middleton judged the situation to be so grim that he wondered why no "genuine revolt" had been attempted. The ironic answer, was too much demoralization and repression:

> . . . although the Eastern zone is in a pitiable state, and leaders of the new Government are quarreling, there are reports of a growing sense of hopelessness in anti-Communist groups throughout the zone and a systematic repression of those non-Communist political parties which have been the focus of much of the resistance to the Russians over the past four years.[241]

Nevertheless, Middleton advised the Western Allies to continue to use the West Berlin enclave to foster resistance -- a strategy encouraged by a number of extremely anti-communist visitors to the young GDR whom we will meet in Chapter 3. Through Berlin, they argued, the Western Allies should transmit "a constant flow of information, which would keep up the spirits of anti-Communist elements in the East and win new converts to their ranks."[242] Middleton thought that without such encouragement, a "hard core of resistance" might never form at all. His focus had suddenly shifted, just as the GDR seemed to have rapidly transformed: as the regime's threat to the West appeared increasingly negligible, its disaffected (if also demoralized) population now presented something of an *oppor-*

tunity for the West to "encourage, advise, and inform any resistance to Moscow."[243] At the same time, however, the future remained uncertain and contested: for Middleton and a number of West German visitors to the GDR in this period (See Chapter Four) worried that in spite of mass demoralization, "Communist influence" seemed likely to spread, particularly among the youth and war veterans.

This was because of the accelerating pace of socioeconomic transformation in 1949. If the SED hesitated to complete *political* consolidation, it seemed clear that the economy and society were being molded to the Soviet model.[244] Reports from Berlin suggested that socialization of industry and agriculture were creating new, relatively privileged classes of skilled workers and functionaries, coopted by the state and rewarded for conformity. At the same time, however, the Soviets and the SED were hesitating to formally create a "people's democracy" -- ie. one-party rule -- as in the other satellite states. The apparent reason, as might have been expected, was their continued desire to try and win over West Germans. With this ultimate goal in mind, there was no reason for the Soviets not to give the SED more time to raise its popularity, rather than proceed with complete "Sovietization."[245]

But to some commentators, this continued, limited openness to the West seemed much less an of opportunity than Middleton believed. The London *Times*' Berlin correspondent argued that the delayed elections played nicely into the regime's hands: now it could only marginalize the "opposition parties" that much more, leaving them unable to appeal to the public.[246] The correspondent speculated, moreover, that their remaining appeal -- as the only existing alternative to the Communists -- would likely be neutralized by "joint lists" in the next election. Then there was problem of the youth. The opposition parties were not forbidden to recruit and train among the younger generation, but the "em-

phasis of life is towards conformity with the developing Communist system," especially among young people, which meant no organizations existed to counter the influence of the FDJ and Young Pioneers, the communist-dominated sports organizations, or the new school teachers.[247] Communist domination in all arenas of society seemed bound to replace the "general bourgeois outlook" with a socialist orientation, in spite of widespread sullen, hostile, and even rebellious spirits.

This discouraging evaluation suggested the growing *divergence* of East and West, but neither this correspondent, nor Middleton, nor other contemporary commentators saw in it any sort of emerging status quo. Quite the contrary. If the impact of the SED's propaganda and the new Eastern state seemed to have dissipated, many observers remained convinced that a latent communist threat could easily be activated. Once again, the fear of resurgent West German nationalism in an economic downturn, and not the machinations of the SED, could cause "Germany" to turn eastward. The following quote of the same British correspondent shows, however, that this potential danger seemed to exist almost *in spite of* the East German state. The SED could win the struggle for Germany eventually, but *not* on its own merits.

> How can the two parts of the divided whole be brought together again? The Russian answer would appear to be: 'By acceptance of the pattern that has been imposed and developed in the east.' [sic] Events in the east [sic] would seem to have gone too far to allow of reunion by compromise. The east German Government [sic] sets itself up as the nucleus round which unity is to be reformed. That this is an absurdity now, when the east Government has only scattered and uninfluential support in the west, only strengthens the view that the Communists (and behind them the Russians) are waiting for west Germany to run into economic and political difficulties that would shake the new Federation as they shook the Weimar Republic.[248]

The fear expressed here is *not* based on the appeal of Communism or the GDR, of course, but rather the experience of recent history influencing Germans once failed by

democracy in an economic crisis. But on the other hand, the report *implies* an alternative scenario where prosperity creates such stability in West Germany, that the GDR becomes alien, estranged, and virtually disappears behind the iron curtain -- the very thing that many in the West perceived to happen in the years that followed.

But as we have seen, a stable, prosperous West Germany was a potential danger also, and it would very likely continue to attract the interest (as well as the concern) of the Soviets. An alternative scenario, in which an increasingly powerful West Germany emerged and demanded favors from *both* the Allies and the Soviets was formulated at year's end. C. L. Sulzberger, lead foreign correspondent of the *New York Times*, believed that the acceleration of West German industrial production had been permitted by the Allies because of previous favors the SED had begged from the Soviets -- such as welcoming former Nazis into the "National Front" and expanding the People's Police. West German demands of the Allies, therefore, came with an implied threat that the Bonn government could always turn to the Soviets if it did not get its way.[249] Sulzberger believed that a coming host of begged favors (and counter favors) would allow *both* Germanies to grow and recover far more rapidly than if they had been reunited!

But Sulzberger seemed unduly alarmed, even self-deceived, for he could offer no example of a genuine favor the SED had extracted from the Soviets, describing instead policy changes designed to redound as much to the Soviets' own advantage as to their German clients.' And when he wrote about "Germany" and "economic recovery," he seemed, like other recent writers, to actually mean *West* Germany. This reflected the same contemporary fears we have seen amongst numerous commentators: fears of the rapid West German revival. But this radically different scenario--implying eventual unification on *Western* lines--shared the assumption of the London *Times* correspondent about the GDR:

that it had virtually no weight in the struggle for Germany. And Sulzberger, like Middleton, described the future of Germany as if there were no separate eastern state. "Germany" remained a single, indivisible entity which could do nothing else in the long run but realize its true identity.

> Thus a vigorous Germany is clearly recovering her famous national energies and aspirations. She is biding her time until her western half is "integrated" into Western Europe on the assumption that part of the continent cannot get on without her. Because Washington is pressing for this idea Germans like Dr. Adenauer today are describing Americans as 'the best Europeans of all.'[250]

Sulzberger here is forecasting the aforementioned "return of Germany," and less than five years after its total military defeat. European integration, rather than Axis conquest, would make possible this national revival. Whatever the excesses and barbarity of the recent past, whatever the traumas of partition, "Germans" would find their true path and accomplish their "destiny." Sulzberger, unlike many of contemporaries, warned of a German nationalist revival that was *non*-communist, perhaps even non-dictatorial, though he was vague on that issue. However, like the others, he viewed West German nationalism as a catalyst for a resumption of great power politics and possible destabilization.

Missing from his and most of the other contemporary comment on the "German problem" was any sense of competing power blocs, or even the iron curtain. A bipolar political landscape was clearly developing in Germany and Europe, but in this early period contemporaries often understood it as temporary, unstable, and likely to degenerate into a new *Realpolitik* among revived nation-states. In these "imaginings," ideology was *not* absent, but was closely connected to national aspirations and economic power -- the very things the new GDR was unable to create or inspire. And despite recent history, German nationalism was itself usually discussed in real-political terms: it was not dangerous because of a violent, genocidal, and unmastered past, but because it threatened to

create radical, tectonic shifts in the cold war landscape. This understanding of "Germany" in postwar Europe suggests that arguments about the transformation of American attitudes towards Germans after World War II require certain qualification. While it is true that Americans -- and to a somewhat lesser extent, the British -- reconciled themselves to a peaceful partnership with West Germans due to the exigencies of the Cold War and generally positive relations between occupiers and occupied, older concerns about German nationalism and *Realpolitik*, now in the context of the Soviet threat and two Germanies, suggest an enduring undercurrent of ambivalence that was elaborated on by a considerable number of more politically partisan visitors to the GDR as well. These writers' travels and observations will be the subject of Chapter Three.

[1] The expression is taken from American Commentator Anne O. McCormick, "West Still Holds Initiative in Germany," *New York Times*, October 10, 1947, p. 22, c. 5.
[2] Richard Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (New York, 1989), p. 99.
[3] Ruud van Dijk, "Winning the Peace," in *TUSGECW*, p. 83.
[4] See Introduction, endnote 41.
[5] Schumacher, "From Occupation to Alliance," in *TUSGECW*, pp. 92-3.
[6] The Allies and Adenauer never seriously considered this last offer, but according to one East German scholar, it was very likely genuine given the number of conciliatory moves the Soviets went on to make that year in both Asia and Europe. See Childs, pp. 44-5.
[7] Osterman, "Little Room for Maneuver,"in *TUSGECW*, p. 172.
[8] Ibid., p. 173.
[9] Ibid., p. 175.
[10] See Introduction, pp. 5-10.
[11] The phrase was coined by an American author of German-Jewish origins, Norbert Muhlen, in his 1953 book of the same name, which will be discussed in Chapter Three.
[12] In actuality, the importance of many former Nazis to the West German economic recovery, the desires of American officials to exonerate them, and American interests to conclude denazification as early as possible, was already well researched by Gimbel in 1968 (pp. 171-4). What has changed over the years, largely due to the work of Lutz Niethammer, beginning in the early 1970s, on denazification in Bavaria, is the growing understanding that the shortcomings, indeed the failings of denazification in the American Zone were not simply the result of the Cold War concerns, or even the changed attitude of Americans towards Germans resulting from fraternization, but the basic fact that the interests of justices could never be completely served because "the functional elites of German society had been organizationally coopted by National Socialism to such an extent that, after the [initial] purges, the replacement personnel ran into insurmountable problems." See Cornelia Rauh-Kühne, "Life Rewarded the Latecomers: Denazification during the Cold War," in *TUSGECW*, pp. 65-72. The quote is from p. 68. Similar dilemma's recurred in the French and Soviet Zones as well, where the occupying authorities transitioned away from purging to German-run tribunals early than in the American Zone. For Timothy Vogt's conclusions on denazification in the Soviet Zone, see Chapter One, endnote 107. Also for the Soviet Zone see Helga A. Welsh, "Antifaschistisch-demokratische Umwalzung und politische Säuberung in der sowjetische Besatzungszone Deutschlands," in Klaus-Dietmar Henke and Hans Woller, eds., *Politische Säuberung in Europa: Die Abrechnung mit Faschismus und Kollaboration nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1991), pp. 84-107. The same author also suggested, however, that the Soviets had a certain advantage over the Allies in their to draw from a pool of unincriminated (and leftist) "substitute elite." See H. A. Welsh, *Revolutionärer Wandel auf Befehl? Entnazifizierungs- und Personal-politik in Thuringen und Sachsen(1945-1948)* (Munich, 1989), pp. 29-30, 41.
[13] "The Future of Berlin," *The Times*, May 18, 1948, p. 5, c. f.
[14] "As it looks in Berlin," *New Statesman and Nation*, April 17, 1948, pp. 307-8.
[15] "The Future of Berlin."
[16] Anne O. McCormick, "Abroad," *New York Times*, April 24, 1948, p. 14, c. 5.
[17] Edward A. Morrow, "Soviet Terror Chokes Democracy in German Zone, Britain Charges," *New York Times*, June 2, 1948, p. 1, c. 6; p. 8, c. 4. The survey was titled "Pressure on the democratic parties in the Soviet zone." It was also cited in "Dismantlings in Soviet Zone," *The Times*, June 2, 1948, p. 3, c. e.
[18] Morrow, p. 1, c.7; "Dismantlings in Soviet Zone."
[19] Morrow, p. 8, c. 5.
[20] Gabrielle Tergit, "The Russians in Berlin," *Contemporary Review* 992, August 1948, p. 85.
[21] "Besuch in der Sowjetzone," *Wirschafts-Zeitung* 3(24), June 11, 1948, p. 1.
[22] Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 188.

[23] Drew Middleton, "All German Trade Called Soviet Aim," *New York Times*, August 31, 1948, p. 6, c. 2.
[24] Ibid.
[25] The article on Western Europe was Michael L. Hoffman, "Revival of East-West Commerce Held Vital to Europe's Recovery," *New York Times*, August 31, 1948, p. 6, c. 2. The article on Berlin was James Reston, "Equal Rights Held Present Barrier to Berlin Accord," *New York Times*, August 31, 1948, p. 1. c. 4.
[26] Middleton, "Soviet Paves Way to Leave Germany," p. 8, c. 4.
[27] Ibid., c. 3-4.
[28] "Soviet Policy in Germany," *The Times*, October 25, 1948, p. 3, c. c.
[29] Ibid.
[30] See the discussion in the Introduction, p. 6.
[31] "Against the Ruhr Statute," *The Times*, February 2, 1949, p. 4, c. b.
[32] "Tighter Counter-Blockade in Germany. Anglo-U.S. Step," *The Times*, February 5, 1949, p. 4, c. a.
[33] Ibid.
[34] "Mr. Attlee in Berlin," *The Times*, March 5, 1949, p. 4, c. d.
[35] Sydney Gruson, "Soviet Promotes Nationalism at Leipzig Fair; Posters Urge a United and Strong Germany," *New York Times*, March 9, 1949, p. 4, c. 4.
[36] Drew Middleton, "German Reds Open Intensified Drive," *New York Times*, March 8, 1949, p. 2, c. 7.
[37] Ibid.
[38] "West Mark Only in West Berlin," *The Times*, March 21, 1949, p. 4, c. b.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] "Communist Plans for All Germany," *The Times*, March 25, 1949, p. 4, c. a.
[42] Anne O. McCormick, "End of a Long Road to Agreement on Germany," *New York Times*, April 9, 1949, p. 16, c. 5.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] A month earlier, for example, in discussing the continuing (and unsuccessful) Soviet efforts to prevent the formation of the western Federal Republic, *The Times*' Berlin correspondent counseled against accepting "unreasonable terms," but nevertheless was quite clear that "the desirability of a settlement of the German problem remains above question . . ." "Soviet Tactics in Germany. The Soft Pedal," *The Times*, March 8, 1949, p. 4, c. b.
[46] Sydney Gruson, "East Land Return to Germans Hinted," *New York Times*, April 16, 1949, p. 2, c. 5.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid. The paper was *Informationen*.
[49] Ibid.
[50] "Communist Propaganda and Berlin Blockade," *The Times*, April 20, 1949, p. 4, c. a.
[51] Ibid.
[52] "Economy of Soviet Zone," *The Times*, April 21, 1949, p. 4, c. e.
[53] "Break in the Log Jam," *The New York Times*, April 27, 1949, p. 26, c. 1.
[54] "Breathing Space in Germany?," *The Economist*, September 4, 1948, p. 1-2.
[55] "Recovery in the West. The Russian Answer," *The Times*, July 19, 1948, p. 4, c. a.
[56] "Middle Class Parties in the Soviet Zone," *The Times*, July 15, 1948, p. 4, c. b.
[57] "Recovery in the West."
[58] Ibid.

[59] "Stimulus of E.R.P. Confidence Reborn," *The Times*, August 7, 1948, p. 4, c. a. Similar sentiments were noted by Werner Knop, a German-born U.S. citizen who traveled illegally in the Soviet Zone in the "late summer" of 1948. See Werner Knop, "I Prowled Russia's Forbidden Zone," *The Saturday Evening Post* December 11, 1948, pp. 15-17, 101, 103-4; December 18, 1948, pp. 30-1, 52-4, 58; December 25, 1948, pp. 24, 50-52; January 1, 1949, pp. 24, 51-52, 54. (Hereafter *SEP*). There will be much more about Knop's report in Chapter 3.

[60] "Soviet Aims in Berlin," *The Times*, August 17, 1948, p. 4, c. b.

[61] Among the more readable and concise descriptions of this process is the one found in Pritchard, pp. 163-193.

[62] Knop, "I Prowled Russia's Forbidden Zone, Parts Three & Four,*SEP*, December 25, pp. 25, 50-2, January 1, pp. 24: 51-2, 54.

[63] "Communist Fortunes in Berlin," *The Times*, August 31, p. 4, c. b.

[64] "Leipzig Fair Traffic from West is Barred," *New York Times*, August 28, 1948, p. 3, c. 1.

[65] "Soviet Zone Seeks Trade with West," *New York Times*, August 30, 1948, p. 2, c. 6.

[66] "Leipzig Fair Open with Few Buyers," *New York Times*, August 31, 1948, p. 32, c. 6.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Drew Middleton, "All German Trade Called Soviet Aim," *New York Times*, August 31, 1948, p. 6, c. 2.

[69] "East German Economy," *The Times*, October 11, 1948, p. 3, c. c.

[70] Edward A. Morrow, "Council in Berlin Quits Soviet Area," *New York Times*, October 14, 1948, p. 3, c. 1.

[71] Drew Middleton, "Reds in Soviet Zone Lose Ground in Blockade, Western Officials Say," *New York Times*, October 14, 1948, p. 3, c. 3.

[72] "'People's Police' in Germany," *The Times*, October 19, 1948, p. 4, c. c. The report also described the creation of a network of informants named 'people's correspondents'. Their duty was to report to local newspapers on the goings on in their "immediate sphere." The exact number was not known, but 300 had recently met in Magdeburg.

[73] "Police in Soviet Zone," *The Times*, October 20, 1948, p. 3, c. a. The correspondent's subheading noted that there was reported to be one policeman in the Soviet Zone to every 43 inhabitants.

[74] Middleton, "Reds in Soviet Zone Lose . . ."

[75] Recall that his sources included recent refugees from the region and a "United States political observer of long experience in Germany."

[76] Middleton, "Soviet Paves Way to Leave Germany," *New York Times*, October 20, 1948, p. 8, c. 3. The "German People's Congress" received a revised text for the "All-German Constitution" that same week. The London *Times* called it a "counterblast" to the constitution then being drafted, "according to established democratic procedure" in Bonn. "Constitution for All Germany," *The Times*, October 23, 1948, p. 3, c. e.

[77] Ibid., p. 6, c. 5-6.

[78] "Police Forces in E. Germany," *The Times*, November 3, 1948, p. 4, c. c.

[79] Ibid., c. 4.

[80] "In Soviet Germany--I," *The Times*, November 29, 1948, p. 4, c. f; "In Soviet Germany--II," November 30, 1948, p. 4, c. f; "The Soviet Zone," November 30, 1948, p. 5, c. b.

[81] "Communist Aims in East Germany," *The Times*, December 31, 1948, p. 3, c. a.

[82] "Tighter Counter-Blockade in Germany. Anglo-U.S. Step," *The Times*, February 5, 1949, p. 4, c. a.

[83] Adolf Hennecke's record one-day individual output in a coal mine in October 1948 was a staged event set up by Otto Buchwitz, chief of the SED in Saxony, and modeled on a similarly staged exploit by the Soviet worker Stakhanovite, whose legendary accomplishments Buchwitz learned about during a visit to the USSR after the war. The story of selecting and promoting Henneke, and the reaction of East German workers to his celebration -- was often was very skeptical -- is discussed in Naimark, pp. 198-204.

[84] "Tighter Counter-Blockade in Germany." Naimark's evidence indicated basically the same thing.
[85] "Leipzig Fair Has Bleak Opening with Snow and a New Soviet Mark," *New York Times*, March 7, 1949, p. 7, c. 2.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] "Communist Propaganda and Berlin Blockade," *The Times*, April 20, 1949, p. 4, c. a.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Drew Middleton, "Berliners Cheer an Echo of Past: March of Sleek East Zone Police," *New York Times*, May 2, 1949, p. 6, c. 4.
[91] Anne O. McCormick, "Race Between Soviet and Western Policy in Germany," *New York Times*, April 27, 1949, p. 26, c. 5.
[92] For example, Edmund Spevack, who wrote about the Council and the "German Question" did not even discuss this meeting. Under the subheading "Finalizing German National Division," he wrote about the failures of the London Conference (Nov.-Dec. 1947), and the steps the Western powers took to make possible "trizonal fusion," in the spring of 1948. Spevack noted that founding of the GDR as a "temporary solution" in Soviet eyes, but the sense of their being permanently shut out of the Western zones after London apparently made the Paris conference seem completely irrelevant. See Spevack, pp. 48-9.
[93] James Reston, "U.S. Plan Weighed," *New York Times*, May 12, 1949, p. 1, c. 1.
[94] Those terms included exclusion from the International Ruhr authority, and the freedom of a united Germany to participate in the Marshal Plan. But even if the Soviets *had agreed* to all conditions, and in effect surrendered their zone to the new Western state, there were a number of prominent U.S. officials, such as Charles Bohlen, who apparently wanted Germany to remain divided. See Eisenberg, pp. 477-482. Gaddis, not as critical of U.S. policy as Eisenberg, noted that the U.S. officials, including Marshal and his successor, Dean Acheson, *did* carefully consider Program A as originally written. See Gaddis, *We Now Know*, pp. 121-125.
[95] "U.S. and German Occupation," *The Times*, May 13, 1949, p. 4, c. c.
[96] Thomas J. Hamilton, "Acheson Sees German State Open for East Zone to Join; U.S. and Britain Will Urge It," *New York Times*, April 29, 1947, p. 1, c. 4; p. 3, c. 5.
[97] Ibid., p. 3, c. 5.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Eisenberg, pp. 477-8.
[101] That author was the editor of the London *Times*, who wrote: "The test of that concession agreement [ie. the Soviet acceptance of a merger on Western terms] would, of course, be in the details--whether, for instance, the Russians gave appropriate guarantees of free elections in the eastern zone. The Russians would presumably hope to secure the overthrow of the democratic German Government at a later stage. In the meantime they would have given an immediate fillip to their so-called peace campaign which, they might hope, would discourage the western Powers [sic] from consolidating the North Atlantic Pact." "Russian Policy in Germany," *The Times*, May 17, 1949, p. 4, c. d.
[102] Anne O. McCormick, "Prelude to Another Meeting of the Foreign Ministers," *New York Times*, April 30, 1949, p. 12, c. 5.
[103] A.J. Fischer, "The Eastern Zone of Germany," *World Affairs* 3, July 1949, p. 268.
[104] "Russian Policy in Germany." Clinging to the "entry card," according to the London *Times* "diplomatic correspondent," would be a prelude to a proposal to withdraw all troops "one year after the conclusion of a peace treaty . . ," thereby shifting the onus to West German politicians, who could hardly oppose a total withdrawal publicly, even as the proposed pullout would give them no protection against a "Communist coup" by way of the armed "People's Police." The correspondent believed this proposal was sure to come at Paris, and West German leaders had to remember that "for the present the presence of British and American troops is the only guarantee of the security of their democracy against a Communist *coup*."

[105] Thomas J. Hamilton, "Acheson Sees German State Open for East Zone to Join; U.S. and Britain Will Urge It," *New York Times*, April 29, 1947, p. 1, c. 6.
[106] James Reston, "U.S. Plan Weighed," *New York Times*, May 12, 1949, p. 1, c. 1.
[107] C.L. Sulzberger, "Soviet Intentions Shielded in Paris," *New York Times*, May 25, 1949, p. 5, c. 1.
[108] Ibid., c. 2.
[109] Edwin L. James, "Big Four Bargaining is Off to a Slow Start," *New York Times*, May 29, 1949, IV, p. 3, c. 7.
[110] Ibid.
[111] McCormick, "The Focus Has Shifted at This Big Four Meeting," *New York Times*, May 28, 1949, p. 14, c. 5.
[112] Ibid.
[113] James, "Big Four Bargaining if Off to a Slow Start," c. 8.
[114] McCormick, "The Western Program," *New York Times*, May 30, 1949, p. 12, c. 1.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.
[117] "Mr. Vyshinsky on Western Plan," *The Times*, June 1, 1949, p. 4, c. c.
[118] "Second Round in Paris," *The Times*, June 1, 1949, p. 5, c. b.
[119] "Disagreements in Paris," *The Times*, June 8, 1949, p. 5, c. b.
[120] "4 Powers Break New Ground," *The Times*, June 9, 1949, p. 4, c. d.
[121] "Last Days in Paris," *The Times*, June 14, 1949, p. 5, c. b.
[122] "The Powers," *The Times*, June 21, 1949, p. 5, c. b. The text of the Foreign Ministers' Communique can be found in "Text of the Big Four's Communique," *New York Times*, June 21, 1949, p. 4, c. 3.
[123] Edwin L. James, "Time Is Running Out at Paris Conference," *New York Times,* June 12, 1949, V, p. 3, c. 7.
[124] C. L. Sulzberger, "What Soviet Is Up to Puzzles West at Paris," *New York Times*, June 12, 1949, V, p. 4, c. 1-2.
[125] Ibid., c. 2.
[126] "A New Soviet Peace Plan," *New York Times*, June 13, 1949, p. 18, c. 1-2.
[127] Anne O. McCormick, "The Russians Drop a Hint on Berlin Settlement," *New York Times*, June 13, 1949, p. 18, col. 5.
[128] "A New Soviet Peace Plan." They gathered as much from a Soviet proposal that in actuality had little bearing on the outcome at Paris. The Soviets had requested that each of the four powers draw up a German peace treaty and agree on a total withdrawal one year after a final peace was signed. The Allies had quickly objected, arguing that there was no "Germany" with which to conclude such a treaty, and the proposal was tabled. The *Times* editor believed the Soviets, having no real chance to further influence events in the West, had made the proposal in hopes of getting a genuinely in-dependent and neutral Germany, which then could be "detached" from Western Europe and eventually "sovietized."
[129] McCormick, "The Russians Drop a Hint on Berlin Settlement."
[130] Ibid.
[131] McCormick, "The Hour of Decision Strikes in Paris," *New York Times*, June 15, 1949, p. 18, c. 5.
[132] Ibid.
[133] McCormick, "Measure of Paris Conference Will Be Taken Later," *New York Times*, June 20, 1949, p. 18, c. 5.
[134] "The Results at Paris," *New York Times*, June 21, 1949, p. 24, c. 1.
[135] Spilker, *The East German Leadership and the Division of Germany*, p. 187.
[136] Drew Middleton, "Communist Tide in Germany Reaching All-Time Low Ebb," *New York Times*, June 5, 1949, IV, p. 5, c. 6.
[137] Ibid.

[138] Middleton, "Hans Schmidt: Portrait of a 'Kleiner Mann'," *New York Times*, July 17, 1949, VI, p. 14, c. 4.
[139] Ibid., p. 36.
[140] Ibid., p. 37.
[141] "East Zone 'National Front'," *The Times*, July 27, 1949, p. 3, c. f.
[142] C.L. Sulzberger, "Germany Divided at All Costs Is Held to Be Russian Policy," *New York Times*, July 19, 1949, p. 7, c. 2. There seems to be little evidence, however, that the Stalin ever worried about such a development. Once West Germany was incorporated into the European Defense Community and NATO, (1952) he did wonder if a rearmed West Germany might at some point attack France and seek to regain Eastern territories, but never seemed to consider the possibility of a unified communist Germany arising to challenge the USSR. On his views on the new danger posed by West Germany in the EDC, see Gaddis, *We Now Know*, p. 128.
[143] "German Nationalism in Soviet Zone, " *The Times*, August 3, 1949, p. 3, c. b.
[144] Ibid.
[145] "Nazis in 'National Front'," *The Times*, August 5, 1949, p. 3, c. e.
[146] "Future of East Germany," *The Times*, August 17, 1949, p. 3, c. e.
[147] See the discussion in the Introduction, pp. 5-6.
[148] "German Nationalism," *The Times*, August 2, 1949, p. 5, c. c.
[149] Cited in "Future of East Germany,"
[150] Harold Callender, "Fear of Germany Rules French Policy in Europe," *New York Times*, August 21, 1949, IV, p. 4, c. 7.
[151] "Eastern German Meetings," *The Times*, September 24, 1949, p. 4, c. g.
[152] "The Frontier with Poland," *The Times*, September 12, 1949, p. 4, c. c.
[153] "Eastern German Meetings."
[154] "Communists on 'Just Peace'," *The Times*, May 10, 1949, p. 4, c. a.
[155] "Four Million 'Noes'," *The Times*, May 19, 1949, p. 5, c. c.
[156] "Mr. Henderson's Assurance," *The Times*, May 16, 1949, p. 4, c. a.
[157] "Big Anti-Communist Vote," *The Times*, May 18, 1949, p. 4, c. a.
[158] Ibid.
[159] "Four Million 'Noes'."
[160] "Big Anti-Communist Vote in Eastern Zone," *The Times*, May 18, 1949, p. 5, c. a.
[161] "Four Million 'Noes'."
[162] "Big Anit-Communist Vote."
[163] "Four Million 'Noes'."
[164] "German Communists Put Nationalism First," *The Times*, May 18, 1949, p. 3, c. f.
[165] Fischer, p. 263.
[166] Ibid. Fischer did note, however, that despite the SED's dominant position, there was considerable division *within* the party, and even among the former members of the KPD. The key split he described was between those trained in and devoted to Moscow, and those who hoped for more of a National Communism à la Tito's Yugoslavia. If it was clear to earlier visitors that the former member s of the SPD had mostly been demoted in the SED ranks, Fischer was one of the first to note that there was trouble *even among the Communists themselves.* He also noted that the growing unpopularity of the Soviet occupation helped strengthen the hand of the "National Communists," many of whom were veterans of Nazi concentration camps. See p. 261. He offered no predictions as to whether these splits might weaken the party's control of the Eastern administration.
[167] Ibid., p. 262.
[168] Ibid., p. 264.
[169] "German Freedom Movement," *The Times*, July 22, 1949, p. 3, c. e.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Middleton, "Resistance Grows in East Germany," *New York Times*, August 27, 1949, p. 4, c. 4.
[172] Ibid.

[173] Ibid.
[174] "Eastern German Meetings," *The Times*, September 24, 1949, p. 4, c. g.
[175] Michael James, "Good Hospitality Is Marked as Fall Fair at Leipzig is Opened," *New York Times*, August 31 1949, p. 12, c. 4.
[176] James, c. 4.
[177] "Leipzig Fair Lists Business," *New York Times*, September 4, 1949, p. 2, c. 6.
[178] Knop's discussion of the mines, a place he likened to hell as portrayed in Dante's *Inferno*, was reported no New Years Day 1949. For the interest in the mines in September, 1949, see "Russian Search for Uranium," *The Times*, September 27, 1949, p. 4, c. c..
[179] "2 U.S. Students Seized by Reds Assail Reports on Return Here," *New York Times*, October 1, 1949, p. 11, c. 6.
[180] The thesis that Stalin never wanted the GDR at all, rather considering second best alternative to Soviet influence over a united German state, was put forth by Wilfried Loth in 1994. See Introduction, endnote 23.
[181] The growth of American sympathy for the defeated German population was greatly facilitated by the ease with which American forces conquered the Western and Central parts of the country, but also through fraternization, and later, the U.S. commitment to the civilian population of blockaded Berlin. There was also the influence of U.S. officials in the occupation authority that knew Germany before the rise of Hitler and continued to believe that there was a core of "other Germans" who had not supported Nazism that could only be cultivated by more lenient treatment generally and more trust in their ability to work toward democracy with less outside control. For the ease of conquest see Klaus-Dietmar Henke, "Gentle Conquest in the West: Americans and Germans, 1944-1945," *TUSGECW*, pp. 508-514; For the importance of fraternization see Goedde, *GIs and Germans*; On the importance of the airlift in giving Americans a new sense of their role as "providers and protectors of victimized Germans" See Goedde as well, pp. 167, 196; On the attitude of American "Germanophiles" in the occupation years see Volker Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold War in Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), pp. 26-51. For a more critical view of American sympathy for defeated Germans, or their simple lack of interest in thorough denazification and greater interest in restarting the German economy and "bringing the troops home," see Grossman, *Jew s, Germans, and Allies*, pp. 15-46.
[182] Barbara Ward, "Is Germany Still a Menace to Peace?," *New York Times*, October 2, 1949, VI, pp. 13, 59-61, 63.
[183] Ibid., p. 60.
[184] Ibid., p. 61.
[185] Ibid.
[186] "East German Regime," *The Times*, October 3, 1949, p. 3, c. d.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid.
[192] "Challenge in Germany," *New York Times*, October 7, 1949, p. 26, c. 2.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] McCormick, "Another People's Government Minus the People," *New York Times*, October 8, 1949, p. 12, c. 5.
[196] "Two Germanys," *The Times*, October 8, 1949, p. 5, c. b.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.
[199] "New Phase in Germany," *New York Times*, October 10, 1949. p. 22, c. 1.
[200] Ibid.

[201] McCormick, "West Still Holds Initiative in Germany," *New York Times*, October 10, 1949, p. 22, c. 5.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.
[204] See Spilker, *The East German Leadership and the Division of Germany,* 91-92; 245-249.
[205] "Powers for New Government," *The Times*, October 11, 1949, p. 4, c. a.
[206] "National Front Appeal," *The Times*, October 12, 1949, p. 4, c. a.
[207] McLaughlin, "Thousands Cheer New German State," *New York Times*, October 12, 1949, p. 3, c. 1.
[208] Middleton, "Two States Competing for German Loyalties," *New York Times*, October 16, 1949, IV, p. 4, c. 1.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Noted in McLaughlin, "Thousands Cheer . . ."
[211] Middleton, "Two States Competing . . ."
[212] "East Germany," *The Times*, October 15, 1949, p. 5, c. c.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Middleton, "McCloy Bars Easing of German Policy to Counter Soviet," *New York Times*, October 19, 1949, p. 1, c. 4.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Ibid.
[217] McCormick, "The Western Powers and the Bonn Government," *New York Times*, October 22, 1949, p. 16, c. 5.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Henry Colmar, "In the Soviet Zone," *The Spectator*, October 21, 1949, pp. 529-530. The author also remarked rather vaguely that "slowly but surely the conviction is gaining ground that Germany must adopt a certain degree of "popular democracy" -- if only to be rid of Russian occupation," (p. 529) without indicating that he meant a degree of participation in the new regime, or whether by "Germany" and "popular democracy" he met some kind of populist movement nationwide. He offered no real evidence of active popular protest, however, but only evidence of low-level individual dissent such as avoiding Soviet films presentations or reading Western newspapers.
[220] McCormick, "The Western Powers and the Bonn Government."
[221] Ibid, c. 4.
[222] For Middleton's views see Ibid. The London *Times* Berlin correspondent noted that "there are few signs that the Soviet authorities contemplate any special acts of generosity such as would greatly popularize the new régime, or that they will allow the government any great scope in that direction." The author also pointed out that the lack of an occupation statute meant that "the sovereignty of the eastern Government may well be less than its members claim." Meanwhile, the same concessions Middleton mentioned, "dangled" before the "middle class parties" to get them to agree to creation of the GDR, had all been "shelved." "Change in East Zone," *The Times*, November 14, 1949, p. 4, c. c.
[223] Middleton, "Russia Is Forcing New Decisions on Germany," c. 6. A similar view of the GDR's limitations was offered two weeks earlier in *The Economist.* "The Pieck Republic," *The Economist*, October 22, 1949, "East Germany Put in Soviet Economy," *New York Times*, November 18, 1949, p. 8, c. 4.p. 875-876.
[224] Middleton, *Where Has Last July Gone? Memoirs* (New York, 1973), pp. 168-9. Cited in Grossman, p. 240.

[225] See Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold War in Europe,* pp. 55-9. At dinner parties with other journalists and U.S. officials in Frankfurt in the early 1950s, Middleton, still working for the *New York Times*, vouched for the efforts of McCloy's public affairs director, the journalist, historian, former U.S. army officer and Germanophile Shepard Stone, who, among other tasks, supervised the "reorientation" efforts in the U.S. Zone, as the later, less draconian efforts to cultivate a democratic and civic culture and educational system in Germany came to be known.
[226] "East German Régime. A Pawn in the Soviet Political Offensive," *The Times*, November 21, 1949, p. 5, c. f.
[227] Middleton, "West Gains in Germany, But East Holds Trumps," *New York Times*, November 11, 1949, IV, p. 5, c. 3.
[228] At meetings in Paris the Federal Republic was "promoted" to a position as a full-fledged negotiating partner regarding industrial dismantling. The West German government and Western media were informed of the results on November 15. See "Paris Decisions on Germany," *The Times*, November 16, 1949, p. 4, c. f.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid., c. 4-5.
[231] "East German Régime. A Pawn in the Soviet Political Offensive."
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.
[234] McCormick, "German and European Union: a Triangular Issue," *New York Times*, November 30, 1949, p. 26, c. 5.
[235] For the former, see "Armed Police of Soviet Zone," *The Times*, November 23, 1949, p. 4, c. c.; for the latter, "Prospects of East Zone Purge," *The Times*, November 26, 1949, p. 3, c. c.
[236] McCormick, "German and European Union: a Triangular Issue."
[237] Ibid. The article referred to is Walter Bedell Smith, "My Three Years in Moscow, Installment 24: Soviet Squeeze Play Fails," *New York Times*, November 29, 1949, p. 31, c. 2.
[238] Middleton, "Russia Forcing Its Pattern on East Germans," *New York Times*, December 11, 1949, IV, p. 3, c. 3.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid., c. 4.
[241] Ibid., c.5-6.
[242] Ibid., c. 6. One of the anti-communist travelers to the GDR who was most focused on the importance of Berlin was the aforementioned Norbert Muhlen. As noted above, much more will be said about him in Chapter Three.
[243] Ibid.
[244] "In Soviet Germany. I--A Planned Economy on the Russian Model," *The Times*, December 19, 1949, p. 5, c. f; "In Soviet Germany. II--Communist Consolidation in the Eastern Zone," *The Times*, December 20, 1949, p. 5, c. f.
[245] "In Soviet Germany. II--Communist Consolidation in the Eastern Zone."
[246] Ibid.
[247] The correspondent failed to mention one youth organization outside the Communist fold: the Protestant young people's organizations known as the *Junge Gemeinden* (Youth Communities). Several visitors in the 1950s commented about the strength of the independence of these groups, particularly in periods when the regime was more tolerant of them. See Chapter 4 in particular.
[248] Ibid.
[249] C.L. Sulzberger, "Germans Use the 'Cold War' to Speed Return to Power," *New York Times*, December 28, 1949, p. 16, c. 4.
[250] Ibid., c. 4.

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BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN: WESTERN TRAVELERS AND CORRESPONDENTS IN EAST GERMANY, 1945-1972

VOLUME II

By

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Chapter Three: Danger Zone?

Leftist and Rightist Travelers and the East German Social Revolution: 1945-1954

Newspeople were not the only Western visitors to the Soviet Zone who used their experiences to interpret Soviet motives and evaluate the overall direction of postwar Europe. A small group of politically motivated visitors who are perhaps best described as *activists*, both left- and right-leaning, wrote with a sense of unparalleled urgency about their experiences in the Soviet Zone. Their warnings of imminent danger were interspersed over time with the views of other politically motivated visitors as well. Less urgent but equally partisan, these leftist "sympathizers" and rightist "detractors" attempted to describe the immediate impact and longer-term prospects of the political and socioeconomic transformation of the region to wary audiences in America and Britain. The common theme that united all these accounts -- despite the authors' radically different political views and commitments -- was that *Soviet intentions in Germany were widely misunderstood in the West*, and clarification was vitally, even urgently, important. For the "activists," a clear understanding of Soviet motives and actions might avert World War III. For the other leftists and rightists, who were in effect respective political allies of the activists, the Soviet Zone/ early GDR was an invaluable window onto an alternative world. Depending on their respective politics, it was either a menacing "re-run" of the "totalitarian" Third Reich, or an example of a flawed but nonetheless functioning alter-native to Western liberal capitalism.

The activists numbered six, and with one exception, were in the Soviet Zone in the first two years of occupation. The leftist sympathizers and rightist detractors generally came later, and, at least in some cases, offered more accurate analyses of the occupation and life in the early GDR. Nevertheless they shared with the activists obvious political commitments that set them apart from most of the newspeople of Chapters One and

Two. All of these authors claimed to offer unbiased reports that would transcend propaganda and Soviet secrecy and reveal the true state of life "behind the iron curtain." However, the "truth" often had more to do with a given author's hopes and fears for the future than with objective analysis of contemporary reality.

These two groups of radically different interpretations inspired by the Soviet occupation and the early GDR obviously testify to the great hopes and fears created by the penetration of the Red Army into Central Europe in 1945, and how it might contribute to a variety of socio- and geopolitical developments throughout the continent. However, the need to either passionately defend or strongly condemn the Soviet occupation and early GDR is not entirely explained by the transformations caused by the Soviet victory in World War II. It also reflects both the impact of Nazi culture and values on Western writers, and, a sense of openness in the postwar years. Put simply, there was potential for *both* a new beginning *and* a new crisis in Europe, the latter quite possibly an apocalyptic confrontation resembling the last war. Activists, sympathizers, and detractors labored under the influence of recent memories, and without the sense of stabilization and *modus vivendi* in Europe that grew in later years. Dire warnings about the "Soviet communist threat" from the right, and over-exuberant praise of "democratic socialist reconstruction" in the Soviet Zone from the left, were part of arguments not only about the future of Germany and Europe, but also about the meaning of the present and recent past.

For the activist writers of the right, a new, expansionist, "totalitarian" regime in eastern Germany had quickly replaced the old. For their leftwing counterparts, a much desired socioeconomic revolution was underway there--designed to permanently uproot the fundamental causes of fascism. The former group urged confrontation with the Soviets

and preparation for war; the latter immediate cooperation and *emulation* of Soviet policies in the Western zones. What both groups shared, however, was a strong preoccupation with *danger*. For the right-wing activists, the danger was obvious: either a Soviet invasion or gradual undermining of the Western zones. For the leftists, the danger was *within the German population*. If German society was not radically reorganized, recalcitrant Nazis and embittered nationalists would surely resurface and provoke war between the Allies and the Soviets. In effect, both groups used a different interpretation of the Nazi past *and* the present Soviet occupation to warn against new conflict.

As the East German dictatorship became stronger and at least semi-permanent, both the leftwing and rightwing "messages" about the GDR changed considerably. Comparisons to the Third Reich became fewer and less incriminating as the prospect of war receded. Lacking a sense of imminent danger, rightwing detractors of the young GDR increasingly focused more on the threats the regime posed *internally* -- to the subject population -- apparently a more all-pervasive threat than the Nazis had ever posed. But while rightists agreed on the nature of that threat -- a "total claim" on the hearts, minds, bodies and time of East Germans -- they disagreed about its relative strength and potential. Beneath their violent rejection of East German Communism, there was considerable uncertainty about how much totalitarian coercion, propaganda, and surveillance could be resisted by even the most determined anti-communists in the GDR. At times, the GDR appeared to be the obvious weakest link in the Soviet bloc; at others, it seemed to be gathering strength, especially among the young people, a development which all the detractors seemed to fear the most.

Leftwing sympathizers, meanwhile, continued to defend some *ends* of the regime, as well as selected aspects of its domestic policy -- such as social leveling and economic

planning -- while *not* overlooking its more coercive aspects. Their "critical sympathy" with Soviet-style socialism was most definitely *not* based in apologetics, and is an important corrective to the history of blanket rightwing accusations against the European Left's alleged aiding and abetting of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe.[1] A handful of sympathetic visitors to the early GDR (and several more in later years) were *not* Soviet mouthpieces, nor were they complicit in oppression. Their willingness to visit the region and engage "the enemy" was based on a genuine hope that the GDR, still in a process of internal evolution, would *eventually* develop a more socially just regime than West Germany. What it did *not* signal was a desire to overlook injustices and oppression in the name of some glorious utopian future.

The positions of these reports along the left-right continuum of the British and American presses tell us a great deal about a different conflict *within* the Cold War: a battle for public opinion. While the governments of the U.S. and Britain did much to varnish the Soviet image in the West *during* the war, the postwar commercial media in both countries anticipated the return of long-held suspicions about both the Soviet regime and the Red Army: -- that they were untrustworthy and potentially threatening to the freedom of Western Europe. None of this should surprise students of this period, but a quick survey of the *publishers* of this group of authors tells us a good deal about the limited space allotted in the mainstream media to any sympathetic report on the Soviet occupation of Germany. The leftists -- both activists and sympathizers -- either wrote for pro-labor audiences or communist-sympathizing publishers, only twice playing a dissenting role in more centrist publications, while the rightists wrote in mostly mainstream and moderate news and information publications, none of which made an effort to consider, much less qualify, their biases, exaggerations, or prejudices.

Clearly, the anti-communist right was given a large share of "center stage" in Anglo-American coverage of the Soviet occupation, while its opposition was shunted aside. The shrill anti-communist bent of mainstream reports in American publications such as *Time*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The New Yorker*, and *Vital Speeches* and British monthlies such as *Contemporary Review* -- with no effort to present opposing views -- is obvious testament to the militant anti-communism in the print media organs of both countries, and also its chilling impact on public debate in the early years of the Cold War, especially in the U.S. There, the reading public received an image of the Soviet Zone and early GDR as the spearhead of a Soviet threat to Western Europe. But moreover they were told -- sometimes with the help of rather flimsy and impressionistic evidence -- that the East German regime was even more sinister -- because more controlling and brainwashing -- than Nazi Germany itself.

Both the "critical sympathy" of the left and shrill anti-communist criticism of the right dwindled after 1954. The receding sense of urgency brought more dispassionate, if generally unsympathetic, analyses from a number of Western visitors we will meet in later chapters. The GDR experienced several crises in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and due to the continued refugee flow through West Berlin and superpower contention over the city, remained both an international hot spot and a kind of provisional state. Nevertheless, the travelers' tales of those years never again focused on the regime as a breeding ground for war or an exported revolution.

But leaving this aside, our present purpose is to consider again the history of the Soviet occupation and founding of the GDR, not as the straightforward, inexorable, and basically unavoidable step-by-step establishment of a communist dictatorship, but rather as contemporaries saw it. If the majority of newspeople in Chapters One and Two could

scarcely imagine a lasting partition of Germany, describing instead an ongoing East-West struggle more or less within the context of a singular German national identity and culture, the political partisans of *this* chapter mostly dreamed of greater possibilities for a *renewal of Germany*, or, alternatively, apocalyptic disasters. Their hopes and fears as they reported developments in the Soviet Zone and early GDR betray a sense of the impact of the earlier horrors of Nazism and World War II, the unparalleled opportunities and dangers that occupation and reconstruction contained, and the numerous, often unexpected ways that knowledge of the past shaped warnings about and prescriptions for the future.

Doomsday in Germany?: Left- and Rightist Activists and the Soviet Zone 1945-1949

We have seen how Soviet motives in Germany perplexed visitors to the Soviet Zone, but also how the Western news media expected eventual unification--most likely under some kind of democratically elected government. We have also seen that unlike later scholars, contemporaries still held out hope for a settlement as late as the summer of 1949, and to them, the eventual creation of two Germanies actually signaled increased danger in the Cold War, rather than any achievement of a status quo. Early fears of conflict resulting from German provocations, inter-Allied misunderstandings, or the Soviet-sponsored expulsions of Germans from Eastern Europe show that a *general fear of war* lay beneath reports from or about the Soviet Zone, but alarming forecasts of *imminent danger* emanated only from the most politically-motivated authors. Six of these "doomsday scenarios" -- three from left and three from the right -- all written by travelers in the Soviet Zone -- give us a window onto the complex and bitterly divided mental world of the post-World War II West. Weary of total war but fearing its return, these authors used ideological templates, along with the contemporary hopes and fears, to interpret the ultimate

ends of the Soviet occupation, and, advise appropriate responses by the West.

As we will see presently, the three leftist scenarios more obviously form a single, coherent argument resting on a particular ideological and historical perspective. Nevertheless, the views of their rightist counterparts can also be pulled together to demonstrate a very different argument about imminent and mounting danger, in effect based on an opposed set of assumptions. Underlying the essentially pro-Soviet argument of the three leftist activists was the standard Marxist interpretation of the origins of fascism: namely, that it emerged out of the crisis of monopoly capital. Based on this, they argued that it must be overcome by organizing the working classes and their allies, the "democratic forces" and through decartelization of German industry and land reform. They also stressed educating more reactionary elements against nationalism and racism, which for them were tools that the industrialist and *Junker* elite used to disguise class oppression. Their Marxist interpretation of fascism, then, pointed logically to a standard democratic-socialist "remedy," which they clearly believed the Soviets wanted also. The situation in Germany was so grave for them because *only the Soviets* seemed determined to uproot all the bases of fascism, whereas the Allies failed to grasp the nature of the problem.

The rightist activists also offered or implied a rather standard interpretation of both the Nazi dictatorship and Soviet occupation -- that both were essentially "totalitarian" regimes. At root, then, they were fundamentally the same: aggressive, dictatorial, and driven to mobilize the masses for some greater millenarian goal. They deduced the Soviets' ultimate goal as quite simple: a unified, communist Germany. For them, the only essential difference between Nazism and Communism was the former had been defeated. This meant that surviving henchmen of the Nazi regime were ready recruits for another authoritarian regime. Where the rightist activists disagreed, however, was in their estima-

tion of Soviet capacities and tactics: two of them saw the Soviets as rather weak and insecure, and therefore all the more desperate and dangerous, the third portrayed them as having gained great momentum from their defeat of Nazis, preparing to further exploit their enhanced position. But in all three cases the situation was dire indeed, and the solution to imminent crisis was the same: confront the Soviets immediately, demand they change their ways, and be militarily prepared for worst.

For both groups, then, interpretations and solutions to the emergent East-West conflict were very much what might be expected, respectively, from both the far left and the far right of the Anglo-American world. Nevertheless they contribute to our understanding of the immediate post-war period when viewed as a "mental moment" in the history of the West, a brief time period in which the future seemed wide open, if troublingly uncertain, and the immediate past a shocking and jolting encounter with unprecedented evil. And while both the leftist and rightist authors forecasted grave danger, they differed somewhat in the degree of certainty they brought to their prognostications. While the rightists were somewhat more pessimistic, given their conceptions of Soviet mentalities, the leftists, with their great admiration for the Soviets, retained *at least some hop*e. It is to that bit of hope, mixed though it was with grave foreboding, that we now must turn.

The three leftist activists differed in their style of presentation and the overtness of their political message as well. Their accounts also differed due to the *timing of their visits*, given the rapid transformation of the Soviet Zone and rush of events in Germany as a whole. Nevertheless, close inspection makes their shared agenda and ideological viewpoint quite clear. All three backed their calls of support for the Soviets and their "plan" in Germany with the same basic points: 1) that anti-communist and ethnocentric prejudices in

the West prevented a fair and realistic assessment of the Red Army's behavior and operations in the Soviet Zone; 2) that the Soviets had the only clear and thorough plan for democratizing, denazifying, and ultimately reunifying Germany on a peaceful basis; and 3) that therefore the Western Allies must support their policies or a third world war would surely result.

To persuade readers of the good intentions and basic humanity of the Red Army, all three minimized rape and other Soviet misdeeds in the final days of the war, and *none* of them even mentioned that such behavior continued far beyond the initial conquest of Germany and Berlin.[2] They also contrasted their enlightened views of the Soviets with continuing anti-Soviet prejudices of Germans and other Western visitors. The first of the three, William Peters, an interpreter with the English army, was in Berlin and, on several occasions, the Soviet Zone proper between August and December 1945. Little is known about Peters, save clues derived from his long pamphlet, *In Germany Now*, presented as a diary of his experiences.[3] It was published by Progress Publishing Ltd., a small, pro-Labour publishing house, and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd., the same press that handled the works of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). More recently, Peter's account made the London-based Working Class Movement Library's collection of pamphlets and papers on Germany.[4] But regardless of Peters' connections to the CPGB, his admiration for the Red Army seemed to know no bounds.

The book was written in diary form, with an introduction by Labour and Cooperative MP Norman N. Dodds, who introduced the Peter's visit to the Soviet Zone as a kind of revelation. This was because virtually all information in the West of Soviet misdeeds, according to Dodds, was either false or gravely exaggerated.

> He [Peters] came to Berlin much influenced by the propaganda, poured out through a press and radio, which tends to give the man-in-the-street a wrong im-

> pression, particularly of conditions in the Soviet zone. [sic] Slowly, Mr. Peters found out what things were really like.[5]

As we saw in Chapter One, Western journalists touring the Soviet Zone were initially quite impressed with Soviet efficiency and organization. And though they reported a number of incidences of fear and frustration among the German population, they gave very few examples of coercive behavior, let alone acts of violence. But beginning with Peters, the left activists went to greater lengths to minimize and relativize rape and other abuses in several different ways. Their overall aim was to make the Red Army's behavior appear no different than that of other Allied armies, and also to contrast it with the far more barbarous behavior of the *Wehrmacht* in Russia.

Peters recounted stories of encounters between Red Army soldiers and German women that were not unbelievable, but given the timing of his visit and extant evidence, certainly far from typical. One, related by a shopkeeper he met in the Wilmersdorf district of Berlin suggested, that the Soviets' anger and thirst for revenge was in the end tempered by conscience.

> He told me a story of a Mongolian soldier who came on three successive days to a flat in his street and threatened a woman there with his pistol. He always left after a few minutes without doing anything or taking anything. A Russian-speaking woman went up to him and asked him what he really wanted. His answer was: 'My wife and my three children were burnt alive by the Germans. I like to see German women trembling with fear. This is my revenge.'[6]

The author did not avoid the issue of rape, but only offered stories of it that somehow ended positively -- or at least justly. In one, the victim became the rapist's "girlfriend," and he protected her from other soldiers; in another, the victim, who had a reputation for satisfying S.S. men on leave, turned her violation into a kind of mutual redemption: the soldier confessed his cowardice and criminality, and the young woman, moved by his desolation, rushed to console him. "The incident finished with both happily together loving

each other tenderly," wrote Peters.[7]

While he admitted that things "might not have been like that everywhere," he clearly left the impression that Berliners were equally if not more infuriated by the behavior of Allied troops -- more recently arrived in their neighborhoods -- than their Soviet predecessors. He also made frequent reference to the murderous conduct of both the S.S. and the *Wehrmacht* in Russia, implying that many Germans had failed to put the "isolated incidents" of Red Army misconduct in proper perspective. He found fear of the Soviets almost everywhere he went, but dismissed it as primarily derived from years of "Dr. Goebbels' propaganda." And indeed, such fears did not seem to survive actual encounters, as most people he met or overheard found the Soviet soldiers to be decent and well behaved. As mentioned, Peters journeyed beyond the Soviet sector of Berlin into the Soviet Zone proper, but in *both* areas he found an odd mix of apathy and dependence on the occupiers, combined with fear of and bigotry towards them. Peters believed the Germans in the Soviet Zone, much like the Western media, often had trouble separating the "myth" from the "reality" of the Soviet occupation.

The same was true of Allied servicemen. Most of his British counterparts disparaged "the Russians," as did a French officer who hitched a ride West out of the Zone with Peters' unit. In the following quote Peter's testimonial to the "truth" about the Red Army stands in stark contrast with the prejudicial attitude of his French colleague, who here is clearly a stand-in for the prevailing Western view of the Soviets. Notice how this man, like the defeated German population, fell under the control of the Red Army only because of his *own bad choices.*

> He was as outspokenly prejudiced against these 'dirty Russians' as any of our men. He had been on an unauthorized journey to Magdeburg in the Soviet zone [sic], consequently had been arrested by a Russian patrol who kept him in custody for a few days for the purpose of checking on him. He could complain neither

> about the food nor about bad treatment, but just gave vent to his disappointment at being unable to do what he liked in other people's territory. I attempted to reason with him--but, I am afraid, without much success.[8]

This frustration quickly turned into admiration as Peters' used his convoy's departure as occasion for his most unabashed defense of the Red Army:

> I saw the last Red Army man at the barrier in Helmsford. They waved to us and I returned their greetings. 'Good-bye you valiant men of the Red Army, to whom the world owes so much. They may slander and despise you, but, without your help Hitler would still dominate Europe and perhaps the whole world. Before I met you I was told you were a band of ruffians, robbers, and murderers. Now I have met you in Berlin and found you human, sincere and decent. I hope to meet you again soon!' . . . We crossed into the British zone at one o'clock. The French lieutenant told me that he could breathe more freely now.[9]

The second leftist activist was also a British subject: Gordon Schaffer, a journalist and author, regular contributor to the left-wing *Reynolds News*, and Vice Chairman of the British-Soviet Friendship Society. Like Peters, he played down the issue of the Red Army's conduct, presenting an almost unbelievable picture of Soviet deference to the sentiments of the German population. Also like Peters, he saw the defeat of fascism by the Red Army as an historic opportunity for the construction of democratic socialism (and lasting peace) in Germany. But unlike his predecessor, Schaffer left a long paper trail, all the way to 1996, when he published his memoirs at age 91, shortly before his death.[10] His brief study of the "Russian Zone" based on his travels there in early 1947, came at a time when his admiration for the Soviet Union was at its peak.[11] Over the years he would grow increasingly critical, but always insisted that social democracy would have been possible in postwar Europe if the "capitalist powers" had not been so determined to destroy it. His critics in the late 1940s noted an "unqualified admiration for the [Soviet occupation] regime," suggesting that this self-styled "political journalist" placed his politics ahead of his journalism.[12]

The timing of his visit, and especially of his book's publication, meant that he was arguing against a mounting skepticism about the Soviet ambitions in both Eastern Europe and Germany. The year that lay between the publications of Peters' diary and Schaffer's book was packed with events and decisions that set the Cold War in motion. As we have seen, the Soviet Zone in this transitional period remained a kind of limited, consultative representative government, even if the Soviets were gradually shifting power to the SED and away from its rivals. Contemporaries were not sure of the long-term impact of these developments, but nevertheless the issue of violence against civilians had not gone away. Like Peters, Schaffer felt the need to deal with it, and do so early in his text.

To reassure skeptics, he used a similar strategy as well: playing down the scope, brutality, and time window of Soviet excesses, stressing their heroic achievements, using obviously atypical stories of individual Soviet soldiers, and accusing Allied troops of similar or worse behavior. This time however, there was only a vague allusion to rape, and gender and sexuality disappeared altogether -- replaced by the aberrant actions of rogue elements and non-violent acts of score-settling.

> There is plenty of talk still going the rounds about occurrences during the first days of occupation. Some bad incidents took place. The Red Army had fought its way from Stalingrad to Berlin through thousands of miles of Russian countryside devastated with sadistic thoroughness by the Germans. The men had seen the tortures inflicted on their own people, they came to Germany to find homes stuffed with loot. Millions of the best of Russia's manhood, trained in the principles of a Socialist army, had perished. The units which eventually reached Berlin contained many elements, even criminals who had been given the chance to redeem themselves by fighting for their country. Some of them got out of control. But when you hear the stories from the people on the spot you find that there is general agreement that order was very quickly restored. . . . Some of the incidents were amusing rather than tragic, as for example the woman in Dresden who told me how one Red Army man came in to demand her watch, but was followed by a second who promptly threw his companion out and gave her a large sausage as a peaceoffering, or the 'very nice young Russian' who politely collected sewing machines from a whole street because the Germans had taken every one from his native village and

> he was determined to make restitution. I heard just as many stories about the Americans in the areas which they captured before the Red Army took over, but these incidents were not used by the world Press to discredit the American Army.[13]

He proceeded to blame the chaos of the early days exclusively on Nazis who "ran amok" and refused to surrender peaceably, while praising the good conduct of the Red Army at every possible opportunity. All this was part of day-to-day administration of the Zone, in which relations with local population had become both smoother and more routine. If Peters' Germans were annoyed that the Soviets treated them as conquered peoples (an attitude he could never fully understand), Schaffer's Germans were *pleased* that the Soviets were fair and reasonable administrators, most definitely *not* treating them as the conquered. The Red Army leadership even seemed sensitive to the German's wounded pride.

> The general attitude of the Russians is to minimise the burden of occupation and not to provoke the sense of humiliation which a people must feel at the consciousness of being under the supervision of a foreign power. Significantly, I never once heard the Soviet National Anthem, even at Russian functions.[14]

Good behavior and lenient treatment were also emphasized by the third leftist activist, American Jerome Davis. Davis was a sociologist and professor at Yale divinity school, who traveled to the Soviet Union frequently. This eventually resulted in his being accused of communist sympathies, denied tenure, and being blacklisted by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Through connections he did not elaborate, he was able to get permission to travel freely in the Soviet Zone for two months in late 1947, and even get a car and driver from the British authorities in Berlin. He introduced his "dissenting report" on the Soviet Zone in *Christian Century* with a similar "revelation story" regarding his driver, a veteran from the English army named Goodfellow.

> He had been warned to expect dire things in the Russian zone and carried a loaded revolver. As we started our trip he insisted on turning back and going to the com-

> missary department to get ten days' rations 'just in case,' as he said. Actually he never touched them, and when we got back he said his trip had disproved all the rumors.[15]

Davis not only minimized rape and violence, but tried to locate them even farther *in the past*, as part of brief and understandable trauma, referring to "the widespread hostility evoked by [Soviet] armies at the start of the occupation,"[16] -- a hostility he believed was ebbing. Like Schaffer, he also praised Soviet restraint -- and explained industrial dismantling at the same time -- by emphasizing the horrendous destruction of Soviet territory by the German invaders -- destruction he had seen first hand during the war. Finally, he blamed Western suspicions about abuses and persecution in the Soviet Zone squarely on "former nazis [sic]" and officials in the Western Zones who refused to refute the "slander."[17]

The Soviet plan for denazifying and democratizing Germany was touted by all three activists, though of course at different stages of its evolution. It was contrasted with the Western Allies' lack of a plan by Peters, their imminent restoration of "trusts and cartels" by Schaffer, and their opposition to political unification on Soviet terms by Davis. MP Dodds summarized Peters' view of the Soviet political agenda in his introduction. He wrote that the Allies seemed to underestimate greatly the "problem of Germany," namely its lack of democratic tradition, and how the Soviets were providing the desperately needed solution. Notice how in making this point, he included similar claims to Schaffer's about the strictly limited Soviet presence in daily affairs *and* the isolated nature of Soviet excesses.

> It is up to the young democratic forces in Germany to see that Germany changes her way and makes her contribution to world progress. I think this is possible but the remnants of National-Socialism and its underlying causes must be eradicated

> first. In this respect we can learn something from the Soviet authorities who have put into office and given complete responsibility to the democratic forces inside Germany which they support wholeheartedly. . . . Both the author and myself have come to the conclusion that the Red Army gives Germany a chance and, though some soldiers may have gotten out of control, on the whole it is not interfering over much with the civilians or the German political organization.[18]

Non-interference meant that the handful of genuine "anti-fascists," whether communist, social democratic, or even liberal or Christian democratic, were allowed to organize and campaign long before such activities were allowed in the Western Zones. This was critical for Peters because the broad population circa autumn 1945 was in such a state of dejection and dependence, and most importantly, lived in a political vacuum. These widespread attitudes convinced him that the "democratic forces" desperately needed every assistance from the occupying authorities in *all* zones. When the Soviets *had* intervened, it had been to welcome any and all "anti-fascists" into government administration. Peters insisted that the Soviets always preferred less qualified "anti-fascists" over more qualified and experienced former Nazis, believing that within a year or two, they would surely make up for their lack of efficiency.

The leaders of the KPD wholeheartedly agreed with this policy, according to Peters, claiming "no exclusive right to leadership."[19] But Peters made it clear that the Communists in fact *were the leaders* of a plan to "make the economic possibilities of Germany available to the whole population by cutting out all privileges."[20] Critical of the Social Democrats lack of commitment to a "clear programme," he suggested that their popularity -- which he admitted surpassed the KPD's -- derived from "the lack of political understanding among the people."[21] In retrospect, it is at this point that Peters' support of the Soviets' "plan" reads most like a mouthing of the KPD party line. He suggested there were "strong tendencies" among the Social Democrats for a merger with the Communists,

without noting that there was perhaps equally strong opposition.[22] But it must be emphasized that neither Peters nor his leftist colleagues were true Soviet mouthpieces; rather, all indications are that they were simply *allies*, deeply imbued with the leftist explanation of fascism as well as a deep distrust of the broad majority of the German population, something that recent evidence has revealed they shared with the SED leadership itself.[23]

Peters also applauded Soviet economic policies in their zone. In particular he gave an overall positive opinion on the progress of land reform, though like other leftists (and non-leftists) he freely criticized certain deficiencies. But as we have seen, the land reform set off few alarms in the West, both because it displaced the reactionary *Junker* aristocracy and because it settled so many families of Eastern refugees. More controversial was the freezing of savings accounts, which he defended as preventing people from living off their savings and thereby not working.[24] Peters said very little about industrial dismantling, a rather dubious omission, and apparently lacked knowledge of the étatization of Nazi-owned factories and businesses, then in its early stages. The point, however, was always to create the impression that all was being done to suppress fascists and fascist tendencies, with the goal being *not* communism, but rather a new democratic egalitarianism. From his point of view, the reforms he witnessed seemed far superior to the apparent lack of economic policy in the British Zone.

Schaffer visited the Soviet Zone in a period in which the outlines of a new administration were clear to see, but the ultimate *political outcome*, like the future of Germany as whole, could not yet be determined. He dramatically titled an early chapter of his report "They Have a Plan" to drive home the message that the Soviets were far ahead of the Western Allies in creating a democratic, demilitarized, and denazified Germany.[25] The watchwords for the new administration were "shared power": all parties participated in

the new *Länder* governments, and im-portant decisions were made in consultation with them all. The workers, too, through their reconstituted trade unions, were brought in on an "equal footing." Schaffer described the early formation of the zonal Administration of Industry, but hardly mentioned Soviet dismantling among its many initial obstacles. Instead, he argued that the central economic problem was *zonal division itself*: "In the various zones frantic attempts are made to provide substitutes for materials in plentiful supply in another zone. Factories have been divided from their sources of material in the most crazy way."[26] In this way, Schaffer could explain deficiencies and shortages in the Soviet Zone *not* as the fault of the Soviets, but of the West for choosing not to support unification on Soviet terms -- his ultimate demand in the end.

Schaffer's timing allowed him to also defend the entire gamut of socioeconomic changes in the Soviet Zone, which he skillfully characterized as necessary for thoroughgoing denazification. For example, he argued that freezing bank deposits was basically an acknowledgment of the bankruptcy of the Third Reich, as 90% of their funds had been put into war loans.[27] Etatization of industry, similarly, was merely the due punishment for "war criminals and profiteers," and it was left to committees made up of representatives of all three antifascist parties and the trade unions to decide each case. And since "over-concentrated German economic power," that is all of large-scale German industry, had fueled the Nazi war machine, the Soviets, according to Schaffer, believed the Potsdam Agreement justified nationalization and a state-planned economy. As for the land reform, Schaffer cautiously reserved judgment, but nonetheless remained optimistic, noting that those who predicted disaster had been confounded so far.[28]

The Soviet-owned factories in the zone (SAGs), as we have seen, emerged around the time Peters left for the West. Schaffer's defense of them was less than airtight. The

best he could say against Western charges that they were "state trusts" of the Soviet Union was to remark that "at any rate, under Soviet administration these firms will not make cartel agreements with the American and British oil monopolists, as they did in the Weimar and Hitler periods!"[29] Schaffer created the impression that reparations went through an initial period of looting and unauthorized purchasing, all of which was dealt with very harshly, and then became very well coordinated between Soviet and German officials, with many safeguards against "pilfering." Fritz Selbmann, then Saxony's Minister of Economic Planning (a long-time communist who had spent the duration of the Third Reich in concentration camps), was quoted at length by Schaffer in regards to economic planning. The point was to demonstrate that it had a long history in Germany and Western Europe -- mostly under "monopoly capitalists" -- and now the antifascist administration, in "consultation" with the SMAD, was doing the same thing, but this time "in the interests of the people as a whole." Alleviating remaining shortages of raw materials, transportation, and "assured markets" would require the cooperation of the Allies in a "peaceful reconstruction" of Germany. Schaffer believed in that event that the Zone's production could thereby grow beyond even prewar levels.[30]

Davis too touted "the plan," though focusing on its *social benefits* rather than its connection to a future anti-fascist democracy. Writing for a more skeptical American audience, he was more subtle in praising the Soviets, and rather more vague about what cooperation with them might ultimately involve. He found that in randomly selected locations, both farmers and miners seemed to be benefiting from Soviet policies -- the former due to lack of restrictions on selling all produce above their quotas, the latter due to good wages, sick leave policies, and cheap, hot lunches. Both groups were well stocked with fuel for the winter, believed living conditions were generally improving, and claimed to have com-

plete religious freedom. Apparently they felt free to criticize of the regime as well, but their complaints suggested a more general frustration with foreign rule than the SED.[31]

Davis left this issue aside however, becoming a kind of advocate for the social welfare and reconstruction measures in the Soviet Zone. He went so far as to speculate that U. S. had "rejected the Russian suggestion for a central German government," *not* because of the reparations impasse or their belief that a unified Germany must be permitted to participate in the Marshall Plan,[32] but because the Allies had not matched the Soviets' "socialization measures"! Davis painted a compelling picture of a welfare state that would surely have pleased American left- liberals and union members.

> She [Russia] has given first priority to the schools, printed far more German textbooks than the Americans in their zone and has provided far more money for scholarships. . . . Russia has given every encouragement to the cooperative movement, whereas America often blocks it. The Russians have helped the shop steward movement and the trade unions in the factories; we have not done nearly so much for them. In the Russian zone even policemen belong to the trade unions. In Leipzig over 95 per cent of the force are members. Social insurance in the Soviet zone covers unemployment, sickness, accident, old age and widows' pensions, and hospital, dental, optical, and convalescent treatment.[33]

Not that Davis denied that policies such as dismantling, expulsions from the Eastern territories, retaining German POWs in the Soviet Union, and food requisitions for the Red Army caused bitter resentment. But like Peters, he believed the Soviets were gradually improving their image with the German population, while the Western Allies, with their lack of interest in real socioeconomic change, were losing popularity. Among the three authors, only Peters delved very deeply into conditions in the Western Zones, but all three conveyed a general sense of *inaction*: resistance to some reforms, slowness to implement others. Biases aside, they concurred with early media reports (Chapter One) on the apparent dynamism and purposeful effort of the Soviets and their German allies that was sorely lacking in the Western Zones.

But the leftist activists went further than any correspondent in warning about the *consequences* of these differences. Peters was the most indirect of the three. He left it to Dodds to issue the appeal to the Western Allies to follow the Soviet example in supporting the "democratic forces" and transforming the economy. With this help, the reader of Peters' diary could assemble his daily anecdotes to conclude that failure to follow the Soviet initiative was prolonging and worsening the widespread problems of political apathy and unrepentant German nationalism. These problems were critical to Peters, for they amounted to a political and moral vacuum among the broad population, which the Allies were doing far less to fill than the Soviets and the German antifascist parties they sponsored.

This vacuum, according to Peter's, born of the hesitation of a weary population to support or participate in politics, (and lack of sufficient Allied guidance in the Western Zones) left the political field open to a Nazi resurgence should the Allied armies withdraw. According to Peters, this was because so little had been done to change widely-held racist views or popular susceptibility to Nazi propaganda. Peters gave numerous examples of persons in Berlin, the Soviet Zone, and the British Zone who expressed Nazi racist beliefs, as well as a complete lack of perspective as to why their living conditions had become so desperate, blaming hunger and other shortages on the occupying armies instead of Germany's defeat in the war.[34] But the gray area *between* Nazi values and conservative, nationalistic values seemed equally dangerous to Peters. It was at the inaugural meeting of the Christian Democratic Party in Herford, Westphalia (British Zone), that he encountered a bellicose, chauvinistic nationalism that contrasted so mightily with the early activities of the anti-fascist parties in Berlin and the Soviet Zone.

The gathering was almost exclusively the province of men over 50, and this group

put on a disturbing display of wounded national pride. Germany's enemies, rather than anti-fascism, had triumphed in the war. The speaker who raised the loudest cheers spoke of *German* soil, *German* forests, *German* oaks, without mentioning the actual location of any Eastern or Western borders. The "Christian principles" and "romantic vagueness" of the speakers betrayed an unwillingness to address Nazi racism, call for punishment of war criminals, or even encourage cooperation with the Allied armies.[35] Though they *did* reject National Socialism, to Peters there was no sense of that the lessons of defeat had been learned. The author did not directly implicate the British occupation authorities in this display, but the event was closely associated in his diary with many examples of the persistence of racist beliefs and denial of Nazi criminality -- the majority of which occurred in British Zone.

But it was in Berlin -- presumably in the British sector -- that one such example sparked Peters worries about possible war. On a visit to a doctor and his 25-year old daughter, both of whom he had met previously, he learned of her belief in the racial inferiority of Russians, how she passed on every negative rumor she heard about them, and how she blamed the Four Powers for all all current troubles in Germany. "She has the typical attitude of the German today," lamented Peters, which he blamed on 12 years of Nazi propaganda.[36] Then he moved to the presumed *consequences* of such attitudes: expectations of another war. We have seen that other correspondents and commentators feared it, and believed certain Nazi elements would stop at nothing to foment interallied conflict. But only Peters issued a warning that ended with a scarcely veiled threat: against those he blamed broadly for the state of mind of the German people:

> Many [German] people think that there will soon be a war between the Soviet Union and the Western Democracies. They express this belief in conversation with British soldiers and seem to think that such a war would produce an alliance between Britain and Germany. The Nazis hope for such a war as an opportunity of

> gaining power. Everything is done by them to stir up trouble between the different occupation armies. British soldiers are told about the bad behaviour of the Russians; the Russians are told about the bad behaviour of the Americans, and so on. . . . Unfortunately many people listen to this insidious propaganda. Whatever could happen in such a war, one thing seems certain, and that is that it would be fought on German soil, in which case *not many of the Nazi rumour mongers would survive*.[37] (emphasis added)

There is a semi-conscious theme of "just desserts" here that expresses both Peters' utter contempt and hatred for the Nazis, but also frustration with the Allies -- the Soviets included -- for not completely suppressing them. But Peters' overall focus on antifascist political and administrative development in the Soviet Zone, as against the inattention to chauvinistic and racialist attitudes in the *Western* Zones, puts the above quote in very different perspective. In the end, the central problem he saw in Germany was the lack of a pervasive antifascist politics to replace Nazi beliefs and values. This meant the Soviets were *somewhat ahead* of the Western Allies in changing German mentalities, but the disparity was *not yet critical*. By early 1947, this was no longer the case. When Schaffer and Davis warned of a possible World War III soon thereafter, it was the widening political and socioeconomic divergence between the Soviet and Western Zones, rather than a possible Nazi revival, that seemed so destabilizing.

Schaffer's and Davis's warnings, unlike those of Peters, sounded like lectures for the Western Allied leaders, *not* warnings to Nazis and German racists. In Schaffer's Soviet Zone, the unrepentant Nazi seemed to have vanished entirely. Loss of jobs and status had left former Nazis, or at least the small fry, eager to join the SED in the interests of getting their old jobs back.[38] Davis believed the Nazi rumormongers *were* still active, but mainly because the occupation authorities -- both East and West -- encouraged slander of their counterparts on the opposite side.[39] But if both sides were complicit in defaming the other, neither Schaffer nor Davis believed they were equally to blame for the mounting cri-

sis in Germany. That crisis, most basically, was caused by the refusal of the Allies to wholeheartedly support the Soviet plan for German unification.

Read side by side, Schaffer's and Davis's pieces are essentially two versions of the same argument. In both cases, the Soviet Zone is neither bled dry by reparations nor a dangerous police state, but a "going concern" in which the rule of law is respected. They both believed social welfare policies and a commitment to "antifascism" meant that post-war hostility toward the Red Army was ebbing. The West's misunderstanding of these developments, therefore, had led to the false assumption that the Soviets could be counted on to eventually merge their zone with the Anglo-American Bizonia. The reason they would *not*, according to both authors, was that the problem of the Zone's disconnection from Western raw material sources would soon be solved -- by reorienting the Zonal economy toward Eastern Europe. This meant Germany could *not* be united on terms favorable to the West, but only with *Soviet cooperation.*

What this cooperation would entail, not surprisingly, was some sort of compromise between the socialized industry and reformed agriculture of the Soviet Zone, and the private industry and agriculture of the Western zones. Neither author offered much guidance on how this could be achieved, but both warned that the economic policies of the Allies were verging on recartelization, making any compromise less and less likely. For Davis, the obvious contrast between Soviet policies -- nationalization of industry, land reform, support of producers' cooperatives, stronger support of trade unions, and social insurance -- and the policies "we are trying to follow" in the American Zone, explained U.S. resistance to the Soviet plan for an all-German government. These "unpopular policies" he did *not* name as recartelization, but this was clearly what he meant. To carry on with them not only meant losing the support of many Western Germans, but in effect forcing

the Soviets to redirect the Soviet Zone's economy eastwards, further dividing Germany. Schaffer put the critique of Anglo-American policy quite a bit more bluntly: "To rebuild the German trusts and cartels as a subsidiary of western capitalism is to court the same disaster which enveloped the Weimar Republic,"[40] and he too believed it was costing the Allies popular support. Both of them also made the related, and rather specious claim that popular support for the Soviets was growing in their zone, with apparently only selective evidence.

Both authors were also highly skeptical that Western leaders would understand this predicament in time. Therefore, both ended with dire warnings, which, when considered side by side, seem almost lifted from a pro-Soviet template. They argued that a division of Germany almost certainly meant armed confrontation, on a scale of destructiveness and horror only matched by World War II itself. Here are their two formulations. Schaffer's first:

> Can the Allies [ie. the four powers] still hope to work together for the rebuilding of a democratic Germany which will no longer be a menace to her neighbors . . . ? The answer to that question is that the Allies must accomplish this task. . . . A Germany divided between Allied occupying forces, or a Germany feeding on the disagreements between her conquerors and sullenly awaiting the day of revenge, would bring the shadow of world war number three over the world.[41]

> If America continues to oppose a politically united Germany, it will give Russian a strong moral case with the German people. For Germany cannot be split into an eastern and western zone without disastrous consequences. . . A Germany split into hostile camps is a portent of World War III. Why not try Russia's proposal and work together to rebuild a united Germany--of course with safeguards against rearming.[42]

In both quotes, the Nazi rumormonger is completely missing. Instead, a combination of East-West hostility and frustrated German nationalism and revanchism is the lethal combination. Even though Schaffer expresses his fear of "the Germans" more open-

ly and graphically, both authors indicate that the *conquered population remains the trigger of danger*. Given recent experiences, particularly the response of Germany's working classes to 1914 and Hitler's rearmament program, plus the leftist understanding of the causes of fascism, the European Left must have initially viewed Soviet initiatives in Germany -- land reform, nationalization of industry, and social welfare policies -- as a kind of *last chance* for a socialism there, and perhaps for peace in Europe as well. The unspoken assumption of both authors is that the Allies would invariably side with a revanchist Germany mainly because of their similar economic systems. In this way these warnings of doom can be read today as artifacts of an era that leftist historians like Eric Hobsbawn have called the European Civil War. In this reading, the polarization of left- and rightwing forces in Europe triggered by the October Revolution of 1917 ultimately led to rise of fascist barbarism, followed -- eventually -- by an alliance of the "progressive forces" against it.[43] Given their politics and close support of the U.S.S.R., we can safely assume that Schaffer and Davis feared that a "third act" in that civil war could spell the final defeat of the Soviet Union, and therefore, their hopes for a peaceful future in Europe as well.

The rightist activists referenced a very different set of ideas to warn of equally dangerous developments in the Soviet Zone -- perhaps even more dangerous. For at times, all three of these authors seemed downright hysterical. They believed Soviet actions in Germany and in Eastern Europe were an almost mirror image of previous Nazi aggression – not simply expansionist, but evil and immoral, making them "World Problem #1." They believed the underlying motives behind this "threat" were lust for power and conquest that little distinguished the Soviet occupation from Hitler's Germany. It can be argued that contained in their analyses, particularly those of the last two writers, is a more radical and alarmist strain of the same thinking that in-formed American officials, most nota-

bly George Kennan and Dean Acheson, as they authored the U.S. policy of containment.[44] But however similar their thinking may seem, efforts to link the Soviets with the Nazi legacy in various ways took the rightists *beyond* containment strategy, or even totalitarian theory, into a kind of "chamber of horrors" that recalled both the barbarism of the Third Reich and the apparent ease with which power and indoctrination could destroy freedom and morality.

At the same time, however, these three analyses vary more in their arguments than did those of their leftist counterparts in one important sense. On the left, as we have seen, the source of danger was always some *German revival* in the midst of superpower misunderstandings, particularly given the lack of socioeconomic transformation in the Western zones. For the rightists, *differing estimations* of *Soviet power* factored into three somewhat different arguments about a threat in Central Europe. True, all three were certain that one way or another -- and very likely via force of arms -- the Soviets were plotting to control all of Germany, and all three believed the West sorely underestimated this danger. Yet only one of them predicted a conflict generated by the apparent strength of Soviet forces, while the other two argued, however paradoxically, that it was the Soviets' *weakness* that encouraged their expansionist drive.

Despite these different assessments, though, they were unanimous in arguing for a stern confrontation with the Soviets -- "getting tough" and being militarily prepared to deter any future adventures. All three, in effect, found an aggressive, totalitarian state preparing both for further conquest and more complete control of those already beneath its heal. Yet they also differed in how they attacked the Soviet occupation. The first to visit, an American GI in Berlin writing for a primarily Catholic audience, reduced events in Soviet-occupied Germany to a tale of godlessness, human sin and the corrupting force of ab-

solute power,[45] while the two later visitors, Karl Brandt, a German-American academic, and Werner Knop, and German-born journalist naturalized in Britain, understood Soviet motivations in more calculating, strategic terms.[46] But as we will see, Brandt and Knop differed as well in their estimation of the Soviet mindset in confronting the West.

There was also difference of opinion on the relationship between the Red Army and the occupied population. All three *did* emphasize German hatred of the Red Army and their resistance to "Soviet expansion," but only Brandt focused primarily on the Germans' *victimization*. For the other two, in very different ways, the Nazi past lingered on in the Soviet Zone, shaping the outlook of resisters, collaborators, and bystanders. The brutality, deprivation, and dictatorial rule in the Soviet Zone reminded both the GI and Knop of Nazi rule in Eastern Europe, and Knop in particular enhanced the sense of danger in the Soviet Zone with details about direct collaboration between the Red Army administrators and former *Wehrmacht* officers. Knop believed the new, totalitarian regime they were *creating together* might soon threaten Western Europe with another *Blitzkrieg*. Regardless of these differences, however, their advice to to the Western powers was the same: stand up to the Soviets immediately, and prepare for the worst, for any other course would embolden them, just as appeasement emboldened Hitler at the Munich conference in 1938.

The American GI was in Berlin in the same months as William Peters (August-September 1945). Unlike Peters, however, he saw the Soviets as taking every advantage of the chaos and instability in central Europe to enhance their own power. The Western Allies were not condemning them, he believed, because they had needed the Red Army to win the war. Toleration of their mounting abuses of the German people deeply disillusioned the GI, leading him to conclude that in postwar Germany, "might makes right."

And herein lay the approaching danger, which to the author seemed even more grave than the last war. Yet it was precisely the depth of the previous trauma that seemed to inform this dark view:

> The more I see of things here, the more I am convinced that we will not have *peace in our time* and that the present inner and outer disorder in Europe will reach catastrophic proportions in our lifetime that even the most pessimistic politicians do not foresee.[47] (emphasis added)

What could be done? Against the evils of Communism and materialism, the GI believed in only one ultimate antidote: "Prayer alone will help Europe now. It is too late and too deep for politics."[48] But this fatalism did not prevent him from once again referencing the apparent "missed opportunity" of the late 1930s: he added the vague assertion that "we should cease *appeasing* Communism"[49] (emphasis added)

This opinion linked him to the second American "rightist," German-born Karl Brandt, a refugee from Nazi Germany, an agricultural economist, and professor at Stanford University and the Food Research Institute during the World War II era. Over the years he advised the OSS, the UN, and the Eisenhower administration, but his arguments about the grave danger posed by the Soviet occupation grew most immediately out of his four months of work in Germany in early 1946 as advisor to the U.S. War Department on food and agriculture. Believing that all of Europe was hanging on the question of war between the U.S. and U.S.S.R., he insisted that it could be avoided only if the West recognized the true nature of Soviet "intentions and strategy." Based on conversations during his travels to and from Berlin with "hundreds of Germans who live and work in the Soviet Zone" and "from American citizens who have traveled as diplomats and reporters"[50] there, he concluded that the Soviets had become the "new enemy" in Germany, and the Western Allies must get tough with them immediately.

Brandt eschewed the racist and Eurocentric language wielded by the GI -- who characterized the Red Army as an infidel, "Asiatic" horde -- but Brandt made them appear equally vicious and criminal. Yet like the GI, he focused on the initial wave of rapes, looting and murders that came with the Red Army, and believed their ultimate goal to be conquest and conversion of *all* Germany. Given, however, that Brandt saw them more as a military adversary than an Antichrist, he believed they were better dealt with by power-political means than prayer. The key insight the author offered to this process was his belief that despite the grave danger they posed, the Soviets, ". . . as a modern power, are the most overrated people in the world."[51] Because of their ultimate *weakness*, he was certain tough talk would eventually bring them around to the American point of view -- or at least, what he believed that point of view ought to be. The decision for war or peace in Europe, he therefore believed, belonged to the Allies -- that is, if they acted quickly.

Unlike his predecessor, then, Brandt *did* propose a definite plan of action, though in essence it amounted to another call to *end appeasement*. A good deal of it was apparently shaped by his own past, most particularly his relations with both German banks and the anti-Nazi resistance movements. For him, Nazism had been definitively crushed and would never revive again. Therefore, he argued for rapid economic unification of all four zones, followed by the revival of German industry, specifically to help prevent starvation in the Western Zones. Once the food situation stabilized, he called for denazification to be ended as quickly as possible, and for a provisional German government to form from a "national assembly" elected by the people of all four zones. This would mean abandoning the Potsdam agreements -- which he believed the Soviets considered null and void in any case -- and building support at the U.N. for a "unified economic administration."[52] All of this might have sounded plausible to an American audience in 1946, al-

beit somewhat hasty, but Brandt went even further in his assumption of post-Nazi normality in Germany, calling for a reopening of the question of the Eastern German territories. This proposal, along with the others, derived from his belief that German expellees and residents of the Soviet Zone were *victims of Soviet aggression*, and that Americans must set aside their anti-German prejudices and refocus on the *new* danger. He believed that the Soviets would soon accede to a bold new plan to reconstitute Germany (and restore *some* eastern territory) simply because they were too economically and militarily weak to do otherwise.

This rather uncomplicated approach to both Germany and the Soviets suggests that for Brandt the Nazi past was more of a problem of the American administration's mindset than a on-going issue in contemporary Europe. The Allies' determination to remain "in the past" and not fully free themselves of the "Morgenthau mentality" that demanded "destruction" of Germany was precisely why they had neglected his "sensible course" of political and economic unification of Germany and firmness toward the Soviets.[53] Delaying this process had become inadvertent appeasement of the "real enemy," because it only added to the economic chaos that would eventually cause all Germans to drift "into the morass where the [German] Communists, and with them, the Soviet government, take them in tow."[54] Standing up to the "weak enemy," then, would *not* result in war, but ignoring the grave danger they posed in the chaotic conditions of divided Germany very likely might. Brandt's characterization of the barbarity and unscrupulousness of the Soviets on the one hand, and the total harmlessness of remaining Nazis and sympathizers on the other, could not have been more different than the pro-Soviet argument of the left activists.

The third rightist activist, Werner Knop, like Brandt a native-born German, an

economist, and a refugee from Hitler's Germany, concurred with the basic premise of Soviet weakness in Germany, but took it much further. Knop had become a British citizen in 1939, aiding the British army with information about Germany's finances and armaments and with propaganda advice, eventually enlisting himself. After the war he settled in the U.S., planning to change his citizenship while continuing as an economic correspondent in Washington for English newspapers. He was the only traveler in this writing who visited the Soviet Zone *illegally*, with false identity papers. His exposé, titled "Prowling Russia's Forbidden Zone," was published in serial form in the *Saturday Evening Post* and also in book form, and is especially notable for its rare English-language account of clandestine border crossing -- what German contemporaries called "traveling the green way" -- a fairly common occurrence until the zonal border was more or less hermetically sealed in the spring of 1952. Despite its biases, Knop's book, like Schaffer's, is often cited as a fairly reliable primary source on the Soviet occupation.[55]

His two months in the Zone included the early days of the Berlin blockade and airlift (late-June to August 1948), a period of extremely heightened East-West tension. He believed the Soviet blockade was a desperate move brought on by their failure to win over the German people, both East and West, and would be followed by the deliberate ruining of the zonal economy. The empty void thus created would serve, strange as it may sound, as a launching pad for an all-out invasion of Western Europe. Though much more of his account was devoted to the dramatic twists and turns of his covert journey, in the end Knop's purpose was to warn American readers that the time for tough talk had passed: that the Soviet's weakness in Germany had become so pronounced, and their plan of action so desperate, that America must "rearm as fast as its huge industrial capacity will permit."[56] The quote suggests the critical role of the United States -- the "Arsenal of De-

mocracy" in FDR's famous 1940 formulation -- both in winning World War II and potentially deterring aggression in 1948. But Knop also made clear that Germans *behind the iron curtain* hoped for a tougher American stand.

So, three different eyewitness estimations of Soviet strength reached the same conclusion: that the West should get tougher immediately, even if the specifics were either lacking or somewhat oversimplified. But the matter cannot be left here, because the different estimations of the Soviet threat were based on different understandings of its *nature* as well. The GI saw the Communism most basically as an evil force, which gathered strength because the forces of goodness and order had been so weakened by the war. American toleration of Soviet abuses was a sign of this weakness, which bordered on a complete moral breakdown. He called for prayer because all secular power seemed to have been abdicated.

> The only powers left are Communism and the Church, and I am afraid that Communism will make things very much darker before the Church once again illuminates them. Men have lost hope here, and when that happens, they lose all sense of morals and of rightness, and they are unable to respond to any of the great sacrifices which reconstruction would require.[57]

Despite the stronger moral tone, in effect this is an argument for containment, not unlike the ones made by its American architects, for example in Secretary of State George C. Marshall's famous address in June 1947 at Harvard University.[58] Since communism is most appealing in times of great social unrest, a restoration of a certain normality and the individual's stake in that normality will most effectively combat it. But if politicians sought restoration of liberal capitalism, the GI, like a number of postwar religious figures in Europe and North America, sought "reChristianization" -- a return of Christian values seemingly lost in the rise of totalitarianism and the brutality of the war.

Obviously the threat of Communism was seen in far more secular terms by Brandt. Apparently for this reason it seemed infinitely more solvable to him as well. But the Soviet's overall weakness in Germany did *not* mean they lacked certain advantages in Germany -- indeed, he believed they were a threat partly because of their dominance within their zone, which he referred to as "Soviet remote control," through well-healed "German administrators and experts."[59] He also believed they retained a certain credibility in spite of their abuses, for having never bombed German cities and having supported the anti-Nazi underground. But their most important advantage, ironically, was given them by the United States: namely, time. Out of fear of a Nazi revival *and* offending the Soviets, the U. S. was clinging to a failed policy--zonal division--which perpetuated economic chaos and gave them time to pursue their ultimate goal: control of *all* Germany, which he believed they had planned from the moment of the Nazi invasion. In essence, Brandt believed the Soviets were a threat to the extent that the West enabled them and conditions in Germany continued to deteriorate. And, just as in the 1930s, the fear of starting another war could be the very thing that made one possible.

> We must abandon our fears about a future war, make up our minds about what we want and say so, and go after it like hard Yankee traders. Otherwise, we will get into war by gradually sliding into it on *the slippery down-grade of appeasement.*[60] (emphasis added)

Two years later, Knop's travels in the Soviet Zone convinced him that the Soviet position in Germany had become even weaker, but even more menacing. Ironically, their weakness now meant that they, rather than the Allies, held the keys to war. For Knop, the Soviet threat was more complex than for the previous two authors: while the themes of coercion and conquest, (and the need for greater American assertiveness) were again present, Knop emphasized their inner psychology, and in doing so highlighted another

part of Kennan's understanding of the Soviets: that they were more motivated by internal and geopolitical insecurity than anything else. But he went much further, characterizing their insecurity as irrational and paranoid, particularly regarding America. Knop believed Soviet fears of America, based on ignorance and misinformation, had been supercharged by the Berlin Airlift, and their position in Germany had become untenable. Thus they were preparing for war, even nuclear war if necessary, regardless of how it impacted life in the Soviet Zone.

During his covert adventures in Thuringia, he experienced Soviet paranoia and intolerance first hand, in a speech by a Soviet officer (in perfect German) about the "treachery" of the Allies in the war, and later in threats against anyone speaking favorably of the airlift. The speech painted a picture of an ineffectual and late Anglo-American effort against the Nazis (while the Soviets triumphed over the "peak strength" of the *Wehrmacht*), and yet demonstrated the new Soviet fear of imminent offensive by the "American imperialists," which the officer implied would be countered, if necessary, with a So-viet atomic bomb![61] Knop also chronicled a dramatic lowering of living standards brought on by the blockade. But the centerpiece of his argument for Soviet fear and desperation was an exposé on recent developments in the Zone, as explained by members of a covert resistance movement within the SED. This group had initially supported the Soviets for the very same reasons Peters and Schaffer had, only to become disillusioned in the extreme. They elaborated on the Soviets' extreme inferiority complex, as well as their gravely weak strategic position in Germany.

Knop met them in Dresden through a personal contact, explaining that they were former SPD members who had supported the merger of 1946 and now worked for the Saxon government bureaucracy. With their great hopes for a democratic socialist trans-

formation crushed, they were now working to undermine the regime from within. In the following explanation of their initial enthusiasm, a man Knop described as a "white haired trade unionist" reminded of the initial Soviet advantage so many observers noted in the Chapter One:

> 'When we took office,'. . . 'we had our hopes. Unlike the Americans and the British, the Soviets from the first relied on the co-operation of us Germans. They vacillated between two extremes [rebuilding or stripping the Soviet Zone], and we thought we had enough influence to make them go in our direction.[62]

Knop's informants had hoped that land reform, nationalization of industry, and integration into the Soviet economic system would pave the way for both a democratic and prosperous Germany, something they assumed the Allies would never offer. But then came a regimen of hardship. Hunger and fear of war seemingly turned the entire zonal population against the Soviets. Another in the group went on to explain how the Soviet strategy to destabilize the Western Zones had also failed, and the currency reform and beginnings of economic recovery there only reinforced how far behind the Soviet Zone had fallen.

When Knop asked whether the Soviets could yet regain the ground they had lost and make a final bid for the "prize of Germany," Knop's contact in the group, a man he named Karl, finally got to the heart of the matter. A Soviet answer to the Marshall Plan was *not* feasible, he explained, because despite the deteriorating conditions in the Soviet Zone, the Germans there already had a living standard *twice as high* as the Russian people, and Soviet troops, who knew life in both regions, would never tolerate a further increase in the disparity. The Soviet Zone had become a permanent bind for its occupiers: if they helped out the German population, they would alienate their own troops; if they did not, they would remain permanently on the defensive in Germany. The only way out seemed to be a *desperate military offensive*. But if this were not enough to make the case

for imminent danger lurking in the Soviet Zone, Knop concluded by describing the irrational, paranoid Soviet view of America, the ultimate reason for their pursuit of the atomic bomb and recruitment of former high-ranking Nazis and *Wehrmacht* officers to their cause.

He believed Soviet overtures to former Nazis, namely the creation of the "National Democratic Party," the end of denazification, and the release of several thousand "small Nazis" were all part of a larger scheme to create a new German Army -- which he called a "red *Wehrmacht*" to heighten the sense of menace. He heard rumors in Leipzig -- true as it turned out -- about the return to Germany of specially trained POWs to take up important positions in the admini-stration.[63] Knop believed that among them were members of the "German National Committee," a pro-Soviet POW organization formed during the war.[64] Their new mission, or so he believed, was to spread the word that a "German militia" was training in various places in the USSR. Knop also believed that the Soviets were returning former *Wehrmacht* "specialists" to the Soviet Zone to join them.[65] The rumors of the German militia were not put to rest until November 1948,[66] but for Knop, a combination of rumors and actual occurrences, as well as the precedent of the clandestine German army trained in the Soviet Union in the 1920s, were strong evidence that a new strike force would soon be operational. In essence, he argued that a new *Blitzkrieg* was being planned by the veterans of the earlier ones.

Less speculative were Knop's impressions of the uranium mining in the *Erzgebirge*, the goal of which was the first Soviet atomic bomb. Here, as later scholarship has shown, abysmal working conditions for labor conscripts had created a public-relations nightmare. All efforts to keep the project secret had failed, and Knop likened working conditions to the lower levels of hell in Dante's *Inferno.* For him, the Soviets' rush to ex-

tract uranium clearly demonstrated their priorities: preparing for conflict with the West overrode all other objectives. According to an SED functionary:

> 'The uranium mines are our greatest liability . . . but,' he added, 'what's happening . . . there must be done. If it helps the Soviets to produce the atomic bomb, we are all for it, no matter what the cost. After all, what counts in the long run is not that we are popular at this moment, but that we are going to win the atomic war.'[67]

This relative certainty of imminent "atomic war" Knop put down to the Soviets' complete misunderstanding of American intentions. The Soviets, in other words, were not simply vilifying the U.S. for propaganda purposes. A good many of them *really did believe* that America was the mortal enemy of Europe, and therefore of the U.S.S.R. as well. He was surprised to learn that Soviet officials had no realistic sense of America at all. This was in part due to an extreme inferiority complex, but also a fundamental fear of the unknown:

> . . . what fascinated me was the half-wistful, half frightened way they talked about America. Even when they castigated it, you saw how, to them, American was something out of this world--a mixture of monster and fairy prince. Something greedy, cruel, decadent and voluptuous, but also something so rich and efficient, so glittering and Daedalian. Something that defied human understanding, and therefore seemed full of menace.[68]

A friend assured the author that if they truly understood what America was, "they would never dare provoke a war."[69] But the basic problem was that most Soviet personnel and citizens alike had become victims of the regime's propaganda.

This irrational fear had led the Soviets to build-up their military from its weak position in 1945, when it was "exhausted to the point of collapse."[70] They had cajoled their tired citizens to work harder with propaganda about American imperialism, fearing that otherwise their entire way of life would unravel.[71] They had become, in the end, prisoners of their own beliefs. This explained why Knop's friend insisted that American prepara-

tion for war in Europe must *precede* any diplomatic overtures. In the end, Knop believed the Soviet threat to the West came *not* from a blueprint for global domination, but from a combination of an untenable position in Germany and an outrageous and misinformed understanding of America. Unworkable policies and irrational fears had led them to create of a ticking time-bomb in central Europe.

> Bled white by Russian reparations, deprived of raw materials by both the Soviets and the Western counterblockade, racked by hunger, deserted by multitudes of skilled men, and weighed down by the dark blanket of fear and oppression, the Soviet zone of occupation has become a malignant tumor in the recovering body of Europe. Its very existence represents a threat to the peace. . . *For such are the dynamics of an aggressive, totalitarian regime that it will never accept the humiliation of failure or defeat.*[72] (emphasis added)

There is a tension in this passage and throughout the account between the Soviets' purposeful intent on the one hand, and their mounting, unmanageable difficulties on the other, which Knop never fully resolved. And yet, this did not prevent another veiled warning of the dangers of "appeasement." Clearly in the final sentences, the Soviets have replaced the Nazis as the new, expansionist aggressors, an almost mirror image of the fanatical former conquerors of most of Europe.

Knop ultimately also drew on containment thinking in analyzing the Soviet threat -- but only to a point. His focus on their deteriorating position -- both among the Germans and their own troops -- and willingness to exploit any and all means to preserve their position, suggests Kennan's view that they were *not* motivated primarily by ideology, but by perpetual insecurity both at home and abroad. But Knop departed from Kennan in his deeper findings on the Soviet mindset. If Kennan believed the threat of the U.S. was exaggerated in Moscow primarily to bolster the regime at home -- that is a conscious deception -- Knop, as we have seen, was sure that the broad rank and file of the regime's administrators had come to believe the exaggerations as well. Also, while Kennan

argued that the Soviets would attempt to expand their influence only into areas that presented minimal risk, Knop found them desperate, ready to take the ultimate risk: invasion of Western Germany and even a nuclear war with the United States. No contemporary believed the Soviets were so weak, or so imminently threatening.

A key part of that threat, the emerging relationship between former cadres of the old regime and those of the new one, developed long after the travels of Brandt and the GI. Yet like Knop, these authors also used relations between the Soviet occupiers and various groups in German society to energize their cases for the threatening and immoral nature of the Soviet occupation. In the process, all three referenced the Nazi past in different and sometimes unexpected ways. The GI, despite repeating some of the worst Nazi stereotypes of the Soviets, was remarkably prescient in sizing up the defeated German population. In the following passage the soldier turns his sense of moral outrage toward Germans he met on the street. These words could just as easily have been written by Peters, who coincidentally was in Berlin the very same month.

> We talked to a German yesterday . . . the head of a large research organization, [who] told us that many of his key men have taken poison rather than be forced to go to Russia for a continuation of their work. . . . Though you know how I dislike Communism, I think it is, in a way, a bad thing for us to permit Germans to make criticisms of this sort . . . It is an escape mechanism for the defeated country which Germany is at the present time (and should be). By painting a dark picture of the Russians, they distract attention from their own guilt. They use the Russians, as escapists would, to whitewash themselves. German atrocities were committed earlier and can more easily be forgotten and overlooked if the Germans can impress us with the present character of Soviet cruelty. . . . Finally they like to feel chummy with Americans and to tell us their troubles in a special way. If they feel that they are really our allies against the Russians, it brings them up to our level and the past is wiped out. They are not really our foes then, our vanquished enemy. They are our friends. . . . I told this German today when he started in about forcing his men to go to Russia that there had been 4,500,000 slave laborers imported to Germany. He said that this was under Hitler not under Germany, and that the Moscow radio used to promise the Germans different treatment. At any

> rate, this man was a member of the Nazi party. He apparently didn't criticize Hitler when he should have done so, but gave him support in a positive, gratuitous way.[73]

This was not the only German he found prepared to explain away the nation's support of Hitler. But in the end, the GI believed their submission to the prior dictatorship had made them more pliant and easily controlled by the Communists than the prior quote suggests. Did they expect war? The GI did not think so. But in this, he believed, they were foolishly mistaken.

> The German people as a whole show a surprising ambition and industry. It is all over now, they seem to think, so let's roll up our sleeves and get back to work. . . . but the people do not yet realize the cataclysm that is upon them. . . . When the Germans see how badly off they are; how hard the winter will be; and, how in the darkness of the future their enthusiasm will avail nothing, their present ambition and industry are likely to turn into bitterness and disillusionment. One may well speak, then of the coming defeat of Germany.[74]

It could be surmised that the GI did not think the German people deserved much better, but what most concerned him was not their day-to-day relations with the Soviets, but their *ultimate fate,* due to the growing power of communism. In this respect, the Germans seemed to be walking once more into a trap -- "ambition and industry" had already led them to the catastrophe of de-feat under Hitler, and seemed badly misplaced once more. The "darkness of the future" seemed to promise *even worse*.

Brandt had nothing to say about popular responsibility for the Nazi crimes. Judging from his report on the daily victimization of German middle classes in the Soviet Zone, it is arguable that he judged them as Hitler's victims also. He only brought Nazism into his argument when it appeared to obstruct the path toward a peaceful, democratic reunification. As noted, he believed excessive fear of Nazi revival dominated U.S. thinking on Germany, thus delaying badly-needed economic restoration. He demanded that the

U.S. government turn away completely and irrevocably from the advice of "certain editorials, newspaper columns and radio comments" and forget about any "desire to destroy Germany once and forever."[75] Further discussion of Nazi crimes also was counterproductive: both the Nuremburg Trials and denazification in the western zones must be concluded as soon as possible, he wrote, because they only stood in the way of getting the Germans back on their feet and out of reach of Communism. The urgent need to end discussion of Nazi crimes and thereby safeguard the future he summed up neatly as follows.

> To give Goering and Ribbentrop and other crooks the right to speak and provide them with the ablest German defense attorneys, and to leave 70 million people without either representation or the right to speak, does not make for democracy, but works toward Russian ends.[76]

Whether Nazism was exclusively a phenomenon of high politics, and not at all the concern of the "70 million" Brandt did not say. But his conceptualization of denazification as mainly the prompt and proper treatment of war criminals suggested that very thing. And it seemed to follow quite naturally that the German population was once again at the mercy of dictatorial high politics, though this time from a regime determined to destroy both political *and* economic independence. For Brandt, the latter was the ultimate danger. Those who knew him described him as "driven by a great love of personal freedom and a tremendous faith in the virtues of societies made up of free men,"[77] and while he had been a dedicated opponent-in-exile of the Third Reich, he clearly found a more profound menace to the very basis of freedom in the Soviet occupation. In rather vague language about job losses and de-skilling, he made the dispossession of middle class entrepreneurs and skilled professionals appear to be the plight of the *entire society*, ignoring the fact that the majority of the population had lacked economic independence under the *previous* regime as well:

> The Germans in the Russian zone have already become prostrate proletarians who can do nothing except call on the government for help. They have not only been stripped of everything they owned or earned, but are made incapable of working at jobs--or the jobs they once held have simply been wiped out. That, of course, crushes any hope they might have of regaining by means of employment the things they lost.Their economic distress plays into the hands of the German Communists, and rule by the German Communist dovetails with Russia's foreign policy. . . . The agrarian reform is the other barrel of this gun. The large estates have been abolished. Their owners and managing personnel, except for those who fled or committed suicide, have with few exceptions been shot or deported. . . .[78]

Knop also presented considerable evidence of progressive dispossession, but because his point was that the zonal economy was being *deliberately ruined*, he avoided terms like proletarianization that suggested a carefully planned social revolution. And given his focus on economic crisis and the creation of a "Red *Wehrmacht,*" he referenced different aspects of the Nazi past as well. Despite the apparent trap the Soviets had gotten into in Germany, Knop learned from many informants at different levels in the administration of the Zone that the Soviets still hoped to use any and every "artifice" to win over the population. Courting former army officers and former rank-and-file Nazis, then, was not merely a sign of desperation, but also, as post-unification scholarship has suggested, was part of a genuine effort to integrate large and wary segments of the German population into the new regime.[79] Knop found a chilling example to reinforce his argument about imminent danger which made the new regime appear all the more like its predecessor -- down to the details. When he visited the revived Leuna chemical complex in Saxony-Anhalt, a member of its police force was discussing the courting of former lower-level Nazis just as one appeared! Knop gave the impression that such persons would not feel the slightest conflict in joining the other side, given the desperate circumstances and the regime's appeal to frustrated nationalism.

'You can see that [trying to win over the Germans], by the way they are trying to

> attract the former Nazis. And there comes one of them. Watch out!' . . . The officer who was walking toward us was such a perfect replica of an SS man that he took my breath away. His smartly cut black uniform, brightly polished top boots, the revolver dangling from his hip and all the pomp and circumstance of silver lace were in perfect harmony with the cold arrogance of his face. Koscik [the works' policeman] saluted him, and the officer walked past. . . . 'Good heavens,' I said, 'I never thought I would see that uniform again in Germany.' . . . During the next few days in Leipzig and later in Dresden and other cities of the Eastern zone, I found that they were right. The Russians are appealing increasingly to the pathological fringe of German nationalism; the embittered former Nazis, the jobless high officers of Hitler's armed forces, the same unprincipled but efficient mercenaries who started to undermine the democratic republic of Weimar twenty-five years ago.[80]

This "appeal" as we have seen, included appointments to government posts for former members of the National Committee for Free Germany -- the pro-Soviet POW organization created during the war. Knop stressed the hostile intent of these appointments after the encounter above by describing the most notorious example: "Captain [Paul] Markgraf, who had been decorated with the Knight's Cross by Hitler, and who, as the Soviet-appointed police president of Berlin has proved himself a willing tool in Russian hands."[81] Knop was correct in his basic assumption that denazification in the Soviet Zone had become less a purge and more a process of integrating all but the most criminal and highest-ranking officials, but the apparent carryover of personnel in military and police forces, suggested something far more sinister than sociopolitical reintegration. The ruling elite appeared to be building a war machine that was becoming a mirror image -- literally in the case of the SS man -- of the Nazi regime. Whether they were recruiting former enemies, or fleecing businesspeople and professionals, alienating workers, farmers, and even their own troops, the "Soviet totalitarians," like their Nazi predecessors, were inevitably bringing Europe to the precipice of another abyss.

Sympathy and Support, Hope and Disillusionment: The Spectrum of Leftist Reporting, 1946-1954

The leftist activists we met above shared much with less doctrinaire, less pro-Soviet progressives who also visited the region in the early years. Given restrictions on independent journalists and correspondents -- the exceptions being Leipzig fair time, and those deemed reliable Soviet allies -- this small progressive group was a curious mixture of government officials, reporters (at least one of whom traveled as a private citizen), and Germany's most famed living novelist, Thomas Mann. The earlier visitors (1945-47) seemed to have had their material published primarily to demystify (favorably) the workings of the zonal administration and economy in a period of rapid transition. The later ones (1948-54) had a more difficult task: to argue against the increasingly negative Western view of the Soviet Zone/GDR as it moved towards a communist dictatorship.

These "sympathizers" shared with the leftist activists the basic assumption that radical change was necessary to democratize Germany, including more economic democracy, and overall they were greatly impressed by efforts to empower the working classes and provide for their social welfare. Some also praised nascent efforts to bring culture to working people and do away with social hierarchies and distinctions. For some time too, they continued to argue (or least hold out hope), that the zonal economy could beat the odds and become self-sustaining and even somewhat prosperous. More philosophically, therefore, most of them shared with the leftist activists a hope that the Soviet Zone might represent *an alternative* to the restoration of large-scale capitalist industry and traditional, anti-democratic values in Germany. For they clearly viewed concentration of industry and uncritical nationalism as the essential bases of fascism, and therefore they were deeply concerned about the restoration of large-scale industrial capitalism in the Western zones.

The other side of this wariness was a generous and rather trusting view of the Soviet occupation through 1947, and, in spite of the increasing turn toward one-party dictatorship in 1948, a continued belief that many of the social and humanitarian goals of the regime were worth defending. Yet as we will see, these beliefs did not prevent them from focusing on the coercive and manipulative aspects of Communist rule as well. They were neither naive, nor -- for the most part -- willing to make excuses for the increasingly dictatorial atmosphere of the region from 1948 onwards.

Indeed, it was precisely this dictatorial atmosphere, particularly the discouragement of independent thought in education, that led these progressives to part company with their pro-Soviet predecessors. They tried to separate the unacceptable aspects of the occupation and early GDR from what they considered progressive achievements. They struggled with a kind of "critical sympathy" that was totally absent from the writings of the activists. While they wrote little about the misconduct of the Red Army, both at war's end and over the years that followed, they made no attempts to defend it or explain it away (as had the activists) and they despaired over the increasing popular disenchantment with the regime, particularly regarding its propaganda and public statements that seemed increasingly divorced from reality. Ultimately this critical sympathy, then, did *not* provide a fig leaf of respectability for the regime. It was based *not* on support of one party rule, but the belief that there was some popular support in the Soviet Zone /GDR for certain of the regime's reforms, and that in spite of the emerging dictatorship, those "socialist achievements" held out more hope for both social democracy and social justice than did the emerging regime of the Western Federal Republic. To take this stance was obviously to open one's self to fierce criticism from anti-communists. But at the same time, odd as it may sound, the Cold War left a certain time and space for sympathetic conside-

ration of these policies because the East-West deadlock put Germany's future "on hold." If the GDR was widely regarded in the West as illegitimate, and rightly so, leftist sympathizers could point out that its social welfare institutions were taking root, and speculate about *a more democratic evolution in the future*. Also, resource problems and Western hostility could be used to help explain, if not fully justify, the continued lack of prosperity and democratic freedoms.

Leftist sympathizers, along with an occasional later left-leaning visitor, help us reconsider the development of the GDR from the contemporary perspective of the non-communist Western European left, with its great distrust for American capitalism and increasingly, a parallel distrust for Soviet Communism. Convinced that militant American anti-Communism in the context of divided Germany offered no real solution to the problems of reconstituting Germany (or Europe as a whole), they had guarded hopes that something more just and humane might emerge out of the social revolution in the Soviet Zone. Their critical sympathy, then, was also part of a larger realization that the hopeful moment of 1945, the defeat of fascism and opportunity to create genuine social democracy, was passing rapidly, and that the only alternative to conservative capitalist restoration in West Germany lay behind the iron curtain, in a most unlikely corner of Central Europe that should not be understood as the dictatorial nightmare the anti-communist Right was portraying. In the end, however, such sympathetic left evaluations dwindled, leaving German-Jewish emigré Heinrich Fraenkel as the lone defender of the East German social revolution by the early 1950s. Later in the decade, as we will see in Chapter Five, another handful of leftists revived this hopeful reporting on gradual economic progress and limited popular support. But they did so in a period when the GDR, and German division itself, was taking on what one visitor called "a look of permanence."[82]

As we have seen, the early years of the occupation presented the Western media and other observers with an uncertain future, sometimes perplexing, sometimes menacing, sometimes hopeful. Leftist sympathizers, like their activists counterparts, could marshal considerable evidence in this early period to suggest that the Soviet occupation was successful in terms of de-militarizing, deNazifying, and even economically reviving their part of Germany. But only one of these sympathizers -- the first visitor among them -- joined the activists in offering a prescription for reunifying Germany: American James P. Warburg -- an ex-New Dealer and international banker. Only Warburg, who visited the Soviet Zone in the summer of 1946, could write about the Soviet occupation *before* the East-West conflict made the region a competitor and rival of the Western Zones. The fluid moment in which he traveled, combined with his political concerns, led him to produce an urgent political appeal to the Allies by late fall, 1946.

Warburg was one of a number of liberal American commentators and politicians who argued that American occupation policies in Germany must take into account the legitimate security interests of the U.S.S.R, a view that was most widely publicized in the conciliatory speech of U.S. Secretary of Commerce Henry A. Wallace in September 1946.[83] But Warburg continued to oppose containment into the early 1950s, and like a number of ex-New Dealers, continued to view Germany as a greater danger to world peace than the Soviets.[84] He would be ridiculed for exposing the unwillingness of the U.S. government to seriously consider the "Stalin notes" of spring 1952, which proposed German unification and neutrality.[85] Not that Warburg was ever a friend of the Soviets, in the sense of Schaffer or Davis, or otherwise. But like the leftist activists, he was a firm believer that Germany ought to be a kind of "bridge" between East and West, between American capitalism and Soviet communism, *without* the industrial cartels that had made

Hitler's rearmament possible. In 1946, however, Warburg was determined to show how such a "bridge" could square with American interests. Unlike the leftist activists, his plan for a new Germany did *not* include following the "Soviet lead" in Germany, but rather negotiating with them to get a *partially socialized* economic system in *all four zones*.

Warburg's travels in the Soviet Zone did *not* convince him that the Soviets had the *best* plan, but that they simply knew better than the Americans how to make the Germans work for them. After traveling in all four zones, he found the Soviet Zone to be the best managed, both for their "own purposes" (ie. delivering reparations from nationalized and Soviet-owned current production, as opposed to further dismantling) and "from the point of view of the German population."[86] Another lower-level (and non-political) American official who traveled to Leipzig about two months after Warburg closely echoed these sentiments, noting order and efficiency, and apparently no unnecessary coercion.[87] The problem, as Warburg saw it, was how to get the Western Zones going in a similar fashion -- that is, with a good deal of *socialization of industry* -- without preceding as far with socialization as the Soviets had. If this were accomplished, he argued, the way would still be open for some kind of negotiated settlement and an early, democratic unification of all four zones.[88]

While it is true that shifting U.S. policy towards early unity would in effect have been accepting the stated aims of Soviet policy in Germany (ie. a unification under a central, "anti-fascist" government), Warburg did not argue for it out of sympathy for the USSR. In fact, he believed that at the time (late 1946) the Soviets were actually taking advantage of both French resistance to unification, and the U.S. decision to merge the American and British zones. In effect, they could both remove massive reparations from their zone and pose as champions of German unity by accusing their Allies of obstruc-

tion. He believed the September 1946 speech of U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes, committing the U.S. to a longer-term effort to rebuild the German economy, had been widely misinterpreted as a challenge to the Soviets for control of all of Germany, and the Soviets themselves had been unwilling to consider a new plan of compromise due to the key sticking point: Byrnes expressed view that Germany's Eastern border as determined by the Potsdam conference could not be considered final until the conclusion of a peace conference.[89]

To end this impasse, Warburg believed, not unlike Karl Brandt, that the Allies must admit zonal division had been a mistaken policy from the beginning. However, quite unlike Brandt, he believed the U.S. must take Soviet proposals for early unification seriously. This would mean establishing a central, "antifascist" government, and economic unity as well. But for Warburg, "antifascist" did not imply a radical leftist agenda, any more than his admiration for the Soviet occupation meant supporting communism. He believed a more socialized German economy was the key to peace in Europe but that all four powers had to compromise on the *degree* of this socialization. He therefore took it upon himself to offer an "addendum" to Byrnes's speech: U.S. policy should be that neither the U.S. nor the Soviets be allowed to dominate Germany, but also that Germany be prevented from again becoming a threat in its own right. All this would be accomplished by a commitment to a unified German economy with "a large measure of economic socialization of a non-authoritarian nature."[90] It can be surmised that while Warburg did *not* believe the Soviets were modeling an economic system for the other occupying powers to follow, he *did* think that they had taken *some* steps in the right direction, none of which meant an inevitable march toward a separate communist state.

What Warburg's "economic socialization" ultimately entailed was following up on

the land reform in the Soviet Zone (which had broken the power of the Junker aristocracy) with the break-up of the German industrial cartels, which had their seat in the Ruhr region in the British Zone. This would mean a reversal of trends present already in the U.S. Zone, whose economic system Warburg unequivocally referred to as "capitalist restoration."[91] But the plan would also involve some giving in the Soviet side, because adequate food supplies for the entire country might require restoration of at least *some farm land in lower Silesia*--land already assigned to Polish administration.[92] (emphasis added) All of this suggested Warburg's *mixed view* of the Soviet occupation: some steps in the right direction (land reform), but some excesses as well (giving all of Silesia to the Poles, and moving toward "complete socialization" of their zone). In this reading, Soviet actions in Germany were not dangerously provocative, but certainly far from ideal. The Soviets, in essence, were co-contributors to a chaotic and volatile situation, but one that still could be diffused.

The U.S. government, of course, did not follow Warburg's recommendations. 1947 marked a critical year for the breakdown of interallied cooperation, and there was to be no major socialization of industry or agriculture in the Western Zones. But in the Soviet Zone, as we have seen, a full-blown Communist dictatorship had not yet been established. It was in this context that other socialist-leaning visitors presented more positive views of the Soviet occupation. Indeed, they began to present it as an alternative to the American-led occupation of the Western zones, and, potentially at least, as a path to a better future for Germany. One such author was Heinrich Fraenkel, a refugee from the Third Reich, returned to Germany as a correspondent for *New Statesman and Nation*. He was very much interested in the development of post-Nazi education in *all four zones*, but in the end became primarily a correspondent from the Soviet Zone and East Berlin for

the next 7 years. His attempts to defend both the socioeconomic policies in the Soviet Zone and some of the hopeful idealism behind them were seconded by at least two other visitors in 1949, one of whom was returning exile Thomas Mann.

While none of these authors completely avoided the drawbacks of life in the Soviet Zone, a variety of developments *in the West* gave them reasons to make favorable comparisons. The initially grim and chaotic economic and political situation in the Western Zones, and, when it came, the American-sponsored recovery there, could *both* be compared negatively with the social revolution in the East. As we have seen, they did have a point, economically speaking, in the former case; but in the latter, anti-Americanism was brought into play--most directly by Mann. He made the Soviet Zone appear, at least in part, as a deeply-rooted, European alternative to an increasingly Americanized West Germany. In the years after Mann's visit, however, Fraenkel was virtually the only sympathetic leftist voice reporting from the GDR. His continuing, somewhat flickering hopes for an alternative, democratic and socialist Germany in the East alternated with expressions of genuine dismay and disillusionment. But in the bigger picture, as noted above, the complicated and critical sympathy from this handful of non-communist Western leftists is valuable evidence against the common rightwing assumption that the West European left did nothing but aid and abet communist oppression in the Soviet bloc. For these were *not* the writings of apologists, let alone mouthpieces, for the Soviet cause. The contrast with the activists, which we will return to below, makes this all the more clear.

Fraenkel's first visit to the Soviet Zone in the summer of 1947 was well-timed to give a glimpse into life there after a host of major changes, but *before* the dictatorial rule of the SED had been completely established, or economic hardship had increased again.[93] Because access to the Zone had been so limited, he, like a number of writers of the early

postwar years, believed it deserved considerable demystification. This process began with his description of crossing the "iron curtain" border itself. He stressed that it was hardly a greater obstacle than any other border in Europe. Once across, he also came to realize how ridiculous were the warnings of his friends about "disappearing to Siberia" and never returning. And though Fraenkel was assigned a Soviet officer as escort, he insisted he had ample time during a six-day tour for unsupervised conversations, and was trusted enough to be allowed two additional day trips from Berlin completely on his own.[94] Debunking prevalent exaggerations about danger in the Soviet Zone allowed him to proceed to make his case for the regime as an increasingly viable alternative to the one in Bizonia.

He began with food supplies, which all sources of the time confirmed as an advantage of the Soviet Zone, and which, naturally, led him to the land reform. He visited a "new settlement" east of Berlin, not far from the Oder river, where 160 "new farmers" and their families had been settled on a former *Junker* estate. The area was recovering from both war damage and spring floods, but the fields were in bloom. Agricultural equipment, along with horses, cows and chickens had been distributed, and despite difficulties, the farmers were making their assigned quotas and then some, selling surpluses for profit on the "free market," and hoping to make a better living in the future. Their principle grievance was the lack of agricultural machinery, but the only *major* complaint Fraenkel heard was highly unexpected. Local CDU cadres disagreed with the policy of small plots: not because the owners had been dispossessed without compensation, but because they believed the uneven quality of the soil made many of them unviable. They told him collectivization *on the Soviet model* would have been more advisable (!), but that the SED had not wanted to seem too wedded to their patron's methods.

More impressive were reforms in education, specifically the influx of youth of

working class backgrounds into universities. But the corollary was discrimination against middle class youths, and this bothered Fraenkel, and as we will see, Mann as well. Fraenkel also praised the new *Einheitsschule*, a unified system of secondary education for *all* children, replacing the elite Gymnasia and lower-tier trade schools. He admitted that given the "house-cleaning" of deNazification, a large number of marginally qualified people had been hired as teachers. But he remained optimistic, because they seemed to be learning quickly on the job, were expertly advised, and would soon be supplemented with "the first fully qualified post-war crop of teachers."[95] He also added that even though religious instruction had been removed from the curriculum, religious *practice* was not being obstructed in any way. Indeed, in one rural district apparently not known for its faith, he found 95% of the children receiving religious instruction.

What all of these hopeful developments ultimately meant to Fraenkel was that the Soviet Zone, unlike the Western zones, had "a definite constructive policy." To demonstrate, he chose a completely uncontroversial comparison -- highway construction -- in which the Soviets were apparently far ahead of the Allies. But the psychological impact of this and their other efforts was what he believed mattered most:

> I was also impressed by a (completely unpolitical) friend who, when we met in Berlin last year, was desperately unhappy about having to live in the Eastern Zone. But meanwhile, having had an opportunity of seeing all the other three Zones, my friend no longer wishes to move, convinced that, for the time being, life has more purpose in the Eastern Zone.[96]

What this "purpose" would ultimately lead to was unclear. "Sense of purpose," was rather like the term "going concern" used by newsmen who were not necessarily sympathetic. But Fraenkel certainly anticipated some sort of more equal and just socioeconomic arrangement, as indicated by his approval for different aspects of the social revolution. But if he offered little direct comparison with conditions in the West, two leftist authors who

followed him in 1949 would do so emphatically. One was Thomas Mann, who made a controversial visit to Weimar in the summer of 1949.

For many years, Mann was characterized not as any sort of political actor, let alone a leftist. Rather, historians, literary scholars, and biographers thought of him as an unpolitical aesthete, especially after World War II, when he chose to never resettle in Germany.[97] More recent evaluations suggest however, that with some reluctance, he *did* gradually become both a political activist and a democrat, and continued to play a role as a public intellectual after 1945, albeit as an expatriate who never again felt spiritually close to the German people. These authors argue that during the Weimar years he "slowly came to believe that culture [in the sense of the elevation of individual consciousness through the arts] required a democratic framework."[98] During his years of exile (1933-1945) he remained a consistent and vocal opponent of Hitler, but at the same time grew skeptical of the postwar aims of the Allies. After the war, his new openness to democracy was put to the test, as the rise of McCarthyism in America -- which he experienced first hand from his home near Los Angeles -- caused him renewed despair over the future of Western civilization. America in the early Cold War seemed eerily familiar to Germany during the rise of Nazism.[99]

In the summer of 1949, he returned to Germany for the first time since his voluntary exile, at the invitation of the city of Frankfurt am Main (American Zone), to receive the city's Goethe Prize, which had been awarded since 1927 to the German intellectual who best exemplified the spirit of the great author.[100] Mann hoped that his return would be understood as a unifying gesture to all Germans, and after speaking about Goethe in several western cities, Mann made an even more unifying gesture, or so he hoped, by traveling to Weimar (Soviet Zone) to accept another Goethe prize. The invitation to speak at

Weimar came from the German cultural minister in the Soviet Zone, Johannes R. Becher, who with Bertolt Brecht, Anna Seghers, and other notable German artists had moved to East Berlin to lend their talents to the social revolution. Mann did not announce his intention to go to Weimar until the day after his arrival in Frankfurt, though it had been clear for some time he felt compelled to accept the invitation.[101] That decision would ultimately bring his popularity in West Germany to its all-time low.[102]

Mark W. Clark has argued that Mann's purpose in going to Weimar and speaking there was an effort to find "common ground" across the German divide and more broadly between the U.S. and the Soviet Union as well.[103] Mann hoped somehow that a writer, in effect a "keeper" of German culture, could stand as a symbol of a "cultural unity" that continued in spite of the growing political and economic divide, believing, like other leftists mentioned above, that Europe divided into East and West was "very dangerous to the peace." Unlike the leftist activists, however, Mann's remedy was by no means following the Soviet example. Rather, he argued for the two sides to *compromise*: as he put it in a 1947 interview: "the present tension between the United States and the Soviet Union could only be solved, if America would become more socialistic, and the Soviet Union more democratic, so that they meet halfway."[104] Unlike Warburg, who would restrict a mixed economy to Germany and Europe, Mann, increasingly alarmed by the anti-communist fervor in the U.S., apparently hoped for a spreading of a "third way" across the Atlantic as well.

But Mann's own report on his travels, translated and published in *The New York Times Magazine* within a month of his visit to Weimar, was more sharply critical of the U.S., and, to an extent, attempted to locate the social revolution of the GDR within the context of current and historic *European* developments.[105] At times he sounded rather like

a prodigal European son, who, having abandoned the continent 16 years earlier, wrote of his trip to Weimar not simply as a public intellectual or cultural guardian, but as a kind of *European nationalist.*

But Mann clearly wanted to distance himself from Marxist ideology as well, and to make sure the Soviets would have no opportunity to distort his words, he left a copy of the Weimar speech in Frankfurt. He assured his "intimate associates" that he would not allow the Soviets "to take political advantage of him."[106] But over the course of his account he showed just as much concern, if not more, about the sinister political potentialities in the *Western* zones. He claimed that were he still living in West Germany, then he "should be hated and reviled as un-German, anti-German, and a traitor to the Fatherland by the broad unregenerate masses who have long since reverted to brazen nationalism."[107] He went on to the list their complaints ("everything was better under Hilter," "democracy had been tried and had failed," etc.) and was apparently still referring to *Western Germans only* when noting that . . .

> . . . the tension between the two great powers emerging from the war favors the evil elements in Germany while harming the good, putting them on the defensive and at a disadvantage equivalent to that . . . which they suffered in the Thirties.[108]

This opinion was strikingly similar to the view of the activist Peters, though Mann, upon his return to America, made *no distinction* between East and West Germans regarding what he believed was a "recrudescence of National Socialist sentiment."[109] Yet he also deeply distrusted the Soviets and the Eastern regime as well, noting that it was mainly upheld by the implied threat of coercion manifest in its large and ubiquitous German police force. In the end, he devowed the politics and unification strategies of *both* regimes. But this did not prevent him from looking favorably on aspects of the East German social revolution.

Mann's visit came several months after the lifting of the Berlin blockade and a period of considerable strengthening of the political power of the SED. Nonetheless, he, like several other observers of the time, asserted that "one-party rule" was *not* yet accomplished.[110] There still remained "an occasional liberal" in both the state and municipal administrations in Weimar, a theologian presided over the city council, and a "conservative" was Lord Mayor.[111] His reception in Weimar also suggested a kind of thoughtful openness among the populace, which he attributed to the "incisive . . . process of popular education" in the Soviet Zone. He believed this education had created more respect for intellectuals than had the "threat of Buchenwald." Striving for a middle ground, Mann proclaimed himself a "non-Communist" as opposed to an "anti-Communist," and therefore willing to give the benefit of the doubt to . . .

> something new that is still under trial, ideals that have so often become hypocritical pretexts for ulterior interests; and the simple fact, finally, that I refuse to take part in the rampant hysteria of communist persecution.[112]

But there was more: like a number of German writers of the period (Chapter 4), and other leftists we will meet in Chapter 5, Mann went on to suggest a certain inevitability regarding the coming of a more socialistic system to the Western world, or at least one with "Communist traits." Even more striking, however, was the way he described the social revolution as an alternative to -- indeed a rejection of -- Marshall aid and American influence. The reforms in the Soviet Zone -- and many of the people who were carrying them out -- reminded Mann as much of dramatic change as they did of Europe's dynamic and independent past:

> Among the Communist officials of the Russian Zone I found many a figure in whose face I could read concentrated good will and pure idealism. It would have been hard to escape the impress of the speech delivered on the eve of our departure by Dr. Wandel, president of the 'German Administration for Popular Education' in Berlin . . . [who] said that for once he did not wish to speak *of* me but to

> report *to* me what had been undertaken, created and built up in the Eastern Zone in recent years. He spoke of agrarian reform, of 'democratic reeducation,' of the socialization of the means of production, of measures to promote intellectual life, measures aimed at a more intimate bond between the people and creative workers. He spoke of the respectable poverty in which constructive work was done to the best of one's ability, painfully, *without borrowed funds, but also without envy of those who had greater wealth.* Was this but the fox for whom the grapes hung too high and who therefore called them sour? No! There were overtones in these words which every European could sense--a hint of the honor of the old Continent. *A wishful challenge was thrown out--the challenge of a Europe that could not be bought, that would no longer be the kept woman of the man with the big moneybags, a Europe that would regain her dignity, pursuing her course by her own will, her own laws and necessities. Terror is detestable, but are not the conditions imposed by a creditor only a more 'humane' form thereof?*[113] (emphasis added in lines 10 through 18)

In this way Mann "historicized" the Soviet Zone. It was *not* an artificial, "Asiatic," or dangerous implantation in the European landscape, but represented Europe's democratic traditions *and* most importantly, its pride -- even its coping with recent loss of world hegemony. But I added emphasis to make clear how Mann took Fraenkel's "sense of purpose" and fashioned it into a defense of "socialist achievements" in the face of American capitalism. The Soviet Zone is here made part of the "old world" that Americans did not understand, which they would put at risk in the name of interest and profits.[114] The theme of East Germans' "respectable poverty" also links Mann to some West German visitors, who used it to understand the appeal of certain regime policies for working people (See Chapter Four). But for Mann, the issue was larger in scope: the Soviet Zone was part of the struggle to rebuild Western civilization, not destroy it.

To that end, he joined Fraenkel in approving -- to a point -- new opportunities for working class and peasant families to attend universities. Neither of them, however, could overlook the obvious discrimination against sons and daughters of the middle class. Their similar responses seem like honest efforts to deal squarely with a serious problem, but in

the end Fraenkel was somewhat more willing to extend the benefit of the doubt, apparently because of his own lack of class identification. In the following quote, Fraenkel refers to discrimination in university admissions as a clear misstep of the regime, but also to the middle classes as over-reacting. Notice how he assumes the middle classes had little, in principle, to fear from the regime:

> Such routine discrimination has inevitably caused a vicious circle by embittering blameless people who were quite willing to co-operate, but whose very victimization has made them do objectionable things, such as nipping across the Zone-border and exaggerating their tale of woe to very willing listeners.[115]

Mann, though overall in favor, was more defensive regarding the middle classes -- those with whom he most identified. If the social revolution was admirable in general, radical egalitarianism in practice could still seem risky. In the end, he rather hesitantly reserved judgment.

> . . . is there any sense to the wholesale rejection of young people from the middle class--that middle class which, after all, brought the sciences into being? We had heard of cases in which the high school diploma proved a positive obstacle to admission to a college, and we inquired of the woman minister about this curious form of discrimination. She reassured us that the situation would settle down and improve as soon as there was more room, more institutions, more qualified teachers. Things were in the making, in the process of transition. The primary task was the breaking up of the class state. Our disturbed sense of justice had to rest content with that.[116]

There were other indicators of indoctrination and even more serious coercion, and both authors attempted to put them in sympathetic perspective *without* apologizing for the regime. None of these threatened their basic impression of what was truly valuable. In describing numerous receptions in small towns, Mann tried to remind readers that their similarity with Nazi pomp and circumstance was merely superficial:

> There were flags and inscribed streamers across the streets. Municipal bands sounding their brass. There were Mayors and teachers with classes and toasts. . . . On

> occasion I found that the outward forms of 'popular democracy' exhibited a fatuous resemblance to Nazi stage managing. Yet it must not be forgotten that the international youth song which was sung constantly is a song of peace, with a refrain that runs: 'Friendship will conquer.'[117]

This effort to assert an important difference from the fascist past did not involve explaining substantive actions that actually violated (or may have violated) human rights. Mann *did* inquire "discreetly" into the plight of detainees at Buchenwald, though he was not permitted to visit the camp. He was told that only a third of the inmates were held for "overt activities against the new regime," and he believed the high death rate was mainly caused by their being the lowest priority in a situation of continuing food shortage. Trying to avoid apologetics, Mann wrote: "It is a doleful picture. Let us hope that it is not worse than it is painted."[118] Fraenkel's justification of the "midnight removals" of German skilled workers from the Soviet Zone, however, went a step further. In the following passage, we see the same concern of the activist authors to quell unfair Western suspicions. But at the same time, there is a clear effort to talk about *real and possible mistakes*, without ruling out possible coercion.

> Heaven knows the Russians are not exactly trusting by nature, and their suspiciousness, encouraged by recent history, is frequently nourished afresh, which in turn makes them employ methods apt to provoke yet more reaction. Take the case of the "mass deportations" earlier this year when Berlin went wild with the story that many thousands, that night, had been picked up at a moment's notice and deported to Siberia. In point of fact, a few hundred specialised technicians had been take to do some jobs near the Oder which, many months earlier, they had been contracted to do. Whether or not they had signed under pressure, I do not know, but the fact remains that they were picked up at night, thus creating the exaggerated rumours which found only too willing listeners and disseminators. I asked a prominent Communist . . . why pick them up at night? Why not send them a note: 'With reference to their undertaking of such and such a date, would they please report at *Stettiner Bahnhof* next week at such and such a time?' I got the surprising answer that, if so much warning were given, no man would report, and they would nip across the Zone border. I do not know if they would, but the Russians think so and act on that assumption, and the resulting rumour-mongering obviously

> tends to confirm and strengthen their suspicion. They are well aware (and resentful) of the panicky fear they inspire in most 'Western Germans,' particularly those with a 'bourgeois' background.[119]

Of course, Fraenkel could have admitted that the broader history of unpredictable Soviet behavior in the occupation surely played as great a role as mutual suspicions. He surely knew of the infamous mass deportation of October 1946, involving many thousands of scientists and skilled technicians, which inspired fear and uncertainty throughout the Soviet Zone, though in fact the "removal" of them and their families was by and large humane and nonviolent, if sudden and, for the most part, unexpected.[120] But all the same, the passage is not an attempt to glorify the Soviets or paper over their misdeeds. If anything, Fraenkel's take is a kind of *handicapping* of the Soviets' conduct -- ie. a granting them a greater latitude than the Western powers given their recent experiences and the current geopolitical situation. This sort of strategy would become a favorite not only of sympathetic visitors regarding the SED's actions, but those who later found some popular appreciation for the regime.

Another leftist sympathizer of 1949 used "handicapping" to asses the *economy* of the Soviet Zone during the Berlin blockade. Peter de Mendelsohn, also representing the *New Statesman and Nation* at the spring Leipzig Fair, formed the rather remarkable conclusion from the Zonal exhibitions that the economy had turned a corner and was growing again.[121] At a time when the Western counterblockade showed no end in sight, he used the expression "making the grade after all" to suggest, however vaguely, that the Soviet Zone was outstripping the grim forecasts of Western critics. But "making the grade," was apparently not obvious unless one gave all due consideration to the Zone's different starting points and available opportunities. Given how inauspicious both had been -- due to heavy reparations, dismantling, and lack of Marshall aid -- the situation could not be fairly com-

pared on an equal basis to the rest of Germany. "Making the grade," then, actually meant simply *providing the basics*, and residents of the Zone could take pride that they had achieved it "solely [by their] own strenuous efforts," -- even if there was a noticeable lack of quality when compared with the West. It also meant that "incessant coaxing coupled with persistent political indoctrination" had been needed to produce the results.[122] This passing remark suggested a similar admiration for the social revolution (if not corresponding sensitivity to its possible drawbacks) to that expressed by Fraenkel and Mann, even if the author's focus was otherwise rather narrow and technical. This is important to note because aside from Fraenkel, no leftist author dug deeply into the issues of real, increasing political coercion and the corresponding growth of popular apathy. Indeed, He was also the only visitor after Mann who continued (and struggled) to defend the social revolution, at times by narrowing his focus to reports on major industrial building projects -- such as the new steel town Stalinstadt.

In the interim, Mann, because of his stature as a public intellectual, faced harsh criticism both in West Germany and the U.S. Letters to the *New York Times* were *all* negative, criticizing his unwillingness to "choose sides" and renounce Communism. One author accused Mann of allowing his vanity to deceive him: the warm reception offered in Weimar might have contrasted with Western criticism, but the latter was a sign of freedom, not lack of respect for higher culture.[123] To these American critics, what was at stake in the Soviet Zone was not the dignity of the "old world," but the very survival of free thought. All these letters seemed to take for granted that Western Europeans would naturally not mind both indebtedness to and supervision by the U.S. in the face of the "Soviet threat."[124]

The Western German media was equally scathing. They chastised Mann in parti-

cular for saying nothing about the internment of innocent persons at the former Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald. Eugen Kogon, a prominent postwar liberal Catholic intellectual, and at the time editor of *Frankfurter Neuen Presse,* criticized Mann for forgetting that Germans had no choice as to what zone in which they must live and therefore lacked any real autonomy. Unlike Mann during his exile in America, Kogon argued that East Germans had no refuge "in the German language" from the harsh reality of occupation," suggesting that the Mann should have dared to engage the regime politically at Weimar, rather than restricting himself too readily to "culture."[125] What the West German media seemed to want from Mann was a strong personal denunciation of Buchenwald, which he refused to give. In his own defense, Mann argued that to complain to the East German authorities would have accomplished nothing, since they had no say over Buchenwald in any case. Moreover, he insisted that his visit was *not* political, making silence the only appropriate course.[126] This, of course, was not entirely fair on his part, as Clark has noted, because in divided Germany both his visit *and* silence invariably had political implications. Clark argues that what his critics really wanted was a personal *statement of sympathy* for the Buchenwald inmates, if not a denunciation of the camp itself.[127]

Such a statement would actually have fit well with Mann's views as expressed in the *Times*, if not his official statements in Weimar itself. He wrote that his gracious reception by so many "ordinary Germans" was a sign of their isolation and fear of further "estrangement" from the West." He wanted to stress that visiting was ultimately better for them than principled boycotts. He also wanted the "nonconformist sections" of the population to know his visit was in no way a sign of "ideological support" for the regime. On the other hand, he clearly aimed to please the Soviets and the SED when he proclaimed at Weimar that individual liberty, justice, and human dignity could also be

preserved within a regime of "increased social obligations."[128]

And indeed, his *Times* report made the social revolution there seem rather less than "totalitarian domination." His defense of policies, if not the regime itself, were connected to his aforementioned hopes for common ground, both between the two Germanies and more broadly between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R, and while the Soviet Zone was hardly an example of "common ground," its arguable that to Mann, in the context of the Cold War, it seemed at least potentially an alternative to increasing polarization. Unfortunately, after this visit Mann for the most part avoided public life and public political pronouncements, and his reputation in West Germany did not improve until 1955, the year of his death. He never regained the sense of feeling at home in either part of Germany he had had before the Nazi seizure of power.

Those who criticized Mann's failure to deal with the mounting political coercion (and related popular apathy) in the Soviet Zone would have found only one leftist visitor after him that tried to do so frankly. That was Fraenkel, who continued to report from the young GDR up until the fall of 1954. Already in September 1948, however, his tone was dramatically different, as he struggled to support the social revolution in a changed political atmosphere. By chicanery he only revealed years later, Fraenkel got a rare opportunity to travel in Mecklenburg during the Berlin blockade.[129] His original silence about the obstacles he had to overcome just to enter the Soviet Zone, both in 1947 and 1948, seems to derive from efforts to remain in the good graces of Soviet authorities, but on the other hand his criticisms from 1948 on, as we will see, certainly could not have pleased them. His memoirs show even less caution, focusing on the anti-democratic nature of Soviet rule in Germany and the dictatorship which ultimately lay behind it. It seems Fraenkel, in retrospect, did not wish to be remembered as a defender of *anything* in the Soviet Zone and

early GDR, even though he did admit in his memoirs that the Soviets, as well as the Allies, were guilty of "poisoning the political atmosphere" in postwar Europe.[130]

In a Mecklenburg farming village he found fear and sycophancy, along with complaints about lack of implements, strict produce quotas, and decent housing. He found widespread political apathy as well -- that is, once a local friend assured villagers he was not a government informant. Farmers told him that despite having joined the SED, they had no interest in politics. It seemed that politically and economically, conditions were now far worse in the countryside than during his last foray into Brandenburg. But the most disturbing revelation in the village came from a father and son, at a brand new meeting hall where the man served as caretaker. Fraenkel noted the boy's criticism of "vocational classes of the new *Einheits-Schule*": he said he learned nothing useful there. True to his belief in the new schools, Fraenkel registered his disagreement with the boy's opinion, after which he recounted a chilling attempt by the father to distance himself from the son's remarks:

> . . . having sent the boy packing with an unmistakable threat of a good hiding to come, the father turned to me and said: '*Ich meinerseits bin in meiner Weltanschauung voll und ganz gefestigt.*' 'Ideologically sound' -- this was the dreary phrase used in the Third Reich whenever a little Nazi wanted to reassure his Party superiors. But what was even more depressing was the man's pathetically obvious anxiety to cover up the boy's *faux pas*, just in case the stranger might be a Party inspector sent to test him and to decide if he was worthy of his job as caretaker of the new meeting hall. . . . Of course the man didn't know us; and such is the general fear and suspicion that, had I not been accompanied by a friend born and bred in the district, I probably could not have got an honest word out of the peasants and others to whom I spoke.[131]

Behind all of this suspicion and self-policing -- all the more troubling to the author because it seemed to be learned behavior from the Nazi years -- was, of course, the increased tension and regimentation of life in the Soviet Zone due to the Berlin blockade.

Fraenkel blamed the currency reform (by which he surely meant the Eastern version) for raising prices in the Soviet Zone, and, unlike in the West, offering no compensation in better consumer goods. But he said nothing about the Berlin crisis, or the possibility of war. Instead of contemporary politics, or any other explanation for the new atmosphere, he seemed entirely devoted to finding any hint of genuine support for the land reform. The farmers complaints, as noted, were about the basics: getting needed supplies and housing and earning a living. So Fraenkel tried to shift them to more basic principles.

> After listening to many such complaints I told myself that farmers, at all times and places, are wont to grumble. If I approached this problem of land reform with any prejudice at all it was in favour of it, and, when meeting *Neubauern*, I put them leading questions, such as if their present difficulties were not overcompensated by the proud feeling that after all they were masters of their own soil. Only one said 'yes'—rather half heartedly, and obviously under the impression that one can't be too careful when talking to a stranger. Two or three just shrugged their shoulders, and two shook their heads and said they wished they were with their old master: then, at least, after a day's hard work in the fields they knew what they had earned, and they didn't have to sit down sweating over accounts and facing problems and responsibilities often insoluble.[132]

"Distressed" was how Fraenkel described his reaction to both their attitudes and predicament. He still believed that by dispossessing the Junkers and helping the "destitute land-workers," . . . "the Eastern Zone has scored over the West" with the land reform.[133] Yet he wondered if all the problems with sharing equipment and the (too small) size of the holdings meant that those who had argued for collective farms had been right after all. In this way, he questioned the tactics of the social revolution, but *not* its basic aims or essential justice.

From 1950-1954, Fraenkel was alone in the mainstream Western media in defending the social revolution. While an occasional British, American, or West German reporter or private traveler reminded journal or newspaper readers that there were some bene-

fits for ordinary workers in the GDR,[134] or that they took a certain pride in their "respectable poverty" (See Chapters Four and Five), only Fraenkel stood behind the ultimate goals of the socioeconomic policies of the young GDR. The setbacks of the regime were personally frustrating for him -- most particularly the growing popular apathy that seemed to peak in the half year after the uprising of June 17, 1953. He continued his self-conscious efforts to seek out successes and benefits for the working classes in the GDR, even though he often had to admit that many ordinary East Germans did not understand them as such. Eventually, he came to outwardly admit that there was *no genuine democracy* in the GDR, and wrote about repression and intolerance there as well. Yet it always seemed to him that the Western press exaggerated the negative, and that time would bring greater benefits to East Germans, and even a degree of democracy as well.

Of course, Fraenkel's reports cannot be taken as representative of a larger leftist views of the GDR in Britain, let alone Western Europe as a whole. Its clear that the mainstream left in the U.K. had written off the idea of cooperation with the Soviets by 1947 and the SPD, of course, even earlier.[135] What the reports *do* demonstrate is that a non-communist leftist with certain connections and fluency in German could visit the young GDR -- that is, with determination and persistence -- and report a complicated mixture of hopes and disappointments with the SED's attempt to remake German society. This was possible in part because there was much about the conservative restoration in West Germany that he could subtly attack at the same time, and therefore place the GDR within a larger, post-Nazi German context. The GDR, seen in this light, was not an ideal state and society, but to Fraenkel showed far more *potential to evolve* into one than did the Federal Republic.

And such potential was on exhibit in East Berlin in early 1950: in the production

processes of several state-owned industrial enterprises, in a "socially diverse" audiences for music and the theater, in the new, less hierarchical judiciary, and in the proliferating state-owned *Hilfsorganisation* retail stores, commonly known as the *H.O. Laden.*[136] All of these were for Fraenkel signs of progress -- and more progress needed -- as many of the benefits would have to wait for the future. For example, the state-owned stores were still too expensive for most East Germans, but because the higher value of the D-Mark made them cheap to West Berliners, their purchases would invariably bolster Eastern industrial productivity, thus gradually bringing prices down.[137] The judiciary, meanwhile, was becoming a more practical, less legalistic, and less archaic system than in West Germany. Fraenkel called both the judges and lawyers "amateurs," but meant it mainly as a complement, given their "common sense" approaches to issues of ordinary crime. He admired their willingness to maintain high standards and exhibit a "human touch" in their public service, though he admitted that unswerving "ideological reliability" was required by all.[138] Fraenkel went on to extol the fine arts in East Berlin and the unpretentious audiences, suggesting that performances there were better than in West Berlin, and more available to all social classes.[139]

But neither the "sound economic planning," nor more egalitarian legal proceedings, nor concerts for "the people" could assuage the author's frustration with the *lack of free thought.* In 1950 he dealt directly, though carefully, with the problem of political persecution, warning readers not to assume the worst:

> I have seen evidence of cruelty meted out in the East to real or alleged political opponents, to whom scant mercy is shown; but I have also seen evidence of wild exaggeration or sheer invention by 'refugees' seeking the cloak (and benefits) of political martyrdom as a welcome escape from petty crimes committed in the East. 'In the *Demokratische Republik* we have complete freedom of opinion,' one of the leaders told me as pompously as if he were addressing a mass meeting, 'but of course, whoever breaks the law by acting on opinions held to be criminal, is law-

> fully punished.' No doubt about this, where adults are concerned; no doubt either about the genuineness of the efforts to rehabilitate wayward youth--to say nothing about capturing the minds of the children.[140]

Fraenkel here cleverly mixes coercion and intolerance in with both positive policies and the machinations of regime opponents, as if asking his audience to both reject the state and sympathize with some of its efforts. The ultimate reason to do so, however, was, as noted, the implication that the Federal Republic offered no just alternative. In the following passage, he sounds *even more skeptical* of the Eastern regime -- making it difficult to imagine that this is the same state he praised in a companion piece -- but he is quickly distracted by the remaining strength of Nazism in the West. What set Fraenkel off was the possible meaning(s) behind the uniform of the *Junge Pioneere* (Young Pioneers, the East German Communist childrens' organization):

> I remarked to my guide that the blue shirt and Boy Scout scarf looked much nicer than the Hitler-Youth uniform. I was sternly reminded that this wasn't a uniform at all. Just a blue shirt, *das Ehrenkleid des Arbeiters*. But the uniformed minds--what about them? *And what about the West, where the young are being taught by the old Nazi teachers--all back now, more truculent than ever after "de-Nazification"?* . . . I hate to think of the youngsters, East or West. Germany's future rests with the young men, Nazi or otherwise, who fought and are still sick to death of war.[141] (emphasis added)

Did Fraenkel think the young generation would ever truly support the social revolution? All that can be said for certain is that his hopes waxed and waned, reaching their lowest point during his visit of October 1953, not quite four months after the suppressed workers' uprising of June 16-17. This visit occurred in a period in which the SED implemented the "New Course," relaxing political pressure on the small business people and believing Christians, increased production of consumer goods, and abandoned practices of dramatically raising work quotas, all in an effort avert further unrest. But the visit also marked Fraenkel's first mention of the regime's propaganda, which so many critics of the

era deplored. As he surveyed the audience at an East Berlin rally for the fourth anniversary of the GDR's founding, he blamed the regime's nonstop anti-Western tirades for the overwhelming apathy all around him. Each and every one of the regime's "socialist measures" was shadowed by such propaganda, and the population seemed downright fatigued. That fatigue suggested to Fraenkel not simply discontent, but the question of the regime's basic legitimacy. There were flags, bunting, and fireworks at Marx-Engels Platz, but none of it could hide the obvious problem:

> . . . it was the mood of that crowd--the very thing that could not be organised--that I found so shatteringly revealing. They were well enough behaved, to be sure, but I have never seen a crowd so utterly and obviously bored and indifferent. They stood and ambled around in small groups, talking office and family gossip while half a mile away we could see the circular stands of invited guests and Pieck, Grotewohl, Nuschke making their speeches. . . . We could hear them too, since huge amplifiers were all over the place. Yet, in well over an hour I did not see a single person paying the slightest attention to the placid stream of platitudes droning on and on. When Pieck had gratefully accepted his unanimous re-election to office the National anthem . . . was struck up, and naturally my two British colleagues and I stood at attention. We were the only ones. All around us I could not see one single person doing so. People just kept their hands in their pockets and ignored it. . . . Compared with my last visit to East Berlin a few years ago, I found the change in the mood of the people very remarkable. I used to think that a substantial minority--say 30 per cent.--were genuinely in favour of the regime. I doubt now if it is as much as 10 per cent.[142]

They seemed to have lost any hope that their living conditions would ever improve either. He believed this primarily explained the increasing flight to the West -- his first mention of that problem as well. He also blamed bad living conditions for the much larger "pilgrimage" so many East Germans were making to West Berlin for the so-called "Eisenhower packets" -- food parcels distributed by the U.S. authorities to discredit the SED regime.[143] To him, both flight and collecting the food were signs of utter despair over *material* circumstances, because both the job prospects in the West and the contents of the food par-

cels were so unappealing. He spread the blame to both sides for the 2 million who risked harassment and even imprisonment for the food parcels, accusing the erstwhile Allies of waging the Cold War on the stomachs of innocent civilians. But he would not consider either flight or the claiming of the parcels as *political acts*, despite the apparent low estimate in which most East Germans held their regime.

No, for Fraenkel material difficulties and "problems of presentation" sufficed to explain the flagging support for the SED. It would be another year before he could admit that the GDR had become a dictatorship. But doing so allowed him to implement a new strategy, an effort to view the social revolution "from below," as created by the workers themselves. Fraenkel visited a place that seemed far from the propaganda and dictatorial control of the SED, and his hopes for the regime were somewhat revived because of it.[144] At Stalinstadt, the new steel town on the Oder river, there was less sense of production as part of a grand scheme of the party to raise living standards (eg. Fraenkel's take on factories in East Berlin four years earlier); rather, the workers -- due to a combination of political thaw and demand for their skills -- had seized the initiative, and could now, in turn, support the regime because they had a say in it.

Not that the town didn't seem a model of socialist planning, even regime generosity: it had a wealth of social services -- facilities for all levels of education, for entertainment, and a *Kulturhaus* "complete with a substantial library."[145] But perhaps the best advantage to Stalinstadt was what the regime had *not* accomplished, the lack of the "sickeningly monotonous and obsequious propaganda slogans which deface street corners in other cities, towns and villages."[146] This suggested a relative independence, a kind of new direction. In the following passage, experiencing Stalinstadt allows Fraenkel to openly denounce the regime even as he rekindles faith in it:

> I have no doubt that the majority of [Stalinstadters] are for the regime, and too happily concerned with their own thriving community to be aware of the hollowness of the much-abused word Democracy in a country where "elections" are so bogus as those stage-managed the other day. And after all, the Stalinstadters--and for that matter all of the citizens of the "Democratic Republic"--can let off a good deal of political steam by grumbling about parish pump politics and about shortcomings in local administration and their own place of work. They can grumble to their hearts' content, and they can even get things done and have an inefficient boss sacked. That sort of criticism--to say nothing of the much publicised *Selbstkritik*--is now not only permitted; ever since the June 1953 riots it is positively encouraged by the authorities.[147]

Here, the regime is as illegitimate as a year ago -- perhaps even more so -- and yet the social revolution has new life: the New Course had unleashed possibilities for new dialogue, criticism, and, among the party cadres, soul-searching (ie. *Selbstkritik*), all of which produced greater possibilities -- if as yet no real democracy -- than Fraenkel had found on any previous visit.

In viewing the New Course "from below," Fraenkel did not simply recover hope: he anticipated a line of post-1989 research about the relation between the East German state and society. For in the above quote the author has identified what was described in the Introduction as a process of "negotiation": in which regime plans and projects were decreed from the center, only to meet resistance and counter-demands from various groups in the population, most particularly factory and collective farm workers, which in turn forced the regime to adjust and revise its plans.[148] But while Fraenkel hoped the process would be *integrating*, perhaps ultimately even *democratizing*, we have seen that later scholars focused on just the opposite -- the regime's need to constantly adjust its plans ultimately caused its destabilization -- the ultimate weakening of central control and popular estrangement from the regime. Of course, that outcome could hardly be guessed in late 1954. Whether the New Course would turn out to be merely a shift in tactics or a

genuine change of strategy, Fraenkel's "take" on Stalinstadt suggested an alternative scenario in which economic growth and industrialization could create a political process based more on some sort of "co-determination" -- compromises between workers, supervisors, and functionaries in planning the production -- rather than more adversarial "negotiations." Elsewhere in Saxony, he found (or else judged from observation) signs that socioeconomic system was providing more of a basic sense of security, or barring that, a willingness of working people to carry on in it and accept their lot.

Like other leftists, most of whom visited years later, Fraenkel's "hope" was not manifest so much in defense of the regime as investigation of its *actual impact* on the population. Assuming the reading public in the West knew about the "unpleasantly coercive aspects" (in however exaggerated form), he tried to demonstrate that many of the regime's institutions had a just and humane bent, despite its unfortunate demands for ideological conformity. And clearly the policy changes of the "New Course" expanded the former while at least somewhat reducing the latter. Though Fraenkel admitted the actual impact of the recent relaxation *outside* Stalinstadt was more to *reduce opposition than build popularity*, in a companion piece he found first-hand evidence of a new satisfaction among workers with life in the GDR that previewed the findings of both sympathizers and more neutral observers in the late-1950s. In the following passage, a skilled worker he met in the Saxon resort town of Bad Schandau helped him make the case for the beginnings of a better life for the East German working classes.

> I had a significant talk with a 60-year old skilled worker in the building trade, on holiday with his wife. He hadn't had too happy a time either in the Weimar Republic or in the Third Reich--too much work or none, plenty of worries and little enjoyment. Things hadn't been too good at first, he said, in the Democratic Republic, but now they were improving. For the first time in his life he had spare cash to buy, and leisure to read, good books, and to go to concerts and operas. For the first time he was enjoying a real care-free holiday. 'Before turning in, I have a

> last glass of beer,' he told me 'then I usually find my wife fast asleep. For the first time in all these many years I find her face happily relaxed.'[149]

Fraenkel also defended the land reform (again), and chatted briefly with a farmer who, though not in a nearby collective farm himself, was clearly not against it, and did not feel unduly burdened by state production quotas either. Fraenkel updated earlier findings on educational facilities, teachers, and books, all of which continued to improve, but remained possessed of an "ideological slant." He also described "impressive" facilities of the FDJ -- feudal castles made over into "youth homes," and a group home for juvenile delinquents. Both facilities of combined political bias with earnest attempts to improve young lives. Fraenkel was not so much reserving judgment as describing the slow development social and economic institutions -- hoping, despite all ideological and provisioning problems -- that they might yet evolve into the basis for a "better Germany." But in this last reports of 1954, he had finally ceased dancing around the problem of dictatorship. However, it was the apparent new leverage of the skilled workers at Stalinstadt that allowed him to do so.

But its also clear in the final passage of his last report that Fraenkel continued to support reform *from above*, which, in spite of all the drawbacks, suggested a hopeful future. Making one final "plug" for the land reform, he wrote:

> Whatever grumbles and grievances there may be--and when was a peasant ever satisfied?--this is an act of State which no one in the rural districts of the Democratic Republic would wish to see reversed.[150]

While its true that *any* attempt at balancing the merit of "socialist achievements" with the coercive core of SED rule could leave any Western visitor open to the charge of abetting Soviet domination (and indeed many West Germans and Americans believed that even visiting the GDR itself implied tacit approval), its important to note that the leftist sym-

pathizers (if not the activists) were describing developments in a relatively fluid period. Despite the increasing tension in Europe, at least until the spring of 1955, as noted in the Introduction, the future of German division was not certain. However insoluble the "German problem" may have appeared in this time, the idea of a permanent division remained unlikely, and therefore, leftist appraisals of the Soviet Zone and early GDR invariably involved comparisons of the regime to the Anglo-American occupation and Federal Republic, respectively. And, rather surprisingly, there was more to credit the GDR--from a social welfare standpoint at least--than might have been expected, given the distance the *organized* West European left was putting between itself and Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. But the observations of Fraenkel and Mann were in not so much transgressions of that "distance" because at the time, the GDR was yet permanently established in the Eastern bloc. They, along with Warburg and de Mendelsohn also approved "some socialist achievements" while *not* apologizing for the Red Army or praising the SED or the antifascist bloc. Indeed, "the problem of dictatorship" was never far from the center in these accounts -- with the exception of the more technical evaluation of de Mendelsohn. That dictatorship, however, assumed frightening proportions of a handful of anticommunists "detractors" who visited the GDR around the same time as Fraenkel. The relationship between the writings of these authors and the rightist activists we discussed previously will concern us next.

The Ideological Enemy: Anti-Communist Travelers and the Early GDR: 1950-1954

The founding of the GDR, needless to say, was part and parcel of the most tense period of the early Cold War. It is therefore not surprising that the almost hysterical attacks on the Soviet occupation by rightwing activists were a prelude to similar, if somewhat less

urgent attacks on the new East German regime by other anticommunists. While the "sympathizers" just discussed tried to concentrate on progressive and humanitarian reforms (while usually not ignoring repression and discrimination in the process), their anti-communist counterparts placed the coercive aspects of the regime at center stage -- sometimes with rather obvious exaggeration. Of the four best examples of these political motivated detractors, we can be certain that only two, American authors Norbert Muhlen and Joseph Wechsburg, actually traveled in the GDR proper -- that is, beyond Berlin.[151] Another American, journalist Wellington Long, based his attacks on second-hand information from refugees or other regime opponents in West Berlin,[152] while a British pundit known by the pen name Ignotus, was entirely unrevealing about his sources.[153]

The fundamental anti-communism of all these authors, rooted in a totalitarian conception of the East German dictatorship, means they were ideologically much more in step with the rightwing activists than were the leftist sympathizers with their activist counterparts. The principle difference on the right -- perhaps the only one of importance -- was that the detractors *no longer forecast war*. Otherwise, as noted above, their message of the planned total control of all East German livelihoods and all "hearts and minds" was both consistent *and* consistently covered by mainstream publications, receiving far more attention than sympathetic or pro-Soviet views from the left. Clearly, public opinion in the U.S. and Britain was far more familiar with evaluations of the GDR that stressed the flight of refugees, the militarization of the inner-German border, growth of the Stasi and new People's Police, and pressures on East German Christians, than the social welfare and (limited) material benefits of the "social achievements." The detractors could indeed be referred to as "mainstream rightwing" authors, who created a picture of a paranoid, menacing regime, determined to root out all opposition, end all economic indepen-

dence, and perhaps most importantly, win over the young as a means to "win the future" in Germany. And while this picture clearly had some basis in reality, they exaggerated actual events and trends, so East German Communism could be placed on par with Nazi Germany as an enemy -- one that was apparently even more threatening (and disliked) domestically.

The two earlier writers, Muhlen and Ignotus, were the most confident in the eventual defeat of the "totalitarian" communists, but an underlying worry dogged them nevertheless. The latter two, Long and Wechsburg, however, bemoaned the apparent and growing permanence of the regime, offering little hope for change. To them, the years 1952-4 seemed to be witnessing the gradual victory of the "totalitarian" state. Despite the common ideological framework of all the authors, however, only Muhlen directly compared the regime with the Nazis, sounding much like Werner Knop in the process. For the others, the Nazi past was largely off the subject and far away, even if Long and Wechsburg were occasionally reminded of it. The totalitarian interpretation of dictatorship meant that for all of them the GDR (and by implication, its Nazi predecessor) was ruled entirely by fear and terror. "Socialist achievements" did have some appeal for workers, but the vast majority of the population had to be bribed (with career opportunities) or black-mailed (through political pressure) to be held in line. This meant that unlike the activists before them, who described a relentless drive for *expansion*, these authors believed the danger had been turned almost completely inward, the goal being not simply a social revolution, but a transformation of the inner psychology of every East German.

Muhlen, German-born and the most prolific writer of this group, had an intimate relationship with recent German history, and broad knowledge of contemporary developments as well.[154] He visited the GDR sometime in the fall of 1950, and his scathing criti-

que was published in the conservative Jewish-American monthly *Commentary*. But neither this article nor his subsequent treatise on the state of both Germanies, published in 1953, contained any explanation of how he entered the GDR, nor any other references for many events and experience that only an eyewitness could have recounted in such detail.[155] Muhlen called the SED, its cadres, and government administration "the New Nazis," and in his book, the GDR was "the Red Reich." These names were highly revealing, for not only did they suggest that many of the same unscrupulous and brutal people occupied the lower and even middle levels of administration in both states, but that the majority of the German people had the same relationship to both regimes -- one based quite simply on fear and oppression. In this he agreed with all the other rightists in this chapter.

But unlike the others, Muhlen was more deeply immersed (and apparently invested) in the history of Germany and the aspirations of the German people. He stressed that the American public had largely misunderstood Germans and their history, arguing that the enemy had never been the alleged authoritarian, apolitical character of the German people, but the menace of totalitarianism itself, which did not reside in a national group, but in political regimes which sought to expand their power and suppress individual freedom.[156] That menace had gripped Germany, however, because of traditions which renounced "democratic citizenship." Since the early 19th century, Muhlen claimed, Germans had been taught to conceive of politics as existing on an elevated plane, with the state a guarantor of private security and prosperity, but otherwise "none of their business."[157]

Muhlen implied -- because to him it seemed so self-evident -- that totalitarian regimes reduced popular agency to nothing, indeed destroyed "civilian courage" and other values altogether. He called the SED "the New Nazis," not so much because they enlisted

former Nazis (though he pointed out repeatedly that they did), but because they sought to control and render completely passive the entire population to the goals of the regime, even more completely than had the Nazis. While the latter had left some room for private unpolitical quiescence, the Communists tried to organize every moment and every thought. In this reading, neither regime was desired, and the German people were not "totalitarians," nor fatally flawed in their character, but the *Unpolitische (the unpolitical).*[158] Unfortunately for the U.S., though, this did not make the Germans democrats either.

Muhlen's "New Nazis," then, were a rogue and unrepresentative minority who, like their predecessors, would oppress the majority for their own ends. Despite a number of astute observations about postwar German behavior, and an honest and thorough critique of U.S. occupation policy as well, Muhlen was unable to understand German dictatorships (both past and present) as involving any kind of limited consent, popular appeal, or 'negotiation." Also, like the rightist activists, he saw no difference between Hitler's expansionist goals and the presumed blueprint of the Soviets for Europe. The separation of "totalitarians" from those over whom they ruled allowed him (and his contemporary Ignotus, about whom more presently) to forecast their ultimate failure, but neither of them seemed to take much comfort in these predictions.

Perhaps this was because in the end, they had to deal with the seemingly contradictory appeal of the regime to the young. Terror and social pressure alone could not explain their enthusiasm for the regime's goals. Indeed, according to Muhlen, the regime's generous support of higher education was a part of massive effort to win them over by appeals to *self-interest.*

> The dictatorship is . . . generous in handing out bribes and rewards to its youthful followers. And since those who refuse to cooperate forfeit their right to higher education or specialized training, their chances to make a living, and also their sense of personal belongingness, the regime may yet succeed in gaining the alle-

giance of a minority, for a time at least. . . It may be safely assumed that there are more sincere supporters of the Soviet system in the age group under twenty-five than among any other group. . . . Among the members of the Free German Youth with whom I discussed the proportion of "real Communists" in their group, replies varied from 10 to 25 percent. Among the students of the universities of Halle, Leipzig, Griefswald, Jena, and Rostock, the proportion of 20 percent was given with amazing unanimity.[159]

As the final sentences suggest, this strategy could indeed backfire, however much implied coercion was built into the education system. But lack of "real Communists" was not the biggest problem young people presented the SED. Muhlen believed that the young also provided the *only serious opposition* the regime need worry about. He described individual, minor acts of resistance by a small number of young people, "such as painting 'F' signs (for *Freiheit*) on house walls, distributing leaflets in public places, . . . and . . . [efforts] to hamper and frustrate dictatorial injustice in individual cases where they can help the victims."[160] He assumed they were deterred from doing more by the threat of lengthy prison sentences -- a group of young people under twenty had recently received years, rather than months, for distributing handbills demanding free elections. But since participation, as the example of education suggested, did not guarantee *loyalty*, he believed, rather hopefully, that many more youths were joining the mass organizations to "to obstruct from within."[161]

When Muhlen wrote of the ideological goals of the regime, however, he sounded much more like the rightist activists, and, as we will see, the other detractors as well. Muhlen and Ignotus (who wrote on the dilemma of Christians especially) both described efforts to stomp out independent thinking that suggested -- following Knop's argument -- the ultimate weakness of the SED vis à vis the population, and ultimately, in Germany as a whole. Though they wrote in a period of relative tolerance, more than a year before the SED launched the "building of socialism" (in May 1952, the drive to completely socialize

the economy and turn up the pressure on all resisters), they portrayed the SED as bent on total control of East German society, ultimately because of their fear of both the West and free thought in general. Here again too was Knop's sense of the *irrationality* of Communists -- Germans in this case -- in facing the "class enemy" of the capitalist West:

> To fence off the minds of East Germans from contamination by the West, the Communists have invented a new ideological crime, the so-called crime of 'objectivism.' 'If we have a bottle marked 'cyanide'' said East Berlin's Municipal Education Director, Ernst Wildangel, 'everybody believes us, and nobody wants to first taste and make sure its really cyanide, or he would be dead. But, as concerns the products of Western thought, everyone wants to taste them first, and after a person has done so, it's too late: he is lost.' The sordid crime of 'objectivism,' punishable by re-education in a labor camp and expulsion from the party, can be committed by reading a Western newspaper or listening to a Western broadcast; the culprit may even be a convinced Communist who only wants to hear what the enemy says so as to be better able to fight him--that does not matter. 'True objectivity' can only be found in the works and words of Marxism-Leninism; its contradiction, 'objectivism,' is a Western capitalist trick to poison the mind. . . . At present, the theory of 'objectivism' underlies all education, which is nothing but a political assault against the main enemy--the open mind--and a political instrument for producing 'planned men (*Planmenschen*) after the Soviet pattern,' to quote a recent speech of the East German foreign trade minister, Georg Handtke.[162]

The passage is meant to stress the SED's domineering, puritanical obsession with control, and yet it also suggests their fear of how easily the "unenlightened" population could be led astray and forever "lost." Muhlen would eventually stress the opportunities for "turning" the inquiring minds among East Germans. Ignotus, meanwhile, suggested any even more dangerous pressure against believing Christians. Over two years before the regime began its direct persecution campaign against them, he claimed it was out to deny the basic means of subsistence to those who would not renounce their Christian faith. He assumed Christians already faced an "either or choice" between their faith and "Marxist materialism." Unfortunately, Ignotus did not back up his claims of heavy pressure with specific examples. In fact, he presented no hard evidence at all, but substituted an arche-

typical, "anti-communist (and Christian) German," for the *actual* experiences or views of East Germans of Christian faith. Both this approach and the timing of the report (before the spring 1952 start of the "building of socialism") cast doubt on whether Ignotus actually ever visited the GDR; rather it appears he reduced rather limited "skirmishes" of the early years to a simple morality play.

The author's archetypical German believer was a male head of a household, caught between the demands of the state and his duty to family and conscience. The trap set for him by the regime was the high prices in the *HO Laden,* designed, so the author believed, to deprive him of all his possessions. The only way to avoid deprivation, then, was to "volunteer" for work in the uranium mines near Aue. In effect, one either starved or worked "for the Russians." Naturally this caused a crisis of conscience for this "German":

> *He is a German who hates communism.* If he goes to Aue he is working in a communist war industry, and is haunted by the question: 'I make a sacrifice for the benefit of my family, but is it right to strengthen the Russian armament?'[163]

We then learn, however, that this German *could* avoid Aue; in some cases, that is. Instead he could join and conform to the expectations of the *Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* (F.G.D.B., Free German Labor Union Federation -- the trade union organization controlled by the SED). But this too was "aiding communism," and refusing to join meant being odd-man-out at one's factory -- facing every possible discrimination, first in line to be dismissed, and if so, again having no recourse but Aue. "To keep aloof means ruin for themselves and their children."[164] This was certainly true for anyone determined to not cooperate with the regime in *any* way. But this was not the attitude for most Christians at the time, let alone the broader population. As we will see in Chapter Four, contemporary West German visitors, even Christians wary of the regime, described most East Germans as working in a variety of trades and labor without a serious "crisis of conscience." This

view, to an extent, even set Ignotus apart from Muhlen: recall that in latter's view, opposed young people had no problem participating, regardless of their private convictions.

But for all rhetoric of indoctrination and manipulation, in the end Muhlen and Ignotus basically agreed that the regime was not as strong as it appeared. Its attempts at total control produced the very resistance and hatred that could be harnessed in the overall struggle against Communism. Considering the situation of the East German population as whole (rather than just the young) brought Muhlen to the conclusion that with Western assistance, truly effective opposition to the regime was possible:

> The large majority of East Germans form that only too frequent modern community where a general inner dissent from, and rejection of, the government, is veiled by outward consent and loyalty gained through blackmail and terror. Much as people hate and reject dictatorship, they fear it in the first place. While they cannot liberate themselves, they do want liberty. They can be counted on to fight with the West against Soviet totalitarianism to a far greater extent than they assisted the struggle against the Nazis . . .[165]

Ignotus, on the other hand, believed the regime would be weakened by the power of *inner resistance* to totalitarian claims. His sweeping claim for a popular "crisis of conscience" emboldened him to make even more sweeping claims about the power of the East German churches. They were the key, he believed, not simply because they could shelter dissenters, but in aiding a mass resistance he believed was growing in response to the regime's pressures. The following quote reeks of idealism and exaggeration, and were it published in West Germany, arguably reckless advice. But here the East Germans are liberating themselves, apparently with no regard for their own needs or even well-being.

> One cannot serve two masters. Christ is the truth, not materialism, Marxism, or the National Front. One cannot maintain one's spiritual liberty, or live honestly and peacefully, if one becomes a member of the National Front or contributes to the *Volkssolidarität. But one can live without human security*; one can live on the

> base [sic] of forgiving sin, on the base [sic] that Christ has overcome the world. . . . *The churches not only shield their members, but the whole people, because all are threatened alike by communists.* They shield them spiritually, and if necessary, also materially. . . . Because the spiritual forces, the belief in humanitarianism and human values, are growing under the oppression, things in the Eastern zone of Germany are not so bad as one thinks. *But this holds only for those who are prepared to take all risks, who on account of their religious belief are delivered from all anxiety and agony, who are able to give up everything and feel free to face the worst.*[166] (emphasis added)

Ignotus here rather suddenly moved from the seemingly inescapable power of the Communist police state to its underlying, seemingly fatal weakness. Though Muhlen saw the fight against communism as built on participation rather than outward defiance, he also believed in a kind of ultimate weakness that the West could exploit. To him, the GDR presented the best opportunity in the Soviet bloc for an "ideological offensive" because it bordered directly on the West (and equally important, on West Berlin), and its people could make direct comparisons of the two systems. But the apparent contradiction between "fatal weakness" and "inescapable clutches" was never resolved by either author.

For reasons he did not fully explain, Muhlen feared that the Soviets might yet win the struggle for Germany -- and gain control of all Western Europe as a result. Clearly, however, part of the reason he worried was that he believed, like Brandt, that many in the West were still too concerned about the threat of Nazism, which by 1951 meant the presence of former Nazi party members in the Bonn government. The concerns of these "Western liberals," about former Nazis were preventing a united front with the West Germans against the Soviets. Muhlen argued that the apparently fragile relationship be-tween the U.S. and West Germany would ultimately make or break the Western alliance. Following Brandt he implied that the Nazi past must be put aside, a position many in the contemporary American news media found quite dangerous.[167]

> Germany is our test. On the bloodless battleground which extends from West Ger-

> many to East Germany, America's strength in the world-wide contest with the Soviet power is being explored. The paradoxical fact is that, while Soviet Russia has failed in the totalitarian experiment of East Germany, it has nevertheless a good chance to win the contest finally over the democratic idea despite the latter's more successful results in the test. In this contest, America's own vital interest is at stake. If it loses Germany, it will--in addition to the perhaps decisive weakening of its defensive power by the loss of German raw materials, manpower, strategic air space--lose the great battle of ideas. Either Germany shall in the future be an independent free country integrated with a free Western Europe, or America shall have to live as a beleaguered continent in an isolation enforced upon it by its enemy against its own will. . . . Only if West Germany lives and works as a democracy can it defend itself against totalitarianism from within and without, and be an outpost and ally of America. To help Germany grow into democracy, America must show its faith in freedom and its faith in man--in this case its faith in the German people as well as in the values, the moral strength, the great purpose of America.[168]

Whatever the undercurrents of American imperialism (or, America as global policeman), Muhlen clearly placed the burden of saving Western freedom *with Germany* (or West Germany--like other authors we have discussed, he wrote as if the two were interchangeable). Only the West Germans could attempt to win over the East Germans to democracy -- somehow. The scenario is eerily similar to Britain "standing alone" in the summer of 1940 against the Nazis, and once again, the U.S. must give any aid available. "Germany" must find its own way, not an especially reassuring situation given the authors criticisms of the *Unpolitische* in the Federal Republic.

Muhlen's writings were full of exaggerations, overdrawn characters on both sides of the iron curtain, and worst of all, a very oversimplified characterization of the nature of both Nazism and the East German dictatorship. But his restrained insistence that the Germans must find their *own* way struck a chord of rather unexpected moderation. So too did his sense of the Cold War in Europe as a long and patient struggle, rather than a potentially explosive confrontation. In the end, he was not as radical or alarmist as any of the ac-

tivist authors, and in a sense, Ignotus was not either. If the latter's council of total resistance and inner strength through faith sounded extreme, it actually was measured and reasonable in comparison to his co-Christian, the American GI, who it will be recalled had no real advice save to pray in the face of approaching catastrophe. Ignotus, despite his reduction of life to a morality play, and all resistance to martyrdom, did, if read correctly, suggest a kind of personal empowerment in the face of danger.

But of course, Muhlen and Ignotus were also witnessing a *different moment* in the history of the Cold War in Europe than the correspondents and commentators of Chapter Two, one that was objectively less tense. Two Germanies had been established without bloodshed, and though both vowed to overcome the other, there appeared no *immediate danger* of armed conflict, even in Berlin. The "totalitarians," one might say, seemed to have lost "round one," and the two authors were, in a matter of speaking, assessing their remaining strength for the coming rounds. If war seemed less likely, their readers needed to know that given recent history, no one ought to assume that the struggle was anywhere near completion, or that the West should cease to be vigilant.

The following spring (1952) a second American, Joseph Wechsburg, offered another variation on the the totalitarian nature of the GDR -- this time for the more moderate audience of *The New Yorker*. All arguments about the international repercussions of the regime were gone -- it was neither a menace nor an opportunity, but simply a dreary and hyper-controlled corner of the Soviet empire. In this reading, the SED were not "New Nazis" ruling with terror, but rather supervisors of a gigantic police state, where the *threat* of coercion was equally or even more important than the actual thing. The oppressive atmosphere was made all the worse by the ruined and neglected Leipzig cityscape, the kind so many visitors described in the early years.

> . . . the prevailing color scheme was gray. The unpainted houses looked gray, the battered railroad station looked gray, and so did the dusty stretches of urban ruins and rubble --Leipzig was heavily bombed during the war. Nor did the drab clothes of the men and women and children provide any contrast. I had the feeling of being immersed in the same depressing gray atmosphere that I shall always associate with my visits in the last year or two to Prague, Budapest, Belgrade, and Warsaw. It is the bleak grayness of the Orwell state. The only injection of lively color into the dreary backdrop was the blue shirts of the *Volkspolizei*, of whom there were a great many around, directing traffic, studying license numbers, guarding official building, making the rounds of the beerhouses—always watching people.[169]

References to the capitals of the "people's democracies" of Eastern Europe, to heavy bombing, and the "Orwell state" were signs that Wechsburg would not link contemporary Leipzig to its Nazi incarnation, nor the GDR to the Third Reich in any direct way. What seems to set off this new era of "totalitarianism" is simply its poverty, its masses of police, and its lack of popular support, all of which also could explain why the West need *not* be mortally afraid of it. But ultimately, Wechsburg was less confident about the inevitable failure of the GDR than Muhlen or Ignotus.

While he seemed to agree with them that the majority of the young were not easily swayed by the regime's benefits, he also worried about the growth of the state's power: both economically and politically. He was one of the first visitors to note that clever youth could use educational opportunities as a springboard to profitable careers in West Germany. He also heard from a young worker who, though he liked some of his on-the-job benefits, nonetheless despised "political education," read Western newspapers, and admired American technical know-how -- "The youth is nevertheless a Westerner," he wrote.[170] Yet the regime's propaganda machine and its productive capacities (as represented at the Leipzig fair), spoke of better long-term prospects, and the permanent loss of the old Leipzig he had once known.

Like Muhlen and Ignotus, Wechsburg believed the propaganda of the regime was

often disbelieved, but indicated that for a large number of the population, so much disinformation was hammered into their consciousness that it had come to be accepted as fact. They example he gave was fabricated stories about the "evil deeds" of the U.S. Army in Leipzig at war's end. Worse still, more skeptical East Germans had come to doubt all information *from the West* as well, believing it to be nothing more than counterpropaganda. Wechsburg was also the first on the right to suggest that the popularity of the regime among workers was growing -- he believed the improvement in the food supply over the past year was the main reasons, even though supplies were still lower, and prices higher, than in the West. But all of this was rather unimportant to the author because the true nature of the GDR was *colonial*, "Soviet Germany" as he put it, and that was the message of the Leipzig Fair.

> The fair itself, which I visited one afternoon, followed the pattern of similar political road shows in Prague, Budapest, and Poznan. It was a sad comedown for the once great Leipzig Fair, which was first held in 1250, as a tribute to free trade. The Soviet Union overshadowed the show, with a display of machinery, industrial products, Zim and Zis automobiles, and hundreds of gadgets that had been manufactured in Soviet A.G. plants in East Germany. In the satellite's exhibits, there was the same official emphasis on heavy machinery, and there were the now standard photographs of machines rather than the machines themselves, and the customary abundance of charts, graphs, percentage figures, and banners bearing workers' ardent promises to fill and exceed their quotas. . . . The arrangement of the exhibits in the big hall reflected--like the seating arrangement of an official dinner party--the esteem which the members of the Cominform family are currently held in Moscow. Last year, the exhibits of Red China and North Korea were the favored ones. . . . Dominating the entire hall was a red plaster statue of the Best Friend of the German People [Stalin], twenty-five feet high. Classes of school children were led in, and stood before it in silent admiration. They didn't bow, as Japanese children used to bow before a statue of their Emperor, but there was the same look of almost religious devotion in their eyes.[171]

In terms of pure economics, the author was not completely fair to the German regime, ignoring that the East German state *did own* the majority of socialized industrial

plant. He was completely dismissive of the remaining private firms as well -- for the author, the fact that most of the production of both state-owned and private industries went to the USSR or the other bloc countries made their actual status meaningless. Politically, of course, the statue of Stalin said all that needed to be said. But the indoctrination of children into his "cult" was bothersome enough that Wechsburg raised it anew as he described an evening dinner in the famous Auerbach's Keller in downtown Leipzig, a standard haunt of foreign fair visitors--and apparently Soviet secret agents as well.[172] He met an old female friend there, a native *Leipzigerin.* Through their conversation Wechsburg suggested a stronger future for totalitarianism in East Germany than any of his rightist predecessors:

> I mentioned to my friend the distress I had felt that afternoon at the fair as I watched the children being led into the presence of Stalin's statue. 'Ah, yes,' she said. 'Who has not felt that distress? People of our age, after all, have seen both sides of the coin. We can reason and judge and condemn. But the children!'[173]

Oddly enough, only the leftist Fraenkel had been this worried about "young minds," but he had also indicated that not all those who had known "both sides of coin" -- meaning left- and right-wing dictatorships -- were instinctive opponents of the new regime. But Wechsburg left this, his only reference to the Nazi past, aside very quickly, and used his friend's comments to conclude with an emphasis on *change*, rather than continuity.

> 'People in the West can't imagine what it means to be spied on, day and night. You get to a point where you don't even have to turn your head--you know instinctively that somebody is watching you. Then you *do* turn your head, and, sure enough, there he stands, just as you had sensed. In those happier days of the past, when I could afford to dress well and use make-up, I felt flattered whenever I caught a man staring at me. Now I have no clothes I'm not ashamed of, and when a man stares at me, he isn't thinking of me as a woman--he's thinking of me as a possible enemy of the state.'[174]

Its difficult to believe that the "happier days" of which the woman spoke had all occurred *before* 1933. Rather, its apparent that she was speaking more generally of the

interwar years, with the border between past and present being more recent. That border was not necessarily the founding of the GDR or even the start of the Soviet occupation, but more likely the point in the middle of the Second World War when the Nazi regime began to organize the society for total war and more strictly regiment daily life, while Allied air raids were becoming a regular occurrence. This is an attitude consistent with oral histories of daily life in the Nazi era: Germans not designated as enemies of the Nazi regime or in military service have reported a striking sense of normality to their daily lives, perhaps as late as early 1943.[175] Wechsburg's friend could have been expressing a similar kind of myopia, but the reading audience is left with the impression of the GDR as a dramatic interruption of a much less sinister past. Earlier in the piece, to be fair, Wechsburg did date the "happier days" of Leipzig -- as *he* experienced them -- as the mid-1920s, the occasion of a previous visit, and long before the Nazi seizure of power. But nonetheless, the impression of the new regime as far more menacing, and much less like its predecessor, pervades the article, most dramatically in the adulation of the statue of Stalin, who is made to appear as a kind of Asian demi-God.

Wechsburg's personal opinions of the Nazi past remain unknown,[176] but his overwhelming sense of fear and alienation when confronted with a Soviet-style regime suggests he saw little relation between the GDR and its predecessor. The SED were not the "New Nazis" that Muhlen had described, nor were they creating Knop's "red *Wehr macht*." They could not be defeated by "ending appeasement" as the activists had prescribed, or even via the patient, determined inner resistance advocated by Ignotus. Wechsburg was outlining a kind of "new totalitarianism" with much more overwhelming displays propaganda, police surveillance, and worst of all, a secular religion honoring Stalin. But perhaps even more disturbing than all of it was growing support among the working

classes--Wechsburg was the only rightist visitor of the early years to even acknowledge it. What could be done if this "gray Orwell state" actually *was* garnering some popular support? No advice was given on how the West could combat this new power; no gaping weakness seemed easily attacked.

Two and half years later, despite intervening pendulum swings of the "building of socialism," the June 17 Uprising, a wave of reprisals, and the easement of the "New Course," another mainstream U.S. correspondent presented a nearly identical picture of the GDR in *Time*. Indeed Wellington Long, *Time's* bureau chief for Germany, may have even made life there seem more Orwellian than Wechsburg! This was because his sources were refugees and Western visitors exclusively. Outward appearances, as well as mass media and all public entertainment, were basically unchanged: gray remained the dominant color scheme, implying not simply poverty and lifelessness, but fear and silence as well. Though Long had to admit there was somewhat less political pressure on small shopkeepers and peasant farmers, he tried to make their independence seem as ultimately meaningless as Wechsburg had:

> In the villages, signs proclaim how much of the various quotas each farmer has or has not delivered. Woe to the laggard. . . . If a free farmer or private businessman has any self-respect left, the Communists take it away from him come election time. They make all private businessmen hang out signs saying: 'I Vote Communist.'[177]

Long titled every subsection "Red . . . " using the adjective to describe every aspect of life. The most foreboding of these titles, "Red Brainwashing," actually did *not* describe efforts to convert the middle classes or other dissenters to communism. Instead, it focused on surveillance -- and the fear of denunciation created by the multitudes of spies and informants. "Contrary opinions" could never be safely expressed without first "looking over the shoulder," a familiar behavior described by Wechsburg and other detractors.

There was also mention of factories and cities renamed to reflect "the new values of socialism"; of more imports coming from Eastern Europe than the West; and of East German music lovers ignorance of a prominent Israeli violinist. Certainly these were all signs of growing separation from the West, and even *intimidation* and *manipulation*, but hardly indicated *mass indoctrination*.

What *did* sound like "brainwashing" followed under the heading "Red Children." Like visitors of both the Left and Right, Long left the impression of a creeping threat to young minds. Unlike Wechsburg, however, he focused on the alleged "family-weakening implications" of the GDR's programs for children, implying the contrast with dominant Western ideals of domesticity for women and childraising unencumbered by bureaucratic government interference.[178] But once again, the regime could be seen attempting to consolidate its power by working on the young -- the "easiest targets" -- with the goal being a "mental makeover":

> The children, in classic communist fashion, are pulled away from parental influence. During the summers, most are sent for six or eight weeks to camps run by the Communist Party. Those who are home spend a great deal of time in state nurseries, because most mothers have to work at least part time. When they leave school, places of apprenticeship usually are so far away that the youths no longer can live with their parents. And a parent has to be careful in coaching the child, for he might unconsciously or even consciously tattle.[179]

For all his other exaggeration and overdramatization, Long was very much in the mainstream of contemporary reporting on these issues. Indeed, the fear of children implicating grumbling parents, intentionally or accidentally, was a standard trope of West German travelers up until the mid-1960s.[180] At the same time, however, referring to everything in the GDR as "red," to the regime as a "communist police state," and basing conclusions strictly on opinions of regime opponents and outsiders when East Berlin -- if not the GDR proper -- was open to virtually all Western visitors, was unnecessarily reducing

the scope of lived reality -- including the potential for both resistance *and* support. Long and *Time* went beyond all previous rightists in their emphasis on almost total helplessness of the population, as if they wanted to match the U.S. government's official position on all Eastern Europeans as "captive peoples." But Long also followed Wechsburg in turning away from forecasts of the imminent failure of totalitarianism to warn of an increasingly dark future. His only example of active resistance was small, and he made it seem all the more so in comparison to the staying power of the Soviets.

> Occasionally the East Germans win a quiet victory over their masters. For instance, a few years ago, the movie houses showed only Russian films. But even a state-owned enterprise likes to break even. So after years of empty houses, the movies began showing fewer Russian and more domestic films. . . . But that is a pinprick compared with what the Russians will accomplish if they stay for a generation--as well they may.[181]

While none of the authors had any idea how long the struggle with "the Russians" would go on, Wechsburg and especially Long were coming to terms with a semi-permanent communist presence in central Europe, all the while making the "new totalitarianism" seem stronger, ever more completely in charge in East Germany, but *not* immediately dangerous to the West. No sign of failure, even the potential for failure, was suggested by either one of them. In some sense, then, their growing dread takes us back to the first rightist activist, the Catholic GI, who saw the Soviets' brute force as seemingly unstoppable. Meanwhile, on the other hand, Muhlen's and Ignotus's belief in the Soviets ultimate *weakness* links them to the other activists, Brandt and Knop. All of them argued that determined resistance (albeit from different quarters) would ultimately weaken them further.

Yet all of these authors, as they speculated about the true potential of the "new totalitarians" in East Germany, shared more important similarities than differences. All

saw a yawning chasm between rulers and ruled. The only exception to rule by force and intimidation was support from a few bribed or misguided youths and easily manipulated children. What changed most over time was neither the assumed agenda of the rulers nor the attitude of the ruled, but rather the *confidence* of the authors in confronting the apparently continuing vitality of SED rule. Their core assumptions about communism -- in essence that it was based entirely on bribery, intimidation, and "thought control," showed no sign of any evolution. In effect, what they believed made the Soviet Zone and GDR "totalitarian states" was the *intent* of the rulers alone -- their intent to make a total claim on the lives of population, regardless of the population's response. And this explains, in part, the oversimplified characterizations of the East German population in most of these accounts; generally they were reduced to a mass of victims, with only a few determined resisters, despite moments of seeming contradiction in which the authors confidently assumed that the adult population completely rejected the regime. The central problem, of course, was the younger generation. As Wechsburg emphasized, their maturation under communism could complete the "mission" of the communists within a generation.

Leaving this question of ultimate outcome aside, however, the on-going uncertainty among these authors about the regime's ultimate strengths and weaknesses, and the interrelated question of its relationship to East German society, suggests the pitfalls of "totalitarian" as an accurate designation for either the Soviet occupation or the early GDR. I have referred in the introduction to the reaction in recent years *against* totalitarian theories (which gained strength once again after 1989) in describing the East German dictatorship. For present purposes, it can argued -- and here I follow Corey Ross's objections to the use of the term to define the GDR -- that the group of anti-communist authors under discussion used the term freely because they assumed that the regime's *intent*, its stated

aims and goals, namely to control and direct East German society, suffice to define its *impact on the ground*. Because of this, they gave limited consideration to the mechanisms of rule (ie. the cadres and mass organizations operating on the ground), and even less to the social conditions and cultural world which the regime sought to transform.[182] The difficulties of implementing regime policies and popular reactions against them hardly exist at all in these accounts, because the authors are so fixated on the aim to control the society and the seemingly overwhelming police powers which backed it up.

But the ultimate success or failure of the regime's aims was indeed played out *within* East German society, at the intersection of the regime's claims and popular counter-claims, as we have discussed previously. Measured by results *as well as* intent, then, it is arguable that the GDR and USSR are *not* best defined as totalitarian, even if both were clearly forms of modern dictatorship. The rightist visitors were arguably too seduced by the seeming omnipresent power of the communist dictatorship, surely in part because of the era of dictators and military cliques that had unfolded over the past 30 years. Terror and military might in the era of the Two World Wars must surely have suggested that the powers of ordinary people to resist or even influence modern dictatorships were puny indeed.Yet their own experiences, as noted, suggested a more complicated picture. Resisters, apparently, could sometimes remain aloof from the regime *or* join its organizations to undermine it from within, the latter group somehow avoiding any complicity. Victims, meanwhile, seemed to include many who *willingly* complied, or others who won occasional "little victories," *as well as* the threatened middle classes and independent farmers. Yet in the end, all of these authors wanted to stress that the broad population was *basically helpless* to influence their fate -- they were not, in any meaningful way, "negotiating" with the regime.

Because of this understanding of rulers and ruled as fundamentally separate, rather than engaged in any sort of political give-and-take -- and politics therefore narrowly defined as a practices monopolized by the party and more or less imposed on the society from above -- these authors implied or expected only two ultimate possible outcomes: either the complete absorption of the society into the state, or the total rejection of the state by society. Viewing the development of the GDR as such a polarized contest between state and society was a replication of the polarized contest of the Cold War itself: the people behind the iron curtain, like the Western alliance in front of it, were struggling to contain the expansive power of the ideological enemy. From the perspective of Western outsiders in the early years, this was not an obviously inaccurate characterization. Truly there was much more to the "grayness" of the early GDR than harsh living conditions: coercion and implied coercion were increasingly obvious, and political conformity was usually the price for a share of the rather meager benefits the regime could offer. But hints abounded of processes not easily contained within the conceptual framework of totalitarianism, most importantly the willingness of some workers to accept "socialist achievements" -- if not communism itself -- as ultimately just and progressive, an attitude that would be more noticeable to later, less partisan visitors.

Conclusion

The Soviet occupation of Germany provoked numerous warnings from politically partisan visitors and other commentators. Regardless of political affiliation, however, a core group of them feared that radical socioeconomic and political change in the Soviet Zone could lead to destabilization and even war in Europe if the Western Allies did not respond appropriately. Among these authors, the left urged cooperation, and in some cases,

even emulation of Soviet policies. The right, however, urged diplomatic confrontation and preparation for the worst. The left believed unrepentant Nazi elements, particularly in the West, would stir up conflict if not dealt with in short order, and as time passed, that they might even lead a nationalist revival there; the right, meanwhile, showed little concern for nationalist revivals in *West* Germany, but some of them believed the Soviets could win over unrepentant Nazis in their efforts to gradually destabilize West Germany and perhaps enlist them to launch an invasion of the West.

The organizing assumption beneath all of this alarm was the apparent indivisible reality of the German nation. Like the newspeople of the previous chapter, these authors could not fathom a lengthy division of Germany, but unlike them, they wove tales of looming disaster as the prospect of semi-permanent division grew more likely. The fear of World War III in Europe in the context of German division in those early years is easily forgotten today, and most particularly, the way it was shaped, even partly created, by recent experiences of war, conquest, and genocide. A sense of the general worry and uncertainty created by the German divide, if not imminent catastrophe, was expressed at the end of November 1950 by the German constitutional scholar H. R. Külz:

> . . . a Germany split in two will always remain a source of unrest and trouble in the centre of the Continent. The Soviet zone, [sic] less than a hundred miles distant from the Atlantic coast, will continue to constitute an encouraging spearhead or base for further Communist expansion; and here I would refer to the warning example of Korea. It is not a united, but a Western Germany reduced to her present areas, which will always and, inevitably, look eastward to the Soviet zone and therefore, be only a weak member in any Western European or Atlantic community. So I hope that, both in the interests of my country and of a free and peaceful world, a united democratic Germany, including the Soviet zone, will soon take her place again in the family of nations.[183]

Though this view assumes the German people had "learned their lesson" in defeat, or, alternatively, were not responsible for the war and genocide inflicted by the Nazi regime, it

points to *both* Soviet expansionism and embittered German revanchism as potential dangers -- the latter more so than the former.

But what of more shrill warnings of the activists? Were they guilty of exaggerating the threat of a third world war? The heightened sense of danger surely seems "over the top" in retrospect. Yet we know today that in certain months, most particularly around the start of the Berlin blockade and airlift, the possibility of war was fairly clear. We also know that detonation of the first Soviet atomic bomb and the communist victory in the Chinese Civil War, both coming in late summer 1949, sent shockwaves throughout the West.

On the other hand, we can see in these accounts that with the exception of Werner Knop, contemporary rightist visitors and observers believed that the Soviets *lacked* a master plan to conquer Western Europe, something recent research into Soviet archives has confirmed.[184] More often, the Soviet threat they described was *creeping* -- undermining Western Germany through its hopeful appeal to the poor, the desperate, and frustrated nationalists -- though still very much explosive. The problem with such predictions, of course, was that they ran counter to deep anti-communism of Western Germans, symbolized by their total rejection of the overtures of the SED's Western ally, the KPD. Similarly, leftist claims of a Nazi-inspired war also seem overblown. While there can be no doubt that denazification in the Western zones was anything but swift and sure, and that the Western Allies gradually moved towards policies of conservative and capitalist restoration after the Byrnes speech of September 1946, there existed no organization of determined former Nazis capable of destabilizing the occupation. In the years that followed, nationalist revivals were clearly worrisome to the Allies, the French in particular, but there is certainly a difference between nationalist attitudes, even unrepentant ones,

and danger of a Nazi revival, let alone World War III. Leftist concerns over rising nationalism and "recartelization" never quite went away in the 1950s, as debates over a West German army, and later, West German atomic weapons, demonstrate. However, even if the U.S. had no compunction against enlisting German industry in waging the Cold War -- for example to supply U.N. forces in Korea in the early 1950s -- their allies in Western Europe were in no hurry to remilitarize West German society, nor bring German military forces into the defense of Western Europe.

Seen in this context, the emphasis on *imminent war* from both the Right *and* the Left seems somewhat misplaced. This focus on *danger*, therefore, appears to have been, in part at least, a strategy to focus attention on the given author's contribution to the debate on the future of Germany: to rivet attention on seemingly vital and "inside" information. This was not, however, sensationalism for its own sake: the situation in Germany was clearly laden with *possible danger*, if not the signs of an apocalypse. The mental project of normalizing Germany as a place divided between such radically different economic and political regimes -- particularly given the level of armaments on both sides -- was not soon accomplished. As we will see below, even as late as the mid-1960s the iron curtain remained strangely unnatural to many Western travelers.

In the end, the left abandoned the dire postwar warnings first. Aside from the creeping danger Fraenkel implied during the airlift in Mecklenburg, the leftists turned away from a sense of urgency after the early years, replacing it with a limited number of "updates" on the progress of the Soviet Zone. A number of such reports would follow those of Fraenkel beginning in 1955. In them, the GDR became a competitor for the Federal Republic rather than a source of danger and destabilization. The leftist and left-leaning reports on the GDR continued to be *demystifications*, but *not* warnings. Rarely, however,

did such authors hide their frustration with the oppressive atmosphere that continued even as living conditions improved. Rightists, meanwhile, though fewer in number as the 1950s progressed, continued to characterize the early GDR as a terrible threat to its *own citizens*, and the continuing flow of refugees to the West through West Berlin reinforced their growing sense that the regime was not simply weak, but teetering. In both cases, the GDR was never the international threat the Soviet Zone had been, despite Muhlen's provocative characterization of the German Communists as "the New Nazis." Rather, the problem of flight and the related questions of domestic stability and economic progress were always at the forefront.

Both leftists and rightists were guilty of distortion. In efforts to influence Anglo-American policy in Germany and vis a vis the Soviets, they made developments in the Soviet Zone, in its relation to the Western zones, seem far more threatening to the West than they actually were. Unrepentant Nazism and Soviet interests in expansion were both clearly issues in postwar Germany, but Soviet actions in their *own* occupation zone were for the most part *not* decisive in creating the Allied impasse of 1947, the Berlin blockade and airlift, or the eventual creation of two German states.[185] While the social revolution of the Soviet Zone raised eyebrows about the Soviet's ultimate intentions, it was launched in an early period when *all four powers* were taking unilateral actions in their respective zones, and the leaders of the American military government in Germany were more concerned with efforts of the French to block any and all moves toward a unified administration in Germany. Over the next two years, it was ultimately Soviet demands for heavy reparations from the *Western Zones*, and American concerns about the foothold they might gain in the *Ruhrgebiet* while procuring them, that convinced the U.S. government to pursue the policy of a separate West German state. The material and political costs of repa-

rations from the Western zones were simply deemed too high, given the central role the *Ruhrgebiet* had to play in rebuilding Western Europe.[186] Developments in the Soviet Zone itself were relatively tangental in the process, even though they became cause for increasing concern.

From 1949 on, both the left and right continued to overgeneralize at times, and engage in certain wishful thinking at others. On balance, however, the left was more willing to look at the early GDR at least somewhat objectively. The region was not as suitable for a "Western offensive" or massive internal disobedience (at least before 1952) as some rightists had it, but it was also not as oppressive and dictatorial as others made it out to be. The left, meanwhile, was correct in asserting that a genuine humanitarian viewpoint lay behind the efforts of the new regime, but was overzealous in attesting to economic improvement and increased satisfaction, from which only a minority were benefiting.

The future of post-Hitler Germany remained wide open in the early years, while the possibility of two German states enduring side by side seemed -- from the vantage point of that moment -- highly unlikely. The very early trend toward radical socieconomic reorganization in the Soviet Zone, therefore, inspired a great deal of hope, fear and speculation. Certainly these changes would have an enormous impact on the Western Zones, and in particular on U.S. and British thinking about Germany's future, but what sort of impact? Rightists and leftists both believed the impact could be tragic, albeit for very different reasons. Ultimately, the pleas of a handful of agitated traveler-writers tell us more about the mood of the times than about events leading to the division of Germany, but that mood should remind that the postwar era was not a simple change from one international conflict to another. Rather, the sense of crisis and danger on the one hand, and hope and possibility on the other, intermingled throughout the early postwar years. The "Euro-

pean crisis" did not end with the Nazi surrender, only to reappear two years later with the announcement of the Truman doctrine or the failure of the Moscow and London Conferences. Similarly, leftist hopes of a more peaceful and democratic future for Germany did not evaporate with the onset of the Cold War, any more than rightist fears of "totalitarian" mind control suddenly materialized with the creation of one-party rule in the Soviet Zone. The recent experience of Nazism and war helped construct and explain a good deal of what Western observers encountered in the Soviet Zone, and the recent past also factored into arguments about the future of Germany--into prescriptions, some of which became "roads not taken" by the Allies. Just as German nationalism was inextricably intermingled with the "Soviet threat" in the 1948-9 (Chapter Two), throughout the postwar period, Western perceptions of the Soviet occupation and early GDR were colored by memories of the Third Reich -- "memories" meaning, in actuality, differing fundamental assumptions about the meaning and functioning of the Nazi dictatorship.

[1] One writer and critic who has made a sweeping condemnation of the Western European left, arguing that it "not only discouraged criticism of the communist regimes but was often quite energetic in their defense," is Tony Judt. See Tony Judt, "The Past is Another Country," in Istvan Deak, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt, eds., *The Politics of Retribution in Europe* (Princeton, 2000), pp. 315-6.

[2] Naimark devoted considerable space to the impact of rape not only on its victims, but on the capacity of the SED "to build support for a communist future." (p. 133) He described the impact of the rapes, which may have ultimately numbered as high as two million, as creating a "collective anguish" that lasted far beyond the founding of the GDR -- perhaps even into the post-unification years. Naimark also remarked on the efforts of Communist intellectuals, including the famous dissident professor Wolfgang Harich, to downplay the importance of rape in the larger scheme of wartime and postwar destruction and suffering. While conditions varied depending on the willingness of local Soviet commanders to maintain discipline or even report activity, border towns, seaports, and transportation crossroads were the most dangerous areas for German woman, and rape and violence against continued throughout the entire occupation period. Eventually, the Soviet command banned fraternization altogether, strictly confining Soviet troops to bases and instituting harsh punishments for rape convictions. See Naimark, pp. 69-140. The author himself suggested that the total numbers were very likely in the 100,000s, though he included the estimate of 2 million (p. 133) from Barbara Johr, "Die Ereignisse in Zahlen," in Helke Sander and Barbara Johr, eds., *Befreier und Befreite* (Munich, 1992) p. 59.

[3] William Peters, *In Germany Now.*

[4] See http://www.wcml.org.uk/holdings/pandp_germany.htm. A contemporary book review said nothing about his party affiliation nor his rather obvious bias towards the Soviets, apparently because the author was rather impressed with Peters' analysis of the mood of the conquered population -- in Berlin, the Soviet Zone, and the British Zone as well. See E.J. Gough, "In Germany Now: A Diary of Impressions in Germany, August-Decenber 1945. By William Peters," *International Affairs* 23(3), July 1947, p. 418.

[5] Peters, p. 5.

[6] Ibid., p. 27

[7] Ibid., p. 43.

[8] Ibid., p. 88.

[9] Ibid. The author mentioned just before this that in a meeting with a friend, a judge who had been interned in a concentration camp, the two and several others had all concluded that the "Russians" had given more "advantages" to the Germans under their control than the other allies, and were doing only "mak[ing] the people do things which, in the long run, are in their own interests . . ." They also believed "individual excesses" had mostly ended, and that humane treatment was bringing the population slowly to a sympathetic view (p. 86).

[10] Gordon Schaffer, *Baby in the Bathwater: Memories of a Political Journalist* (Lewes, UK, 1996).

[11] Schaffer, *Russian Zone.*

[12] The quote is from Nettl, p. xiii. Nettl did cite Shaffer occasionally, as did a number of later writers. Despite the obvious bias, his was one of the only detailed firsthand Western sources of the early occupation. Another was Löwenthal, 1950. The biases of this ex-government official's account lay in the opposite direction, as Nettl noted on the same page. Yet Nettl was forced to use him as well, and more often.

[13] Schaffer, pp. 14-15.

[14] Ibid., p. 179.

[15] Jerome Davis, "Russian Germany--A Dissenting Report," *Christian Century* 65, January 28, 1948, pp. 108-110

[16] Ibid., p. 109.

[17] Ibid., p. 108.

[18] Peters, pp. 5-6.

[19] Ibid., p. 60.

[20] Ibid., pp. 61-2.
[21] Ibid., p. 62.
[22] To be fair, of course, there was a good deal of truth to his remark also. There was considerable belief among many rank and file SPD members that unity on the left, which only some sort of a merger could bring, would prevent the return of fascism, given that the Nazis electoral victories in the early 1930s gained was believed to have a primary contributor to electoral rise of the Nazis in the early 1930s helped pave the way for Hitler's rise to power. There has been a voluminous literature produced on the "forced merger" over the years, but Gareth Pritchard argues convincingly that many carrots *and* sticks were used by the Soviets to convince SPD functionaries to support the merger -- or at least, make public statements of "working class solidarity," but the KPD persuaded the rank and file. They swayed ordinary workers to their side by being better organized on the shop floors. Then those same SPD workmen put considerable pressure on the functionaries above them to go along. Though there was also consider coercion, and, as we have seen, the process was far from democratic, the rank and file's support must be factored in as well. See Pritchard, pp. 108-136.
[23] Despite their later, official view of the defeat of Hitler as the liberation of the German working classes, in the early postwar years the SED leadership, which had spent the war in exile in Moscow, was convinced that the German working classes, and the population in general, had been thoroughly Nazified and could not be trusted with democratic rule. Jeffrey Herf summarizes and quotes the views of Ulbricht, Pieck, and others regarding their resentment and bitterness, even their shame towards their fellow Germans in Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), pp. 13-39.
[24] Peters, p. 51.
[25] Schaffer, pp. 41-55.
[26] Ibid., pp. 42-3.
[27] Ibid., pp. 46.
[28] Ibid., pp. 47-50.
[29] Ibid., p. 51.
[30] Ibid., p. 54-55
[31] Davis, p. 108.
[32] The latter demand, along with an end to current production reparations, a unified government based on the federation of the *Länder*, and guaranteed regulations for political rights, had been made by the Western Allies at the November-December 1947 London Foreign Ministers' Conference -- well over a month before Davis's report went to press -- precisely because of their confidence that the Soviets would *not* accept them. See Eisenberg, pp. 353-362. Davis betrayed a limited understanding of the complexities of the issues, even if his basic hunch about U.S. reticence was correct.
[33] Davis., p. 109.
[34] As noted in Chapter One, Grossman found considerably evidence that the U.S. occupying force in particular increasingly became sympathetic to the "poor Germans." While Peters was clearly far too trusting of the Soviets, who, as we have seen, also began to urge the Germans to focus more on rebuilding and reconstituting their lives without deeper reflection on their own responsibility for Nazi crimes, his sense of their feelings of victimization, lack of reflection, and sullen self-absorption is clearly in the mainstream of both contemporary thought and later scholarly investigation.
[35] Peters, pp. 99-102.
[36] Ibid., p. 67.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Schaffer, p. 76.
[39] Davis, p. 108.
[40] Schaffer, p. 192.
[41] Schaffer, p. 192.

[42] Davis, p. 110.
[43] See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* (New York, 1994), pp. 55-177.
[44] George Kennan's famous "long telegram" from Moscow, sent to Washington in early 1946, and arguing that Stalin's fundamental insecurity at home impelled him to expand his power unless he was met with "unalterable counterforce," can be found in Barton J. Bernstein and Allen J. Matusow, *The Truman Administration: A Documentary History* (New York, 1966), pp. 198-212. It reached wider audience in the article X, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25 (July 1947), pp. 566-82.
[45] "Letters from Berlin," *The Catholic World* November 1945, pp. 135-142.
[46] Knop, as we will see below, was the last of three to visit the Soviet Zone, traveling clandestinely in late summer 1948, during the Berlin blockade. His travels were first published in serial form as Werner Knop, "I Prowled Russia's Forbidden Zone," *The Saturday Evening Post* December 11, 1948, pp. 15-17, 101, 103-4; December 18, 1948, pp. 30-1, 52-4, 58; December 25, 1948, pp. 24, 50-52; January 1, 1949, pp. 24, 51-52, 54. (Hereafter *SEP*) They later appeared in book form as Werner Knop, *Prowling Russia's Forbidden Zone: A Secret Journey into Soviet Germany* (New York, 1949). (Hereafter *PRFZ*)
[47] "Letters from Berlin," p. 137.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., p. 141.
[50] Brandt, p. 688.
[51] Ibid., p. 692.
[52] Ibid., p. 691.
[53] Brandt here was not speaking of the original plan of pastoralization advocated by U.S. Treasury Secretary Morganthau, but of continuing restrictions on production, reparations, and demolition of industrial plants. The speech was given several months after the inception of the new "Level-of-Industry Plan" of March 1946. It called for reducing Germany's standard of living to its 1932 level, not letting it exceed that of other European countries, and reducing industrial capacity (aside from coal production) to about 50-55% of its 1938 level. Because deteriorating East-West relations brought an end to important related exchanges of food and raw materials from the Soviet Zone for dismantled equipment from the Western Zones, and the mounting problem of mass starvation in the Western Zones, the plan was abandoned by the fall of 1946, and a new, more generous plan for Bizonia created the following summer. See Fulbrook, *Divided Nation*, pp. 156-7.
[54] Brandt, p. 692.
[55] Knop, *SEP* December 11, 1948, p. 16. This description of Knop's career was contributed by *The Post's* editors.
[56] Knop, January 1, p. 51; *PRFZ*, p. 109.
[57] "Letters from Berlin," p. 137.
[58] The text of Marshall's speech can be found in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947* vol. 3 (Washington, DC, 1947), pp. 237-9.
[59] Brandt, p. 690.
[60] Brandt, p. 692.
[61] The first Soviet atom bomb was not tested until late August 1949, approximately a year after Knop concluded his travels.
[62] Knop, *SEP*, December 25, 1949, pp. 24 & 50; The quote is truncated from a longer statement in *PRFZ*, p. 71.

[63] The returnees were described by one West German author as the "Gray Eminence," a term Knopf himself used specifically for Soviet Colonel General Vladimir Dekanzov, who he was told was the real force behind the winning over of the Nazi generals after Stalingrad. The Munich weekly *Der Ruf* described these young former *Wehrmacht* officers as "reliable," "brutal," "untouchable" new converts to socialism, though lacking any kind of leftist background. This allowed the writer to see them as a mirror-image of their former selves, fanatically engaged in a completely different cause, yet using the same methods as they had learned in the Third Reich. "Die Graue Eminenzen der Ostzone," *Der Ruf*, 3(2), 15 January 1948, pp. 6-7.
[64] The "National Committee" had originally been formed after the Nazi surrender at Stalingrad as a propaganda tool to demoralize the *Wehrmacht* and the German people with radio appeals to resistance. Its most famous member, General Friedrich von Paulus, had surrendered what remained of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad in early February, 1943.
[65] Knop admitted that the militia's existence was unsubstantiated. As for his additional claims regarding the planned 'red Wehrmacht,' there appears to be no hard evidence that former *Wehrmacht* "specialists" were being registered by police -- he mentioned pilots experienced in jet aircraft operation and army personnel who had worked with tanks and guided missiles -- and subsequently disappearing "for an unknown destination" (p. 88). It is true that returning POWs were being recruited in the summer of 1948 for the paramilitary Alert Police, which would become known as the "Barracks' Police" and ultimately form the basis of the NVA, and also true that former *Luftwaffe* and *Wehrmacht* officers were placed at its head, but their purpose was to be a "German auxiliary" for Soviet forces, not a strike force. See Naimark, pp. 369-374. The U.S. State Department's findings on the Alert Police a year later also suggests Knop's undue hysteria, noting in the fall of 1949 (over a year later) that its "military value is still insignificant and its political reliability untested." See "Office of Intelligence Research, Department of State, Report 4798.3," p. 3, National Archives, Record Group 59. Cited in Naimark, p. 374.
[66] See Chapter Two, p. 13.
[67] Knop, *PRFZ*, p. 139; *SEP*, January 1, 1949, p. 54.
[68] Ibid., *PRFZ*, pp. 106-7; *SEP*, pp. 24-51.
[69] Ibid., *PRFZ*, p. 107; *SEP*, p. 51.
[70] Ibid., *PRFZ*, p. 108.
[71] Stalin's reversal of rather lenient social and political wartime policies came as a great shock to most ordinary citizens who expected a further relaxation, possibly including an end to repression, censorship, and even the collective farms. See Elena Zubkova, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-57* (Armonk, N.Y., 1998).
[72] Knop, *SEP*, January 1, 1949, p. 54. The passage is drastically altered and the tone sightly moderated in *PRFZ*, p.p. 197-8, as Knop concluded his book not with warnings of imminent disaster, but of admonishments to the Western Allies not to "render defenseless" West Germany. In this shift of focus, the Soviet Zone was no longer a "malignant tumor," but instead a "festering sore," and a unified, pro-Soviet Germany seemed more an *ultimate goal* than a disparate, urgent necessity.
[73] "Letters from Berlin," p. 140.
[74] Ibid., p. 138.
[75] Brandt, p. 691.
[76] Ibid., p. 692.
[77] W. Glenn Campbell, Walter P. Falcon, William O. Jones (Chairman), "Memorial Resolution, Karl Brandt (1899-1975)." Viewable on-line at histsoc.stanford.edu/pdfmem/BrandtK.pdf.
[78] Brandt, p. 689.

[79] We have seen (Chapter 1, endnote 107) that recent research has cast doubts on the older view that Soviet denazification was more thorough than the Western zones. Not surprising also, is that over the years East German and West German scholars have disagreed about the primary motivations behind Soviet denazification. Eastern scholars have focused on the goal of a classless society and Western scholars on denazification as purges as paving the way for communist domination. Post reunification scholarship, however, suggests that its early end in March 1948 had much the same effect as its end in the Western zones not long after: namely, "that those not guilty of specific acts were able to avoid an 'inner moral confrontation' with their own behavior." Vogt, p. 15. The phrase "inner moral confrontation" is from Olaf Groehler, "Anti-faschismus--Von Umgang mit ein Begriff," in Ulrich Herbert and Olaf Groehler, eds., *Zweierlei Bewältigung: Vier Beiträge über den Umgang mit der NS-Vergangenheit in den beiden deutschen Staaten* (Hamburg, 1992), p. 31. And the reasons denazification was abandoned in the Soviet Zone in 1948 are basically the as in the Western Zones: the inherent conflict between the ideologically-based desire to root out Nazism root and branch and the practical demands of administration, the growing reliance on German-staffed review boards, and the ever-growing bureaucracy required to process all party members. These methods and exigencies meant that Denazification in the Soviet Zone, as in the Western Zones "*became a primary means of reintegrating (party members) into society.*" Vogt, p. 236. (emphasis added)

[80] Knop, *PRFZ*, pp. 84-85; *SEP*, December 25, 1948, p. 52.

[81] Ibid.

[82] "East Germany--I: A Look of Permanence," *The Economist* April 12, 1958, p. 125. More on this travel report will follow in Chapter Five.

[83] For the text of Wallace's speech, see Henry A Wallace,"The Way to Peace: Division of World between Russia and United States," *Vital Speeches of the Day* XII (24), October 1, 1946, pp. 738-741.

[84] See James P. Warburg, *Germany--Bridge or Battleground* (London, 1946). The views of Warburg's liberal circle are discussed in Thomas Reuther, "In Hitler's Shadow: American Images of Germany," in *TUSGECW*, p. 604.

[85] Warburg, *Germany, Key to Peace* (Cambridge, MA: 1953).

[86] Warburg, "Report on Germany," *New Statesman and Nation* August 10, 1946, p. 62.

[87] Reuben Peiss, "Report from Leipzig," *Library Journal* October 15, 1946, pp. 1443-1444, 1451. Peiss worked for the Library of Congress Mission in Germany, established in Frankfurt am Main in the fall of 1945 to secure and transport books and periodicals ordered by American libraries from German dealers before the war.

[88] Warburg, "Nation or No-Man's Land," p. 50.

[89] Ibid., pp. 44-53.

[90] Ibid., p. 50.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., p. 48. This was among the important details Warburg chastised Byrnes for not including in his speech.

[93] Heinrich Fraenkel, "In the Russian Zone," *New Statesman and Nation* August 30, 1947, p. 167.

[94] All this was important to note, because *New Statesman* readers would have recalled that a year earlier Fraenkel and his editor Kingsley Martin had had a rather harrowing incident with a Red Army NCO in East Berlin, which seemed to have shaken Martin more than Fraenkel, who did not write of it until many years later. For Martin's account, see Kingsley Martin, "A German Diary," *New Statesman and Nation*, April 20, 1946, p. 277. In those years, Fraenkel, as we will see below, made every effort to give the Soviets the benefit of the doubt. By the late 1950s when he wrote his memoirs, however, he had moved from somewhat pro-Soviet to rather more neutral, making the task of gaining entry seem somewhat harder, and stressing the potential danger of traveling during the mounting cold war. For his account of the detention with Martin, see Heinrich Fraenkel, *Farewell To Germany* (London, 1959), pp. 78-86.

[95] Fraenkel, "In the Russian Zone."

[96] Ibid.
[97] Denis L. Bark and David R. Gress emphasized Mann's sense of estrangement from and rejection of the German people after the war, suggesting he no longer desired to be an intellectual and cultural leader. See Denis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany: From Shadow to Substance*, vol 1 (Cambridge, MA, 1993), p. 162. The historian Gordon Craig argued that Mann was a predominantly apolitical intellectual *both before and after the war.* See Gordon Craig, "The Man Nobody Knew," *New York Review of Books*, February 29, 1996, p. 34. German historian Jost Hermand characterized Mann as retreating completely from public concerns to pursue purely intellectual ones in the postwar years. See Jost Hermand, *Kultur im Wiederaufbau, Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945-1965* (Frankfurt, 1989), p. 143.
[98] This is primarily the argument of Herbert Lehnert and Eva Wessel, *Nihilismus der Menschenfreundlichkeit: Thomas Mann's "Wandlung" und Sein Essay "Goethe und Tolstoi"* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991). Similar views of Mann as a playing the role of public intellectual, albeit with some reluctance due to his preference for literature over politics, can be found in the work of noted German historian and Hitler biographer Joachim Fest, and in a biography by Donald Prater. See Joachim Fest, *Die Unwissenden Magier* (Frankfurt, 1993), p. 19, and Donald Prater, *Thomas Mann: A Life* (New York, 1995).
[99] Mark W. Clark, *Beyond Catastrophe: German Intellectuals and Cultural Renewal after World War II, 1945-1955* (Lanham, MD, 2006), p. 116.
[100] Ibid., p. 117.
[101] Jack Raymond, "Mann in Germany after Long Exile," *The New York Times*, July 25, 1949, p. 3, c. 5.
[102] Clark., p. 115-16.
[103] Ibid., p. 116.
[104] This and the preceding phrase are excerpts from Thomas Mann, *Frage und Antwort: Interviews mit Thomas Mann, 1909-1955* (Hamburg, 1983), pp. 266-7. Cited in Clark, p. 116.
[105] Thomas Mann, "Germany Today: By Thomas Mann," *New York Times Magazine*, September 25,1949, VI, p. 14-15, 26, 28-30, 32.
[106] Raymond, "Mann in Germany after Long Exile."
[107] Mann, "Germany Today: . . ," p. 14.
[108] Ibid.
[109] "Nazi Resurgence Noted by Dr. Mann," *The New York Times*, August 13, 1948, p. 3, c. 8.
[110] One was A.J. Fischer, a British newspaper correspondent who visited the Soviet Zone in early summer 1949. See Chapter 2.
[111] Mann, "Germany Today . . . ," p. 28.
[112] Ibid., p. 29.
[113] Ibid., pp. 29-30.
[114] Mann was clearly *not* active among the European left intellectuals who blamed German capitalism for the Holocaust, and after 1945, broadened their position to a more general anti-capitalism, and therefore anti-Americanism. However, as the previous quote suggests, he *did* share with them hopes for a 'third way' in Europe, which the historian Volker Berghahn has suggested was conceived "as a means of salvaging the achievements of European 'high' culture and of preserving their own national or regional identity" See Volker Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold War in Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), p. 92.
[115] Fraenkel, "In the Russian Zone."
[116] Mann, "Germany Today . . . ," p. 32.
[117] Ibid., p. 33.
[118] Ibid., p. 32.

[119] Heinrich Fraenkel, "Berlin and the Russian Zone," *The Political Quarterly* XVIII (4), October-December, 1947, pp. 326-7. This is an expanded account of the same visit discussed in *New Statesman and Nation*. However, the concluding anecdote about a "friend" who returned to the Soviet Zone for its sense of purpose was removed. Fraenkel (or the editors (?)) replaced it with a call to the Soviet occupation authorities to permit "a more regular exchange of civilities as well as of mutual information..." (p. 330). The reference to deportations earlier in 1947 refers to one in a series of relatively small deportations of scientists and skilled technicians that followed a mass deportation in October 1946. The well coordinated "round-up" of skilled specialists involved in military research and development involved several thousand specialists and their families, most of whom had no advanced notice and signed contracts to work in the U.S.S.R. for various time periods -- usually several years -- either on the day of departure or soon thereafter. In the years that followed, there were no further mass deportations, but, as Fraenkel notes, fairly large groups were taken, often with little advanced warning. According to Naimark, throughout 1947 and 1948, additional specialists "were recruited, with both carrots and sticks, to move to the Soviet Union . . . ." But steps were also taken beginning in 1946 to revive scientific research within the Soviet Zone and integrate operations there with comparable institutes throughout the Soviet Union. See Naimark, pp. 228-233.

[120] Naimark describes the deportations of October 22, 1946, code-named Osoaviakhim, in pp. 220-228.

[121] Peter de Mendelssohn, "Leipzig Fair," *New Statesman and Nation*, March 19, 1949, pp. 271-2.

[122] Ibid., p. 272.

[123] "Ernest W. Wheeler, "Non-Communist," *New York Times Magazine*, October 16, 1949, VI, p. 4, c. 3.

[124] Additional letters critical of Mann were published the following two weeks (October 23, p. 4, c. 3; October 30, p. 4, c. 4).

[125] Kogon's critique appeared in *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, July 7, 1949. Cited in Clark, p. 118.

[126] Clark, p. 118.

[127] Ibid.

[128] The expression comes directly from the text of the Weimar speech. Parts of the original speech are translated in Clark, p. 116. It was originally published in Thomas Mann, *Ansprache im Weimar* (Weimar, 1949).

[129] Or so it seems. The report was originally published as Heinrich Fraenkel, "Mecklenburg Village," *New Statesman and Nation*, September 11, 1948, p. 210. over two months into the blockade. However, in his memoirs Fraenkel reported the trip as taking place in 1947. No month was specified, but the author indicated in the text that it came *before* the London Foreign Ministers Conference, which began in November. Certainly, however, the events in the report, as we will see, suggest the more repressive atmosphere of the blockade period, and moreover, as we will also see, the author referenced the currency reform: "in the East no less than the West the currency reform has wiped out small savings and created a shortage of cash . . ," by which he could have only meant the reforms of late June 1948 (the West followed by the East). Finally, *New Statesman and Nation* was not likely to publish a correspondent's report that was at least 11 months old. As for the chicanery involved, it was not fully explained, but somehow Fraenkel got permission to go by getting an East German newspaper to issue him a press pass. He traveled without any other identification, leaving behind his Western press credentials and betting that border guards would be sufficiently impressed by the pass. Fortunately they were. See Heinrich Fraenkel, *Farewell to Germany*, pp. 91-97. Not a word of these schemes was published in the original report, very likely because if Soviet or East German authorities learned of them, Fraenkel would not have been allowed to visit again.

[130] He used this term in Heinrich Fraenkel, *Farewell to Germany*, p. 97.

[131] Fraenkel, "Mecklenburg Village." The same passage appears in *Farewell to Germany*, p. 95, with some minor adjustments. More interestingly, however, is the change in the section just before the quote regarding the Einheits-Schule. In 1948, Fraenkel referred to it as "a most remarkable achievement"; in 1959, it had become merely excellent in theory (p. 95).
[132] Fraenkel, "Mecklenburg Village."
[133] Ibid. This comment was *not* included in his memoirs.
[134] One example was *New Statesman and Nation* contributor Basil Davidson, as he considered the extent to which both Germanies had consciously broken with the past. Davidson quoted a Social Democratic city counselor from Stuttgart (American Zone) just returned from a visit to Dresden in June 1950:

> I am quite convinced that in the East Zone they are doing everything they can, first and foremost, to improve the lot of the working people. . . The social conditions there are basically different from ours. These social changes in the East cannot simply be denied existence by closing our eyes to them.

Basil Davidson, "A Different Germany?" *New Statesman and Nation*, June 17, 1950, p. 677.
[135] The Labour Party *did* hope for a "mutual understanding" between the USSR and Great Britain in 1945, but by 1947 they were "pursuing an Atlanticist agenda designed to contain the perceived Soviet threat to Western Europe." Stefan Berger and Darren G. Lilleker, "The British Labour Party and the German Democratic Republic during the Era of Non-Recognition," *Historical Journal* 45 (2), (2002), pp. 433-4.
[136] Fraenkel, "Divided Germany, I -- 'Never the Twain. . . ,'" *New Statesman and Nation*, January 21, 1950, pp. 58-9; "Divided Germany, II -- 'H. O. will have it,'" *NSandN*, January 28, 1950, pp. 93-4; "Divided Germany, III -- 'What Price Freedom,'" *NSandN*, February 4, 1950, pp. 125-6.
[137] Ibid., Part I, p. 58, Part II, pp. 93-4.
[138] Part III, p. 125.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid., p. 126.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Fraenkel, "Cold War Frontier," *New Statesman and Nation*, November 7, 1953, p. 553.
[143] The U.S. media understood the enormous propaganda value of the distribution, as well as the clumsy efforts of the Soviets and SED to discourage participation, but had no qualms about how the U.S. took advantage of the hunger of East Germans. See for example "Hungry Germans Scramble for West's Food," *Life*, August 10, 1953, pp. 33-5.
[144] Fraenkel, "Stalinstadt," *New Statesman and Nation*, November 20, 1954, pp. 640.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid.
[148] See Introduction for a brief introduction to the historiography on the East German socialist transformation as "negotiation."
[149] Fraenkel, "Beyond Berlin," *New Statesman and Nation*, October 30, 1954, p. 530.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Norbert Muhlen, "The New Nazis of Germany," *Commentary* II (1), January 1951, pp. 1-10; Joseph Wechsburg, "The Gray Young Republic," *The New Yorker* 27, May 19, 1952, pp. 82-95.
[152] "Inside Communist Country: The Drab Hush," *Newsweek*, November 29, 1954, p. 47.
[153] Ignotus, "In Eastern Germany," *Contemporary Review* CLXXIX, January-June 1951, pp. 20-25.
[154] Muhlen was a contributor to other conservative publications as *Reader's Digest* and the lay-Catholic *Commonweal*, as well as the liberal and anti-communist *The New Leader*.
[155] The book was Norbert Muhlen, *The Return of Germany: A Tale of Two Countries* (Chicago, 1953).
[156] This is a rough outline of the foreword in Ibid., pp. 3-13.
[157] Ibid., pp. 110-111.
[158] Ibid., he used the German noun *Unpolitischen*, but for unknown reasons did not capitalize it.

[159] Muhlen, "The New Nazis of Germany," pp. 6-7.
[160] Ibid., p. 7.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid., p. 5.
[163] Ignotus, p. 21.
[164] Ibid., p. 22.
[165] Muhlen, 1951, p. 9.
[166] Ignotus, pp. 24-5.
[167] See Thomas Reuther, "In Hitler's Shadow: American Images of Germany," *TUSGECW*, p. 604. But as I argued in Chapter 2, worries about 'the return of Germany' among many American pundits were often rather oddly "Nazi-free" -- that is, concerned about Germany emerging again *as a great power*, but with little surprisingly little reference to Nazi criminality or barbarism.
[168] Muhlen, 1953, p. 300.
[169] Wechsburg, p. 82.
[170] Ibid., p. 86.
[171] Ibid., pp. 93-4.
[172] The 'fleecing' of Western fair visitors there in the fall of 1947 was described all too disturbingly by a contributor to *New Statesman and Nation*. To a Soviet officer observing intoxicated Westerners shedding their hard currency for food and drink, it all seemed a display of the decline of the West, from which his countrymen were more than happy to benefit. But to a German driver, all the foreigners seemed equally contemptible. See Hilde Spiel, "Intourist Keller," *New Statesman and Nation*, September 20, 1947, p. 227. Years later, *Newsweek* correspondent Robert Haeger was reported as a "suspicious character" to a plain-clothesed Vopo, who checked his identification papers, bought offered no further trouble. According to Haeger the informant reported him because he was "following an order" droned into his consciousness by the propaganda. See "Leipzig Fair Visitors See Red Triumphs Everywhere," *Newsweek*, September 22, 1952, p. 40.
[173] Ibid., p. 95.
[174] Ibid.
[175] See Ulrich Herbert, "Good Times, Bad Times: Memories of the Third Reich," in Richard Bessel, ed., *Life in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 97-110.
[176] A further book about his travels in the GDR in 1963 was similarly silent on the Nazi era. See Joseph Wechsburg, *Journey through the Land of Eloquent Silence: East Germany Revisited* (Boston, 1964), of which there will be more in Chapter 5.
[177] "Inside Communist Country: The Drab Hush."
[178] The term "family-weakening implications" I borrow from American President Richard Nixon, who used it to explain his veto of government sponsored childhood day care in the U.S. in 1971.
[179] "Inside Communist Country . . ."
[180] See Chapter 6.
[181] "Inside Communist Country . . ."
[182] See Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, p. 32-6.
[183] H. R. Külz, "The Soviet Zone of Germany," *International Affairs*, April, 1951, p. 166.

[184] As Naimark has argued, the Soviets craved access to coal from the Ruhr, uranium from the *Erzgebirge* and German scientists for their atom bomb project, and "from the outset of the occupation thought of themselves . . . as being in a struggle with the Western Allies for the future of Germany." However during the occupation years they did not decide absolutely on whether to work toward a "Sovietized Eastern Zone," "the creation of a unified Germany run by the Socialist Unity Party," or "the establishment of a demilitarized "neutral" Germany in the center of Europe." Though the first option looked more workable as time passed, and the third increasingly less so, different competing interests in Moscow, within agencies of the occupation in Germany, and in the SED itself were unreconciled. In addition, Naimark points out that the socialization measures in the Zone grew out of "commonly share historical experiences and social instincts . . . as much if not more than articulated principles of ideology . . . ," but "not because there was a plan to do so." As for the role of Stalin, he "stood above the fray and allowed a variety of Soviet policies to be followed." He backed Colonel Sergei Tiul'panov, information officer of the SMAD who was an early advocate of Sovietization of the Eastern Zone, suggesting that he too anticipated German division, but ultimately, as Naimark observes, he "kept his options open" in Germany precisely because of the aforementioned desire for the resources of the Ruhr, and hopes of getting a four-power agreement on a unified, neutral Germany. See Naimark, pp. 349-352, 465-471.

[185] According to John Gimbel, who examined records of discussions in November 1945 among General Lucius Clay (American Military Governor in Germany in the first years of the occupation), his political advisor Robert Murphy, John H. Hildring, head of the Civil Affairs Division of the War Department, and representatives of the State Department, the latter cited Soviet behavior in Germany and regarding the population transfers from Eastern Europe as reasons to doubt their willingness to "carry out the political and economic principles" of the Potsdam Accords. Clay, however, was focused on the refusal of the *French* government to move forward with the creation of central German administrations under the supervision of the Allied Control Council. Indeed he linked the Soviets unwillingness to lower barriers to interzonal trade and travel to *French* intransigence, noting that (as Gimbel phrased it) "in the absence of central administrations, every zone commander could take unilateral action in own zone, as the United States commander had also done." Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany*, p. 27.

[186] For a discussion of the centrality of the reparations issue to the division of Germany (and the apparently pivotal role of the U.S. government in bringing about the division), see Backer, *The Decision to Divide Germany*.

Chapter Four: In a New World?:
West Germans in the Soviet Zone and Early GDR: 1946-1954

One can only imagine the sense of fear and mystery West Germans might have had when gazing eastward to the Soviet Zone in the immediate postwar years. Anti-Soviet propaganda (of both Nazi and non-Nazi origin), along with the infamous misdeeds of conquering Red Army troops from East Prussia to Berlin, could hardly have made it otherwise. The general Soviet penchant for secrecy, along with increased border controls from mid-1947, surely did not make matters any better. But for all of this, Western Germans went to the Soviet Zone frequently in the early post war years, and the early 1950s also. As noted in Chapter One, travel for Germans between occupation zones was relatively easy between August 1945 and the following spring.[1] After that, most trips were illegal, what Germans referred to as crossing "the green way"--in small groups though remote wooded areas, evading either Soviet troops, or, in time, the East German People's Police.[2] But for a tiny minority, official sanction was granted through much-coveted inter-zone passes. Beginning in the spring of 1946, a small number of the passes were given to persons in all four zones whose travel was deemed critical to reconstruction, public health, interzonal trade, or the interallied administration.[3] Many more West Germans began at-tending the biannual Leipzig fair beginning in the spring of 1947 as well. In these first years of occupation, such travelers tended to stress how little there was to fear, and some fairly impressive economic progress also.

Nevertheless, the Red Army had occupied and begun a transformation of places that seemed uniquely and irrevocably German, and so West Germans who visited the East in these years already were especially interested in measuring the extent and meaning of the socioeconomic and political-cultural transformations -- how they were affecting the lives of workers and families, and, in time what they would mean to the rest of Germany.

These descriptions and analyses of change and apparent estrangement of East and West Germans were made in a *fluid period* of postwar German History, and were written by authors who could not imagine the permanent division of Germany, even if they clearly feared the effects of a prolonged division. The complete lack of reference to the creation of two German states in the reports of 1949-50 is telling, for despite an overwhelming sense of dramatic change, the unspoken assumption of most of these visitors was that partition was not simply unjust and unacceptable, but an *unnatural* state of affairs that the West must reverse -- somehow -- and as soon as possible.

What the transformation of the Soviet Zone and early GDR would ultimately mean, then, was not known, but not a few West German travelers said or implied that some of the economic reforms in the GDR, and its orientation toward advancing the welfare of the working classes, were too popular to not be retained in the future. The story of the "estrangement" of the young GDR from West Germany, then, was not a straightforward narration of clear cut, progressive divergence, but divergence amidst contradictory expectations of reunification, lingering (albeit stretched) family and cultural ties, and questions about the value of economic "socialization" and state-sponsored social welfare benefits. But the way some authors scolded readers, they clearly feared that their West German countrymen were losing interest in reunification, rapidly forgetting what the authors believed was the West's responsibility for the fate of East Germans.

Days before the "pass system" was announced in Bavaria in early 1946, an early report by a West German journalist, invited to tour Thuringia by the Soviet authorities, was objective, matter of fact, and conveyed little sense of oppression or of socioeconomic change more generally. While the author made no bones about the nearly total control

of the economy by the military administration, and the primacy of reparations (in both German controlled factories and the SAGs), all indications were that denazification was now entirely in German hands, and that any "non-active" former party member was allowed to continue in his or her post.[4] Soviet rule seemed strict, their control of the economy somewhat excessive, but nothing like police terror or total regimentation seemed to exist. For the next year and a half, most Western German visitors would agree, though there was an ongoing debate about how much the culture of the region was being reoriented toward the East, and whether or when all aspects of "bourgeois refinement" would give way to working-class egalitarianism.

In March 1947, the second postwar Leipzig trade fair offered even more West Germans legal entry -- and not simply to the fair and city. Published accounts indicate that quite a few of these visitors used the opportunity to travel to *other parts* of the Soviet Zone as well. Some of them continued to stress the *lack* of danger or difficulty facing the Western German traveler. Many did not even raise the issue of danger at all, noting only that outside of fair time, gaining entry remained difficult. They also described relatively mild treatment of East Germans and some shared the belief of foreign visitors that recovery and economic progress remained more advanced than in the Western zones.[5] Most also wished to remind Western readers that German ways and German culture endured, despite Soviet rule and the early socialization measures. They reported that basic services were functioning just as well, or even better than in the West,[6] that denazification was neither ruthless nor unfair, and that passing through the "iron curtain," was not a tedious ordeal at all, let alone frightening.[7]

But this was not all. Far into 1947, many West Germans actually looked upon the economic dynamism of the Soviet Zone with some hope -- and not a few reported going

there to take advantage of job opportunities! A traveler in the British Zone that summer overheard a strident defense of both the Red Army and Soviet policy in general -- from a woman recently returned from the Soviet Zone. Though it seems quite remarkable in retrospect, it is understandable given the remaining restraints on the industrial output of Bizonia, and the resulting unemployment. Speaking to a group of apparent strangers, the woman boldly declared:

> 'Let me tell you, once and for all, the truth about the Russians. So many lies are told about their administration. I have come from the Russian zone—the 'green way' of course. The Russians are a hearty, kindly people. To be sure, they behaved at first rather . . . ahem . . . with women, you know . . . That only occurred in the beginning. Afterwards discipline was restored and now they behave quite decently. Take my husband, for instance---I don't conceal the fact that he was a member of the Nazi party . . . and a member of many years' standing. What do you think the Russians did with him? Sent him to a concentration camp, or to Siberia? Not a bit of it! The gave him a job, and a good one too. That's what the Russians do; if anyone is a specialist (my husband is a skilled worker) and willing and able to work, the Russians will give him a job. It does not matter whether he is a Nazi or not. . . . A couple of voices: Yes. yes. that's true. We've heard it before. Here [the British Zone] people are not allowed to work; there they are all welcome.[8]

The quote speaks volumes about the sullen dejection and self-pity of Germans in the Western Zones, the majority of whom blamed the Allies, rather than Hitler and their previous support of National Socialism, for their predicament. Such views were confirmed by opinion surveys and the travels of many correspondents and officials at the time, and far into 1948.[9] More obviously, it gives a sense about the relative ease of illegal travel between the Western zones and the Soviet zone in the early postwar years. And it was precisely that openness that allowed the apparent economic progress in the Soviet Zone to be so widely advertised. A West German, this time traveling on a train in the *Soviet* Zone, heard a remarkably similar opinion, albeit in a more heated argument about Soviet reparations. To the author's dismay, the contrasting fortunes of the Soviet and Western

Zones also suggested a strikingly rapid divergence between them.

> 'Everything is different over there.' [in the Western zones] --- 'Yes, Yes, its already different. Here and there are already different lands' --- 'True, here something has indeed already been done. But over there, the rich live from money and the poor slowly starve to death.' --- 'Done? What has been done here? We must travel on a single track [the second tracks were being dismantled by the Russians for reparations]. And the little bit that is left over after reparations is . . .' --- 'This is all nonsense" said 'Maxe,' a younger man, "Look at me! I am 19 years old. They said to me: 'for the love of God Maxe, don't go to the Eastern Zone. They will take you away.' And so? Have they taken me away? I have already been traveling here and there in the Zone. People, one can only do real business here. Those in the West are really boring. And courage and risk-taking—well, where is there any of that in the West?'[10]

Like the previous quote, this one does *not* suggest that many Germans living in the Soviet Zone had forgotten or forgiven recent Soviet behavior, or even generally approved of their presence. But what is clear is that those in search of opportunities to move beyond contemporary misery and helplessness at least saw a *chance* there. Very much like Heinrich Fraenkel's friend who relocated to the East around the same time (Chapter 3), these persons reveal a yearning for a new beginning. The endurance of such feelings among young East Germans in the harsh conditions soon to follow was of special interest to many West German visitors.

But it was at the Leipzig fair itself (along with side visits to the cultural mecca of Weimar -- just a few hours travel by train) that visitors offered broader insights into what was becoming of the Soviet Zone and its relationship with W Germany. The first impression of the spring 1947 fair (which was considerably larger and better attended than the first postwar fair[11]) was largely positive. One West German writing for a textile trade journal called it an "achievement show of the Eastern Zone," yet noted that unlike the previous fair, there was considerable representation of West German firms as well.[12] But the most important change over the past spring was that most fair visitors no longer at-

tended out of shear curiosity or to make new contacts, but actually to *conclude transactions*: to borrow from the old American expression, the business of the fair, once again, was business.

But business between whom? Another West German visitor, noting signs of considerable -- and mostly state-owned -- industrial revival, believed it all boded very poorly for any near-term economic reunification.

> The first Leipzig "Peace Fair" in May 1946 made visible (*shaubar*), so to speak, the necessity of economic reunification of the four zones of occupation and led to a resounding call for it; the spring fair [of] 1947 brought most clearly the danger before [our] eyes, that already in this short time the Eastern zone can no longer be reunified with the Western zones.[13]

What this unbridgeable divide meant in more immediate practical terms was the "hopelessness" of private industry in the Soviet Zone, and perhaps the swift decline of the fair itself -- a development the author would "deeply regret."

A year later (spring 1948), a Western German fair visitor also saw the bitter fruits of economic division, rather than state-driven productive progress.[14] Though the fair *did* show advances in the development of industrial machinery, the author saw in it the economic denouement of Germany --not so much due to superpower rivalry, but *four-power rule in general*. The author scored all four powers, with their rules of interzonal exchange and their hands in the fair's profits, for "skimming off" the top of all transactions. To this anonymous author, it was all a painful reminder of "our overthrow and our catastrophic present . . ."[15] But this author also had specific and important observations about the divergence of the Soviet Zone from Western Germany *as a whole* -- namely the stricter limits on free speech and increasingly intimidating public atmosphere of the former. If material conditions had declined to about the same level as in the West, the political atmosphere was radically different, and chilling indeed:

> Everyone dreads denunciation the most. Of this they speak, if one gets into a conversation in a locality or on the street car, but not so much of the arbitrariness or violent acts of the Soviet authorities--and it [denunciation] was spoken of astonishingly often and with astonishing frankness. . . . . to most of those who reside in the eastern zone it is simply incomprehensible, that in the newspapers of Bizonia, or at least in those of the area occupied by the British, criticism of the occupying regime is allowed to be practiced so openly. They cannot grasp it.[16]

This increasingly dim view he shared with another West German fair visitor who moved about in the countryside, Ewald Schmidt di Simoni. While noting the increasing political predominance of the SED, and widespread uncertainty about the future, Di Simoni also emphasized how estranged Eastern Germans felt from the West, noting an increasing sense of isolation. But he offered different observations about daily experience as well: one that showed both a willingness to express grievances, *and* the ways that the new socioeconomic regime was changing the expectations and values of Eastern workers.

In the following passage, the author shows not simply the wide embrace of egalitarian socialist ideals in the Soviet Zone, but how the regime had apparently *transgressed them* in bestowing privileges on workers at a "People's Own Enterprise" (German acronym VVB):

> 'Where is the social justice about which the SED [party] men spoke,' said a worker [at a table in a crowded Leipzig restaurant] 'if all those who work in a People's own factory are in every respect preferred above the rest of us, especially regarding food allotments.' [author's voice] Most residents of the Eastern zone, especially housewives, live from [ration] card 4, the 'hunger card,' the 'cemetery card,' that corresponds approximately to the West German normal consumption card. However, it is provided, that the workers in the People's own factory are far better supplied. 'I know one such factory,' explained the worker 'where the other day all female workers were wearing new clothes, no, [they are] regularly given new clothes. Three dresses for each. And also a coat. And also more and more . . . The rest of us go around in rags.' – 'And what does the SED say to that?' – 'The SED . . . ' He repeated the word and shrugged his shoulders.[17]

On a side trip to an unnamed district capital in southern Saxony, the author tried to a

show a different frame of reference -- one that reminded of small town life everywhere, but with an added and overwhelming sense of sorrow. Here resources were even more limited -- food, electricity, and heating fuel -- than in Leipzig. And there was a feeling among residents of being permanently stranded. The views locals expressed about the future in the Soviet Zone were the exact opposite of those who quoted above in the previous summer.

> 'You [plural] in the West' – so it goes as a leitmotif through all conversations – 'have begun, or so it seems, to [live] a normal life again. It stands before you, this normal life–or perhaps not? But what will the future bring us, we [here] in the East?'[18]

In truth (and Di Simoni made the point repeatedly), the Western Zones were *not* yet better off economically. The quote spoke more to a fear among residents of the Soviet Zone of an eventual complete isolation from the West. According to the author, this isolation, and accumulating political pressure, were what Easterners meant by lack of a "normal life." But in his impressions of both Leipzig and the small town, Di Simoni seemed to find much that appeared familiar as well -- the unchanged routines of daily life, such as the tendency of the people of the small town to mill around the train station to observe the daily comings and goings, for example. The region had not yet become a police state, but the processes of political regimentation and socialist values were clearly being felt. The mixture of change and endurance, familiarity and hints of a new society, was even more apparent -- and controversial -- to a number of travelers who made their way to Weimar, the idyllic town of Goethe, recently made the *Land* headquarters for the Soviet military government.

A anonymous visitor from the Rheinland wrote the most interesting consideration of change meeting tradition there in late May 1947. It was titled "Weimar without Goe-

the,"[19] by which the author meant the transformation of the two from bourgeois mecca to a working class "reconstruction zone," but *not* the destruction of German culture. The most obvious change was that the town simply overcrowded: by refugees, displaced persons, ex-*Wehrmacht* conscripts, and Red Army troops and German officials. Included in these crowds was a noticeable increase in head-gear reminiscent of Russia: felt hats for men and head scarves for women, and, to the author's dismay, more men in working-class clothing, while "beautiful women are a rarity," the exceptions being traffic cops and office workers at the National Theater. The majority of locals hurried about the streets *en masse*, looking tired and worn down, not at all befitting to the bourgeois "sedateness" (*Behäbigkeit*) of the town's neoclassical architecture. The theater itself, sight of the famed Goethe-Schiller memorial and birthplace of the first German republic in 1919, was not yet restored from bombing. The ongoing reconstruction had brought a small army of laborers, "conscripted" from the city and its surroundings, contributing to the new "blue collar" appearance of the city.

And appearances seemed indicative of cultural change as well. At the Thuringian *Landestheater* performances were sold out, but most tickets were distributed to workers via the trade union organizations. "Goethe is not at home here either," the author remarked, hinting (without providing evidence) that theatrical fare had shifted to appeal to a mass audience. The author *did*, however, offer an anecdote that suggested the decline of the cinema. The district administration had apparently just lost its film department director, a former projectionist for Ufa in Berlin, who for reasons not mentioned had moved to a career in pest control(!?). Whether this odd turn of events suggested corruption or mere incompetence, it fed into the author's impression of a sharp decline in the quality of cultural production. Attendance was down in local cinemas.

The "Theater of Dance" in Weimar was faring somewhat better, but it too lacked space for local performances, which had been shifted to Erfurt (the largest city in the region, about half an hour's drive to the West). The performers compensated for their low pay by doing "guest performing tours" (*Gastspielreise*). The upside of this arrangement was its potential for cultural exchange with similar groups in Hessen in the U. S. Zone, of course pending the approval of the authorities. The situation was difficult in other arts as well. The author offered two examples: a painter who could not obtain either the paint or the cigarettes he needed to carry on with his work, and a novelist who, in exchange for the highest food ration card, served as a representative in the *Landtag*. The author called it "advertising for the SED as a sideline."[20] But this tale of Goethe's apparent absence ended with a reminder that the great man himself, like the novelist just mentioned, had once served in government -- at the behest of his duke -- a distant parallel, wrote the author. Surely all the apparent change could not permanently banish "the ancestral lord of Weimar literature."[21]

What of the Red Army's new, conspicuous presence? For this author, the transformation of Weimar's historic culture was carried through by *German* politicians of the "antifascist" bloc, with the Soviets mainly a background presence. Several other visitors, however, characterized the transformation more in terms of East vs. West -- with Soviet "collective power" meeting "bourgeois liberality." One anonymous visitor noted signs of both Soviet domination *and* the persistence of traditional learning in the first sentence he wrote about entering the town.[22] If young people still went about with book satchels -- ie. concentrating on studies -- the presence of the Red Army was more conspicuous: the mecca of culture had become a Soviet "garrison town." According to residents, around 20,000 troops occupied the city.

This author suggested that Weimar's reputation for being foreigner-friendly (*fremden-selig*) was being put to the test as never before, under "complicated" circumstances in which widows of town notables were entertaining "chic" (*fetsch*) Russian gentlemen. This decidedly unequal arrangement meant that anyone who had not lost their possessions in Allied air raids had to be willing to trade them for food. Life demanded concessions, wrote the author, and life went on despite having to do without name-brand products. But the author did not indicate alarm; the remarks were rather neutral, leaving the reader to consider how much such goings-on differed from the behavior of occupiers and occupied in the Western zones.

The author seemed more worried about advertisements for Russian films and a lecture titled "Does the German Intelligentsia have a Future?" They were signs of how firmly established the Soviets had become, if not exactly indications of a "reeducation process." So too was the fact that Goethe's house remained unrepaired and closed: "closed" was actually written on a door sign in *Russian Cyrillic script*. But arguably most important to Soviet power was not their cultural *or* reconstruction policies, but control of the local food supply, dramatized just across the *Frauenplan* [a central city square] from Goethe's house at a bakery, where a long wooden chute had been built so that newly-baked bread could be slid down into the back of Soviet trucks —many hundreds of loafs, according to the author.

This gigantic Soviet presence created spatial restrictions as well: most large public buildings were taken over by the Red Army, the *Land* government, or the SED, and most ordinary citizens were denied entry. Worse still were hints of greater coercion: less frequent meetings of the *Landtag*, the growth of the Soviet bureaucracy, and posters of Soviet Foreign Minister V. I. Molotov demanding unity. There was also the eerie symbo-

lism of the Red Army setting up its headquarters in the former offices of the Nazi party -- the same scene photographed by *Illustrated London News* in the far more tense atmosphere of a year later. (See Chapter One)

But for the time being (March 1947), the author advised caution: because Weimar remained a small town -- albeit of tremendous cultural importance -- part of the sense of stifling repression derived from the sheer logistics of situating such huge foreign and German bureaucracies there. According to the author, residents smiled when they were asked whether the town ought to be evacuated of Germans to make it possible for the administration to function! They knew, in other words, that the Soviets could not make do without them. Indeed, they believed themselves to more useful than ever, despite their more cramped quarters. The author seemed to want to give the Soviets the benefit of doubt: despite warning signs, it appeared that their rule was a powerful but rather superficial overlay onto the historic culture of Weimar.

A Swiss visitor also saw in Weimar's occupation an assemblage of Soviet domination, but in this case, it was part of a longer, perhaps more profound process of transformation. Though titling the report "In Goethe's Stadt," the author believed the Nazi period and its consequences had severed links to the town's great cultural and political past.[23] Perhaps it was easier for a German-speaking foreigner to deal so frankly with the contrast between Nazi barbarism and the town's great cultural legacy -- at least in 1947. The author began by reinforcing the previous author's sense of *inundation*: the town seemed overwhelmed with all ranks of Soviet officers and officials. To this author it was the "westernmost bastion of the Russians,"[24] and their power was exercised through the same type of personal encounters described by the previous author. Here however, most of the politeness and dignity of these interactions seemed stripped away: when Soviet

officers met the local bourgeoisie, they took advantage of their monopoly on the food supply to obtain whatever they "needed," including . . .

> . . . old and new dresses and shoes and jewelry, bicycles and cameras, they want and need everything, and they pay with money and with coal and butter, bread and meat--not with *Russian* provisions of course, because the occupation is supported by the occupied land, [but] with high rations [from local production] from which they can spare much for the great barter trade. They eat the bread of the Germans, but they give the Germans bread -- their own bread, for a silk blouse, for a broach, for a chic hat.[25] (emphasis added)

But as in the previous piece, this all seemed rather inevitable, certainly not a reason to indict the Soviet authorities. It was a kind of price that must be paid for *earlier transgressions*. The author had little to say about cultural revival or reconstruction -- except to note that neither the Soviets nor local German officials showed much interest in completing the reconstruction of Goethe's house. But this silence was part of the author's different focus: on the dramatic break with Weimar's cultured past wrought by Nazi rule *long before* the Soviet occupation. This rupture was most symbolized by the aforementioned former Nazi Party headquarters. Unlike others who noted the irony of Soviets moving to the unfinished Nazi complex, this author found it all somehow fitting, because for him, the building had been out of place from the start -- a "stupendous" (*gewaltige*) structure, "in the style of the Nazi party rally" (*im Stille des Reichsparteitags*), so close to the mix of neoclassical and early modern buildings in the city center.

What had been lost was not simply the classical past of the late 18th and early 19th century, but the late 19th and early 20th century tradition as well, spanning Franz Liszt, Richard Strauss, Nietzsche, Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus school. The new regime had restored the plaque on the National Theater commemorating the Weimar constitution, (which had been removed by Hitler for calling attention to the "shame of 1919") but this gesture could hardly restore the luster of the past, or so it seems, make the great

names of that past important to the citizens of Weimar once again. Whether the town's greatness was gone forever or just temporarily, wrote the author, "is difficult to say."[26]

But it turned out that no early West German visitor could judge "Goethe's Stadt" so harshly. A year later, one of them was able to characterize the city as a virtual oasis from the Soviet occupation, without referencing the Nazi past at all.[27] Karl Zimmerman could do this be-cause his visit was a virtual pilgrimage, a quest to seek out all of the town's "Goethe sites," some of which remained locked away from the public, thus requiring the author to "beseech" the various local guardians to open buildings and even rooms closed during the war. Though his initial foray beyond the train station suggested Soviet domination, -- Leninstraße had been hung with banners and signs with welcoming the "People's Congress of the state of Thüringia" and calling for a "united Germany and a just peace" -- the heart of the city and the Goethe sites in particular seemed completely, almost reverently unspoiled by propaganda or Soviet excesses.

Indeed, in the heart of Goethe's Weimar, the author mentioned the Soviet occupiers only twice: once at Goethe's garden house in Ilm Park, where a Red Army officer exhibited a respectful awe similar to that of Zimmerman himself; and later, at the Prince's crypt, where pasteboard signs in Cyrillic script identified Goethe's and Schiller's sarcophagae. He referred to the signs as "certificates of reverence, which had been presented to this double incarnation of the German spirit and Western humanity."[28] But he credited the Americans, who briefly occupied the city in the spring of 1945, with a similar reverence, noting that they had arranged for both sarcophagae, removed to Jena early in 1945, to be returned to the crypt. Both sides seemed to instinctively grasp the importance of the place, having left it pristine and untouched.[29] For Zimmerman the experience was like a ray of hope, literally as it turned out, for the town was totally surrounded by fog that

day, and as he headed back toward the train station, he encountered it again. The Cold War came back with the fog as well: a Soviet military band, waiting for the arrival of the congressional delegates -- and trying to appeal to German tastes -- struck up a tune that sounded like a polka. It seemed everywhere outside the "sacred center" of Weimar, the dreariness of Soviet domination enveloped Thuringia.

But Zimmerman, like most of his Western German contemporaries, wrote very little about the surrounding Cold War, let alone an approaching showdown over Berlin or the prospects for partition. Between the lines, however there was an obvious sense of more or less permanent and unwelcome change, and increasingly, the view that whatever the impact of the four-power occupation on cultural legacies or the famed Leipzig Fair, the Soviet Zone and its inhabitants were inexorably moving away from the Western zones. If, as we have seen, the best guess of non-German observers and travelers in early spring 1948 was that most Eastern Germans were wary of the increasingly dictatorial powers of the SED, but not yet entirely anti-Soviet, over the next few months visitors noted a fear of abandonment gripping the population. To the sense of falling behind and growing further isolated from the West was added the feeling that Western Germans were prepared to "write off" their Eastern counterparts in exchange for economic normalization and protection from the Soviets.

In early June, just weeks before the Western currency reform, one of the last Western German authors to report from the Soviet Zone wondered if Eastern Germans' inability to differentiate between compliance with Soviet authorities and consent to the creation of the communist system had made it easier for the SED to gain their dominant position.[30] But to this author, prior "compliance" apparently did not mean East Germans were "on the fence" any longer. Apparently they now realized quite clearly that there was nei-

ther benefit to supporting the Soviets nor any possibility of help from the West. He believed the majority had signed a recent SED petition demanding "unity and a just peace" simply out of fear of repression. The author admonished readers that it would be the bitterest injustice if West Germans abandoned them. And this was precisely what he believed would result from the currency reform: an even tighter closing of the iron curtain which the West would simply have to accept -- and in his opinion *would* accept -- given their increasing sense of inevitability regarding a Western German state.

But of key importance to this argument, the author was making these observations to argue *against* the inevitability of two Germanies. The author boldly told readers that they need not fear being "forced under the communist yoke" should an all-German administration come into being. First of all, the SED had "only around half of the votes in the *Landtäge*." Secondly, as a "bourgeois economic politician" told the author (sounding rather like James Madison in *The Federalist* #10) "a red tint colors the water in a larger vessel less intensively than in a smaller one."[31] This apparent last ditch plea for German unity, however, *did* come with conditions. An all-German state, according to the author, would have to be founded on a genuinely free election in both East and West -- something that had not happened in the Soviet Zone in nearly two years -- and must not result in a unified Germany too weak to defend itself. But the author failed to offer any alternative to the currency reform that might stabilize the economy of the Western Zones.

The Berlin blockade put a great break on all Western travel to the Soviet Zone, save for the Leipzig fairs of Fall 1948 and Spring 1949. The former experienced dramatically lower attendance, and the U.S. counterblockade prevented most West German firms from participating. (See Chapter 2) Only a handful of Western authors had any direct experiences of the Soviet Zone outside Leipzig during the 9 months of the blockade, and

most of these were only possible because of entry gained by surreptitious means. (See Chapter 3) But one West German visitor to the spring 1949 fair touched on virtually all the themes that post-blockade visitors would discuss: mounting threats to the independence of the middle class, a growing sense of separation from the West, the impact of the regime's propaganda, and rather contradictory efforts to convince skeptical Western readers that life in the East was not all sheer misery or oppression.[32]

Unlike harsh critics of the period, Wolfgang Köhler emphasized that the food situation, which had grown considerably worse during the blockade months, was improving in the spring of 1949, and that kidnapping and interrogations were not the constant threat most Western reports made them out to be.[33] True, there *were* provisioning problems, most notably coal supplies for the coming winter--even in the brown coal regions. But according to Köhler, differential living standards were part of *an overall sense of difference from the West* that was so frustrating to East Germans:

> . . . the higher living standard in the Western occupation zones not only increases, it estranges. The residents of bizonia feel the zonal boundary as an uncomfortable restriction, insofar as they have relatives in Dresden or Magdeburg. To the residents of the Soviet occupation zone it goes through the middle of the heart.[34]

Everyone in the GDR, wrote Köhler, regardless of their station, now sensed that the West was "the other side" of Germany. One of the Western misconceptions of Easterners, so it seemed, was that "natural" affinities of language and culture would guarantee the survival of a feeling of national unity. But, the author, rather subtly admonishing readers, noted that both sides also had to continue to *desire* unity.

Elsewhere Köhler--like several visitors to Weimar--tried to emphasize that all Red Army personnel were not villains defiling Germany and German culture. In an unnamed city formerly occupied by the Americans, a Soviet officer in charge of the main train sta-

tion occupied the large house of a noble family, but allowed the remaining family members and their female servants to stay on in part of it. In effect, their servants became the officer's servants. According to the author, when members of the officer's staff drank too much and accosted the servants, they were completely shamed into better behavior by an ensuing lecture from the lady of the house. Even more impressive were the efforts of the officer to protect the family library from an overzealous "student high consular" (*Oberstudienrat*) who wanted to remove "militaristic" books on Frederick the Great and Prussian generals. When the *Oberrat* came for the books, the officer simply pointed to the front door, and the man left hastily and empty handed.

Other observations were more to be expected. Red banners and propaganda seemed ever-present, as was the political pressure they implied: the author remarked that they made every "hardware storeowner" join the SED in hopes that he would be permitted to keep his shop, even though in private the shopkeepers remained bourgeois in "every fiber of their being" (*Konstitution*). Meanwhile, the workers, to whom the propaganda was actually aimed, seemed indifferent. But the author believed they were also indifferent to "Western freedom," judging from their apparent lack of attention to RIAS (American radio broadcasts from Berlin) and *Nordwest Deutsche Rundfunk* (NWDR). But as for the SED, the author believed the workers viewed them *not* as vanguard, but as a *ruling elite*, existing on a separate plan from their own lives as elites did everywhere. He thought this social cleavage was the more noticeable in the Soviet Zone due to the top-down structure of its "social system." In spite of the apparent distance, however, he, like many who followed, noted how the terms of Eastern propaganda seemed to find their way into daily speech.

But Köhler devoted far more space to the middle classes, offering insight not sim-

ply into the precariousness of their existence, but the progressive disappearance of their social milieux as well. The decline of social intercourse, and the gatherings and events of "polite society," had progressed just as far or perhaps even more than the loss of their economic base. The meeting places still existed, but were no longer visited--fear and mistrust of others had replaced traditional social events. Köhler thoughtfully summed up the new mood, new social behavior, and circumstances under which they took place: "If the doorbell rings, the cake [which could only be] scraped together with great difficulty is hidden under the sofa. People do not trust each other."[35] Meanwhile, the regime moved in to makeover public entertainment and resort locations for the trade unions. The "enterprise party" had become "the new form of sociability" -- not that there seemed much energy left among the population for socializing after long hours of labor. Köhler noted that even in Leipzig the streets were nearly deserted by 9 pm. He then quickly returned to the fear factor: "if the doorbell rings, one first asks who is outside."[36]

Köhler talked of village life as spatially and socially transformed as well, noting that the tractor lending stations had become the center of village life, just as the churches used to be. But it was not long before he was again discussing propaganda and hinting at oppression of the middle classes. He mentioned the former in regards to the infamous Anglo-American air raid on Dresden, which he found commemorated by Communist propaganda as a "criminal air attack." Apparently, this view was starting to sink in: "what is said there is not without effect," he added The plight of the middles classes came up again on a visit to Naumburg, a cathedral town in Thuringia. Seeing many Red Army troops about, Köhler noted that "the city is a stronghold of the LDP [Liberal Democratic Party], we were told, and such places always required a strong garrison."[37]

But in the end, Köhler was strangely ambivalent on leaving the Soviet Zone: like

several other Western Germans in the early years, he sensed that part of the difference from the West was a rather vaguely defined "sense of purpose" -- a feeling among many Eastern Germans that they were part of an effort to build a better society out of the ashes of defeat. It contrasted sharply -- and for a time, even compared favorably -- with the seeming lack of any collective purpose in the new West German free market economy arising from the currency reform and Marshall Aid. Köhler saw the two systems as shaping divergent mentalities, and the change among West Germans, as evidenced by the comments overheard in an interzone train leaving the Soviet Zone at Helmstedt, seemed rather unap-pealing. Once safely in the British Zone, the previously quiet passengers suddenly came to life, expressing contempt for all they had seen. They attacked the Soviet guards and propaganda their for stupidity, while expressing contempt for the poverty and apparent lack of taste of ordinary people. One man was especially agitated, rattling on about a slogan on a banner in Leipzig that read "consciousness at work." It was rubbish, he said: no one could work unconsciously! The author almost apologized for his feelings at that moment:

> Maybe one is not at all allowed to say [it], but it really is not for political reasons: as we heard the man hold forth for the fourth time on the conscious work, we longed for a moment to be back on the other side of the Helmstedt barrier. . . . In spite of everything, much 'over there' seemed so to be so much more substantial than on our side.[38]

Though he did not elaborate, Köhler could only have meant by "substantial" some sense of community, and of common purpose, even if it meant the decomposition of middle class activities -- a process that to him seemed more advanced and irreversible than to most earlier visitors. But the author's "longing" is equally, if not more indicative of a certain disappointed with post-war developments -- as if he had expected something more than materialism and the apparent smug self-satisfaction of his fellow passengers.

Not long after the lifting of the blockade, a relatively small but continuous series West German travel reports from the Soviet Zone/GDR resumed, continuing through early 1953. A considerable number of these reports, just like Köhler's, were published in Protestant-affiliated weeklies such as Hamburg's *Sonntagsblatt*, and Stuttgart's *Christ und Welt*. Like Köhler, they would sometimes chide their readers for too willingly accepting division in exchange for prosperity and a safe distance from communism. Not surprisingly, they advocated instead a continuing of personal contacts between the two Germanies as a means of warding off communist influence and maintaining a sense of common national identity. In these early years they stressed that such contacts *must* involve West Germans traveling to the East; *not* because East Germans were barred from the West, for they were largely not until mid-1952. Rather, the economic differential and monetary exchange rate made the cost of travel to the West prohibitive for them. But for all this, *some* of the travelers agreed with Köhler that Western Germans must understand that East Germans did approve of aspects of the GDR's social system. An odd combination of indoctrination, intimidation, and approval of "socialist achievements" -- with the latter sentiment shared mainly by young people and the working classes -- explained the unsettling divergence of the East German population from their Western counterparts, and also the rather surprisingly complex relationship between the Eastern regime and the population.

Two reports from the following September (1949) suggested the interrelatedness of these themes. One author, who interviewed East Berliners who passed through the sector barriers to work each day, suggested that East German's willingness to cooperate with "the Russians" had not completely dissipated -- even among the middle classes -- and that the SED rank and file was not entirely composed of mere "beneficiaries."[39] The other, a visitor to the fall 1949 Leipzig fair, assumed -- based on rather limited evidence -- that the

broad population had become openly hostile to the regime.[40] Paradoxically, how-ever, it was the former author who believed the regime might be on verge of losing what was left of its legitimacy, while the latter author found the population to be exploited, coerced, and manipulated by the Orwellian "official speak" of the regime -- a reworking of the German language that proved nearly incomprehensible to West Germans. Even more than Köhler, this anonymous author saw at the Leipzig Fair saw the young GDR as quickly becoming a foreign land, "the other Germany" as the author called it.

Nonetheless, the author stressed that *ordinary* East and West Germans *could* still understand each other. Over the next three years, both the extent of the divergence between East and West Germans, *and* the relationship between the Eastern regime and the Eastern population would remain debatable. What would *not* be controversial, though, was the growing gap in living standards between the West and the GDR, and the apparent *danger* that bad living conditions, real or implied police coercion, and pervasive propaganda posed for most East Germans.

Threat seemed to come in many forms: in an economy that reminded West Germans of the dearth and chaos of the Western zones *before* the currency reform; in the shadowy menace of the People's Police; in the fear of denunciation for any remark that might seem hostile to the regime, or any act at work that could be dubbed "economic sabotage." But it also seemed to lurk in a longer-term, "psychological damage": from omnipresent, mind-numbing propaganda (which seemed increasingly to change the very way East Germans formed questions); from seemingly endless hours of exhausting work; from long-term material deprivation; and from the regime's stereotypical iconography, which featured images of the new "socialist man," "socialist woman," and blue-shirted, blonde-haired Free German Youth (FDJ). Hints of the changes wrought by the propaganda, dic-

tatorship, and the new, working-class orientation of cultural life and public space were present earlier, as we have seen, but from 1950, concern grew that exposure to this new "way of life" was changing individual East Germans: estrangement seemed to increase year by year. But in spite of the changes, many of the same authors insisted that East Germans continued to feel isolated and *desperate for contact* -- an opinion they went out of their way to share with readers.

West German authors often wrote series of vignettes, designed to reveal to readers the trials of daily experience in the GDR. One group of examples from 1952 included: 1) a description of a train car designed to conceal human cargo; 2) a brief tale of an innocent youth mistakenly pursued by the police, who runs in fear not out of guilt, but because of the permanent uncertainty of life in a "police state"; 3) a comparison of the appearance of women just leaving a factory (too late to tend to all their familial duties), to the regime's archetype of the "equal woman." The anonymous author described the latter as "angular, hard, strong-willed, and dull," and believed there was real danger that all East German women might one day be "squeezed" into this form.[41]

All of these experiences seemed to take place within an environment dominated by a single color scheme--time and again the color and adjective used to describe cities, people, and even the countryside was gray. Noticeable too was that "gray" had an emotional as well descriptive connotation: it stood for a depressing sameness, a kind of dark cloud that had settled over the land. The early GDR was not simply dangerous to its inhabitants, but joyless and forlorn. One author saw in the grim weather that hung over Leipzig a metaphor for the suffocating environment of communist rule.[42] Others often referred to dilapidated buildings in need of paint, plaster, or both as making entire villages look gray. An anonymous traveler in 1951 described a gray cityscape to suggest both po-

verty and the failure of the regime to deliver on its promises to rebuild and renew:

> Everything here is gray, patched-up, and cracked. The old colors crumble. And where are the cars in the street? Only a few of the old types. And where are the construction machines? At the construction sites only a few discontented figures are shoveling. Nevertheless the word 'reconstruction' shines from the posters.[43]

Three years later, it seemed little had changed. After traveling across a grim "gray" landscape of dilapidated villages in the summer of 1954, M. Flesch-Thebesius, arriving in Leipzig for an all-German church convention (*Kirchentag*) of the *Evangelisch* [mainline Protestant] church, offered a similar description: "gray Leipzig" still reminded of West Germany cities during the occupation years (though the author forgot that the currency reform took place in 1948!):

> Leipzig was gray also. That meant that hardly a house had been renovated since the collapse [of 1945]. There are no new coats of paint, no new plaster, there are also few new buildings. Between the ruined facades grow little trees and weeds, and if one made a comparison with the West, then one must go back to the year 1949, in order to find a similar picture. So, the way it was on our side shortly before the currency reform is the way it is up until the present day in Leipzig.[44]

Even the faces of Eastern Germans seemed gray--several visitors noted the signs of vitamin deficiency, and at least one thought it was intentional neglect designed to starve the least productive members of society.[45] Another anonymous author offered a striking contrast--a lavish, secret restaurant with impeccable service and all the finest delicacies--reserved exclusively for higher-level SED functionaries.[46]

The fact that so many of these accounts were written for primarily Christian audiences about life in an officially atheist state raises the possibility of extremely biased criticism, and there surely was some -- particularly, as noted, among authors who warned of persecution of Christian believers even before the regime launched its major campaign of repression in 1952. But for all the warnings and "negative vignettes," there were also a

number of remarkably perceptive observations about developing popular attitudes in the young GDR. This suggests both a certain openness among the writers to aspects of the official policy in the East, and an effort to reach a wider Western audience than practicing Christians alone. Though some of these authors were clearly regime opponents, many of them surmised a relationship between regime, people, and cultural life that was far more complex and contradictory than simple tales of exploitation and oppression.

The theme, aforementioned, of an emergent working class culture in the Soviet Zone/GDR persisted into the early 1950s. But the middle classes, their values, and their activities were not portrayed as simply being marginalized. Rather, they were described as a social group doggedly hanging on against change. If Köhler believed they would mouth or post any slogan to save their business, others made their situation even more hopeless. Readers were reminded that industrialists could be arrested on trumped up charges at any time and have their factories confiscated.[47] And one visitor in early 1950 described the middle classes as a virtual endangered species targeted for extinction -- that is, unless the West might somehow save the day:

> The bourgeoisie (*Bürgertum*) is naturally most of all concerned by the radical change. They stand at the most forward firing line, without any possibility for cover. The specialists still find . . . work [in their] field easily, but they are pressed into the straight jacket of the system, which is particularly hostile to their life experience. So the bourgeoisie must withdraw into the hiding place of their houses, sheltered from the storm of the time and attempt to pass the winter there. It is for them as [for] an older generation, that was brutally separated from the younger [one]. The bourgeoisie sets its hope alone on the hour of liberation. With them fails every power of persuasion, and even the power of terror is dashed against this unresisting, yet inaccessible group.[48]

The author, Conrad Ahlers, was far from alone in this view. Time and again the competition of state-owned stores, hotels and resorts. as well as producers cooperatives was described as putting private shops out of business: according to one author, if any state-

owned hotel at a Baltic Sea resort was struggling, private hotels and restaurants would be forbidden there.[49] And yet, there was a positive side to this class-cultural sea change: the aforementioned cultural opportunities for workers continued and expanded, and a number of authors were clearly pleased that higher education was open to the sons and daughters of workers and peasants for the first time. Clearly there was much to resent or respect in the GDR, depending on an author's degree of affiliation with the middle classes, but many of them noted *both* the positive *and* negative aspects of the apparent social revolution in the early GDR, trying to let the changes speak for themselves.

Most authors seemed certain that socioeconomic "leveling" had changed East Germans in many subtle ways. One anonymous visitor to East Berlin in the spring of 1952 argued that because of isolation and propaganda, East Germans tended to look at West Germans as a uniform mass -- "you in the West" they called them -- and that the majority approved of the Eastern welfare state and the new opportunities for workers and peasants in higher education. But the same author urged readers to remember that East German workers would continue to oppose the regime so long as the regime put the "building of socialism" above consumer goods production, and that young East Germans, however prepared they might be to devote themselves to "a cause greater than themselves" would certainly "tir[e] of their willingness for collective community." Adult informants assured him that such enthusiasm could not last more than about three years.[50]

But for Ahlers -- if not many other visiting authors -- the change in the mentalities of East Germans seemed more profound, and more permanent, possibly coalescing in a separate East German identity. This identity, however, was *not* the result of brainwashing, or even primarily economic manipulation, but as later research has confirmed, of *negotiation* by working people with the regime's functionaries, and its directives. While his-

torians of the GDR have tended to place the origins of an East German identity much later, sometime in the mid-to-late 1960s, and even then believed it was based most simply acceptance of unchangeable circumstances, Ahlers was the first of a number of visitors to the GDR, both German and non-German, who posited an Eastern identity over a decade earlier -- and believed it was based on a degree of approval for the Eastern system.

Ahlers used a rather biased informant, a person he described as a "high functionary," to suggest that a combination of disadvantageous circumstances and carefully deployed propaganda had created the Eastern identity:

> . . . in him is visible every curious trait, which could be described as the psychological centerpoint of the Eastern zone people, namely the pride in living in poverty on their own power, instead of with help from foreign credits. Every political speech, in its confrontation between East and West leads to this point. The Eastern propaganda has made a virtue out of need.[51]

Ahlers went to great lengths to stress that this "psychological centerpoint" did *not* constitute any kind of political affiliation between workers and the regime. Rather, he believed the workers were wary and wise: the difficulties of the postwar transition had left them cautious, and they were rebuilding their lives while avoiding the political "snares." The regime dared not test their toleration, because they needed them far too much. Their viewpoint, then, was *apolitical*, "not facing toward the West or toward the East, but toward the area of life that is entrusted to them." Such was the case with a bus driver the author talked to:

> Indeed he is . . . still the owner of his vehicle, but he drives according to the orders of the state. I asked him if the increasing socialization of street traffic does not disturb him. He did not go into it, but weighed out the objective advantages and disadvantages of one [system] as opposed to the other. He concluded that they remained similar in the end, but what was decisive, however, was that the buses run and are driven by those that understand something about them. And he added, that the exact same thing went for all other machines that were operated in this land, and that the value and meaning of this work was neither diminished nor mag-

nified by the form [of system] in which it was achieved.[52]

This strong attachment to one's own work was actually not as "regime-indifferent" as it appeared, however, because according to Ahlers, this narrow focus and pride in one's work was informed by party slogans about drawing strength from one's "independent poverty" -- the very same ones the regime use to "make a virtue out of need."

> Daily they draw new strength out of their struggle for existence (*Daseinkampf*), and it appears as if the communist propaganda theses, which were born out of embarrassment, which actually defame the West, and are meant to cover up the nakedness of the East, have become an essential component of the feeling for life of millions of people, that basically are not communists.[53]

Ahlers was somewhat ahead of most West German visitors in considering this selective adoption and adaptation of communist propaganda. But he was not alone in his more general assumption that there were limits to the homogenizing force of the mass media in the GDR, as we see below. But where he broke new ground was in arguing that the "coming together" of slogans and popular feelings was complemented not just by political indifference, but -- as the example of the driver suggests -- *retreat into one's limited area of competence or other private activities*, what West German author Gunther Gaus later described as the "niche society."

> The full politicization of public life appears to be followed by a depoliticization of the people, who seek their compensation in different locations (*Bizerken*). From this situation is derived the high level of cultural achievements in the East zone, which, in view of the emigration of so many Prominent persons, is astonishing.[54]

This radical split of public and private worlds in the GDR was described by other authors of the day, but they tended to see the private world as *under siege and endangered*, rather than an independent source of "compensation." Apparently this was because the families under consideration were often practicing Christians and members of the middle

class.[55] The following quote suggests that for Western critics of the regime, it could be perceived as a completely alien "superstructure" overlaying an indigenous, authentic, natural base -- quite the opposite of Ahler's *Daseinkampf*:

> The everyday (*Alltag*) takes place in these two layers: outside and inside, within the four walls. What [the authorities] attempt to accomplish from outside, from the hierarchical apparatus of Moscow via Zinna Forrest, where the Soviet Military Administration currently sits, and via the individual command posts, is clearly demarcated (*sich scheiden haarscharf*) from that which is reality to the people themselves in the individual [residential] apartments. The 'thing' coming from outside (*Das von außen Kommende*) expands itself increasingly at the cost of the interior space (*Innenraum*), [but] nevertheless meets with borders which technically cannot be overcome, as long as we are not yet living in the year 1984.[56]

While most contemporaries did not draw so stark a picture, they *did* tend to conceptualize the regime as "coming at" the East German people through its propaganda and iconography, rather than tapping into their sense of "respectable poverty." Leaving aside both the political predispositions of the authors and the "culture shock" they surely experienced in the transformed sociopolitical environment of the early GDR, the most obvious reason for this was the prevailing unpopularity of the SED leadership. And yet, a number of them continued to believe that among workers, there was also an affinity for the regime's "socialist achievements" --land reform, "nationalization" of industry, health and insurance benefits, and a greater voice in aspects of factory management. Clearly this contradiction worried Western authors as they regarded the prospects for unification in the future. For example, one visitor in the spring 1952 speculated that workers were slowly turning against their state-run industries because the regime was proving to be an even tougher taskmaster than the private capitalist (highly prophetic given the events of June 1953), and yet the author had to admit that the workers discontent did *not* translate into affinity for West Germany or "democracy."[57] Like Ahlers, he believed this was because of a certain pride in their own struggles, but also (and important for this argument),

because workers knew how badly the regime needed them, and would continue to need them.[58]

Nevertheless, Ahlers' bold assertions about a shared Eastern identity was scarcely considered by contemporaries. In the last two chapters we will meet a number of *later* visitors who followed-up and expanded upon his views on East German identity -- beginning in the mid-1950s, but still years before later scholars believed such a phenomenon existed --and I will attempt to explain why such feelings have been overlooked. But for present purposes, it must be stressed that in the early years, what Ahlers viewed as an "identity" was apparently restricted to specific groups in the population: skilled industrial workers, functionaries, and many young people. Other West German visitors spent far less time discussing "socialist achievements," and a good deal more on the problems of impoverishment, emiseration and the increasing estrangement of East Germans -- their objective being to rouse support for *maintaining common identities* rather than theorizing about the growth of separate ones.

Along with the fear of increasing estrangement came frustration with and confusion over the apparent breakdown of normal communication patterns in the GDR, as well as the psychological pressure that seemed to emanate from the regime's inconography as well. Where Ahlers saw language implemented as part of clever coping strategies, other visitors began to describe "language difference" -- both between East and West Germans and between the regime's interpretation of reality and their own. The German language in the early GDR--both a transmitter of regime policies and propaganda and means of more basic communication--proved for Western visitors to be a very elastic and confusing field of interaction, confrontation and even conflict.

As mentioned, regime propaganda had a great impact: some authors found it frigh-

tening, others found it puzzling, many greeted it with scorn. But for most, its pervasiveness contributed to a general sense that the predominant flow of communication in the GDR was *downward*, from the state and party to the ordinary citizen, negatively impacting the latter, with little to no reverse flow. It surely took a keen ear to discern that the meaning of overly-used phrases and slogans might be evolving and changing as they reached further down into society; and it often went unnoticed that there were various forums, even in the early days, for airing grievances -- that is, if they were expressed carefully, without offense to the regime's ideology.[59] The variety of reactions to the "language of the GDR," tells us much about how the region and its future were understood in the West, and what reunification, if and when it came, might mean at the level of practical experience.

The anonymous journalist at the fall 1949 Leipzig found regime functionaries catching themselves in double meanings, loudspeakers blaring out absurd exhortations to freedom while West German visitors were put through humiliating searches, and an official sign-up sheet for an "anti-fascist" organization at the Erfurt *Hauptbahnhof* protected from the local population with chicken wire![60] For this author, the entire "project" of the GDR seemed a hollow sham, a kind of ridiculous nightmare. Others who followed expressed a sense of loss in confronting the new "discursive realm" of the GDR, lamenting the fact that East and West Germans already had trouble understanding each other. An anonymous author who traveled late in 1950, saw the new "language barrier" as product of the radical reorientation of *both* Germanies:

> What was most bitter for me was to meet people with whom we could not com municate, because we spoke different languages. The mental standpoints have been shifted, ours toward the West, and theirs very far to the East. Worse still, this process is developing further with increased speed.[61]

Another traveler of 1952, who felt welcomed by an East German family, still wondered if in time East and West Germans would lose all common forms of speech.[62]

The iconography of the regime was equally disturbing: images of blue-shirted youths, both two and three dimensional, seemed like 'Asiatic' imports, overwhelming in their sheer numbers and omnipresence--all gazing toward some utopian future. One author described them as identical to the faces he had seen previously as his tank unit rolled through Minsk and Smolensk during the invasion of the U.S.S.R., noting that "the faces of the youth are wooden, angular, strange, un-German."[63] But another author was dismayed at how much life in the GDR seemed to imitate art: "who[ever] has seen the marching blocks of FDJ girls must be frightened to recognize the considerable adjustment of the living faces to the artificial picture."[64] One anonymous visitor in 1951 linked the propaganda quite closely to imminent danger -- most specifically, the danger of *disappearing*. Referring to very general and careful speech one used upon entering the GDR, the author wrote:

> Why does one do it [eg. speak in general and unspecific terms]? Because one is afraid. One is afraid before an outrageous, anonymous something that is manifest in the posters and never-ending appeals, the certain obligations that are demanded of one, and which occasionally allow someone to disappear. It is the possibility that something could happen, which makes one fear. It is a dark shadow.[65]

Another writer came to the same place through a comparison that hit more closely to home: the GDR's propaganda messages and images were not so different from Western advertising, except in the consequences for the viewer. While one could safely choose to "disagree" with Western ads, "reeducation" could be the fate for dissenting with Eastern propaganda. Such threats seemed present in the very phrasing: propaganda banners were not *appeals* for support, but *statements* of support--not "fight with us," but "we are fighting," implying that the reader *already agreed* to participate, or else must be an enemy of

the people.[66] Most authors thought the net effect of such propaganda was not "conversion to communism," but a gradual weakening of the individual's ability to resist.

The only "converts" seemed to inhabit positions of various importance in the regime's bureaucracy -- both higher and lower ranks. For example, the unnamed official Ahlers met, who insisted that political oppression and economic hardships -- the "shadows of the system" as he called them -- were nothing but "temporary breakdowns" that would be overcome in the "final victory" of the future.[67] Ahler's description of his "optimistic idealism" reminds of local officials encountered by Thomas Mann.[68] Munich journalist Erich Kuby, who would become one of the leading progressive voices in the history of the Federal Republic, described another younger, lower-level functionary in far less flattering terms: calculating, utterly suspicious, and seemingly fully indoctrinated.[69] In the following quote, the "language barrier" is virtually insurmountable, the discussion partners alienated and dehumanized:

> It was impossible to elicit a single word from him that was not of a tactical nature, that would be 'natural.' He was like an insect covered all the way around with armor. To say that we two were speaking a common 'mother tongue' would be a mockery of the organizing concepts 'people' and 'nation,' which have been eternally explained by poets and politicians. He would have trusted a communist murderer from Shanghai far more than he trusted me, and would also have confided in him more. No one had ever informed him that his own censorial perceptions could be, and were allowed to be, the basis for his judgments, while I, on the other hand, could not trust my own censorial perceptions, because I could not see through 'the tank' (*Panzer*). Only the mute-embarrassed bride he had brought with him led me to suppose that 'the tank' at least had hormones.[70]

The behavior of this young man, an assistant to the minister-president of Thuringia, was similar to virtually every government official Kuby encountered, as he fought the East German bureaucracy, ultimately in vain, to prevent his expulsion. His crime, ironically, was based on *miscommunication* -- or more exactly, the efforts of another young

"system server" to attribute hostile intent to a spontaneous remark Kuby meant in jest.

Having received an invitation to report on a winter games festival in Oberhoff in January 1952, the author found himself in a series of delays and snafus regarding accommodations. Punch drunk from hours of waiting in a bar without sleep with two West German skiers, Kuby vented his frustration and bewilderment with the regretful words "Oh well, heil Hitler!" Ordered to leave shortly thereafter, he embarked on a Kafkaesque odyssey, challenging the order of the local functionary. Shuffled about by pig-headed, lying, ideologically blind, and at times downright incompetent bureaucrats -- not that all of whom were determined to expel him -- he was ultimately removed *not* for the initial *faux pas*, but rather for the irritation he kept causing the behemoth -- his very attempts to get its attention and be treated as a human being. The "double-speak" of the GDR certainly revealed a coercive dictatorship, but equally important, it appeared to root all its practitioners in a narrow, scripted official jargon that left them unable to comprehend or respond to the more subtle, unpredictable, and pluralistic language of the West.

This linguistic disjuncture would fascinate a number of later visitors as well. But for present purposes, the "other" linguistic disjuncture -- the different meanings and impacts of "official language" on middle class and working class East Germans, respectively -- plus the transformation of culture in Weimar -- appeared to be part of a larger and more worrisome transformation. If workers had some leeway in negotiating and even appropriating the discourse in the early GDR, while the regime's propaganda and ideology seemed to place the middle classes "under siege," was a rising tide of socialism about to sweep over the West? Massive numbers of workers pouring from factories each night suggested to a theologian who traveled to the GDR (and beyond, to the former German East) that a virtual sea change in Western history was at hand.[71] Another visitor believed

the coming of "socialist society" marked the start of a "biblical epoch."[72] The former counseled the West to embrace this "will of the working masses" rather the resist; the latter was far more frightened, arguing that the future of civilization itself was already visible in the socioeconomic transformation of the GDR.

Others found themselves somewhere in the middle. Several authors argued that in the event of reunification, the West would have a good deal to learn from the new East German society. And apparently one thing that would have to be learned was that the benefits of education and high culture ought to be extended to all Germans. Surprisingly, given East-West tensions, there were several admissions that a new Germany would have to somehow blend the best of both systems.[73] But one could take a moderate view of developments in the GDR and still remain completely critical of the regime: a contributor to a Protestant weekly who traveled late in 1953, during the relative liberalization of 'New Course,' noted rather prophetically that though travel in both directions had become easier and overt persecution of Christians had ended, the regime was merely biding its time before initiating a new wave of persecution and material hard-ship, suggesting (as did many contemporaries) that the GDR was *not* part of an irreversible tide, but the scene of an ongoing, endemic conflict.[74] Another Protestant visitor was among the first of many to note that the difficult circumstances for Christian believers -- as well as the collapse of 1945 -- had created *greater enthusiasm for the faith*, most importantly among young people, who were attending church quite outspokenly against the wishes of families "alienated from the church" (*kirchen-fremd*).[75] Later authors would find, rather ironically, that Christians in East Germany derived a sense of purpose, a determination to be part of East German society *precisely because of* their struggles against the regime. But neither this nor most other views about the change in East German society suggested the "march of his-

tory" was clearly on the communists' side.

Despite this diversity of views about the ultimate impact of the socioeconomic changes in the GDR, most West German visitors assumed quite naturally that East Germans were *waiting for liberation from the West* -- even those who approved of the SED's social welfare policies and nationalizations. As we have seen, many also emphasized the critical need East Germans had for *contact* with their Western "brothers." M. Flesch-Thebesius, as noted a visitor to Leipzig in the summer of 1954, described the psychological impact of West German visits to the GDR. It was not simply a means of limiting East Germans' sense of isolation, but also *placing them on a more equal basis* with West Germans. The difference between "long distance" communication and West German visits became apparent in the spirit of a Leipzig family the author visited:

> . . . they were not the avoided, the poor relatives, that one puts off with shipments of groceries and cast-off clothes. They were social equals, hosts, they even could give something themselves. And they gave with a joy that one only seldom finds. For the visit in this country is the most natural thing, as [it was] on our side before the time of the currency reform. And the housewife, who, because she is frightened by the new leaders, more or less never takes a step out of the home except to procure the necessary provisions, feels upbeat once again if the guest comes from the West. As she goes in the kitchen to brew a [pot of] tea, one can hear her softly singing.[76]

In the end, however, the author had to acknowledge that no amount of Western visits could prevent the continued, slow drifting apart of the two Germanies. But by 1954, some other visitors were hinting that East Germans, even as they were drifting away, were starting to find a sense of their own strength. In the years that followed a number of visitors, both West German and foreign, would describe them as defiant and even hostile towards the regime and its cadres.[77] In those years, it would be difficult for West German authors to avoid dividing East Germans -- far too simplistically -- into either resisters or opportunistic collaborators, precisely because a more nuanced view would sug-

gest integration into a *separate* society, the very thing they feared most. From 1954, then, East Germans were described mainly as more proactive regime opponents, who, though still far from controlling their own destiny, were at the same time busy reviving the Eastern economy almost *in spite of* the regime. Yet despite its limitations this view was a striking change from earlier pleas for "help" made on behalf of frightened middle class housewives and families.

But this not to say that Western Germans did not find individual spontaneous acts of resistance in the early 1950s. Sometimes the very language of the regime could be turned against it in humorous ways, such as creating belittling acronyms out of the names of regime institutions: the state-owned "Consumer stores" (*Konsumgeschäfte*) had apparently not won over their customers entirely, at least judging from the fact that their shortened nickname, "*Konsum*" had been turned by a punster into an acronym for "*Keine Oder Neisse Sondern Unsere Memel*," (not the Oder-Neisse [border] but our Memel -- the former German seaport conquered by the Red Army in 1945, in present-day Lithuania).[78] This, of course, was more than a mere nationalist appeal or protest of the expulsion of Germans from the Eastern territories, but a direct criticism of the regime's open acceptance of the Oder-Neisse border as Germany's *final Eastern boundary*. Meanwhile, some students admitted to travelers that they planned to use their regime-financed university studies to eventually seek employment in the West, rather than the East. Other, less destabilizing actions the authors noted were the reading of contraband Western newspapers (while using East German papers as seat cushions); carefully-worded criticism of particular policies or rules; increased interest (as noted) in church attendance, events, and youth groups, (especially among the young) and graffiti and other covert means of expressing contempt for the regime.[79] For the most part, however, open acts of defiance

were not visible until June 16-17, 1953 and after. In the earlier years the majority seemed quiet, cowed, and passive.

East German youth, however, were a different matter indeed. Most seemed neither cowed nor contemptuous, and rightly so, for more than any other social group, it was they who most hoped for a new beginning, and also had to respond to the regime's overtures for support. Several authors discussed the pressure on youths to join the government-sponsored *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (Free German Youth). They were not exactly conscripted, but encouraged at every turn; one author noted that secondary school teachers were looked upon more favorably if a large number of their students joined the FDJ. "What teacher wishes to commit occupational suicide?" the author asked, suggesting how hard it would be for any pupil to remain aloof.[80] A related concern, naturally, was the importance of FDJ membership in gaining admittance to *higher* education. For young Christian believers, this would seem to force a choice between the state and their God. One author seemed pleased to note that FDJ leaders expressed respect for theology students, admitting that they were the only other youth group that was informed and active. This author believed the churches, with their "age old message of liberation," provided sustenance and support in the face of state pressures.[81] This author too, however, emphasized the critical need for personal contacts between East and West Germans.

The blue-uniformed FDJ were the subject of numerous vignettes by West German authors. Most lacked the histrionics mentioned above, but several of them implied nevertheless that FDJ activities were reminiscent of those of the Hitler youth.[82] In one instance, an anonymous author described nearly a hundred youths, seemingly all blond, gathered around an old, "beaten-up" stage to watch folk dancers in costume; in another, twenty of them played a fanfare with traditional "land-servant drums" (*Landsknechtstrommel*) with

much vigor and showmanship -- both hearkening back to Nazi activities stressing tradition German culture. Perhaps even more menacing still was an FDJ "parade" in which columns of 12 passed through a street with sloganed banners at the front. An "electrifying" song, with lyrics about the fight for freedom blared from behind them. But the author noted that pedestrians stood by in silence, more afraid than inspired. When the group had passed, they resumed their daily routine as if nothing had happened. Not one of them joined in -- not even the children.[83]

In the end it was not clear whether the blue-shirted youths represented the regime's growing power, or simply provided an outlet for youthful energies and the need for inclusion. In another passage the author described uniformed youth -- both blue- and green-shirted -- in a dining car of a train, spending money and socializing as youth would anywhere -- albeit in some-what quieter fashion.[84] But farther on, the author's perspective seemed changed back to one of alarm. The author referred to FDJ members as pampered and spoiled by the regime, having been given all kinds of chances far too quickly, and growing up in chaos. At least in the Hitler youth, the author added, there had at least been some young men with a certain amount of "breeding" and "cultivation" (!) The author had no idea how the state would ever make them into its "defenders."[85] Another author, who found more evidence of genuine enthusiasm among young people for the FDJ, confidently predicted that it would not last. This author believed that invariably the "natural preoccupations of youth"--interest in new clothes, improving one's personal appearance, in the opposite sex, and in "films, dancing, and alcohol" --would lead the youth astray. And, in any case, the author added, children with an orderly home life would always be less easily "possessed" by the new slogans.[86] A third author found reason to actually approve of the organization, suggesting that FDJ outings to the "Thuringian Forest" were in any case

preferable to leaving young people stranded in the ruins of Leipzig or Dresden.[87] Indeed, the more travel stories one reads from the early years of the GDR, the more one gets the impression that the FDJ inspired more concern among *non-German* anti-Communists and others than it did among West Germans themselves.

In the end, however, West German travelers to the early GDR all agreed that whatever its positive manifestations, the regime was ultimately dictatorial and somehow ought to be overcome. All of them, therefore, anticipated *eventual reunification*, though none offered any realistic means to achieve it. Instead, as noted, most argued for a kind of holding action: travel to the GDR to keep contacts and affinities between the two Germanies alive. Sometimes this view was implied with remarks to the effect that East Germans were expecting Western help. But as we have seen, such stances did not completely eliminate the need to begin to theorize about the kind of society the East was becoming. Though we have seen expressed the view that East Germans were basically "under siege" from a wholly external force, more often than not, expectations of eventual reunification *coexisted with* an evolving understanding of a new and different culture--a separate "way of life" from the West.

And this way of life apparently coexisted with East Germans' *own hopes* for unification as well. One author in the spring of 1952 noted that East Berliners took the "Stalin notes" of that March quite seriously.[88] As we have seen, (Introduction) the Soviet leader proposed a unified, neutral Germany, but the Allies, ever suspicious and wanting to integrate West Germany into the NATO Alliance, balked, and the genuineness of the offer was never tested. But the interest the "notes" aroused did not necessarily conflict with affinity for "socialist achievements" -- the same author made it a point further on to note the pride workers took in the democratic organization of the shop floor and their appre-

ciation for generous social welfare benefits. "He takes a conscious share in the development of his enterprise and treasures the opportunity due him for critique," wrote the author regarding industrial workers.[89] Indeed, it seemed fairly clear that whatever the future held, East Germans were not about to give up their recently bestowed "social benefits."

This was obvious even to vociferous regime critics. Gustav Heinemann, a Protestant Church official, was clearly one of then, and though he found frustration with and resentment of the SED everywhere he went in the GDR, he nevertheless understood that it did not mean the regime was completely bankrupt:

> The standard of living has on the whole improved; people realize that everything has been worked up through their own energy and in the teeth of many reverses, There is no desire at all for a return to things exactly as they used to be; on the contrary, certain basic alterations here and there are approved.[90]

Any possible future unification was even further complicated by attitudes toward the West. East Germans apparently did not simply envy Western prosperity or criticize Bonn's attachment to the U.S., but they also doubted the West's commitment to unification.

> The great longing is . . . that some change may come, perhaps through an all-German election, and the question that is being asked everywhere is why Western Germany does not make a more definite effort for such a solution; why it is all tied up with things that are not acute any more, such as the Oder-Neisse Line, whether indeed anybody is really thinking about them at all, and so on. . . .[91]

Heinemann did not seem to know it at the time, but this frustration would be allowed to incubate for a number of years, and morph into an important aspect of East German identity, as described by later travelers. Some of his contemporaries, however, did speculate on the effect of another ten or twenty years of Soviet military presence in Germany, and whether it might eventually break *all* bonds of affection between East and West Germans. Regardless, virtually all visitors of the time agreed with Heinemann that

however the GDR would develop, the initiative for bringing about unification had to come *from the West*. As one traveler put it in 1951: "they are waiting for us; are we always aware of this?"[92] Another visitor of the previous year was even more urgent:

> If one lives a while amongst the people of the Soviet zone and gains their trust, then one is asked again and again: 'when will the West help us?' They expect help from the West! . . . So West Germany has a great responsibility, because a great trust is brought to it. Trust obliges.[93]

These anonymous authors seemed as worried about the fate of their "countrymen" in the GDR as about West Germans' apathy regarding that fate. But ultimately from their perspective, the greatest problem in divided Germany was not the plight of East German *per se*, but the seemingly inexorable drifting apart of the two sides -- socially, economically, culturally, even linguistically. Even if permanent division didn't result, the problems of reconstituting a unified German state and people seemed to grow more difficult all the time.

[1] See Chapter One, endnote 179.
[2] At least until the summer of 1952, the control of the inter-German border was inconsistent. In the first half of 1950, for example, there was a period of noticeably loose control, in which as many as 20,000 East Germans crossed each month. Western observers speculated then, but also at earlier times, that the Eastern regime was deliberately allowing "malcontents" to leave, in hopes of consolidating their rule and contributing to the large number of unemployed in the West. See Jack Raymond, "Over the Green Border from East Germany," *The New York Times Magazine* August 27, 1950, pp. 12, 38, 40.
[3] A list of occupational groups eligible to apply for these passes was first published in Bavaria in April 1946. Its important that such passes were designed to restrict travel between all four zones, not just between the Western Zones and the Soviet Zone. See "Interzonenpaß auch in Bayern. Nur für beschränkten Personenkries zugelassen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2 April 1946, p. 4. According to one anonymous pass holder, however, in reality, most of the group was actually made up of businessmen and small traders, whose movement the allies deemed vital in order to make the most basic provisioning of the German population possible. This author also explained that in the early postwar years, passholders usually had to travel to zonal borders on one train, cross the border by foot, and continue on another, often in the midst crowds of bewildered and hungry refugees. "Der Interzonepaß, Legende und Tatsachen," *Die Gegenwart* 1(20/21), 30 October 1946, pp. 19-21.
[4] "Das Leben in der russischen Zone," *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 29 March 1946, p. 2.
[5] For example "Weimar -- aktuell und klassisch," *Die Zeit* 2 (13) 27 March 1947, p. 2.
[6] This point was stressed by the anonymous author of "Der Interzonenpaß . . ." (end note 3). In an effort to convince skeptics, anti-Communist or otherwise, the author added for emphasis "'Yes, in nearly every city in the Russian zone there are hotels with bed linens and servants, in which one who lacks rank or connections can find accommodation." (p. 20)
[7] This last point was especially important to Ewald Schmidt di Simoni, who drove to the spring 1948 Leipzig Fair. See di Simon, "Märchen und Wirklichkeit der Ostzone," *Die Zeit* 3 (11), 11 March 1948, p. 2.
[8] Valentin Tomberg, "Trends of Opinion in Germany Today. An Eye Witness Account," *The Dublin Review* 441, Autumn, 1947, p. 91.
[9] See for example Shepard Stone, "Report on the Mood of Germany," *The New York Times Magazine* January 26, 1947, pp. 8, 9, 49, 51-3; and "Inside the German Prison," *Christian Century* September 8, 1948, pp. 902-4. For surveys see Anna J. Merrit and Richard L. Merrit, eds., *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany, The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949* (Urbana, IL, 1970). Of particular interest was a report of April 1947, which noted that 7 in 10 respondents believed Germans were *not* responsible for the war (p. 163), that Germans in the American Zone "worried about food more than about any other matter" and that only 44% believed "the American occupation forces had furthered the reconstruction of Germany" (p. 161).
[10] "Weimar -- aktuell und klassisch."
[11] It was held in March 1946. There was no fair in the fall of 1946.
[12] "Leipziger Messe -- von Westen gesehen," *Textil-Wirtschaft* 2 (6), p. 6.
[13] J. A. Meisenbach, "Die Leipziger Frühjahrsmesse 1947: imposant! -- Aber so geht es nicht!" *Die Schaulade* 22 (4/5 A) p. 64.
[14] "Bericht aus Leipzig," *Die Gegenwart* 1 April 1948, pp. 13-14.
[15] Ibid., p. 14.
[16] Ibid., p. 15.
[17] Di Simoni.
[18] Ibid.
[19] "Weimar ohne Goethe," *Rheinscher Merkur* 2 (20), p. 8.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] "Weimar--akteull und klassisch."

[23] "In Goethes Stadt," *Weltwoche* 15 (710), p. 10.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Karl Zimmerman, "In Weimar, März 1948," *Die Gegenwart* 3 (7/8), 1 April 1948, pp . 30-32. Apparently Zimmerman also wrote "Bericht aus Leipzig," which was signed "K. Z."
[28] Ibid., p. 31.
[29] The Soviet reverence for Goethe and Schiller was mentioned elsewhere, though in a more mocking form, in a brief reminiscence of a British writer on an assistant commandant he had met in Weimar in the summer of 1945. Despite the glowing admiration of this Russian officer, he comes of in the sketch as rather uncultured and uneducated, yet he too, laid a wreath at Goethe's tomb, and had his picture taken doing so. He tried to impress upon the local population that Germany would not be a great power again, but instead a people of culture (*Kulturvolk*). Several people asked the author if he thought the Americans would come back, telling him they were "much nicer" and better mannered than the Russians. The assistant commandant for himself attacked the Americans for bombing Weimar and intimated that all the local war criminals had left with them when they pulled out the two months before. The author seemed to be suggesting that the Russian's praise for German culture (and alternately criticism of German morals) was an attempt to cover up his own dictatorial, toadying, and uncultured ways, and yet there a lot of hints in the sketch that the local Germans were not dealing with their Nazi past either. Alexander Werth, "Assistant Commandant," *The New Statesman and Nation* May 20, 1950, pp. 570-1.
[30] "Besuch in der Sowjetzone," *Wirtschafts Zeitung* 3 (24), 11 June 1948, p. 1.
[31] Ibid. Madison's argument was that a larger democracy would actually function more effectively than a small one because the inevitable diversity of factions in a large polity would tend to cancel each other out.
[32] Wolgang Köhler, "Das Andere Seite: Entdeckungsfahrt hinter dem eiseren Vorhang," *Sonntagsblatt* 2 (15), 10 April, 1949, p. 15.
[33] One such contemporary anecdotal report, describing only arbitrary imprisonment, flight to the West, and suppression of facts regarding the effects of malnutrition in the Soviet Zone was "Blick hinter den (sic) 'Eiseren Vorhang,'" *Kirchlicher Nachrichtensdienst* 4 (98), 1949, p. 3.
[34] Köhler.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid. The author was traveling with several other journalists, but he did not introduce them.
[39] Sowjetzone, von Ostberlin gesehen," *Christ und Welt* 2 (37), September 15, 1949, p. 4.
[40] "Reise in ein anderes Deutschland," *Handelsblatt* October 4 (81), 1949, p. 3.
[41] "Alltag hinter dem Eiseren Vorhang," *Sonntagsblatt* 5 (22) , 1952, p. 11.
[42] "Bericht aus Leipzig" (1948).
[43] "Fahrt in das Andere Deutschland," *Sonntagsblatt* 4 (22), 1951, p. 12.
[44] M. Flesch-Thebesius, "Leipzig und die Leipziger," *Sonntagsblatt* 29 (7), July 18, 1954, p. 9.
[45] "Der Alltag in der Sowjetzone," *Deutsche Kommentare: Wochzeitung für das ganze Deutschland* 2 (11), March 13, 1950, pp. 3-4.
[46] "Auch hier ist deutsches Vaterland," *Sonntagsblatt* 5 (36), 1952, p. 17. The author in the previous note also noted the "excellent food" available to functionaries, as well as for "specialists in the economy and industry, and . . . 'true to the line' journalists and artists." "Der Alltag in der Sowjetzone," p. 4.
[47] "Der Alltag in der Sowjetzone," p. 4.
[48] Conrad Ahlers, "Das Leben hinter dem Eiseren Vorhang," *Sonntagsblatt* 3 (1), p. 15.
[49] "Bei den Leuten in der Sowjetzone," *Christ und Welt* 3 (37), 1950, p. 5.
[50] "Blick in die Zone," *Sonntagsblatt* 5 (19), 1952, pp. 10-11.
[51] Ahlers.

[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] For example, "Alltag hinter der Eiseren Vorhang."
[56] Ibid., p. 10.
[57] "Blick in die Zone," p. 11.
[58] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
[59] The author who most emphasized this point was actually British, journalist A. J. Fischer, who we met in Chapter Two. He observed a "public discussion evening" in Erfurt, and praised the openness of the process:

> . . . I heard people ask questions like 'Why are our prisoners of war half-dead when they return from Russia? And why that enormous propaganda about Russian wheat deliveries to Germany, if the tenfold quantity has earlier traveled in the opposite direction?' All replies were given in a calm and matter-of-fact tone; never has anything happened to the questioner.

Fischer, The Eastern Zone of Germany," p. 263.
[60] "Reise in ein anderes Deutschland."
[61] "Reise hinter den Eiserenen Vorhang," *Die Weltwoche* (Zürich) 18 (893), 22 December 1950, p. 2. The author identified himself as from Western Germany. The same opinion was expressed by an informant of Bertrand Ferney regarding her relatives in West Germany. See Chapter Five, pp. 6-7.
[62] "Alltag hinter den Eiserenen Vorhang," p. 11.
[63] Fahrt in das andere Deutschland, p. 5.
[64] Alltag hinter den Eiserenen Vorhang," p. 11.
[65] "Fahrt in das andere Deutschland," p. 12.
[66] "Alltag hinter den Eiseren Vorhang," p. 10.
[67] Ahlers.
[68] See Chapter 3, pp. 270-201.
[69] Erich Kuby, "In einem Anderen Land -- In der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," *Frankfurter Hefte* 7 (6), 1952, pp. 417-432.
[70] Ibid., p. 427-8.
[71] Erwin Schüle, "Streiflichter einer Ostzonen-Reise," *Christengemeinschaft* 26 (1954), pp. 273-5.
[72] "Alltag hinter den Eiserenen Vorhang."
[73] Most notable among those with this opinion was Gustav Heinemann, a West German Protestant church official, whose report was published in English as Gustav W. Heinemann, "In the Eastern Zone," *The Ecumenical Review* IV (2), January 1952, pp. 190-4, and in shorter version in German as Gustav Heinemann, "Reise durch die Ostzone," *Junge Kirche* 12 (24), 1951, pp. 687-9.
[74] "Vorauslaufende Schatten: Die Lage in der Ostzone vor Wintersanbruch," *Kirche in der Zeit* 8 (11), pp. 220-22.
[75] Lerfeldt, Svend, "Dänischer Bericht aus den Russenzone," *Zeitwende* 22 (1950-1), p. 453.
[76] M. Flesch-Thebesius. A very similar sentiment was expressed earlier in the conclusion of "Reise hinter den Eiseren Vorhang."
[77] For example, West German Peter Ganz, "Die Ostzone Heute: Ein Reisebericht," *Frankfurter Hefte* 9 (4), 1954, pp. 290-4. A foreign visitor who found East Germans even more defiant around the same time was the Berlin correspondent for the London Times in "East Germany a Year after the Riots: Partial Return to Compulsion," *The Times* June 17, 1954, p. 7e. Its important to note, however, that in 1954 other visitors still found East Germans to often be more afraid than assertive, for example a West German cyclist imprisoned for attempting to ride across East German territory. See "Poverty and Gloom in Eastern Germany: Record of a Cycling Tour," *The Times* (London), January 5, 1954, 7e.
[78] "Bei den Leuten in der Sowjetzone," p. 5.

[79] One most interesting example of the latter was actually noted by an American visitor to the fall 1952 Leipzig fair. *Newsweek's* Robert Haeger learned the position of a particular flag on a pole indicated that a certain Western radio program was about to air. See "Leipzig Fair Visitors See Red Triumphs Everywhere," *Newsweek* September 22, 1953, p. 43.
[80] "Bei den Leuten in der Sowjetzone," p. 6.
[81] "Fahrt in das andere Deutschland," pp. 12-13.
[82] One was the author of "Bei den Leuten in der Sowjetzone," p. 6. Another was the author of Ibid. and "Auch hier is Deutsches Vaterland," as we will see presently.
[83] "Auch hier ist deutsches Vaterland."
[84] Ibid.
[85] "Alltag hinter den Eiseren Vorhang,"
[86] "Blick in der Zone," p. 11.
[87] "Reise hinter den Eiseren Vorhang."
[88] "Blick in die Zone," p. 10. On the Stalin notes, and the question of Stalin's interest in reunifying Germany, see Introduction, p. 6.
[89] Ibid., p. 11.
[90] Heinemann, p. 193. In the German version, pp. 688-9.
[91] Ibid., pp. 192-3. In the German version, pp. 688, though the final phrase beginning with "why it is all tied up with things . . . " is missing.
[92] "Fahrt in das andere Deutschland," p. 13.
[93] "Bei den Leuten in der Sowjetzone," p. 6.

Part II: Imagining the East:
Western Travelers, East German Identity, and the Emergence of the GDR, 1955-1972

There can be no doubt that the GDR entered into a more "established phase" after the building of the Berlin Wall created preconditions for economic, and, eventually, political stabilization.[1] However, contemporary visitors found considerable evidence of economic growth and relative political stability in the years *before* the Wall was built as well -- particularly in 1959-60, but also in the mid-1950s. In the mid-to-late 1950s, the Western media seemed to overstate the economic success of the GDR at certain points, and at others, exaggerate the danger of uprisings (for example after the suppression of the Hungarian "Golden October" in 1956). But already in 1959, one of the first American journalists to travel freely in the region since the postwar years was describing the GDR as "here to stay,"[2] and the following spring, another American visitor declared it "Russia's richest colony."[3] They were far from alone in such views. A number of avowed democratic socialists, but also more liberal and conservative travelers, could not deny considerable economic progress, and measure of social stability as well.

The period 1959-early 1960 in particular stands out as one in which Western visitors to the GDR -- though importantly, *not* West German visitors -- seemed certain that however disliked it might be, the GDR was indeed a viable state. And not only this: the combination of economic progress and a counterflow of migrants heading from West Germany *to* the GDR made many visitors wonder, albeit briefly, whether the GDR might become a genuine economic rival for the Federal Republic! This moment corresponded with tremendous scientific progress in the Soviet bloc, and the strengthening of ties between Moscow and a number of "liberation movements" in the developing world, all of it suggesting a new and growing strength of the Communist cause worldwide.

But what these developments, and more limited success in the mid-1950s, meant for the mood of ordinary East Germans was not at all clear to outside visitors. While many traveler-authors and journalists from Western Europe, the United States, and elsewhere noted approval for the GDR's social welfare benefits and socialized production, policies and institutions they referred to collectively as "socialist achievements," others found the population feeling rebellious and insubordinate at times (for example in the ferment following Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin) or increasingly desperate and demoralized (during and after the first Berlin crisis of late 1958). But behind this variety of impressions was a growing realization (though in some cases only semiconscious) that East Germans were becoming a *separate people* from West Germans, with their own sense of "state identity."

Not surprisingly West Germans themselves who visited the GDR in the same years were not prepared to entertain such views, nor would they countenance the idea that socialist achievements were popular among most East Germans. At the same time, however, they focused far less on desperation and hopelessness than might be expected. Instead, they presented most East Germans as struggling against communist indoctrination, but also achieving tremendous feats of reconstruction and production, almost *in spite of* the SED. It was seemingly natural in the 1950s for West German travelers in the GDR to think of East Germans as countrymen forced to live under an oppressive and basically foreign regime. But even so, at least some could not deny a degree of economic progress as well.

Of course, not long after this period, the final round of forced collectivization of agriculture provoked the GDR's most serious crisis to date. Collectivization, as well as renewed threats by Soviet premier Khrushchev to sign a separate peace with the GDR

(and thereby turn over control of the inner-German border to the SED) triggered another sharp rise in outmigration. Contemporary observers quickly revised the East German success story to a tale of acute crisis -- a near "bleeding to death" of the economy coupled with harsh repression for those who remained. Most of these authors revived the rhetoric of totalitarianism of the high Stalinist years. Soon enough, however, the idea of the GDR as a rather unexpected success story returned, and not long after (1964), the notion that East Germans were not only a distinct people, but that they possessed their own "state consciousness" as well. In describing these developments, most authors of the mid-1960s believed it was new -- that is, a product of *post-Wall* developments, though what they described was noticeably similar to the attitudes presented by earlier visitors. As it turned out, however, only one West German researcher connected the two periods together, suggesting in 1967 the growth of East German identity over the years since 1955.[4]

That author, Hans Apel, was *not* the first West German to argue for the existence of an East German "state identity," but those who did so before him either wrote for a foreign audience,[5] or stressed the lack of free choice in the matter. At times, however, their observations suggested something more at work than merely "forced accommodation."[6] During the mid-to-late 1960s, those who argued for the existence of a state consciousness were never in the majority. Instead, they joined a debate about the nature of East Germans' relationship with the Eastern regime that was never fully resolved. Certainly indoctrination played a role in East Germans' attitudes, as did forced separation from the West after August 1961. But the idea that they did not simply adapt to their surroundings but to some extent embraced participation and felt "at home" in the GDR seemed to gather strength through the late 1960s. The notion that East Germans thought of the GDR as "our republic" resurfaced again and again as well, though not all visitors agreed with Apel

that such expressions represented a fully conscious choice for the East German system over its Western counterpart. What most visitors could agree on by the early 1970s was that most East Germans were basically satisfied with their living conditions and work opportunities, and, though still largely unpolitical, were anchored in work, school, and neighborhood organizations. But along the way to this view, a number of West German visitors and an occasional foreigner as well continued to portray many East Germans as "holding out" against the SED, or as somehow immune to its messages.

Both foreign and West German visitors also gained another trope to explain the socio-political stabilization of the GDR in the 1960s: in effect, East Germans came to terms with the regime not just out of necessity, approval of the "welfare state," or even their own selfish motivations, but because the regime embodied "traditional German values." In essence, many non-political citizens came to accept and even approve of the dictatorship because of its commitment to an orderly society and emphasis on skilled work and labor discipline. By the early 1970s, it was even becoming apparent that many East Germans saw certain advantages to life in the GDR. Visitors in this period focused on a number of small businessmen who partnered with the state and thereby achieved both profitability and security -- a situation most of them believed was unattainable in the West. But none of these observations made the GDR seem like a genuine rival or alternative to West Germany. East Germans and "their republic" were, to borrow from a different place and time, "separate but not equal" to West Germans. The basic, underlying coercive nature of the regime, including its mechanisms of indoctrination, always complicated the discussion of East German identity. It was never satisfactorily defined in this period, and as noted in the introduction, later studies and histories dropped the idea altogether, or if not, generally conceived of it as merely a product of having lived in a sepa-

rate regime with little direct knowledge of a common German past.

But to the reasons already mentioned that East German identity has been ignored -- the economic, social, and political problems that eventually overwhelmed the regime, the mounting popular disaffection from the mid-1970s onwards, and scholarly preoccupations with the defining dictatorship and its relationship to society -- must be added *the critical disjuncture between East Germans' basic approval for the "social system" on the one hand, and their general dislike of the ruling elite and rejection of Marxist doctrines on the other*. Visitors found an East German identity that contained little or no ideological commitment. The popularity of "socialist achievements," and identification with "our Republic," were oddly *un*political attitudes. The "republic" was a *welfare provider*, and increasingly, a homeland; "politics" and Marxism on the other hand, were kept at an intellectual distance. Identification, therefore, was not patriotism in any real sense; but it was also more than simply learning the rules of the game, acting for one's own or one's family's benefit, or retreating from public and living a "double life." The observations of diverse visitors suggest that it was a growing appreciation of *available opportunities* and integration into a social system that many, if not all East Germans came to believe was a better choice (if the terms remains appropriate) than the West German system. Whether it was the regime's "Germanness," or its socialist achievements, or simply group activities after work or in one's neighborhood, most visitors came to believe East Germans were coming to feel "at home" in the GDR. The extent to which this basic approval was freely chosen divided visitors, but by the late 1960s, all but the most dedicated opponents of the regime had to admit that East Germany was a separate society, even if the East German state remained an intolerable regime. The following chapter will deal with foreign visitors to the GDR, among them a group who first suggested that East Germans

were a separate people, and the GDR a genuine state. West Germans visitors, who came to grips with the reality of a separate Eastern state and identity more slowly and painfully, will be the subject of Chapter Six.

[1] The phrase was coined by Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, pp. 197-220.
[2] Frederick Kuh, "East Germany is No Mirage," *The New Republic* 189 (11), October 10, 1959, pp. 206-207.
[3] Kurt Lachman, "Russia's Richest Colony," *U. S. New and World Report* April 18, 1960, p. 116.
[4] Hans Apel, "Bericht über das 'Staatsgefühl' der DDR-Bevölkerung," *Frankfurter Hefte* 23 (3), March 1967, pp. 169-178.
[5] Erik Nohara, "A Visit to East Germany," *The Listener* LXIII (1609), January 28, 1960, pp. 155-157.
[6] The first and best example of this view is Theo Sommer, "Zwischen Mauer und Plakatwand," *Die Zeit* 15 May 1964, p. 3.

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BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN: WESTERN TRAVELERS AND CORRESPONDENTS IN EAST GERMANY, 1945-1972

VOLUME III

By

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Chapter Five: "Stuck--Between Disdain for the West and Revulsion against Stalinism"[1]

The GDR and Its Population in the Writings of Foreign Visitors: 1954-1972

The published travel stories of non-German correspondents, political officials, academics, and others who visited the GDR and East Berlin from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s contain such diverse observations, predictions, and criticisms that a singular, coherent overview of them seems impossible. Yet when considered in their totality, they reveal on-going debates about the meaning and timing of an East German "state identity," the possibilities and processes of individual reconciliation to life under communist rule, and most specifically, whether the GDR ever offered a workable alternative to Western liberal capitalism. All three issues were closely related. If the GDR was never a nation-state in the strictest sense, many visitors sensed that it *did* give increasing numbers of residents certain institutions and ideas with which to identify, allowing an easier acceptance of life under dictatorship and some pride in the regime's economic achievements.

In the mid-1950s, a substantial minority of these visitors, mostly from Western Europe, suggested that a growing part of East German population identified with the regime's welfare state and economic accomplishments -- if not the leadership itself -- which, combined with a noticeable dislike of West Germans and the Bonn regime, suggested a kind of shared identity among East Germans. Some of these visitors identified themselves as democratic socialists, others were known for such views, but some were clearly not sympathetic to socialist ideals. But before the building of the Berlin Wall, almost none of them characterized the set of beliefs they encountered as a "state identity." Indeed, they found East Germans' views to be contradictory and confused, strongly influenced by regime propaganda and censorship. Nevertheless, among some groups in the population, particularly young people and skilled workers, they found that a basic acceptance of, if

not affinity for the regime was spreading, years before the Berlin Wall. In other words, these views challenge long-held assumptions that East Germans did little more than make their peace with the regime simply because there was no other realistic option.

But these observations were very quickly replaced--from early 1957--by warnings of impending explosion in the GDR, as reverberations from Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, and ensuing revolts in Poland and Hungary, convinced many in the Western media that a contagion of rebellion would spread. Predictions of another "June 17," however, proved un-founded, as they would again late in 1958 when Khrushchev threatened to sign a separate peace with the GDR in the first Berlin crisis. In this period, popular resentment of the regime was brought to center stage by visitors to East Berlin and the few who traveled beyond it, and con-sideration of opinions about socialist achievements all but disappeared. East Germans seemed either completely hostile to the regime, or totally apathetic, and the continuing outflow of refu-gees was often used as the best indicator of the attitude of those who remained.

But however much or little they dramatized the situation, this crisis period soon gave way to the first signs of major economic advance and greatly improved living conditions since the war, and several visitors wondered if the GDR might indeed soon rival the living standards of West Germany, something its leaders were boldly predicting. Once again, they reported a growing acceptance of the regime, primarily based on the same "achievements" (particularly educational opportunities), and much more than previously, improved living conditions. Speculation about future abundance, however, ended even more quickly than it had begun, due to an more profound crisis provoked by the final wave of collectivization, mass flight, and Cold War tensions that led to the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961.

While it is widely known that the Wall did not immediately end the GDR's difficulties, contemporaries saw the post-Wall period as far more explosive than it has appeared in retrospect. Once again, a number of visitors and observers wondered about revolt, but most found the population to be in state of utter hopelessness, controlled by a hyper-strict police state like none since the days of high Stalinism. Yet this crisis too would pass, and as early as September 1963 a British correspondent was again describing popular approval for certain aspects of the East German welfare state and economic achievements, despite a fairly clear dislike of the regime itself.[2] From the mid-1960s, these opinions, coupled with a sudden and dramatic economic upturn that many contemporaries called "the little miracle," convinced another group of visitors that a "state identity" had emerged in the GDR. Again, nearly all of them were Western Europeans, and they were never a majority, but importantly, other visitors of the day found similar attitudes among East Germans without referring to them as a state identity. It seemed that even as the GDR became more stable and even prosperous (at least by Eastern European standards) resentment of the regime, and most particularly its restrictions on travel to the West, still made state identity a difficult proposition for most visitors.

Of course, the idea of a "little miracle" (or as others called it, the "second economic miracle") was controversial as well. Economic progress was undeniable, but visitors wondered whether the NES would ever generate anything approaching Western-style prosperity, and how much further economic expansion could go in general, due to geopolitical limitations and apparent difficulties within the NES itself. There was a brief period of speculation that economic progress might actually help encourage *political* liberalization, but the nay-sayers proved to be right, and only minor and temporary liberalization transpired. Not that any post-Wall visitor found the regime's behavior to be any-

thing but domineering and fanatically intolerant; but several wondered if economic progress might work changes that the regime could not foresee, or be able to control. Ultimately, however, visitors of the mid-to-late 1960s made so much of this economic success because they wanted Western readers, particularly in America, to know that the GDR was not going to disappear, but had to somehow be accepted, if not officially recognized, as a part of the European landscape. From their point of view, there was quite a bit with which to be impressed: given fresh memories of the dearth and oppression surrounding the building of the Wall, the turnaround seemed incredibly dramatic. So much so, in fact, that the ecconomic upturn of the *pre*-Wall GDR was all but forgotten.

Of course, by the mid-1960s there were no more claims that the GDR would soon rival Western living standards. Indeed, visitors continued to note many difficulties with basic provisions and the limited availability of housing and big-ticket consumer goods. But at the same time, the Wall, to some extent, shifted the focus of comparison: not only had East Germans come far from humble beginnings, but they had done so faster than any state in the Soviet bloc. Not a few visitors attributed these accomplishments to traditional, inherited "German traits" of industry, skill, and dedication, and in the late 1960s, several authors became possessed of the notion that the authoritarianism of the regime was somehow very German itself. Indeed the emerging 'Germaness" of the regime coincided with the arguments for greater acceptance, making these reports a kind of metanarrative of the transformation of the GDR in western minds from a "Russian Zone" or "Red Germany" to "The Germany we don't know," as one American correspondent called it in 1970.[3]

This latter formulation expresses how "getting to know the GDR" was like unraveling a kind of mystery. Even in the 1960s, much of the GDR remained unknown terri-

tory in the West, particularly in America. The Wall and iron curtain surely deterred many, and filled not a few travelers with dread; or at very least, a sense of gripping adventure. But there was still the dif-ficulty for most Westerners of gaining access to areas *beyond* East Berlin and Leipzig during fair time (usually early March and late August every year). These unique circumstances, along with the unreliable information emanating from the GDR's radio, television and news service, meant that correspondents had a difficult task indeed: on the one hand, they had to dispel static and out-of-date views of the GDR as grim, silent, impoverished, police state; on the other, they had to form opinions about economic and social changes which surely would have political repercussions in the West, given West Germany's continued policy of non-recognition.

There was also the related but more philosophical problem of how to define the socio-economic system of the GDR, now that the dawn of consumer abundance seemed within reach. The GDR seemed to be either abandoning or at least redefining Marxism-Leninism as time passed, in some minds even imitating capitalism. If it truly was becoming more secure, the regime was also evolving in curious and unexpected ways. To help understand them, visitors tended to gravitate towards the persons and ideas of the NES that most reminded them of typical Western practice -- most notably remaining East German private business and a new generation of highly educated factory managers and technicians. But at the same time, the regime's penchant for obsessive, indeed nearly suffocating bureaucratic control of almost every other aspect of life in fact did not change. Rather, economic productivity and rigid social control went *hand in hand* -- they suggested an odd combination of old and new, enlightened and mistaken policies. In the years leading up to the signing of the Basic Treaty, by which West Germany recognized the GDR as an independent, though *not* co-equal state (December 1972), the Eastern regime still

defied simple definition in the West. All that was certain was that the regime was "insufferable," as one correspondent put it in 1968, and that it could no longer be ignored.

Dictatorship: No!; West German Regime: No!; Eastern Social System: Yes! -- Charting East German Opinions, 1954-1956

Basic approval for the social welfare system, if not the regime itself, was noticeable as early as 1954. But since such attitudes were far from universal, most travelers of the mid-1950s focused instead on lingering resentment following the suppression of the June 1953 uprising, along with modest and gradual improvement in living conditions under the "New Course" which followed it.[4] The period was not without "horror stories" of travel as well, recalling the earlier predicaments of Erik Kuby (Chapter Four), and Heinrich Fraenkel and Kingsley Martin (Chapter Three): in early 1954, one West German "victim" wrote of imprisonment and brutal interrogation simply for attempting to cycle from the inter-German border to Berlin.[5] There were also visitors who were highly critical of the New Course, who emphasized the continuing poverty and discontent of the elderly and middle classes.[6] There was even an occasional author who hinted that the rebellious spirits of June 17 were waiting for a new spark to set them off.[7] But an early glimpse into approval for socialist achievements was published later that year in both France and West Germany. The author was Bertrand Ferney, correspondent for the widely-read French social democratic weekly *France Observateur,* who was granted permission from the president of the *Volkskammer* to travel freely in the GDR for three weeks in September and October.[8]

Ferney was able to speak alone and in "full candor" with numerous ordinary East Germans, most of whom he claimed to have met in cafes or dance halls. He introduced 17 of them by occupation and narrated part of each conversation. They had profound criti-

cisms and disagreements with the regime, but expressed approval for many social welfare benefits as well, and also resentment of both West Germans and West Germany. Here are some of the most telling narrations:

> A student: (son of a lathe worker, is attending university, after having been passed through by the Workers and Peasants Department (*Arbeiter- und Bauernfakultät*)). 'I am very satisfied: I have 240 DM monthly and I pay 70 DM for my apartment and food in a student dormitory.' With the politics of the government he is in full agreement. He believes, however, that the [political] pressure that followed the revolt of 17 June might have been too strong. He wishes the unions would represent the interests of the workers more than those of the government.
>
> A female tailor: (20 years old, of bourgeois origin.) Relatively satisfied with her lot. She has no interest in politics. She strongly criticized the attitude of West Germans 'they are conceited and selfish.' The West and East [German] family members have recently met each other. 'We don't understand each other any more, and worse yet, we have nothing more to say to each other.'
>
> A doctor: (actively Protestant, 40 years old.) is for the generous social insurance and for the outpatients' clinic. But he is against the police state of the GDR and the revanchist government in Bonn. [He] wishes for a unified Germany.
>
> A commercial agent (*Handelsvertreter*): (from a private textile firm, 55 years old.) Complains about the bad condition of the economy: the factories must often be shut down for lack of raw materials. The paper war [bureaucratic red tape] is fantastic. The lack [of raw materials] leads to corruption. Expensive machines that had been inactive for six months were scrapped in order to make use of the metal. After a long critique he said forcefully: 'But I cannot stand the nationalism, the return of extremely rightist movements and the Americanization of West Germany.' He believed that the momentary difficulties had brought about a reasonable change in the attitude of the church. 'They hung between throne and altar. But now they engage themselves more with the workers.'
>
> A young journalist (party member) 'We journalists are heartrendingly mute. A propaganda is completely ineffective, if all journalists write what the official agencies supply without changing a line. Not only [do] the different newspapers in the same city have all the same inhuman jargon, they also bring all the news in the same wording and under the same headlines.' He had resigned his leader-post in the unified youth movement, because the political disinterestedness of the youth disgusted him.[9]

While these passages contain an enormous amount of information that could be interpreted in numerous ways,[10] for our present purpose they suggest how at a fairly early point in GDR history approval for social welfare policies could coexist not only with resentment of the regime's heavy hand, but even with *basic rejection* of it. This is, of course, due in part to con-temporary sense of political division as *provisional*. Yet hopes for reunification like those ex-pressed above, as is clear, contained the understanding that the better aspects of Eastern system would be carried over. Desire for unity, then, usually did *not* entail a clear choice for the political or socioeconomic system of West Germany. While some visitors blamed SED propaganda for the harsh attitudes expressed toward the Federal Republic,[11] the second passage suggests how face-to-face encounters with West Germans also played a role in the growing sense of estrangement.[12]

In 1955 and 1956, an increasing number of non-German visitors began to echo the findings of Ferney: their East German informants combined approval for a good deal of the East German welfare state with critical distance from the governments of *both* Germanies, and increasingly, they expressed a sense of profound difference from, and often dislike for, West Germans. Such were the findings of retired English naval officer Edgar P. Young, Australian academic Derek Van der Abbe, and Swiss journalist Fritz Alleman, all of whom visited the GDR in the first half of 1955. Of the three, Young betrayed the most sympathy for the regime's welfare policies (and almost no mention of its dictatorial practices), Van Abbe was most cautious and impressionistic,[13] and Alleman, though clearly opposed to the regime, drew the most striking conclu-sions about popular identification with socialist achievements. Both Young and Alleman attended the spring 1955 Leipzig fair, and it was the fairly striking improvement of living conditions there, and the corresponding, guarded optimism of Leipzigers that led Young to postulate widespread, ge-

neral approval for the regime's economic policies, if not its communist values:

> The people still grumble, of course, though much less (and with less cause) than they grumbled in 1949, but on the whole I found most of them -- and more of them are still non-Communist, if not actually anti-Communist -- inclined to feel that their Government was 'delivering the goods.' Things have improved steadily over the past two years, ... and because of this there is general confidence that they will improve still further with increasing rapidity. It is noteworthy, however, that this grumbling is confined very largely to the same kind of rather selfish middle-class people as grumble in Britain about the 'hardships' inherent (for them) in the establishment of the Welfare State, and that the younger generation is almost wholly enthusiastic in favour of the present regime. If there was some equivalent of South Africa to which the grumblers could escape (taking with them their former capital) -- and West Germany, suggesting this possibility, is tantalising in its appeal to them -- the remaining majority of East Germans would doubtless accept, even if they did not altogether approve, the order now well-established in the German Republic, and would oppose strongly any attempt to reverse it in a reunited Germany.[14]

Young here casts developments in the GDR in the light of the progressive social leveling of the postwar West, rather confident that in the GDR, as in Britain, economic justice is being done. But his clearly democratic-socialist perspective, not unlike that of Ferney, should not disqualify his findings, because more critical and conservative visitors of the time found little evidence of widespread hostility to the Eastern welfare state, as we will see below. What is most important for our present purpose is that like Ferney, Young believed that approval for socialist policies *coexisted with* non-allegiance to communist ideology, *and* a critical distance from the West German system.

This constellation of views was more hinted at by Van Abbe. He felt particularly unqualified to draw conclusions about public opinion, but found that Humboldt University staff believed it was "veering over towards the regime," and even ex-Nazis (presumably connected to the university as well) believed "people are happy to have at least the *feeling* of making decisive social change."[15] (emphasis original) Other circumstantial

evidence was the fact that non-com-munist "ordinary citizens" were standing for election to the "consumer councils" at the central, state, and local levels, and most important for this argument, the pronounced "Eastern orien-tation" of two young people he met:

> . . . most telling of all for me, were meetings with a couple of E. Zone students who had recently visited W. Germany and had found nothing in the life there which tempted them to give up promising careers in the DDR in exchange for the political 'security' of refugee status.[16]

While Alleman is perhaps better known for praising the nascent political culture of West Germany,[17] he was the most insightful and persuasive of the mid-1950s visitors in his evaluation of encounters with ordinary East Germans. Rather than simply take for granted the disjuncture between their approving of socialist achievements and rejecting the SED and communist ideology, he brought out the tension, even schizophrenia, that seemed to lie behind this mindset in a contributing article he wrote for the conservative literary British monthly *Encounter*[18] He described how ordinary East Germans could approve of the regime's achievements, but quickly turn on it-- expressing hatred for dictatorship. He believed the first emotion to be based on a kind of defensive pride in the face of the richer, more individualistic West, while the second was motivated by feeling alienated from and oppressed by the regime. Yet contained in these opinions was arguably not only approval for socialist achievements, but an apparent desire for some form of cooperative socialist democracy. While he believed "non-party progressives" and even some members of the SED, dreamed of a kind of "socialism without the SED," he was unable to recognize a similar viewpoint in the admittedly confusing opinions of the "man in the street":

> Of course, they envy the West German standard of living, and dream how fine it would be to be spared the burden of Party propaganda and the secret police. But their envy and admiration is almost always tempered by an element of rejection -- the pride of the poor relation as he observes the wealthy and arrogant upstart. 'Its

> easier for them over there -- but they are self-seeking, callous, and free of all misgivings.' The reaction to the *Bundestag* debates on the Paris treaties was typical; . . . [the debates'] acrimony aroused even more disapproval among them than among the people of the Federal Republic. 'They're free over there, and instead of standing together they insult each other,' I heard such remarks from the most resolute opponents of Communism, followed as often as not by 'At least we work together here.' . . . The feeling that in East Germany there is a much greater sense of community, more solidarity, more willingness to understand and to help one's fellow men than there is in the West is very widespread, not least among those who have had the opportunity in the last few years to get to know the Federal Republic or West Berlin at first hand. Not infrequently a man who seems not to have a good word to say for the East German system will make an astonishing *volte face* and suddenly begin defending the 'social' achievements of the same system which he has just condemned as 'sheer exploitation' or a 'prison regime.' And although, in his earlier talk, he had put a distance between himself and the rulers by referring to them as 'they' or, contemptuously, 'those people,' he now uses 'we,' and 'among us here.' He will tell you how important it is that class barriers have been eliminated or at least lowered, that the talented child of a worker or farmer can get a good education, that moneybags no longer determine opportunity, and what wonderfully cheap holidays the worker gets through his union. The idea of the Communist state as 'social' and 'progressive' has taken root even among those who think themselves completely immune to the regime's propaganda and who complain incessantly of the tyranny of 'norms.' This, too, reflects the ambivalence which makes many East Germans -- and not, in my opinion, the worst -- paint conditions in the Soviet zone in the darkest colours and at the same time defend it against West German 'arrogance' and 'superciliousness.'[19]

In retrospect, it seems odd that Alleman did not give East Germans more credit for understanding the difference between the regime's "means" on the one hand (dictatorship and excessive policing), and its "ends" on the other (social welfare) -- *especially* since he believed that its propaganda had become so pervasive and monotonous that it was largely ignored in any case. But he was quite possessed of the basic view that anyone with sufficient information about how the GDR was truly managed could only have hostile and critical opinions of it. It seemed that the difference between Alleman on the one hand, and Young and Ferney on the other, did come down to ideology. The idea of the state as a pro-gressive engine meant that the latter two could see the regime as failing or even sini-

ster in some respects, just as East Germans did themselves, while still having a certain progressive basis.

But across the Cold War divide of the 1950s, there was the lingering, unresolved problem of unification as well. Ferney had found East Germans who ultimately wanted unity while also supporting the welfare state, and so did another socialist-inclined, younger journalist from Britain, Peter B. Johnson. A reporter for Reuters news service who first visited the GDR in the spring of 1956, Johnson would later hold the distinction of being the first non-communist foreign correspondent stationed in the GDR.[20] Johnson was more up front about his socialist incli-nations in the first half of his published memoirs: "Although I think socialism is desirable and inevitable, it should not be imposed by dictatorship."[21] He described a meeting in East Berlin with the nephew of his German wife, who believed that in the event of unification, the GDR's social welfare policies ought to be retained -- a view that one of Johnson's contemporaries found to be very widespread.[22] Notice here that the welfare state is so disassociated from the "misdeeds" of the recent communist past, that the youth can praise the former while mocking the latter:

> Gunter spoke highly of the classless educational system in East Germany under which he, from a quite ordinary family, had been given a state stipend and trained as an engineer. Such things, he suggested, should be retained if Germany were reunited. However, he mentioned that in order to be recommended by his former factory for training as an engineer, he had to be 'politically reliable.' He fulfilled this by joining the communist Free German Youth (FDJ), not out of conviction but because he wanted to get on. That is not to say that he is violently against the regime. He finds good points in it but is disappointed at the slowness of economic progress. . . . Gunter told us that since Stalin's 'errors' had been criticized in communist countries it was jokingly being forecast that East Berlin's Stalinallee was to be renamed 'the street of errors.'[23]

But perhaps those who were most opposed to the SED, put off by the West German government, and, however ironically, approving of "socialist achievements" were

members of the East German clergy. Later the same year, Johnson recounted the frustrations of one such man he had first met while traveling in the West. Unlike Gunter, this man was clearly ideologically and morally opposed to the regime. However, combating it offered him a sense of purpose that he believed Western Christians, who meanwhile had "written off" their brethren in the East, lacked:

> [He] was bitter about church people in West Germany who, he said, are too well fed and materialistic. While the church in East Germany had a clear enemy to combat -- the atheist element in communism -- in the West the enemy was much more insidious -- Mammon in the age of cars, refrigerators, television, and so on. He and his wife said they were glad to be going back to East Germany because they felt the life of the Christian community there was healthier than in the west. [He] said that the people in the west said they were praying for those in the east -- but often that was all. [He] seemed quite grateful that he had been forced to study Marxism while at theological college in East Germany. It had helped him defeat communists in argument. His view of the East German system is that many who are trying to run it are stupid but at the same time very nasty. He believes that most of the old time communists have retired into the background because of the malpractices, wrongs, and crimes committed by the regime. His village had had about a dozen mayors since the war because one after another, all communists, had been dismissed for incompetence or fraud or had fled to the west. In the village were a few communists who were not atheists, including two school teachers who, he knew, prayed morning and evening at home.[24]

The couple expressed fear of potential repression for their continued practice of alternative values, but the quote hints at an East German Christian perspective not wholly opposed to socialism as well. Their perspective might be called a "negative Eastern identity," in part at least. Such views were not confined to Christians alone, as we will see. But a number of later visitors met pastors and lay people who outwardly proclaimed that "socialism was 'valuable' and there to stay," while also feeling a duty to struggle against the regime.[25]

But findings of support for the social system -- or even mere aspects of it -- raised the question of how much such views were colored by the regime's monopoly on public

information. Alleman argued that contradictions in their opinions sprang from confusion: ie. that the regime's propaganda so distorted reality and so contradicted whatever information they could gather from Western sources that result was invariably a muddling of reality and fantasy. A London *Times* "special correspondent" who traveled the GDR late in 1956 had a simpler explanation: in effect, the regime was slowly reorientating the mindset of skilled workers away from the West -- in terms of information, trade, and even work experience in the communist world -- thus forcing a "coming to terms" with the state, while disagreeable living conditions and uncharismatic rulers easily explained the regime's unpopularity.[26] But this author too seemed caught in a contradiction: stressing the growing attachment of workers to "socialist achievements," the corres-pondent implied a level of approval that could not be fully explained by intellectual isolation or forced reorientation. The tension between rejecting the regime and supporting its welfare state would prove difficult for Western authors to reconcile far into the 1960s. As we will see in Chapter Six, some West German authors tried to resolve it by arguing that East Germans disassociated socialist achievements from the regime entirely!

In the meantime, however, the year 1956 was a momentous one throughout the Soviet bloc, and visitors to the GDR struggled to make sense of the impact of a wave of liberalization and uncertainty following Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. That summer, Alleman returned to the GDR amid an apparently extraordinary political liberalization.[27] He found East that Germans once only willing to talk to him in private (and then only after determining that he was not a regime informant), now talked aloud in groups, and spontaneously welcomed his input. Meanwhile, middle and lower level functionaries were in state of confusion, no longer able to deny Stalinist excesses or deceive the public about political corruption or the true state of economy. But despite a sense of ferment

and change, he found the population feeling surprisingly *hopeless*. It seemed they felt so completely alienated from West Germans that the weakening of the Eastern regime, for all its immediate benefits, offered no long-term solution to their frustrations. They found little to celebrate in the new political atmosphere, despite growing awareness of a shared, collective, "socialistic" identity.

Alleman insisted that the communal and socialistic practices of the regime had given the population a sense that their "individual life plans" were bound up with the "total community (*Gesamtzusammenhang*) in which [they] stood and to which [they] felt connected," despite their feeling "forced to live" in it *and* their total rejection of communism. It seemed in this new incarnation, however, that East German identity -- though still closely connected to both envy of West German living standards and their own "sense of purpose" -- that is feeling "far above" . . . "the egoism, thanklessness, feeblemindedness, pettiness, which one observes when visiting in the West" -- was no longer a product of confusion or manipulation. The author refused to agree with some Western observers who put it down simply to an Eastern "inferiority complex." There was certainly *some* evidence of that, along with genuine dislike for the "shadow side" of the Western economic miracle (by which he likely meant wage inequality and unemployment). But he believed there was much more going on in Eastern society: whether they described the development of the West in "intellectual," "social," or even "religious" terms they all saw the West as "gaining the world, but losing the soul."

For Alleman, this explained why more East Germans did not flee to the West. He discussed the plight of several people wrestling with the decision: they had different grievances with the Eastern regime, but their sense of estrangement from West Germans made leaving a difficult proposition, as did their proud, defiant identification with life in the

East.

> They did not ask my advice, that is obvious; they ask themselves, they struggle before the stranger (*Fremdling*), the foreigner, to whom is shown so many times the internal conflict in which they live each day. . . . And [in] the end there is nearly always an explanation [as to] why they cannot take the decisive step, [though] there are so many reasons to be tempted: because the West has become 'strange' to them, because they belong where they are, because they cannot get rid of the feeling, that they still have a task to fulfill here -- and not least of all, because they simply have too much pride to abandon the field to 'them [over] there' (with an angry glance toward the man with the party badge two seats away). . . .[28]

The East German sense of solidarity, created by approval for socialist achievements, did not simply exist *in spite of* the SED, but here was turned on them: socialism *without* the SED was not simply a dream, but a motivation to defeat them -- somehow. It also offered a sense of participation in a noble tradition, a conservation of older values being lost in the modernizing, atomizing world of the West:

> The word solidarity, which the regime peddles, is in the process devalued. But the thing that this word means, is by [the regime's peddling of it] . . undisturbed: one lives it, one acts in solidarity in a way that in the West has long been forgotten, one knows of a 'common essence,' to which the authors of earlier generations gave expression, totally rooted--and one shakes one's head in regard to 'those over there,' who cannot understand these simple and natural things and live 'happy go lucky,' as if there are only their little personal cares and otherwise nothing in the world.[29]

This sense of solidarity and difference from the West made the hopes of any genuine unity almost fantastical: West Germany had become so foreign that visiting it was akin to traveling to a foreign land, or as the author put it for emphasis, "a different star." The more they felt their separate identity, the more they felt "how thin and threadbare indeed the bonds of common interest [with the West] had become."[30] Still, however, Alleman believed East Germans desired unification, and almost every one of the author's informants wanted to know what he thought of its chances. When he replied that they are

"hardly recognizable," this is how a group of informants reacted:

> Obviously those in the West had no interest at all in the 17 million, and the ugly word, [namely that] the Germans of the Eastern Zone are even 'written off' forced itself [from] between her thin lips. But the others, who did not become angry, but only nodded thoughtfully, obviously think the same, even if they express it only in a patient, subdued fashion.[31]

So solidarity and a sense of Eastern identity came at a high price: resentment of and alie-nation from West Germans, and no real relief from SED domination, despite greater liberalization since Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. According to Alleman, the hopes raised by the libera-lization of 1956 served only to reinforce the feeling that more freedom from the regime would never be achieved. Neither help from the West, nor a change of heart from Moscow, nor even their own efforts could change this basic reality. Hence there was an overwhelming "tension." In a complete disassociation of the regime from the social environment and values it had helped create, Alleman saw East Germans as desperate, both for "socialism without the SED" and national unity with a Western "half" that actually no longer existed. Like a number of writers and observers considering East Germany as rebellions unfolded in its bloc neighbors Poland and Hungary, he sensed that the GDR in late 1956 was moving toward some great crisis.

Years on the Brink?: Reporting Crisis and Flight; Economic Boom and Popular "Adjustment" to the Regime, 1956-1959

But it turned out that Western opinion was divided about the chances of a "blow-up." One French correspondent, Bertrand G. de l'Ain, sensed the growing isolation of the SED in the fall of 1956, and argued that the workers -- if backed sufficiently by Bonn -- were prepared to over-throw the regime.[32] In essence, he believed that the SED had never recovered from the June 17 Uprising, and instability in the Soviet bloc had only revealed the

depth of distrust between the regime and the population. While the regime was feeling increasingly besieged by its own people, West Germany was emerging as not just an economic power, but a political magnet as well: its coming rearmament and the outlawing of KPD showed a strength that might embolden Eastern workers in a desperate bid for unity. A British correspondent visiting about a month earlier also described a large working class opposition, which he believed had coalesced around their common experiences of political pressure and "resentment against the ceaseless drive to work."[33] However, this author believed most workers were either biding their time or fleeing to the West. The hesitation and sense of community Alleman had noted just months earlier were nowhere to be seen in these two reports: hatred of the SED alone seemed to define the population.

Several Western officials in Berlin and Bonn spoke of the "explosive situation" in East Germany over the next few months. One assumed that general disgust with the regime would make a revolt easy to stir up -- if the West so desired. Another was even more ominous, arguing that if East Germans ever believed all hope of reunification was lost "they might try something desperate." But overall they cautioned *against* the view that East Germans would rebel, their obvious disapproval of the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution notwithstanding. Some believed their living standard was simply too high; others that they knew well the futility of confronting Soviet tanks [from June 17, 1953]; still others thought they still held out hope for unification with the West,[34] and finally, stereotypes of "natural" German caution, conservatism, realism and lack of spontaneity were invoked to argue against an explosion.[35]

In the spring of 1957, *Newsweek* magazine offered a cover "tease" suggesting that a Hungarian-style revolution was brewing in the GDR, but inside the revolt was much more "subtle and passive" -- only *potentially explosive*.[36] Recognizing the futility of a po-

pular rising, East Germans appeared to prefer taking a gradualist approach instead. As a university student in Leipzig put it:

> Now we must do it differently--a little bit at a time, a protest here, a protest there, always asking a little bit more. We must be patient, and we must never let up.[37]

But the author clearly believed, like the aforementioned French correspondent, that such organized energy and disaffection *could* still combust, noting elsewhere that:

> As their frustrations and bitterness mount, it is clear that any inadvertent spark might turn the passive rebellion into an open and catastrophic conflict. To forestall this, West German leaders have joined with the Reds in pleading with them not to try to overthrow the Communist regime by force.[38]

All of this was happening just as the SED was moving to arrest the "ringleader" of the revisionist intellectuals, Professor Wolfgang Harich, but *before* Ulbricht was able to remove the "de-Stalinizers" in the politburo. For nearly a year after Harich's arrests, further expulsions from the party and arrests at universities continued.[39] Yet in the months following this report, Western visitors found no sign of any effective, organized resistance. Nevertheless, some did convey a continued sense of danger. In April 1957, a British correspondent wrote that "the dreadful poverty of East Germany may be the most obvious possible cause of unrest," but saw nationalist impulses in West Germany as almost equally worrisome.[40] Richard Crossman, who returned to the GDR in August, was equally worried: suggesting that a main reason for the GDR's economic struggles was West Germany's unfair trade and currency exchange practices, and of course, its propaganda efforts that fed the East German's "inferiority complex" -- the widespread belief that everything produced in West Germany was always better. He reported that "anxious voices" in West Berlin were wondering how long such policies could continue without the risk of "another explosion in the DDR." He added "this time a rising might be the start of World War III."[41] Both Crossman and the correspondent still saw East and West Germans

as one people, and both hinted that unification -- and soon -- was the ultimate antidote to another crisis. But unlike De l'Ain, *Newsweek*, and the Western officials just mentioned, both Crossman and the correspondent also described positive aspects of the regime, and both argued that they ought to be retained in any future unification settlement.[42]

The correspondent, however, did not find popular approval for the regime's socialist achievements. Indeed, he argued that their initial implementation without popular approval meant that they had "been discredited, perhaps for years." Crossman, meanwhile, described the social services of a factory -- medical facilities, a "children's home," and a kindergarten -- and cooperative farms, one of which he visited, as "genuinely Socialist achievements," and found the managers, employees, and workers to be proud of their work. But at the same time, he believed most of the general public was either acquiescent, actively hostile, or cynically indifferent. If socialist achievements were now back in the equation, dislike of the regime still seemed more prominent.

But another British visitor that summer was more or less convinced the danger had passed. He was Desmond Donnelly, another Labor MP, though more moderate than Crossman.[43] He emphasized decreased political tension and marked improvement in living conditions -- partly because he had not been in the GDR in three years. Donnelly, though describing neither support for *nor* opposition to socialist achievements, was the first correspondent to mention another suc-cessful aspect of the GDR's economic system that would be widely discussed in the 1960s: private businessmen who partnered with the state to receive capital and better trade opportunities, while retaining freedom of decisionmaking. It was part of a general policy of less pressure on private business, and Donnelly even noted the arrival of some commercial advertising. The previously hated regime had since turned rather pragmatic, and somewhat less domineering -- fewer guns were dis-

played in public, and fewer portraits of Ulbricht and Grotewohl as well. There still remained a "political malaise," but the regime had "carefully isolated or forestalled opposition in a manner which has not been equaled in most other East European countries . . ." And, at last: "there is no visitable sign of any repetition of June 17, 1953."[44]

Donnelly actually made these observations about six weeks *before* Crossman's warnings about possible war, but later travelers agreed with him -- most East Germans still despised the regime, but were resigned and mute in their opposition. A main reason was continuing economic progress, so impressive that by the spring of 1958 a "special correspondent" for *The Economist* concluded that there was no danger whatsoever of the regime's collapse.[45] While the "inferiority complex" remained, the correspondent noted remarkable improvement, which was producing enough basic necessities and good-paying jobs that "what used to be the special standard of consumption provided in Leipzig for the Fair is now expected generally and, but for the occasional slip, generally provided.[46] The East German economy was apparently "getting on its feet," by a combination of more rational and realistic planning and bringing to bear the native supply of skill and "basic industrial equipment."[47] Flight to the West seemed diminished as well. But if instability was in the past, danger still remained -- the danger posed by a stronger and more independent GDR! This most positive report to date on the GDR's economy suggested how that progress could raise the stakes in the competition between the two Germanies: "Time is not on the western side; indeed, the visitor is forced to doubt whether time is on the side of peace in Central Europe if the present eastern and western policies are continued."[48]

The implication, of course, was that the GDR, if sufficiently prosperous, might soon threaten West German stability. But like Crossman's previous distress, these wor-

ries were not shared by many contemporaries. Indeed, such an outcome seemed very unlikely to another visitor later that year who wrote one of the decade's most thoughtful evaluations of the life in the GDR. Norman Birnbaum, a British academic, was the first visitor in a long while to revive the idea of Eastern identity, and once again, approval for the regime was not required. Indeed, in this incarnation, even socialist achievements were of minor importance. Birnbaum's analysis is notable for suggesting instead that many East Germans accepted the regime simply out of *resignation, inertia, and growing accustomed to the system* -- all things that scholars believed were only possible *after* the Berlin Wall was built. Like Alleman, he clearly disliked the regime, particularly for its dogmatism and violation of basic rights (He was clear at the outset that he did not want readers to believe his trip implied any kind of endorsement of the state).[49] But unlike Alleman, he saw little sense of community binding East Germans together. If anything, they were making the most of what limited *individual* opportunities there were available.

In the following passage, Birnbaum argues that East Germans were beginning to identify with the regime because it was more or less impregnable, because their material situation had improved, and because they could direct their bitterness and frustration at West Germany:

> The German Communist élite rules over a populace bitterly envious of Western Germany's prosperity and lacerated by self-pity at being on the wrong side of the military dividing line. They are nearly devoid of respect for their government--nearly, but not entirely so. The provisional and uncertain character of the East German state has impelled the Communists to rub into their subjects the impression that they are there, if not to stay, at least for a long time to come. Unfortunately, the facts of contemporary history are proving them right. The régime insists with ferocity on its power, but the people are less cowed than resigned. Their resentment and recrimination find targets in the West, helpless to relieve them. Slowly, and not quite imperceptibly, the populace is beginning to identify itself with the régime against which it once revolted. . . . This is a striking conclusion to reach, perhaps, after a trip in which I met practically nobody who gave the

> régime an unequivocal endorsement. But even those who held that life in East Germany was a bed of nails were, apparently, prepared to lie in it. I was surprised how prosaic the question of flight to the West had become. If somebody went, good luck to him. If one did not, there was no point in hoping for a radical change on the spot: it was good sense to dig in and make the best of it. Digging in, however, entails a personal modus vivendi with the régime. And many are engaged in finding precisely that. The recent improvement in economic conditions makes it easier for them to do so. Millions of enforced reconciliations do not, of course, add up to mass support for the "'workers' and 'peasants' state." The reconciliations are devoid of politics. But they produce a compliant atmosphere, allaying the fears of resistance haunting the Communists, and giving them more room for manœuvre.[50]

Clearly, then, this author, saw little real choice for East Germans coming to identify with the regime. Part of the reason was that he, like Alleman and other earlier visitors, blamed the impact of the regime's monopoly on information for shaping their sense of affiliation:

> People who took some pains to denounce the government frequently told me that 'our' currency had increased in value relative to the West Mark. Their political vocabularies echoed the Eastern radio stations.[51]

But unlike earlier visitors who described Eastern identity, Birnbaum took a dim view of socialist achievements; indeed he paid them scarce attention. A welder he met on the train --whose opinions he believed were actually *not* heavily influenced by indoctrination--told him that the "social services" of the regime were "generous." Moreover, "he did not think industry ought to revert to private ownership upon reunification." But the author was not so interested in these views as he was with the seemingly total resignation shown by the man and his friend, a less-skilled sorter on an assembly line. That man was rather more interested in talking about his hobby of beekeeping then opining on the social system. Birnbaum described the pair as "resigned, disinclined to worry too much about imponderables, and not at all hopeful of change."[52]

Birnbaum was ultimately making that case that identifying with the regime was tantamount to *surrender*, in most cases at least. One exception was a Protestant pastor he met in Weimar, who expressed the same kind of "negative Eastern identity" described by Peter Johnson. The man was convinced the "socialism" in the GDR was valuable, but also that "a permanent struggle with [the regime] was his duty." The author was clearly interested in the churches as a possible locus of resistance, as many West Germans were over the years (See Chapters 4 & 6), but the pastor admitted that it was not so much Christian faith, but the fact that the church incorporated "other values" than communism that gave it prestige among the population.[53] In a later period, such "other values" -- for example peace and disarmament -- would indeed be part of the opposition to the regime, but for Birnbaum in 1958, they seemed to suggest mere escape; in effect another form of resignation.

But the persons he met who had most clearly come to possess an Eastern identity were "young intellectuals" -- apparently university professors and scholars. Like the welder, they were clearly not ideologues; but they were clearly *not* resigned either. They exhibited a kind of tension like that described by Alleman -- feeling "visibly and continually irritated" with the regime, and yet, disgusted with the West as well, a judgment they made, incidentally, based on first hand experience. They also shared with the welder and pastor a basic belief in the "essentially socialist nature" of the regime, despite a pronounced skepticism for Marxist ideology. Birnbaum, however, was highly suspicious of their "critical solidarity." They told him of their hatred of Adenauer, and that flight was not an option since their academic credentials were were valueless in West Germany, and that in any case, "they felt responsible for the regime: they could not, morally, abandon something partly their own creation."[54] But he believed they were "sorely troubled" -- and

maybe on the verge of some "resolution of a desperate kind." Whatever he meant by this, he gave no indication that it could change anything.

But that aside, what was interesting about the author's skepticism was that he, like Alleman, seemed to have no understanding that anyone in the GDR (workers, welders, or Christian opponents) could approve of the regime's *ends*, if not its *means*, particularly when both were viewed with such hostility on the other side of the iron curtain. Again, the answer to this blindness seems to lie in a combination of ideology and "claustrophobia." Most Western visitors, confronted with the political and legal restrictions of the GDR, believed they simply *must* outweigh the economic security and guaranteed benefits of the welfare state -- at least, if one were thoughtful enough. Birnbaum described all the persons he met as informed, and *not* deluded by propaganda, but only the intellectuals seemed haunted by their choices.

After Birnbaum's visit, the Western media focused on a rising tide of flight from the GDR, mostly through Berlin, and as if by magic all speculation about an internal revolt completely disappeared. This was because Western news outlets believed that flight to the West represented a kind of political revolution in its own right. In the fall of 1958, both before and during the East-West confrontation provoked by Nikita Khrushchev's threats against the Allied presence in Berlin, a number of reports highlighted *political motivations* for flight, while limiting discussion on economic motives. And, not surprisingly, the consensus in the Western media was that the recent up-tick in the number of flights had been a key factor in Khrushchev's decision to try and push the Western Allies out of Berlin.[55]

U. S. News and World Report focused on doctors,' intellectuals' and university

students' problems with the regime, and their "voting with their feet." The flight of such key persons *was* clearly both political *and* significant, but the report said nothing about the economic plight of workers, even while acknowledging that they made up the largest percentage of refugees, and suggesting in a second report that the prosperity of West Berlin was the reason that "the divided city has become such an irritant to Moscow." *Newsweek*, on the other hand, concluded that political pressure must be the main reason precisely because the economy in the East was actually beginning to improve.[56] Another American "activist" in West Germany, Marcia L. Kahn of the American Council for Germany, wrote in the conservative Catholic weekly *America* that the flight represented a "quiet revolution," insisting the "hemorrhage is political." She focused on a single couple, a doctor and his wife, both practicing Catholics, who felt compelled to leave before their children were taught that the "Church is the enemy of state."[57] But Kahn gave no other data to support her claim of the primacy of political motives. Several surveys of refugees in this period, however, cited better material and career prospects in the West as the primary motive.[58]

In effect, a large portion of the Western media divided East Germans into an inert group of "the resigned" who had lost all hope of unification, or those fed-up and heading towards the West. *Newsweek* was fairly clear about which group had the right idea: it reported that on the day he fled to the West, a rural optician left a sign on his door that read: "the nearsighted should go to the eye clinic. The farsighted should follow me."[59] As it turned out, this was only the first round of crisis over Berlin. But by late March, 1959, the danger seemed to be passing, and it was not long before the Western media reported *steady declines* in the number of flights, even an increasing "reverse flow," -- mostly the return of East Germans who had fled previously.[60] But even before this trend became

known, the first report to indicate that the vast new industrial projects in Brandenburg were finally "paying off" was published in London. The author was T. H. Elkins, a British academic traveling throughout the countryside. He argued that most Western visitors, awestruck by the grim ruins of East Berlin, were unaware of the very real progress in the suburbs and surrounding region.[61] Not long after his visit, many more Western journalists and others ventured beyond East Berlin, and reached a consensus that the GDR was not just more stable economically, but more or less a permanent reality. Several of them wondered if the new stability might lead to true prosperity, a development which could possibly alter the balance of power in Germany as a whole.

Strength, Stability and "Socialist Achievements": A New Challenge to the West? 1959-60

Among the next group of visitors were some of the first Americans to be granted access to points beyond East Berlin or Leipzig since the postwar years. Not surprisingly, they had very different views about the economic turnaround than most of their European counterparts. The points of disagreement were over how the apparently sudden and dramatic improvement impacted the population, and as just suggested, the relationship between the two Germanies. Once again, a small group of left and left-leaning European visitors argued that socialist achievements were widely valued in the GDR, more so than ever due to the expanding economy, and two of them even wondered if the regime's new economic power might soon rival that of the Federal Republic! Most of the Americans, on the other hand, were joined by an occasional moderate-to-conservative English visitor in the belief that improvements could not make up for the harshness of SED rule or the continued attraction of the richer West.[62]

But so profound was the turnaround of the GDR's economy that it even moved

two visitors -- albeit with near polar opposite political positions -- to warn readers of potential danger in central Europe as a whole. 1959-1960 turned out to be brief interlude in which Western reports on and from the GDR suggested *anything but* an approaching economic and demographic crisis. If only left-leaning visitors celebrated the appeal of socialist achievements -- and when they did, mainly among students and industrial workers -- there was a broad consensus that in spite many small remaining problems, the leaders of the regime had "rounded their most dangerous corner."[63] Hardly imaginable in the hindsight of agricultural collectivization, flight from the land, and the building of the Berlin Wall, the GDR in this period actually appeared stronger than ever to Western visitors -- and the consequences of its new economic power were hard to predict.

The small left-leaning European group was social democratic in outlook. They argued that a general acceptance of the regime was spreading, based on the recent economic upturn, and, predictably, a basic approval for the East German welfare state as well. Two of them, Johnson (now stationed in East Berlin) and West Berliner Erik Nohara, af-filiated with the International Union of Socialist Youth (an alternative to Soviet-domi-nated youth organizations in Prague and Budapest), offered a fairly wide view of East German society, showing that while relatively privileged groups, such as skilled workers and students, took pride in socialist achievements, the more general public also accepted the socioeconomic system, even if they often did not actively support it.[64] The other two, more hard-left and politically engaged, were French radical journalist Michel Bosquet, and Crossman.[65] Where Johnson and Nohara saw only a general stabilization, both of these two leftists more or less predicted that the economic gains and increasing commitment of students and skilled workers could make the GDR a genuine economic rival to the West Germany in the coming years.

Johnson found *basic acceptance*, and sometimes even vocal approval of the social system in numerous and sometimes unexpected places, though some informants thought about it more critically than others. On the occasion of an election in East Berlin, after an older party member admitted to him that the voters' right to strike out individual candidates "would not alter the automatic Communist majority," Johnson found himself in a conversation about instilling proper values in young children:

> A few streets away I saw a group of sweet-faced boys and girls, aged about nine, led by a plump woman, singing songs outside a polling station, exhorting people to vote. An elderly woman standing nearby told me she thought that was excellent. She agreed with me that the children did not understand what they were doing, but thought they were getting the 'right ideas' at an early age instead of being taught, as she had been, almost to worship the Kaiser. There were posters on some blocks of flats, saying their occupants were all going to vote at the same time -- for the list of course.[66]

"Right ideas" here seems to include participation in regime-sponsored events as a *social duty*, and encouraging others to do "their part" as well -- *without* blind allegiance to the rulers. But at the same time, much to Johnson's dismay, the woman is clearly not bothered by the lack of real democracy in this process.

A similar sense of general acceptance of the social order, albeit with more complaints, was expressed to Johnson by a member of one of the professions most associated with rejecting the regime:

> An elderly doctor who, unlike many of his colleagues, had not left East Germany for the West, told me that socialism was on the march throughout the world. But he complained that in East Germany things were being done too radically. He himself was not under political pressure, he said, but from time to time he went to West Berlin to read what he wanted and 'charge up my accumulator.' For two years he had been refused a permit to visit West Germany, but was hoping to be allowed to go this year, as travel restrictions for the professional classes had somewhat relaxed.[67]

As it turned out, Johnson heard *repeated complaints* about travel restrictions from per-

sons who nonetheless believed socialism to be basically just. Like the doctor, most of these informants insisted they wanted to remain, but simply wanted the freedom to *visit* the West.[68]

In another meeting with an independent professional, -- this time an artisan -- the author found similar views:

> Spoke to a joiner who had served in the *Wehrmacht* and had been taken prisoner by the British. He was bitter about the evils of German militarism, said he did not oppose socialism, but wished to remain an independent one-man business."[69]

By remaining outside the system of regime-sponsored producers' cooperatives, the man was able to work longer hours, earn more money and enjoy a month's vacation each year. Their conversation also raised the problem of young Christians' job prospects in the GDR, as the man's daughter, a member of a Protestant youth group, wanted to be a teacher, and would have to study Marxism-Leninism as part of her training. Not denying the difficulties still involved for young believers, Johnson pointed out that their faith did not necessarily make them opponents of the social system:

> This is a difficult problem, because the Communists believe that religion is merely a cloak for capitalism, because of the role played by the Russian Orthodox Church before the Soviet Revolution and the behavior of other churches, while church-goers argue that one can support *the economic basis of socialism without losing one's belief in God.*[70] (emphasis added)

Similarly in the countryside, where independent farmers were predictable opponents, the author met one who had no interest in joining a collective, but nonetheless agreed with the regime's argument *for* collectivization --that small farms were becoming "uneconomic" due to the advance of mechanization.[71] But it was not until Johnson journeyed to Rostock, with its huge ship-building industry and the new deep water harbor (still under construction), that he found widespread satisfaction with living conditions and strong identification with socialist achievements.

Indeed, the two were quite closely tied together: better pay and job security, not surprisingly, seemed to go hand in hand with a sense of participation in "socialist construction." After describing the opportunities for Dutch migrant workers at the Warnow shipyards in the Rostock suburb of Warnemünde, he introduced a number of native-born workers -- some party members and some not -- who felt the shipyards truly belonged to them. The following lengthy passage shows both their sense of participation in the system and their personal job satisfaction, but perhaps most importantly, a new sense of *greater economic security*:

> ***15 May 1959:*** . . . The chief of the welding section, Walter Krinetzki, 47, told us he became a Communist because of what he saw under Hitler. He had been unemployed for five years under capitalism. He praised the wage increases and price reductions made in East Germany in recent years. Another welder spoke of the free holidays and medical care. We also discussed the question of how working norms . . . are fixed. We were told this was done by means of modern assessment methods and consultation with the men on the job. No one was asked to do too much, they said. However, if a norm was too easy, someone on the job would suggest that it should be corrected. This, we were told, was done because the workers realized efficiency benefited them and not some capitalist. . . Normal annual holiday is 12 days, plus up to 12 days for particularly unhealthy work, such as welding, and a few days more for staying at the same workplace for a number of years. The men we spoke to were in working clothes, with flat caps or nebbed caps like yachtsmen. All seemed to be keen on 'their' shipyard. . . . Later we were taken out in a motor launch to see work on Rostock's new harbour, which will come into use next year. . . . I asked a harbour engineer, Fritz Jung, 30, who is not in a political party, if he felt that East Germany is democratic. 'Yes, altogether,' he said. Did he feel the lack of any political rights? 'No,' he said firmly. . . .
> ***16 May 1959:*** After watching the launch of one of the ships for Russia at the Warnow yard, I was told by a boilermaker overseer, Otto Reichardt, that he earned 1,049 marks (£92) a month. 'We are very satisfied in our state and it gets better from year to year,' he told me. He too, said he was not in a political party. Referring to the development of the shipyard, he said, 'We have done all this. It belongs to us. We are the state.'. . . Another man, a 28-year-old mechanic, an SED member, earning 600 marks (£53), told me, 'Our workers don't need to worry about what will happen tomorrow. We always have work.' Workers suggestions for improving output brought them in bonuses up to 10,000 marks (£876), I was told. . . . Later I was shown round a large diesel engine factory in Rostock by Jo-

> hann Dvorak, 43, a Viennese Communist who intends to join the SED when he takes East German citizenship shortly. He said his prospects in East Germany were better than his prospects in Vienna. He had been able to build up his household more quickly -- he's married with two boys -- and had no fear of the unemployment he had suffered in Austria earlier. He trains apprentices in Marine engineering. 'I could not have a more beautiful job,' he said. . . . Another man I spoke to, when we went round the works, told me he spent 200 of his roughly 450-marks-a-month (£39) on beer. His foreman had sought out this man to show me he had enough money to spare.[72]

Clearly, the author understood that his hosts were "selling" a success story, but as the last passage indicates, what they were ultimately most proud of was their "good life," -- their escape from want and insecurity -- which they felt they had earned themselves. Though most people the author met in other towns were less enthusiastic, he still concluded that an end of scarcity had come, and materially speaking, life was becoming "normal" again. Its rather significant that this "normality" did *not* include Western-style democracy. Johnson did not speculate about the roll regime propaganda might have played in this view, however, unlike less sympathetic observers of the time.

Later that year, Erik Nohara was a guest of the regime and reported extensively on both the intellectual rigidity of younger and older communist activists, *and* the private frustrations of (at least some) students, young who chafed against the dictatorship, but also rejected the idea of absorption into West Germany. There will be more about Nohara's views of both groups in Chapter 6, but for present purposes, it was his impression of the wider population that seemed to corroborate the scattered evidence presented by Johnson. While Nohara admitted that "indoctrination" was part of the reason there was so much resentment of the West, he believed an orientation toward socialist values and approval for the social system had set in simply due to accumulated, lived experience under SED rule:

> Reunification, free elections, private enterprise, and all the other stock catchwords

> in West Germany have lost their charm because they no longer fit into a reality shaped by almost fifteen years of Communist government. These slogans may still be cherished by the inarticulate layers of society -- but they have no relevance for those groups which would be able to formulate their views, if given a chance to do so. . . . Many or even most of the institutions introduced in East Germany since 1945 are considered permanent and even positively good. People, especially young people, do not object to the social changes that have come about; but to the stifling atmosphere of repression and political bigotry with which they are associated.[73]

Nohara's piece was published in the BBC's British weekly *The Listener*, and *not* in West Berlin or West Germany. As we will see, he was far out in front of even the more liberal opinions of West German visitors to the GDR, who did not begin to consider the idea of a separate Eastern identity until the mid-1960s, or any positive identification with socialist achievements until even later. But most important to this argument, Nohara reiterated the view of many early visitors that there was a disparity between East Germans acceptance of socialist achievements and hatred of the SED. As a economics student told him: "The basis . . . is sound, but the superstructure, the fanaticism of the *apparatchiks*, remains silly."[74]

Neither of the two hard left visitors of this period, Bosquet or Crossman, denied that fanaticism, intolerance, or indoctrination were means by which the SED ruled the GDR. But they found progressive, reasonable, and optimistic *middle-level* functionaries of the younger generation who gave some hope that the GDR might emerge as prosperous and less dogmatic alternative to the West, thereby ending its refugee problem, and perhaps even attracting West Germans. The improved lot of workers and enthusiasm of students suggested basically the same thing. Bosquet was actually the pen name of Andre Gorz, an Austrian-born economic journalist and self-described "existentialist-Marxist" who wrote for the leftist Paris weekly *L'Express*. Despite numerous and sharp criticisms he leveled at the dictatorship and its propaganda, he believed the improved economy, and

opportunities for study and advancement were making more and more workers and students believe that the system was truly working for them.[75] His interviews with a number of factory workers led him to believe, not unlike Johnson, that they had internalized the regime's "ownership rhetoric," -- ie. they really did believe they owned the state and the factories. In practice, this meant responsibility for the production process, but also a growing awareness that their work was the source of all wealth, and that they could only improve their lives through their own efforts.[76]

A 30-year-old union leader indicated, however, that many of them wanted more than simply greater productivity, efficiency, or "ownership": they had their private goals as well: "Cars and television sets, a forty-hour week by 1965, and more culture, in that order."[77] By "culture" the man meant "better and more interesting books." The factory did have a 7,000 volume library, but only 2,000 volumes were in circulation, and both British and American non-communist authors were represented. Another union delegate was even more practical: "more money is what really counts."[78] As Elkins noted around the same time, this was because there were now at least *some* bigger-ticket consumer goods available to buy: he described East Germans as "at the motorcycle rather than the car and refrigerator level."[79] But Bosquet advised that waiting lists remained long and the products far too expensive.[80]

The union leader had on-the-job concerns as well, where there remained great distance between the regime and the workers. The latter were feeling manipulated, exploited, and -- through the regime's propaganda -- patronized. Even as workers were beginning to feel a part of "the system," they thought of the regime's slogans as little more than repetitive tag-lines from Western advertising. To the author this was indicative of how little genuine solidarity -- and trust -- really existed, and he believed the mistrust to be the le-

gacy of bureaucratic, overbearing German governments that stretched back to the times before Hitler. His views on university lectures suggested a similar inability of the regime to reach even the most dedicated student -- lectures at Jena were both boring and lacking the proper prerequisites to the ideas of the mature Marx. Bosquet was not the first Western visitor to express tremendous admiration for the massive expenditures the regime put into education, but was as critical of its dogmatism as any of the more unsympathetic visitors.

But for all the drawbacks and "deformations" of East German socialism, Bosquet did ultimately explain why students as well as workers could identify with "socialism." He met a young man who deeply resented pressure to serve in the military and do "national reconstruction work," but most of all loathed restrictions on travel to the West. Nevertheless, a combination of selfish interests and lived experience within the Eastern culture had created in the youth an "eastern orientation":

> 'I would like to see everything once,' said he, 'your architecture is much better than ours. And there are more diversions there. But I would not like to live in the West. I have much better prospects [here], a stipend to receive, and then can make a good career. Work is not lacking here, only workers.' . . . This conversation appeared to me to be typical. The young man is not a privileged person of the regime; his parents, small [ie. unimportant] people are absolutely against the 'workers' - and peasants' state.' However, one notices the 'Marxist impregnation,' of which those who have been occupied with the 'other Germany' say that they have found in very many GDR refugees. The nineteen-year-old has adjusted to the new society, that is certain; if he also complains about much, nevertheless he definitely recognizes the advantages and attempts to make use of them.[81]

Here, practical considerations seemed to leave little space for any sense of pride in socialist achievements, and only a limited sense of feeling "at home" in the GDR. But Bosquet found more of both when he talked to a medical intern -- a youth who believed he was not alone in his views. For him, personal opportunities and socialist ideals were

closely linked. When asked "if the young had no faith in the future of East Germany," he replied:

> 'No. That isn't true for the majority. Take my family, for example. My elder brother never had a chance to study. He's a furniture maker now. My younger brother is just beginning to study medicine. I know what this has been worth to me.'[82]

And just what "this" was is made clear in the following quote. According to Bosquet, the basic desire of many (if not all) of those who benefited from the regime was not necessarily "socialism without the SED" (Alleman's formation), but some means of protecting their socialist achievements from a Western takeover, so they might eventually expand their reach:

> Socialism appears to have taken deep root among the workers and also with the hundred thousand youths, the sons of simple workers, for whom the stipends have made possible university studies. Even the worker who complains, the trade unionist who stood at the forefront of the 1953 uprising, would not allow his co-determination rights at the enterprise and in the production [process], the nationalizations, the social security, and their many and various advantages to be taken away. They want much more of a stronger workers' self-management (*Arbeiterverwaltung*) and more power for trade union representatives but not the return of the former engineers and owners.[83]

The most intriguing question that these "deep roots" begged was whether the SED might in time reform and strengthen worker autonomy, and what that could mean for the division of Germany. A discussion between the author and a 34-year-old enterprise manager ranged from the recent decline in flights to the West[84] to the prospects for reform in the course of generational change:

> 'Life is easier in the West and more agreeable,' said my discussion partner, 'But if I dislike a lot of things here, I am still certain that the future belongs to us and that my life has a purpose here. I will not stop fighting against the deficiencies (*Mängel*) of our system. That is also a reason I am in the party, and I am not alone in this. Maybe you have noticed that the dogmatic and rigid communists here are [those] over 45 years of age, that were in exile? Those of my generation are more open and elastic. They will one day be in power.[85]

Bosquet's informant here seems to more or less anticipate the argument that generational change and economic modernization produced conflicts within the East German elite that led to a softening of the dictatorship, if not true ideological liberalization, during the implementations of the New Economic System, beginning in the spring of 1963.[86] But for present purposes, he suggests the possibilities that could come with time and continued economic advance, for which the prospects had not been better. Though many contemporary visitors and commentators reserved judgment on Walter Ulbricht's boasts that the GDR would catch up to West Germany's living standard by 1963, Bosquet took them quite seriously, speculating that within five years the expanding economy could even become a magnet for West Germans! But he was not naive: he knew that this would only be possible if the regime could match its economic progress with "greater intellectual freedom," something he found hard to imagine given Bonn's unrelenting hostility. Nevertheless, the combination of economic progress and commitment to socialist ideals--at least among managers, workers and students -- gave cause to believe that East German socialism was building momentum.

Of all Bosquet's contemporaries, it was not surprising that the person closest to him ideologically had the most similar views, both of socialist achievements and the potential of the GDR's economy. But Richard Crossman, returning to the GDR for the first time in over two years, was so struck by the economic progress -- and the reverse flow of migration it seemed to have created -- that he all but predicted that the Eastern economy would *surpass* the living stan-dards of the West! Moreover, since the Bonn regime was so "violent" and "irrational" in its hatred of the SED, the Eastern regime, with its more peaceful efforts at "socialist construction" would have the clear advantage in the struggle over unification:

> 'What contribution are you prepared to make to German unity over here in the East?' I asked a young physicist at the superb Technical High School in Dresden, with its 15,000 students. . . . 'Our first job is to work hard and raise our living standards, so as to teach our countrymen on the other side that our system works better than theirs. When they see we are winning, they will join us.' I found this answer a great deal more impressive than the hysterical appeals for 'renewed resistance against Red terrorism' to which I listened at a student meeting in Bonn, called by the government sponsored organisation, 'Indivisible Germany.'[87]

The only problem Crossman found with the school -- an ironic one given his critique of Bonn -- was its continued preaching of extreme hatred for West Germany. Students were taught to believe that capitalism ran "a close second" to Nazism on the list of "greatest evil[s] of the modern world," he noted.

However, the upside of their "ex-indoctrination from Fascist ideology and . . . indoctrination with Communist ideology" was a full exposure to the enormity of Nazi crimes against the Jews.[88] This was clearly important to the author, who began his report with recent outbreaks of anti-Semitism in West Germany and concluded it with a plea for *de facto* recognition of the GDR. The two were related because according to Crossman, they were symptomatic of an exis-tential crisis in West Germany. He believed the growing economic strength of East Germany was fueling Bonn's greatest fears, and the four powers must reach an agreement guaranteeing the status quo in both Berlin and Germany to prevent another crisis. Such a guarantee, then, would imply acceptance of the GDR's right to exist without official recognition, and reduce fears on both sides of the Elbe. But Crossman did not explain how Bonn could ever be persuaded to accept the statehood of the GDR. And as it turned out, he was not the only visitor who feared the new strength of the GDR. Others though, were not as concerned with Bonn's reaction to it as with the new status (and potential for expansion) it might grant the SED.

From the other side of the political scale (and from across the Atlantic), Flora

Lewis, distinguished columnist for the *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, also found the newly prospering GDR to be a potential threat -- reviving an old fear that many Western observers had described at the regime's founding 11 years earlier.[89] Lewis believed that the outlook of most East Germans did *not* involve hopes for the future or pride in socialist achievements, but a dangerous mix of political resignation and longing for unification with the West. These attitudes, she believed, were giving the regime "enhanced self-confidence" to enact a master plan to once again push for German unity. She believed they were building up the economy, to "close the most visible and irritating part of the economic gap with West Germany," and then they hoped to make nationalist appeals to the West from "a position of undeniable internal strength." In effect, Lewis believed the SED's original goal of sufficiently "building socialism" in the GDR to sway West Germans to their cause was nearly within its grasp:

> By reducing the economic differential, they hope to transform the present alternative before West Germany--freedom and well-being with partition or impoverished nationhood with communism--into merely freedom or nationhood, with comforts either way.[90]

Comparing Lewis's warnings of the danger of creeping communism to Crossman's warnings about Bonn's "irrational" resistance to recognition gives a window onto the great political divide in the West over the future of Germany: Lewis reveals the fear on the right, particularly in the U.S., of giving *any* concessions to the SED. Crossman, meanwhile shows how a generation of the Left remained highly alert for any sign of fascist aggression in Bonn. But in both cases, the larger problem was the division of Germany itself: while Lewis saw "partition" as becoming increasing unstable, Crossman saw partition as the only realistic solution.

Crossman and Lewis also were completely at odds about "socialist achievements."

While both saw indoctrination as playing a role, Crossman believed that overall it was needed to eradicate lingering fascist impulses. But equally important, he believed the GDR's tremendous investment in education and research, combined with its ethos of the "progressive march of socialism," created in the population - and among the youth especially -- an increasing sense of confidence and hope about the future.

> Since I last visited Dresden in the summer of 1957 . . . the attitude to[ward] Bonn has changed. The fear and the inferiority complex which I the noted--the feeling, for example, that everything in the West Berlin shop windows must be superior to what they could buy in the East--has entirely disappeared. These boys and girl, in their superbly equipped schools and academies, are supremely certain that the future belongs to the Soviet Union and her allies and that among those allies the Deutsche Demokratische Republik, though the smallest, is one of the most important.[91]

Crossman did not deny that this change was in part brought about by demonizing the West, but, as suggested above, repeatedly quoted Eastern officials determined to win the struggle for Germany peacefully, something he believed Bonn would not risk.

Lewis, meanwhile, emphasized the more destructive aspects of indoctrination, as well as the costs of the political resignation of East German adults. At the *same* technical high school Crossman visited in Dresden, she *did* find gratitude among students, but she made much more of their exaggerated hatred of the West. The following passage suggests, moreover, that this hatred was highly contagious. Lewis was talking with a group of students in a cafeteria about discri-minatory admissions policies that prevented middle class children from attending universities. Then, when she raised the issue of students fleeing *after* graduation, a girl who had just criticized discrimination in admissions, boldly defended educational stipends:

> 'I say its ingratitude,' the dark girl bursts out. 'The state has paid for our education, it has a right to expect us to work here.' She speaks vehemently against the official policy of West Germany, accepting at face value the Communist press'

> definition of that policy. It doesn't bother her, she says, that she has no other source of information because 'Adenauer never says anything worth knowing anyway.' Her little thrust, delivered with self-conscious bravado, brings cheers from her schoolmates. A point has been scored, they feel.[92]

The quote suggests a dangerous intersection of indoctrination, hate and willful ignorance which all seemed to lie uncomfortably close to the regime's socialist achievements. When discussing the topic of reunification with a Leipzig hairdresser, Lewis found a similar, if less defensive constellation. When the man told her that Germany should be reunited in peace and "democracy," Lewis asked . . .

> . . . what does he mean by 'democratic,' that hugely disputed word? 'Well,' he answers, 'my relatives in the West get good pay, that's one way. I can have a three-week holiday at the seaside with my wife for $18, all included, and if I'm sick, I'll be paid for half a year. That's another way. I'm too little to work out the right way, that's up to the big shots * * * so long as there's no fighting.'[93]

Not surprisingly, then, Lewis had trouble taking seriously young East Germans' feelings of "achievement against heavy odds." She believed they were based on misunderstandings, such as blaming the U.S. for lack of Marshall aid when it was the Soviets who had disallowed it. But rather than give such opinions any further consideration, she simply saw them as a kind of my-thology, the origin of which she could not explain. Clearly, though, it aided the regime by promoting acceptance and political apathy.

The other correspondents and authors I have grouped with Lewis were not as clearly anti-communist nor as worried as Lewis about the pretensions of the regime or "indoctrination," apparently because they were somewhat less impressed with the economic upturn, and somewhat more so with the continued exodus of workers, students, and professionals. But for all this, none could deny the "impression of permanence" conveyed by economic stabilization,[94] or that the "reverse flow" -- migration *to* the GDR -- was large, perhaps as much as 1/3 of the yearly total in the other direction.[95] One author

tried to explain away what he called the "notable backwash" in basically the same fashion that Lewis dismissed socialist achievements. Robert Littell of *Newsweek* described returning East Germans as "emotionally crippled" by the regime, and therefore unable to function in a competitive Western society. But in describing them, he outlined the same combination of beliefs described so often in the past:

> The reasons for this migration in reverse are mixed: loneliness (the furnished room in a strange city, the difficulty of finding a satisfactory job, of making new friends) plus the feeling of insecurity that some persons have when deprived of the crutches a dictatorship puts under the arms of its subjects. . . . And *disillusion with the West.* I have talked with a number of young refugees from the D.D.R. who are loudly critical of West Germany, even disgusted with what they consider a blatant commercialism, a materialistic sense of personal values. Even though they hate what they fled from, they had lived there too long to feel at ease in a capitalistic society. *When asked what kind of society they would like to live in, several of them answered, 'It might perhaps be something like Yugoslavia . . . '*[96] (emphasis added)

Though Littell did not get to talk to those who *actually returned* (apparently he did not visit the GDR at all), its arguable that the desire he found for some form of more democratic socialism was held by them as well, as was disillusion with the West and no apparent affinity for the Eastern regime. But unlike Alleman or Birnbaum or others before him, Littell left these opinions aside, preferring to continue comparing the GDR to its Nazi predecessor, referring to its parades and youth festivals as "the grim circuses of totalitarianism."[97]

This and other English-language reports of the time were basically attempts to show that the GDR's economic progress had limits, manifest most importantly in continued lower living standard compared to West Germany. There was little effort to delve into such "mysteries" as the reverse flow or the pride of the young for the regime's achievements. And they offered little insight into the opinions of industrial workers either. For example, Kurt Lachman of *U.S. News and World Report* wrote only that:

> Workers in East Germany revolted in 1953. But they got no aid from the West, and lost. Now they see no prospect of liberation. And their purchasing power is slowly rising. So most are becoming resigned to life under Communist rule.[98]

To Lachman, it seemed that working people in general who remained in the GDR only did so because flight was risky, and they had a few more pieces of furniture or a radio or television set now that they were loathe to leave behind.[99]

Two English contemporaries, of conservative to moderate leanings, respectively, had even less to say about the lives of workers, skilled or otherwise. One "special correspondent" for *The Economist* noted only that people appeared "overstrained," especially women, by both work and seemingly endless political mobilizations.[100] Like most visitors over the years, the correspondent saw womens' presence in the workplace or in public jobs such as traffic direction as a sign not just of a labor shortage, but of abnormality and coercion. And, as the author noted, there were still about 4,000 people migrating out of the GDR each month, even as conditions were improving dramatically. The other, an English political scientist who, like Nohara, was a guest of the regime, was much more impressed with the regime's efforts to build up educational and social welfare institutions, but concluded that political restrictions and ideological dogmatism undermined all efforts to create a more just and productive society.

> It is tragic that so much sincere effort and so much obvious goodwill is not used to better purpose. Improvements in the standard of living and all expenditure in the cultural field will not make good the lack of freedom and the dominating spiritual conformism. While these prevail there will always be people who prefer the uncertainty of a refugee's existence to the fleshpots of submission.[101]

But for all of this skepticism, its important to stress that by the first half of 1960, no Western correspondent or author that was familiar with the developments in the GDR doubted that the regime had stabilized. The regime might or might not succeed in its quest to rival the living standards of the West, but it was certainly time for the West to stop

pretending it did not exist. But then, in the latter half of the year, a period of crisis began in the GDR, one so grave it seemed to settle unequivocally the question of what East Germans really wanted, while ending all speculation about future economic potential. The final phase of agricultural collectivization, another round of threats by Khrushchev to sign a separate peace with the SED, and Bonn's interruption of inter-German trade in the the fall triggered another dramatic rise in flight to the West. Western reports spoke of *Torschlußpanik* in the GDR (literally the fear of a gate closing), which in turn created famine and, finally, the construction of the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961.

Stabilization Interrupted: The Post-Wall Crisis and Return of Prosperity 1961-1965

The Wall, of course, allowed the SED to control its borders without precipitating a crisis over Allied access to West Berlin. U.S. and Soviet forces experienced several days of tension in the city in September, but America's *de facto* acceptance of the Wall, that is, its unwillingness to challenge its construction, prevented war.[102] Meanwhile, in the GDR, with the last escape route finally closed, another period of stability and even greater economic expansion eventually came to pass. But if the erection of the Berlin Wall is understood today as the most important turning point in the GDR's history,[103] paving the way for its economic stabilization and, eventually, international acceptance, the months following its construction hardly foretold such success. Indeed, the bitter, even desperate mood of the population, and the harsh repression the regime instituted to deal with both rebellious spirits and the food crisis, caused many outside observers and visitors to wonder if another rebelling was brewing.

The building of the Wall inspired the authoring of a number of (mostly dangerous) scenarios in the fall of 1961. Initially, some reported that the regime was *emboldened* by

the Wall, giddy with the prospects of finally getting a peace treaty and the "neutralization" of West Berlin.[104] Others suggested the regime might soon be endangered. One American correspondent in Berlin heard reports from West German officials that suggested an imminent mutiny of the *Volksarmee*.[105] Resistance was reported to the regime's efforts to find new recruits or even simple pledges of readiness to serve.[106] There were also reports of widespread anger and wildcat strikes among industrial workers and even well-paid technicians, suggesting that the regime might face even more opposition than expected.[107] Another American author warned ominously that if the U.S. did not take some action to signal to the East German population that they had not been abandoned, "it is likely that some form of mass violence will break out in East Germany within a year."[108] In East Berlin, however, a British correspondent found that alcohol, and "wry jokes" about Ulbricht were the most noticeable means of "resistance."[109] As mentioned, there were cam-paigns of harsh repression by the regime's army and police forces, but also vigilante actions by the FDJ against both television aerials pointed West and workers allegedly slacking off in factories. Harsh punishments, such as prison sentences or confinement to work camps for anyone protesting, striking, or deemed to be "work shy," along with forced relocations of persons suspected of contemplating flight, were described by foreign visitors as a virtual rerun of the terror of High Stalinism, or in some cases, even likened to "Nazi tactics."[110] Even unexplained disappearances were reported again -- usually of persons publicly critical of the regime.[111]

Far into 1962, correspondents reported persistent food, consumer goods, and manpower shortages -- sometimes leading to child labor under miserable conditions -- that were creating gigantic problems of morale, if not major popular uprisings.[112] Just two years after Lewis' impressions of dramatic improvement, another U. S. correspondent de-

scribed the GDR as "now in a state like that of the poorest countries of Eastern Europe."[113] Among the most surprising evidence given of popular disaffection was continued immigration in spite of the Wall!: one *Economist* "special correspondent" in Berlin estimated that upwards of 60,000 citizens who were abroad on August 13 chose not to return, while another 12,000+ "have contrived at great risk to get out."[114] The same author believed the GDR was so badly weakened by the economic crisis and widespread desire for immigration that certain West German liberals were right to consider *de facto* recognition through official trade agreements (which could be expanded to include all of the Common Market nations). According to this view, so long as the status of West Berlin was secure, such trade would *not* make the SED more secure, but force it to liberalize over time.[115]

The wave of repression following the building of the Wall was actually *ebbing* by late fall 1961, and -- despite continued Western reports of popular desperation and resignation -- was effectively ended in mid-1962.[116] By that time, alongside the continuing theme of hopelessness (and sometimes even in the same reports that emphasized it) there was some new attention paid to the East German social system. For all the crisis- and repression-packed months that had just passed, several Western observers had to admit that "socialist achievements" still impacted the popular consciousness. Robert Alden of the *New York Times*, for example, who visited the GDR in April, made much of the low living standards, but conceded that in particular educational sti-pends and cheap vacations, were "serv[ing] somewhat to bolster the morale of the people."[117] In September, a correspondent for the London *Times* noticed that even those outside the working classes continued to understand their value.[118]

The following opinion this correspondent recorded suggests how this feeling could

easily coexist with a sense of distance from and skepticism toward the regime -- even among those who lived in semi-retreat, or what later observers called the "niche society":

> One frequently notices among east Germans basically critical of the regime a desire to point out some of the advantages of the G.D.R., compared with west [sic] Germany, such as free higher education and a free national health service. 'A lot of us live here now on our own little islands,' a private bookseller from Dresden explained. 'We have contact with the people we know share our views, do the work the regime needs, and hope we'll then be left in peace.' His attitude is common among professional and skilled people.[119]

When he referred to East Germans like this person as cautiously and tentatively "stepping nearer" to the regime, he stressed that it was happening against a background of isolation and growing despair over the possibility of maintaining contacts with West Germany. But it was *precisely because* of the Wall that the Eastern regime had recently moderated its policies. The correspondent was among the first visitors after the Wall was built to note that as the SED had relaxed political pressure (for example on the Protestant churches), and became more tolerant of Western clothing fashions and Jazz music, the East German people were becoming more willing to cooperate with and accept it. Great difficulties remained, according to the author, most importantly the persistent belief that all such relaxations were only temporary, as well as the problem of trust between the public and local functionaries of unpredictable quality and temperament. Still, "special correspondent" was the first post-Wall visitor to suggest that a kind of normalization had begun, even if the economic situation still remained grim.

But the following year (1963) turned out to be one of remarkable transition in the GDR, as steady economic progress and stabilization became undeniable. This trend created a kind of dissonance in Western reporting between those who wanted to insist East Germans remained totally hopeless, and those who believed that life there was becoming livable again in spite of the Wall. The former group, most of whom traveled in the latter

half of the year, insisted that re-pression was as bad as ever, as were shortages of food. Their writings aimed to completely deligitimize the regime, making its political and social system appear completely outside Western norms and experience. They argued that the entire population was either completely miserable or, alternatively, willing to suffer any hardship if it would weaken the regime.[120] The other group, accepting the GDR -- for the time being at least -- as unchangeable, was of the basic belief that just as before the crisis period, "one could live" there,[121] or, as one West German put, East Germans simply "had to go on" (*weitergehen muß*).[122]

Only one member of this second group took a more positive view of the regime's achievements, but even he could only lament that the Wall basically defeated all good intentions by creating a stronger desire to leave than ever before.[123] But another, Daniel Callahan, associate editor for the American Catholic weekly *Commonweal*, found that the Wall had actually strengthened his co-religionists' commitment to *remain* in the GDR and struggle against the regime. This case of what I earlier described as "negative Eastern identity," however, had a somewhat different focus. East Berlin Catholics told Callahan that their primary challenge was "being responsible Christians in a society which they see as *primarily industrialized and secularized and only secondarily Communist*."[124] It seemed that losing "the hope of liberation" had actually made them more aware of the traits *shared* by Eastern and Western societies -- most particularly, the growth of consumerist materialism. For his part, Callahan believed their greatest challenge was to not succumb to hopelessness.

But 1963 also brought confirmation that East Germans still continued to value socialist achievements -- that for all their presumed hopelessness, isolation, or simple "soldiering on" with their lives, they possessed an underlying appreciation of the welfare

state, and the values that it represented. These views came out most vividly in the writings of two visitors late in the year who published book-length accounts of their travels. One was a long-time American critic of the GDR, journalist Joseph Wechsberg, the other a West German businessman, Dieter Hildebrandt.[125] Both suggested that however negative their relationship to the state and to Communism, East Germans still understood that the Eastern system offered them benefits not available in the Federal Republic.[126]

Wechsburg had visited the GDR twice before, the first time in 1952, focusing on its police state and threat to individual liberties (See Chapter 3); the second in June 1961, describing the "bureaucratic nightmare" of traveling, the problems of rebuilding and restoring Dresden, and, not surprisingly, East Germans' sense of "bitter resignation."[127] In that visit, he had mentioned welfare benefits only briefly, venturing no opinion of what East Germans might have thought of them. However, returning in late 1963, he apparently had more opportunities to gather opinions (and more space in which to write about them as well). The following lengthy quote, though heavy on "hatred of communism," is almost a mirror image of pre-Wall opinions on the appeal of socialist achievements -- including the idea that they were *not* incompatible with unification. Moreover, East Germans' views are here presented *without* reference to the regime's propaganda or its manipulation; informants are taken completely at their word.

> . . . while dissatisfaction with the Communist system is violent and widespread in the D.D.R., practically everybody admits that capitalism, as they've known it, is dead. Even the outspoken bourgeois people with whom I talked alone appreciate the blessings of the socialist welfare state -- free medical care from cradle to grave, free education for the young, free vacations for the old, low rents, low taxes and all sorts of benefits for the blue-collar workers. A great many people here have wistful dreams of a supersystem that would combine the blessings of the socialist welfare state with the blessings of Western life: free health insurance for everybody and at the same time a lavish supply of consumer goods. I'd heard similar wishes expressed on earlier trips to Poland and Hungary. Everybody there talks about 'enlightened socialism, somewhat as in Scandinavia.' . . . 'I wouldn't give up secu-

> 'enlightened socialism, somewhat as in Scandinavia.' . . . 'I wouldn't give up security from cradle to grave,' a *bürgerlich* East German said. He was a violent enemy of the Ulbricht regime. 'But I would also like to be able to work where I please, to travel everywhere, to walk into a store with cash in my pocket and be able to choose the things I like. I would like to read any paper, and look at any TV program. Security with freedom, and freedom with security.' . . . I asked him which of the two was more important. He gave a shrug. 'I don't know,' he said, slowly, 'I really no longer know.' * * * The East Germans are obsessed with reunification. It is the most important problem here, a political as well as a human problem. Everybody talks about it all the time -- students and workers, Communists and non-Communists, old and young people. Time and again I was asked, 'Do West Germans feel as strongly about reunification as we do?' When I told them that the West Germans talk less intently about it, realistically rather than emotionally, sometimes dutifully and sometimes out of a sense of guilt, the people seem heartbroken. . . . But what's to become of us?' a student asked me. He looked frightened, a trapped animal. . . . Another student said bitterly, 'We know that the West has written us off. So many of these West German politicians pay lip service when they speak about reunification. They don't really care what happens to us.' I said he was perhaps too harsh but he wouldn't believe me.[128]

As can be seen, one key difference in Wechsberg's appraisal of "Eastern identity" is his restricted focus on welfare benefits. There is no larger sense of the "achievements" as building a socialist society, one based on state-owned industries, collective farms, or even the rebuilding of cities and factories without recourse to Marshall Aid. These middle class opponents show only a *selfish interest* in what accrued to them, not any pride in the regime's accomplishments. The corollary is a lack of any *economic* resentment of West Germans. There is not a word here about living in "respectable poverty," but only a desire to share in consumer abundance.

Nevertheless, Wechsberg clearly saw East Germans as standing between the Communist dictatorship and Western capitalism, desiring a kind of economic security that only the GDR's welfare state could guarantee. This "socialism without the SED" was a product of both the social revolution in the GDR and a considered sense of the inadequacies of the Western system. However, because it coexisted with desires for unity, rather than

canceling them out, it still existed amidst despair over the decreasing likelihood of unification with the West. Within a few months of Wechsberg's visit, however, remaining hopes for unification would begin to dissolve, and the impact of the NES would quickly become apparent. The years that followed would mark the most dramatic turning point in both the economic fortunes of the GDR and how it was perceived in the West. Once again, a consensus formed about the stability of the regime, based on dramatic economic progress (and even more dramatic reduction in immigration), but those who argued for popular identification with socialist achievements still remained in the minority. The differences in the 1960s, however, were rooted in the undeniable reality of the East German state: that reality allowed those who found popularity with socialist achievements (now usually a broader pride in economic accomplishments in general) to call it a "state identity," and allowed more skeptical visitors to find considerable evidence that "accommodation" to the regime often meant more than merely accepting the inevitable. Among them were some of the GDR's toughest critics, searching for new ways to define a regime that seemed to be taking on certain capitalist practices, while remaining virtually unchanged in its ideological dogmatism and political rigidity.

Progress, Pride, Security, and a (Not-So-New) State Identity: the GDR 'Arrives,' 1964-1970

The first visitor to describe an East German "state identity" was West German Theo Sommer, political editor for the Hamburg liberal weekly *Die Zeit*.[129] Most components of this identity -- a cautious "stepping nearer" to the regime, a willingness to throw one's self into one's work and education, a dislike of the leadership but not the socialist system *per se*, and varying levels of resentment toward West Germany, were, as we have seen,

not new. Added to them, however, was a greater willingness by more East Germans to work within and accept the system. In effect, the "state identity" was about having to learn the rules of the game and cooperating, attaining a somewhat higher living standard, *and* still supporting socialist achievements. While Sommer was reaching these conclusions, another West German, a political scientist named Hans Apel, was assembling data which demonstrated that a majority of East Germans now favored the GDR and its socio-economic system over its West German counterpart.[130] While most visitors of 1964 found *hints* of such beliefs, not until the following year were any other visitors inclined to agree with Sommer, let alone Apel. 1964 *was* a turning point, but still offered a *mixed picture* -- improving economic conditions allowed for a basic acceptance of the state, but one filled with continuing complaints about shortages, excessive bureaucracy, and travel restrictions. It was the lack of any sort of *allegiance,* however, that for the time being at least, seemed to make the notion of a "state identity" a non-starter for most visitors.

Such was the basic view of an English "special correspondent" early that Spring.[131] While East Germans still suffered tremendous economic shortcomings and an inefficient, neglectful, borderline-incompetent bureaucracy, there was no longer any question of whether the regime would endure. The question now was whether genuine prosperity was within the its grasp, and if so, whether political reform would follow. The correspondent, like other visitors and observers of the mid-1960s, believed the answer to these questions would ultimately impact the entire communist world,[132] but at the same time, there was no question of the regime genuinely satisfying the material or existential needs of the population in the *immediate* future.

The return of economic progress in the spring of 1964 seemingly directed visitors to search for signs of *material* satisfaction, which they found once again, among the "usu-

al suspects" -- industrial workers in Rostock and Eisenhüttenstadt (formerly Stalinstadt). In the former port city, a London *Times* "labour correspondent" reported that "expansion" seemed to be the watchword of the day, not just at the shipyards and port, but in sports and recreation facilities, blocks of flats, and university facilities, all of which were "growing."[133] The author, following Peter Johnson in 1959, believed that basic satisfaction with living conditions was widespread among workers in both towns. The following quote, however, suggests insufficient information in such communities for a clear choice for the Eastern system over the West:

> Shut inside this country of 17,500,000 people, the very existence of which is not recognized by a great part of the world, the east German [sic] worker tends to turn his eyes inwards and compare his state today with that of the thirties. . . . To him full employment, the welfare state, free education and vocational training, opportunities for sport and culture, cheap flats and holidays and fuel and transport and basic food are the triumphs of socialism. His is hardly conscious that much of this also exists in the capitalist countries, combined with a substantially higher standard of living.[134]

The final sentence, of course, raises the issue of access to West German television. Could the correspondent have overlooked the well-known impact of stridently anti-communist West German programming? According to his informants, *possession* of a television was a perk that *increased* their acceptance of the system, particularly given their sense of past hardship:

> I mentioned cars to a group of four or five workers at the steel works at Eisenhüttenstadt. 'None of us has a car,' one of them said, 'but we all have motor bikes and a good wage and flats and television sets and we are satisfied.' . . . If some of the east Germans are comparatively contented now, it is no doubt partly because of the contrast with their life during the long difficult postwar years. Real wages are calculated to have increased by nearly three and a half times since 1950. If the figure is accurate their plight then must have been shocking. . . . They still have economic problems to face.[135]

The passage invites us to reconsider the GDR of the 1960s in contemporary per-

spective. A generation of workers, many of whom had spent their youth in wartime and early working life in fairly severe deprivation, at last had a sense of financial security, even limited affluence. But the quote also suggests that this "choice" for life in the GDR might not necessarily be permanent, satisfaction being a relative thing. There is also the question of pride in these accomplishments -- unlike earlier visitors to Rostock, the report gave no indication of such views. But otherwise, the opinions of the workers seemed quite similar to the earlier findings of Johnson and Bosquet, as if the crisis years had hardly impacted them at all.

Soon, other visitors, many of them American correspondents, would describe increasing acceptance of the regime based on the improving economy. But as West Germany still remained the primary point of comparison, they tended to characterize the regime's achievements as minimal, its liabilities many. Nevertheless, most of their findings implied the same, general sense of approval for socialism described earlier, which, along with disapproval for Western capitalism, lingered in the background behind other issues or popular grievances, most importantly travel restrictions.

Such views backgrounded reports like the one by American Robert Haeger, a veteran correspondent from the postwar period who crisscrossed the GDR for *U.S. News and World Report* in late 1964.[136] He described a kind of "acquired outlook" of acceptance of the regime, largely made possible by the improving economy. But for him, the pace of economic progress was so slow, and the many shortcomings so obvious -- in public services also -- that real allegiance seemed unreachable. Like a number of Americans before and after, he almost overwhelmed readers with criticisms: first excoriating the SED's complete domination of the other parties, then the blatant dishonesty of all its media, and then, of course, travel restrictions. Further on, he emphasized the large and conspicuous

presence of the Red Army, elsewhere the continued rationing of butter, and (in certain locations) potatoes and meat as well. He went on to describe the second-rate quality of virtually every consumer item, and finally, stressed the persistence of the typically-East-German "glance over the shoulder" -- the instinctive care taken to avoid being overheard by regime informants.

But for all this, the mood of the people *had* changed. Not only was reunification "an all but forgotten issue," but a majority of informants agreed with officials that the Wall had been a "great success"! One benefit of the Wall, which Haeger was among the first to notice, was the first increase in the population since the war's end. Meanwhile, the improved economy had transformed the subject of grumbling from the lack of basic necessities to "higher level" consumer needs: a chemical worker told the author: "If I buy a suit here, before I've worn it one hour, I'll have seen the same suit on 10 other men. Its the same thing if I go to Magdeburg or Frankfurt-on-Oder or Leipzig or East Berlin."[137] However irritating such problems could be, they clearly signaled the end of more basic deprivation. And, despite his informants' caution, Haeger clearly understood the era of Stalinist persecution to be over as well. He noted that "a visitor has very little feeling that 'big brother,' or the secret police, practices close surveillance of foreigners. But people who live here still have trouble sometimes."[138] All in all, Haeger found East Germans to be irritated with many problems, but accepting their circumstances (and the Wall itself) because things were slowly improving.

Welles Hangen, another American journalist, who visited several months later, called the NES and limited political relaxation a "muted revolution."[139] Hangen anticipated the argument of P. C. Ludz, predicting that the expanding economy and generational change within the party -- the emergence of the so-called technocrats -- could lead to a

wave of even more sweeping reforms.[140] Because the impulse for reform was coming directly from within the party, Hangen devoted a great deal of space to recounting conversations with party members and the intelligentsia. But in the process, changing popular attitudes crept into the narrative as well. Where he described liberalizing tendencies, such as in the arts, there were seemed great incentive for East Germans to "step nearer" to the regime. As one young actor in Weimar put it:

> 'Previously, our theater was hampered by too much political interference from above. Theater people were discouraged by narrow-minded officials telling them how to do plays. Things are getting better now. The other day I met our deputy culture minister. We talked a long time. And I didn't do any bowing and scraping.'[141]

But even where dogmatism *did* still predominate, refusal to surrender to its dictates could spur individuals to participation. Like informants of the 1950s who refused to "abandon the place to them" (ie. party ideologues), a medical professional saw it as his duty to work within "the system."

> 'The choice now is between boycotting the regime completely or joining our hospital committee and trying to protect the interests of doctors and patients and keep the Party hotheads in check. At least we let Communists know they can't make a red corner out of our hospital.'[142]

These opinions, of course, hardly imply approval for the socialist system: it could even be argued that they suggest more variants of "negative Eastern identity." But Hangen eventually recounted expressions of a sense of shared values -- even tacit acceptance of the Eastern system -- when he shifted the topic to East Germans' resentment of their Western counterparts. While the following passage, appears to reveal little more than a community of poverty and misery (along with the author's view that there was almost nothing in the GDR to feel proud about) there is a clear demand for respect, even a sense of moral superiority, not unlike views expressed to visitors in the mid-to-late 1950s:

> The people of that unfortunate country [Hangen, like virtually all America visitors, called it East Germany] know they are the real losers of World War II. 'But we are sick of being pitied,' a Dresden dentist told me. 'We're sick of being called 'the Zone' and having the West Germans weep crocodile tears over us.' Sometimes the West Germans even forget the tears and brazenly flaunt their prosperity in the faces of their Eastern countrymen. At fair time in Leipzig, well-upholstered Ruhr businessmen and their expensively dressed wives roar through town in Mercedes limousines, hardly aware of the embittered looks they get from ordinary East Germans who must stand and wait outside. 'The West Germans have lost all ethical values in their lust for prosperity,' a Schwerin businessman said to me.[143]

Later, Hangen would make the familiar move of blaming such views on the regime's propaganda, arguing that East Germans had many misconceptions about the West, or assumed the "half-truths" they had heard were facts. He simply could not (or would not) consider that a basic socialist outlook might lie behind any of these opinions. Soon after him, however, an American correspondent would come much closer to considering it. For Arthur J. Olsen of *The New York Times*, a defensive pride in the regime's improving economy had not simply created identification with the social system, but a genuine state identity in a wide cross-section of the population.[144]

The ironic title of Olsen's 1965 report, "Since August 13 Everything is Different," -- meaning August 13, *1961* -- belied the core argument that the Wall was in fact the original precondition for *later* economic progress under the NES, which East Germans had begun to identify with because of the new work and administrative opportunities, particularly for *younger adults*. And with these opportunities, came a "state identity," which in Olsen's description seemed based on many of the same views East Germans had expressed in the mid-to-late 1950s, plus the regime's longer track record:

> Young East Germans who have never known any other *Führer* than spade-bearded Walter Ulbricht, the people who now largely staff his administrative machine, have begun to take a nervous, tentative, truculent pride in their rag-tag rump state. 'An ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own.'[145]

But there was another key difference as well. The stability brought by the Wall had created a sense of basic, predictable, internal *normality*. As Olsen put it, there was now "the modest hope that some sort of stable and orderly existence (hardly anyone in East Germany yet thinks seriously about being happy) might finally be granted the long-suffering Germans of Saxony and Prussia, Thuringia and Brandenburg."

Olsen, was first of many visitors to describe the NES not simply as reform, but a *weak imitation of free market capitalism*. Several British visitors had hinted at something similar, but Olsen was first to cast the new plan as a kind of little victory for the West in the struggle for hearts and minds. To make the point fairly obvious, he parodied Marx himself:

> . . . the introduction, in 1963, of the New Economic System, a German adaptation of Soviet 'Libermanism' that is tantamount to a declaration of bankruptcy of classic Marxist economics. Workers, factory managers and enterprises are being measured now by the profit they can show. *From each according to his ability; to each according to how much and how well he produces.*[146] (emphasis added)

The use of the term "bankruptcy" was important also, because the regime's "loss of faith" in Marxist ideology, or so he believed, was part of a larger, European-wide decline in the status of all "abstract and theoretical concepts," including "fatherland," "United Europe" and even "democracy." The GDR -- much like the prosperous West -- was a place where tangible, concrete eco-nomic progress and improved living standards were more important than the clash of Cold War ideas -- a trend other visitors commented on, and lamented, in reference to both the GDR and Western Europe.[147] Yet Olsen did nor entirely deny the importance of ideas: two in particular contributed to East Germans' "state identity": one older than the Cold War, and another rooted in recent experience.

> You concede yours [ie. your state] is the weaker materially but find solace in the solemn assurances of your authorities that it is the morally superior. You take pride in the old German values of industry and organization. You regard it as quite

> an achievement -- proportionally greater than West Germany's economic miracle -- that the D.D.R. is now 'the 10th largest industrial state in the world.' . . . That flickering sense of national identity is surely one of the most significant changes that have softened the forbidding face of East Germany in the last four years.[148]

Not only could East Germans attribute their more modest successes to traditional German work ethic and "German quality work," as it was often called earlier in the century, but could also, in some sense *handicap their success*, given the more difficult road traveled since 1945. But its important for this argument to keep in mind that similar attitudes were observed by visitors a decade earlier. This and Apel's findings of a growing preference for the Eastern system suggest that what Olsen was actually witnessing was the *broader proliferation* of these sympathies, rather than their beginning.

This did not mean, however, that more "consolidation" of East German opinion, as the author put it, was not necessary: Olsen's calculated that 12 people a day still attempted flight.[149] But the prospects for greater acceptance of the regime seemed fairly good, considering East Germans' sense of achievement, and continued strong resentment of West Germany. A young dentist Olsen met seemed typical. He avoided party officials, resented all the "communist sermons" he had to endure in his professional association, kept tabs on events in the West, and even dreamed of traveling there . . .

> But the young man is not at all sure he would 'bug out' if he had the chance. Partly he is fearful of trying his luck in the rapacious capitalist West. There is a positive side, too.
> We in the D.D.R. paid the real price for Hitlerism,' he said. 'During all those years when the West Germans were getting Marshall aid, we were paying reparations. We had to deliver billions of marks to Russia; the West Germans, not a pfennig. The state was built up by the Americans, by foreign capitalists. Why shouldn't it be ahead? Everything we have we made ourselves.'
> In this language of a chip-on-the-shoulder nationalist, one notes that resentment runs as strongly against Russia as against the plutocratic West. A traveler in the German Democratic Republic encounters at every hand the language of awakening pride.[150]

"Chip-on-the-shoulder nationalism" described East Germans almost perfectly -- that is, if recent reports that Ulbricht was becoming less despised than in the past were true.[151] Olsen held out another reason why the East Germans' "state identity" now seemed less contradictory than it had appeared in the 1950s: the prospect of truly robust economic growth:

> Prosperity is around the corner if the nation really works for it. Competition carries the promise that hard work will be fittingly rewarded. *Weltstand*--world standard--is the quality goal staked out for an economy too long characterized by shoddy and obsolete production. Industrial products equal to the best of the West have become the national obsession. And here and there East German industry has made it.[152]

As we will see, contemporary West German visitors were far more skeptical about the quality of East German products, and some ridiculed the *Weltstand* slogan as well.[153] But the point of the above quote was that *orientation toward* world standard, if not attainment of the thing itself, had engaged the determination of East Germans and stoked their pride as well.

However, since Olsen insisted that all these accomplishments -- including the "state identity" itself -- had been attained by *abandoning* Marxism, he wondered if in the long run the SED would lose control of the very reforms it had so boldly begun. Like several previous visitors, he believed profit motives and individual ambition were basically antithetical to building a socialist state: the price paid for them might likely be permanent loss of the regime's "push-button control."[154] But later that year, a very different visitor with a very different focus, Oxford fellow Uwe Kitzinger, believed the SED was *not* threatened by the forces of economic change, so long as the Wall remained and life for most East Germans was basically tolerable. For him, however, the emergence of a "state identity" in the GDR was confined to a minority --though a growing one --and based pri-

marily on ideology rather than the "chip on the shoulder" or the pursuit of world standard. Kitzinger's version, because it was limited, also seemed to resolve the contradictions in older views on Eastern identity.

Kitzinger, unlike Olsen, saw the East-West conflict as primarily about ideas, rather than the pursuit of higher livings standards in depoliticized populations. Most basically, he wanted to understand and explicate the great philosophical divide between the pluralism of the West and the closed societies of the Eastern bloc. To do so, he argued that one must entertain what Communists believed: that all questions which divide the citizens of democracies had already been an-swered by Marxist theory, that in the bloc states all social conflicts were being overcome, and therefore all dissent with the party was *in error*. This sort of messianic ideology, of course, could not possibly win the allegiance of all or even most East Germans, but it *did* furnish a common cause to which many could devote their efforts. As Kitzinger put it:

> If you really accept the notion that society has one overriding aim, and that neither a conflict between different aims of society as a whole nor a conflict of aims between different sections within it constantly needs resolving in a new compromise, then the whole system of taboos on criticism does make sense, and there is something to their talk of liberty that is more than just eye wash. . . A theologian, who was obviously very much at peace with the society developed the notion to me one night that liberty in the New Testament was intimately associated with feeling at home--he himself never felt free in West Germany, he said, but oppressed by being in a society of whose values he disapproved. After all, freedom is relative: the tragedy of East Germany in that case is that (as its rulers admit) so few of its citizens really share more than a part of the values that came with the Russian troops and that Russian tanks maintained in the uprising of 1953, and there is a sense in which the society will regard itself as freer if it can persuade--if you like, indoctrinate--its nice orderly young people to identify themselves more and more with Socialism. . . . And there are already thousands who do feel free in this sense, who are given the scope and the tools for a doing a job of work into which they pour their idealism, people stretching themselves to the utmost and finding freedom in dedication to the community.[155]

The notion of freedom as a *collective aspiration*, attained through *collective action*, manifested itself throughout the 1950s and 1960s in movements against colonialism in Africa and Asia, for civil rights in the United States, and even in several major uprisings against Soviet-sponsored regimes in the Eastern bloc. But it was seldom, if ever, considered by liberals or even leftists in the West that participation in the "building of socialism" in Eastern Europe could inspire a sense of "collective freedom." The passage creates the impression that the choice to dedi-cate one's self to the community was just that: *not* a coming to terms with the Wall or acceptance of the hopelessness of organized resistance, but a sense of *choosing to enter a social contract.* But like social contract theory in the English tradition, succeeding generations lacked the right to break the contract, being bound to preserve and transmit it. Kitzinger in effect made indoctrination in the GDR appear not that unlike the inculcation of values in Western countries, and this was not the only part of the report where the Eastern regime was deemed similar to its Western counterparts.

The problem with the "social contract," of the GDR, of course -- as the quote suggests -- was that because of the "values gap" between the regime and many citizens, not all could freely choose to enter into it. Ideologically unable to compromise with them, the regime instead had had to construct a system that did not *directly* oppress them, but induced them by various limitations -- the outermost being the Wall -- to accept the system in exchange for a reasonable existence. Yet in the following quote, Kitzinger again suggests that political system and limitations to participation were, for most East Ger-mans, not unlike those in democratic countries:

> . . . there remains the bulk of those for whom politics is a parameter of life rather like the weather, very much out of their control, who find that, by minding their own business, life can be lived not too badly, if not too well. There are birth, marriage, and death; there are training facilities, there is football, and there are lovely

country walks in Saxony with its rock pinnacles rising from the autumn leaves . .[156]

Whether this larger group thought in terms of "our republic," or resented West Germans' wealth and easier life the author did not say. But in turning to the pressing questions of Western recognition of the GDR, Kitzinger argued for increased trade and contact (though *not* official recognition) precisely because they would benefit a population that broadly shared important Western values; and which, because of the unique situation of SED rule, had put some of those values into more complete practice than their Western counterparts. The following passage ex-plains why Kitzinger rejected official recognition, but also, once again, why he thought that ideas and values mattered more than material progress. Rather than describing a wish for "socialism without the SED," however, the author here describes the spread of socialist values throughout a cross section of the population. This basic, shared commitment seems more important in the passage than any political affiliation:

> There are things the East Germans could teach the West Germans about radically denying the Nazi past and making substantial, if not formal, peace with the Poles; and individual East Germans as far as we are concerned, whether Communists, liberals, or Christians, do have a seriousness about social equality, about the spread of cultural opportunities throughout the whole population, and they are forced, by the very nature of the government under which they live, to face challenges that we can slide over all too easily. There are things here in Britain that perhaps we do not value enough because we take them for granted. Certainly it was a strange, poignant moment when our guide (whom we had perhaps unfairly felt, for all his courtesy, as rather a restriction on our freedom), even though he had spent the war in London, could suddenly come with us no further, as we, with a deep breath, carried our bags through Checkpoint Charlie back on to our side of the wall.[157]

As is clear from the last sentence, even those Western visitors willing to consider the real complexity of life in the GDR could not avoid discussing the Wall. After Kitzinger, quite a few of them devoted rather more space to East-West geopolitical maneuvering,

the long-term prospects of the NES, and the regime's unabated, obsessive control of seemingly all aspects of the economy and society. Often these authors *hinted* at identification with socialist achievements, but seemed unprepared to argue that any sort of state identity existed among substantial numbers of people in the general working population.[158] Not until early 1968 was the issue raised again, and even then, it remained fraught with complexity. Rather than a simple acceptance of East German citizenship based on greater economic security and the seeming inevitability of East German statehood, East Germans were still believed to be proud of certain achievements, while remaining skeptical of the regime, but also somewhat more compliant in their outward behavior. Also, from 1968 on the claim for a separate Eastern identity was closely linked to calls for increased international acceptance of the GDR, and finally, by the early 1970s, to pleas for official recognition.

In the spring of 1968, English academic Ronald Taylor, much like Olsen, wanted Western readers to accept the reality of an East German state *and* an East German "state identity," but hesitated to call for even *de facto* recognition.[159] His visit convinced him that the new found stability and "remarkable economic progress" of recent years had allowed the GDR to meet a standard of "state legitimacy," and therefore that the West must finally acknowledge the existence of two Germanies. In the following passage, however, Taylor, unlike Kitzinger or Olsen, attributes the different East German mindset almost entirely to indoctrination, and sees it extending down into the general population:

> So divergent has been the development of these two Germanies since 1945 that it would be quite unrealistic to imagine that the East Germans are living for the day when they can cast their democratic vote for a government in Bonn and be received into the Federal German fold. Nor must we forget that the flat and easily-governed plains which make up most of the territory of East Germany have been under some form of totalitarian rule since 1933, and the decades of controlled thought, or non-thought, have left marks which will not disappear overnight.[160]

Taylor was not about to argue that the regime had won over the population, or that it imparted or represented any positive or humane values. Indeed the ways it had impacted East Germans over the years were hardly explained at all. Endurance, indoctrination, and economic progress, or so it seems, had made it their state by default:

> But whatever one may think of the East German regime, the only 'national unit' to which the people in that country can feel they belong is the East German state. So why, ask the rulers of this state, does not Britain, along with the other Western governments, simply realise we are there and give us the official recognition due to a government which does quite obviously govern?[161]

The answer, of course, was the problems recognition would create for Bonn. Though the West German population was increasingly accepting partition, the government had to continue to claim to speak for all Germans. Therefore, recognizing the GDR could only encourage revanchism in West Germany and endanger the entire Western alliance. The Allies, according to Taylor, must instead let the two Germanies work their way out of their present "agreed enmity" in their own way and time.

A second English visitor in 1968 believed there was much more involved in East German state identity than the regime's endurance, domination and economic gains. David Hotham, a London *Times* Bonn correspondent, visited East Berlin at a unique moment in postwar European history, just days before Soviet tanks brought an end to the "Prague Spring" in Czechoslovakia.[162] He began his dissection of East German identity with the concept of "control" -- meaning both the regime's grip on its people, and the latter's own rigidly enforced *self-control*, all of which suggested a traditional German ethos:

> I remember looking down from my room on the fifth floor of the Hotel Unter den Linden in east Berlin at 7 a.m. and watching the people walking to work in the broad square below. Something about the sight riveted my attention. I have often seen people walk to work in the west, but this was different. The way they moved was different. They all walked at exactly the same speed and in the same way, to give their service to the 'Socialist Fatherland.' They looked incredibly

> controlled and orderly, the very embodiment of a well-ordered German state, which, after all, is what east [sic] Germany is.[163]

Hotham described this semi-voluntary comportment of the population as "group control, and above all self control,"[164] anticipating Fulbrook's view that dictatorial rule in the GDR was partly accomplished through widespread, unthinking conformity.[165] Hotham observed that people had learned to group together in public and talk quietly among themselves, remaining "unremittingly careful, forever on their guard."[166] The "care" East Germans took in public turned out to be a kind of "poker face" to mask their "deep interest" in the unfolding events in Prague. But *interest* did not lead to any genuine *debate*. A university student told him that "We think, we do not discuss," and a female medical graduate student added: "We never discuss political questions at my school . . . We see no point in it. It cannot lead to anything. So we concentrate on talking about work."[167]

But none of this meant that the students were not well informed. Along with their access to West German and West Berlin television, he found evidence of a lively underground exchange of print media. And the author *did* report on popular protests -- the first visitor to mention them since the months after the building of the Wall. The issue that summer was the destruction of the historic University Church on the central square in Leipzig -- the very same square that locals had bragged was being brought up to "world standard" the year before (see Chapter 6). The authorities had announced they would spare the medieval structure from their rebuilding plans, but within a week they changed their minds and hurriedly demolished it to minimize public outcry. Protests occurred nevertheless, and several days later, at a ceremony awarding the "Bach music prize," a banner was unfurled, "demanding" the church be rebuilt. "It caused an immediate sensation," Hotham noted, and "the organizers were immediately arrested."[168]

This unfolding tale of indirect political pressure, unthinking conformity, and sin-

gle-issue resistance did not suggest much appreciation for socialist achievements, much less a "state identity," and yet Hotham argued that an East German identity *did* exist, and ultimately he offered a larger window unto the complexity of East German attitudes than any visitor of the late 1960s. In 30 conversations he found only two people who appeared to be "convinced supporters of the regime." The rest were a collection of "grumblers," but clearly *not* opponents. Like earlier visitors, Hotham saw them as supporting *aspects* of SED rule, though not the rulers themselves. But where he differed from previous visitors was in his view that "law and order" was nearly as important to East Germans as socialist achievements and economic progress -- an opinion shared by several contemporary West German visitors.This emerging interest in the "orderly German society" appeared, not coincidentally, in a period where the West was experiencing greater social discord than at any time since the end of World War II.

> Wherever I went in east [sic] Germany I heard complaints about the control, the bureaucracy, and the lack of freedom. . . . Yet I was reminded constantly of the saying about the Germans that they 'despise their governments but obey them.' . . . In some ways Ulbricht has been relatively liberal. . . . Up to now there have been no purges, trials or executions in east [sic] Germany (apart from those killed on the Berlin wall). Ulbricht has been astute enough to learn from others mistakes. On top of this there is the instinctive German distaste for rebellion and love of order--and there is plenty of order![169]

But it was ultimately the socialist system that was key to the state identity. Like visitors of the 1950s and early- to mid-1960s, Hotham found that those highly critical of or even opposed to the regime could nevertheless approve of and strongly identify with socialist achievements.[170] In fact, as the following quotes suggests, many saw *no contradiction* between wishing the regime weakened and wanting to retain social benefits:

> Many, indeed most, east Germans I spoke to, even enemies of the regime, admitted to a 'certain pride' in the achievements of *their country* (*and they seem to think of it as a country*) in the past few years. The wall, [sic] for all its enormity as a

> political and inhuman act, seems to be hardly discussed. Most say that if they were free to travel . . . they would not want to stay there [ie. the West], and this may well be true. Some people seemed genuinely grieved by the lack of international recognition of east Germany, and even took the line that recognition could lead to a lifting of the travel ban, on grounds that 'we could travel to the countries which recognized us.' But the majority I spoke to denied this, saying the recognition would merely strengthen the regime, without any certainty that it would in any way alleviate the lot of ordinary people. It might indeed have the contrary effect, they said.[171] (emphasis added)

Both these opinions and the authors' only seem contradictory if we assume that contemporaries could not imagine that East German system surviving without the iron curtain and firm and total control of the SED. There can be no doubt that *most* Western observers did see things this way, and certainly the events of 1989 seemed to prove them right. But in the late 1960s, Hotham was not completely alone in suggesting the possibly that the regime could endure: " . . . it is a mistake to think, as is so often assumed in the west [sic], that if the Russians de-parted the whole place would collapse overnight in a cloud of dust." he wrote.[172] His informants suggested that hopes for "socialism without the SED" were still very much alive.

Less than two years later, American Robert Moskin, traveling with a photographer and reporting on "the Germany we don't know" for *Look* magazine, found the GDR to be more solid than ever, and, like his predecessors, described "satisfaction" in the Rostock shipyard.[173] A longshoreman was featured in his report, declaring "we have everything."[174] But unlike Peter Johnson's informants 11 years earlier, Rudi Pukall, a 36-year-old party man, did not connect his satisfaction to socialist achievements -- at least not as Moskin reported it. The author and his editors seemed to completely separate Rudi from politics or ideology -- even spatially -- in an inset box surrounded by a main text on current development of the GDR. Pukall and his wife and children lived in a four-room apartment in one of Rostock's "model suburbs"; they drove a new green Trabant automobile in

the country on weekends; a photo showed Rudi and his wife, Ruth, shopping in a supermarket that featured imported fruits, juices, vegetables, vodka from socialist countries, and, most notably, French wines. "They seem quite contented with their lot," wrote Moskin. This lifestyle which appeared to approach the "American dream," seemed to exist as far away from politics and ideology as life in the tree-lined suburbs of the U.S. -- most likely an effort by *Look* to make ordinary East Germans appear as decent, hard-working, and even familiar as possible to Americans still immersed in images of the Berlin Wall and the iron curtain. Indeed, no American author had made the life of ordinary working people in the GDR seem more attractive, or more normal. The only deviation from postwar Western gender ideals was Ruth's job -- working as a cashier at a local restaurant. Like so many previous visitors, Moskin viewed women working as a sign of systemic problems, or at least, as an imposition on family life: "everyone has an obligation to work," he explained.

The author might have represented Rudi's lifestyle as a success of socialist organization, or perhaps described his retirement investments (up to two-month's salary at 3% interest) as a some kind of variation on personal investing under capitalism. But Rudi was left aside, and the main text went in a different and contradictory direction. At times, it seemed that Moskin (unlike Hotham or Kitzinger), wanted to divide East German society into insiders and outsiders -- in effect suggesting that only those who joined the party and sat on its committees within their profession felt a sense of being "part of the power that rules here," while those who disliked the regime merely threw themselves into their work because "both revolt and escape are impossible." However, at other times, he described opponents as groping their way toward a compromise between their own personal goals and the demands of the "Communist society": if Pukall's politics were completely hid-

den, a sculptor who felt "full of doubts" about the possibility of true self expression within the confines of "Socialist Realism" was nonetheless determined to "find an attitude."

In the end, however, Moskin tilted toward a view similar to Taylor's: that the true nature of East German identity derived from the many years of totalitarian control and indoctrination. He may have been thinking of Rudi Pukall once again when he wrote: "maybe most people don't feel deprived since no one under 50 can remember what its like to have a political choice." The expressed purpose of his report was to make Americans see that the GDR was now an economic power that could not be ignored. But even with the "goods delivered," its population, once again, seemed like a "nation by default." Indeed, when Moskin used the term "East Germans" he was usually referring only to functionaries and other regime supporters, not the broader population.

The idea of an East German "state identity" more widespread, however, returned once more in the early 1970s. Along with two German-speaking visitors, Richard Crossman, now managing editor of the *New Statesman*, referred to the "institutionalization" of the GDR and its socialist worldview in the population in 1971.[175] Not only did he believe there was widespread identification with the economic achievements, but a certain odd *appreciation for the regime's authoritarianism* as well. This linked him to Hotham, but Crossman stressed a more the profound *ideological difference* from the West among the population. In the following passage, his interpretation of the overarching worldview that guided the GDR is strikingly similar to Uwe Kitzinger's five years earlier, though more widespread:

> If one is kindly disposed one thinks of the unrelenting seriousness of Cromwell's Commonwealth, but I suspect the right parallel is Calvin's Geneva with its doctrine of predestination and the rule of the elect. And yet, despite this oppressive conformism, everyone I talked to feels genuinely proud of the achievements of the

> GDR and enjoys telling you how their little republic, unlike the rich Americanised *Bundesrepublik*, is '*echt Deutsch,*' German through and through, and building a socialist community such as only the countrymen of Marx and Engels can build. When I remarked however that *echt Deutsch* should surely be *echt Preussisch*, I got only sour looks. Despite the smart army doing the goosestep and the ubiquitous 'volunteer' militia, Prussian is still a dirty word.[176]

The quote reminds that "traditionally German" remained a problematic concept in the GDR whenever the discussion turned to historical specifics. But Crossman also found that the new prosperity was somewhat problematic as well. Despite the egalitarian commitment to building a socialist community, he found living standards still to be further advanced in East Berlin than in other cities or the countryside, even if there were signs of material improvements wherever he went. But ultimately, he believed the key to approval for the regime was *not* higher living standards *per se*, but the greater sense of *economic security* than during the "bad old days." Conformity and dedication to one's assigned task allowed East Germans to feel taken care of: "now if you work hard and go straight there is a secure future for you and the whole family."[177] It appeared to Crossman that workers' hopes for a secure life had finally been realized in the GDR, so long as they towed the political line, something Moskin only vaguely hinted at regarding Rudi Pukall. The newfound sense of economic security and the Germanness of the regime were themes described by German visitors we will meet in the next chapter. For at least two of them, opportunities for career advancement also were a factor in approval for the regime.

'The More Things Change . . .': Economic Power, Political Domination, and Consumerism: 1966-1972

For all the visitors of mid-to-late 1960s and early 1970s who attempted to describe and define East German "state identity" or "state consciousness" as many or even more did

not even consider the subject. Most of them wrote narratives packed with tales of overwhelming restrictions, nightmarish bureaucracies, and a hundred minor inconveniences that plagued both the daily lives of East Germans and their own travels as well. It seemed that for many, the experience of crossing into the GDR -- and all the tedious preparations that preceded it -- became a kind of keynote for their entire account. Even those who acknowledged important benefits of the East German system -- and some of the comforts and even pleasure they gave to people they met or observed, found no pride or satisfaction among them. For these visitors, East Germans' com-plaints made their views on socialist achievements beside the point -- most particularly their resentment of travel restrictions. What these visitors were looking for -- either explicitly or implicitly -- was not "chip on the shoulder nationalism," "default state identity," or selective identification with some benefits, but *genuine allegiance* to the regime -- perhaps even belief in Communist ideology. Without internal liberalization or free travel -- or so it seemed -- not even the dawn of Western-style consumer culture could create such affection.

The journey through the Wall (or nearly equally infamous "iron curtain" Western border) gave some visitors a sense of dread, but could also punctuate the entire visit. It seemed almost to lead travelers into tales of the multiple frustrations, inconveniences, and limitations that lay beyond it. It also conveyed a feeling (which I too experienced much later, in November 1982) of passing through a portal to a strange, forbidden world. Even some who did described positive change, such as Moskin, conveyed this sense quite well. Its worth imagining how it might have seemed to those more easily intimidated by the fortified border:

> Twisting between the concrete barriers at Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie, *Look* photographer James H. Karales and I could not help but feel we were descending into another world. When the cold-faced Communist border guard ordered me into a back room to question a carton of cigarettes and confiscate my magazines, I reali-

> zed my Government [sic] is not represented in the DDR and that I could find no help. . . . And yet, Americans pour through the checkpoint every day, curious about the half-city beyond The Wall [sic] or to visit the superb Deutsches Theater and Komische Oper in East Berlin. They rarely have trouble . . .[178]

Contemporaries agreed. Nothing ominous seemed to *happen* at the border -- or beyond it -- but impressions were ominous themselves. Entry included a tedious process of searches, questions, currency exchanges and document stamping that was repeated in each town where the visitor stayed. But the problem of non-recognition, as Moskin suggested, always remained in the background in the 1960s. Swiss author Michael Kogon seemed unsure of what to make of the GDR: initially he called it (and the formerly German part of Poland) "foreign Germany" (*Das Deutsche Ausland*).[179] But passing through the iron curtain, convinced him, as it had Moskin, that he had definitely entered a sovereign state, and a forbidding one at that:

> One thing is now clear to us. It is truly a border that we have crossed just now. And more: we were controlled. And finally: maybe we would have been better [off] remaining outside. Three reactions, -- which one did the state want [most] to convey?[180]

He could not say for sure, but the bureaucratic tedium continued throughout his travels, compounded by his own plans to travel with an East German friend to Poland, to return her to the GDR, and then exit once more to West Germany.

But perhaps no visitor of the era linked the border more closely to all (unpleasant) experiences beyond it than an *Economist* correspondent en route to the spring 1966 Leipzig fair. Neither the success of the NES nor the passage of time had altered the political complexion of the regime, manifest most clearly in the border controls themselves:

> . . . the party itself is run by a company of professional politicians mentally and spiritually limited through long isolation from normal life. Mostly they are men for whom time has stood still for twenty years, who are frightened of free inquiry and free speech, for whom dissent spells treason and magnanimity weakness. . . .

> Their voice is heard by the traveler from the west long before he reaches the border near Eisenach. . . The withering hand is felt immediately at the frontier. Here, with the help of wire, guns, dogs and a regiment of male and female police, immense precautions are taken against all comers and goers, from manifold checking of papers to inspection by prodding of such recesses of every car, including the petrol tank, as might have been adapted to carry contraband, particularly one of those human bodies that have no right, according to the party, to be on the move from one part of Germany to the other. . . . A poster displayed to the human sheep in the frontier pen argues wondrously that since east German [sic] subjects are entitled to vote (from whom?) at the age of 18, and to stand as a deputy (to what purpose?) at 21, altogether 31,270 young east Germans [sic] are playing a direct part in governing their country.[181]

The "disagreeable" feeling grew even stronger as one entered into and traveled through the country. The correspondent described an unchanged, "suffocating atmosphere," in which every effort was made to discourage active participation in public affairs, all West German electronic media were jammed, and all social life and politics in the West made into "malevolent distortion." "Why do they go on being so boringly incredible that you never see anybody troubling to read a newspaper at breakfast?" the correspondent asked, one of a long series of rhetorical questions implying that the regime itself had become primarily responsible for its diplomatic isolation: "Were there but a few signs of a genuine improvement in political manners in east Germany [sic] the growing number of west Germans [sic] who are beginning to ask themselves whether there might not be some advantage in legalizing and perpetuating the existence of two German states would more easily overcome their qualms."[182] Like most contemporaries, the correspondent was not against recognition, so long as the two German states initiated the process.

Most of this author's contemporaries found a grumbling, frustrated population in their travels as well. Complaint number one, of course, was travel restrictions. But such complaints could, at times, suggest a kind of basic acceptance of the regime: those who wanted a chance to travel told visitors they would almost certainly come back. Anthony

Sylvester, a British journalist whose travel experiences were published in a sharply anti-communist American monthly,[183] was told by one man that the Wall was "like a wound that will not heal," but another conversation suggested that loathing the Wall did not exclude an acceptance of the life beyond it:

> 'If only they would let us go to the other side again--we would come back for sure,' said a young man in an East Berlin tavern. 'We have our apartments, and they are cheap. We want to live here.' There are relatives and friends to see on the other side, but what hurts the intensely proud Germans most is the humiliation of being treated as second class citizens who can't be trusted.[184]

Kogon found such frustrations neatly summarized in the telling and sarcastic slogan "our future begins at retirement," referring to once-yearly trips pensioners were allowed to take to the West. "In the meantime, if one can accomplish it, one makes their vacation journeys to the communist bloc nations."[185] While getting a look at *domestic* vacation opportunities first hand at Bad Schandau (he found multitudes of working class persons enjoying the "Saxon Switzerland," not the sort one would meet at resorts in the West) Kogon referred to travel restrictions even more negatively. He overheard a local man, a cinema organist, boasting to young people in a dance hall about buying a traditional alpine hat, a "Tirol." The man did not say *where* he had bought it, but Kogon assumed the whole scene indicated pure escapism: the youths that admired it could thereby forget, he wrote, "that the Tirol [is] far away on the other side of the border and the manufacture of its traditional hat is in no case included in the production plans."[186] It strikes the reader as jumping to conclusions, as if the author's experience crossing the border colored nearly every minor event he observed thereafter.

American Michael Mok, who contributed to a photo essay for the GDR in *Life* magazine in 1967,[187] expressed East Germans' revulsion over travel restrictions through a secretive, semi-imaginary discussion between men in the Harz mountains on a moonless

night.

> 'They'll be trying to slip over tonight, that's sure.'
> 'Every thing is right and a good man can make it -- if he knows the hills, and if he is traveling alone. 'Maybe he'll run into the right kind of border guard, the sort who'll aim high.'
> 'God be with them. But you make me want to vomit with your talk of 'a good man could make it,' when all along the border people are shot like dogs on the wire.'
> 'All the same, a good man can make it--if he knows how.'
> 'That's right. My son went for a two-week hiking trip up there last summer. Two weeks passed, then three and he wasn't back. Then one night the phone rang.
> 'Papa. I'm in Hanover.'[188]

But Mok's larger point was that however mythically cruel the border had become, or how desperate those attempting to cross it, it was *only part* of the reality of the GDR -- perhaps a smaller part than it had ever been: "But out of sight of the Wall, out of earshot of the fierce border dogs, a visitor has to remind himself that the German Democratic Republic, as it is officially called, is a police state."[189]

And the biggest reasons for this were the apparent arrival of a Western-style "consumer culture" on the one hand, and the persistence of private enterprise on the other. Mok claimed to have overheard Soviet soldiers wondering "who won the war anyway?" as they surveyed the rising living standards in the GDR.[190] And indeed, he was quite certain that a "little economic miracle" had occurred. Meanwhile, like a number of other visitors, he seemed astonished to find that so many private businessmen had partnered with the regime and continued to prosper. This mixed system, as well the competitive and realistic outlook of many of the GDR's enterprise managers and technocrats suggested to Mok and others that followed that the GDR's economic program amounted to *a weak and incomplete imitation of Western capitalism.*

This seemed reflected in the emerging consumer culture as well. The author even

speculated that GDR's budding prosperity could "infect" the population with Western psychological problems brought on by too much abundance and convenience: an obsession with frivolous, conspicuous consumption. Mok, for one, saw signs of the earliest stages of the "malady," in a . . .

> . . . surprising preoccupation with Western-stye creature comforts, which sell--despite staggering prices--as fast as they can be manufactured.' . . . What's more, in spite of long waits for expensive, plastic cars (only 1 family in 10 owned one at the time), there were now hints of what has more recently been termed 'affluen za'--a whole new set of problems peculiar to the society with consumer abundance: . . . I was strolling down East Berlin's Karl Marx Allee with an acquaintance who happens to be a devout Communist when a girl passed with an elegantly trimmed poodle tricked out in a green sweater. 'In the West,' I told my friend, 'you'll sometimes see a dog wearing little galoshes.' . . . Despite the labor shortage, we are beginning to enjoy the same benefits as you capitalists,' my friend said, 'It's inevitable that we shall soon be afflicted with the ridiculous aspects of the affluent society.'[191]

But like many authors in the mid-to-late 1960s, Mok wondered about how much more economic expansion was possible without further decentralization or political liberalization. Western-style consumerism also suggested another problem: the impact of Western "youth culture" on East Germans. A fascination with all of the latest trends could, in the near future, combine with demographic to create a kind of Eastern "generation gap." Next to a picture of young people dancing at a party before an illustration of the Brandenburg Gate [where the Wall divided East and West Berlin] Mok wrote:

> The miniskirt is not officially acceptable, but it is popular with young people . . . The slop, the frug, the Watusi and other Western dances are just beginning to infiltrate East German nightclubs, and in time their chorus routines may yet resemble those of the Lido in Paris. The student 'explosion'--44 institutions of higher learning with 220,000 full-time students, up from six and 8,000 in 29 years--may work other changes as ideologically uncommitted youths seek motorbikes, Beatle haircuts and the right to read Western writers.[192]

This is not exactly a warning or prediction, but is somewhat prophetic given the rise of a

peace movement and environmental activism a decade later. But for all the talk of young East German's obsessions with rock and roll and Western fashions in the 1960s, only one visitor described anything approaching an East German "hippy"--and that youth seemed isolated and even disliked.[193] At most, the fascination of East German youth for Western youth culture seemed capable of generating some *future or long term undermining* of "socialist values," and neither "affluenza" nor youth culture suggested any *political* threat.

Another author who hinted at affluenza, English correspondent Stephen Aris, showed how the regime tried to make hay out of consumerism, and in so doing helped foster stability. At the grand opening of a state-owned *Centrum* department store in East Berlin (the largest edition of the chain to date) Aris was expressly forbidden to photograph the scene as party big-wigs opened the doors to a horde of frantic shoppers. To Aris, this minor prohibition was highly instructive: the regime could maintain such domineering control of public life precisely because it was "delivering the goods" to consumers:

> The range and quality of goods on display at *Centrum's* showpiece and the size of the crowds waiting to snap them up illustrates far more vividly than the dry and often misleading official statistics just how far the Germans have come in the 21 years that have passed since the establishment of Herr Ulbricht's regime. At the same time the fact that party officials feel it necessary to watch over such a politically inconsequential event as the opening of a new store illustrates the extent to which day-to-day life in East Germany is still dominated by the politicians and their acolytes. And it is precisely this combination of monolithic party control and surveillance and rapidly accelerating material prosperity that makes East Germany such an interesting if not wholly attractive phenomenon, and makes talk of The Other German Miracle [sic] quite credible.[194]

The event took place in November 1970, three years after Mok hinted at affluenza. Advancing consumerism had most definitely *not* altered the outlook of the regime, or, apparently, reduced its controlling ways. But also, it was clear that economic progress

was underwriting the stability of the GDR --the SED was "making the grade" where it apparently mattered most. Despite the continued export of the best products, Aris noted that "the consumer['s] . . . needs are being catered for in a manner that would appear to justify East Germany's claim to be the richest of the countries of the Eastern bloc and the world's tenth wealthiest industrial nation."[195] Not that Aris had a positive word to say about the regime, or ignored continuing shortages, most notably in housing. He assumed, however, that the younger generation, having known nothing different, accepted total control. By 1970, though an occasional visitor to the GDR could wonder if ". . . all those miles of bannered slogans [in East Berlin] . . . yielding place to neon-lit advertisements,"[196] suggested the potential for political relaxation, most visitors concurred with Aris that elements of capitalist practice in the GDR *coexisted with unchanged political orthodoxy.*

Moreover, because the economic gains hardly ever seemed to approach Western standards, most visitors were not nearly as enthused as Mok or Aris. Authors such as Sylvester, Moskin, and two "special correspondents" from *The Economist* did not speak of prosperity or anything like consumer abundance. Sylvester grudgingly admitted that economic progress had made the GDR "somewhat more attractive to its inhabitants."[197] One of the special corres-pondents was even more critical, insisting that while some consumer products and new construction were more in evidence, the lot of East Germans still remained "bleak" by Western European standards.[198] Moskin wrote about the new and impressive Panorama Hotel in the Thuringian ski resort of Oberhof, noting that its 900 bedrooms were already booked out for the entire year of 1970, but soon after noted that even super-productive workers on the "short list" for a new car could still wait four years.[199] Sylvester also added that while East German clothes and footwear were superior to their East German counterparts and much in demand in the Soviet bloc, they remained

"more than a shade below western standards," and given the amount exports there was still not enough production for "constant availability" at home.[200] The other *Economist* correspondent wrote in 1967 that the GDR ". . . in terms of income per head is within striking distance of the rich European capitalist countries," but believed that only the introduction of Western-style free market competition would allow the GDR to reach genuine prosperity and abundance of consumer goods.[201]

Not that entrepreneurial, competitive spirits were totally lacking. American visitors in particular (even those who were skeptical of the "little miracle") were fascinated by the remaining private businessmen in the GDR, as well as the more entrepreneurial technocrats -- the new generation of managers and technicians discussed previously.[202] By 1967, stories about threatened private businessmen, or small shopkeepers who survived but never felt truly secure, were replaced by stories of successful businessmen partnered with the state and *business-like* enterprise managers who were nearly as entrepreneurial themselves.[203] These East German capitalists and managers reinforced the view that the GDR's economic system had become a half-hearted *imitation of Western capitalism*. Moskin highlighted the irony in quoting an official who declared: "We have proved workers are able to run a state and run it for a profit."[204]

But irony aside, Western visitors were somewhat perplexed by the existence of East German capitalists. The fact that they existed at seemed surprising. Unlike like larger economic trends, or the reforms of the NES, however, they did not inspire predictions of future political liberalization. Rather, they seemed to exist in almost perfect harmony with the existing dictatorship. These men (and it seemed all of them were men) were simply getting the most out of available opportunities (including preferential access to raw materials and a lack of competition). They seemed quite happy to share their success

with the regime, which showed no intention whatsoever of nationalizing their businesses, so long as they remained profitable. The regime was, in effect, a silent partner to East German capitalism. And though these partnership had in some cases existed even before the Wall was built, few visitors discussed them until the late 1960s. The technocrats attracted Western interest first, and their situation was alternatively intriguing and frustrating for the visitors.

"Special Correspondents" of the London *Times* made several reports from Halle and the surrounding "chemical triangle" in 1963-4, focused mainly on managers and technicians referred to as the "New Elite in Handel's [sic] Town,"[205] One correspondent interviewed the young director-general of a new edition to the massive Leuna chemical complex. The author referred to 33-year-old Dr. Siegbert Löschau from Dresden, an "industrial chemist and member of the Communist Party," as a "captain of East German industry,"[206] suggesting a stature on par with the great industrialists of the American Gilded Age. But it turned out decision-making at the plant was more bureaucratic, and the manager's prerogatives more limited than a "captain of industry":

> When I met him in the works he had just come from a conference of the works directors. At issue were investments in a coal hydrogenation plant, and before a decision was taken the plans had to be attacked, and defended, regarding their profitability in a three-way dispute between scientists, engineers, and works economists. . . This process is now part of the so-called 'new economic system' introduced in east Germany after the 1963 party conference. If the Ulbricht regime had taken its principles to their logical conclusion, and given the workers and management sufficient incentives [sic], it might have had a revolutionary effect on the creaking, shortage-ridden east German state economy. It has already helped to improve the living standards as the Leipzig fair made clear.[207]

The author did not go into detail about what was meant by "incentives," but almost certainly it meant not simply bonuses for meeting production targets, but encouraging producers to be *more responsive to demand.* Though this author did not seem to be advo-

cating a transition to full-blown private competition, the "logical conclusion" of the NES surely pointed toward more familiar Western business practices.

Welles Hangen said quite a bit more about a higher-level manager he met in East Berlin in 1965. His office was as "dingy and undistinguished" as any other, but the man clearly was part of a new generation of the SED with considerable freedom of action,:

> [Helmut] Wiedmer is an engineer and a Party member. At the age of forty he is production manager for twenty-two plants manufacturing industrial control devices, data-processing equipment, photo apparatus, and optical goods. Like his opposite numbers in eighty-odd other associations of state-owned enterprises, Wiedmer can set prices for his products, shift labor from one job to another, allocate investment capital from earnings, distribute profits to himself and other members of the concern, and deal directly with foreign and domestic customers--all without getting a single ministerial stamp of approval.
> 'The fact that I'm receiving you alone here today' Wiedmer told me, 'reflects our new system. I'm independent. There's a kind of natural selection going on here: old-fashioned bureaucrats being replaced by younger, technically qualified men. We used to have lots of interference from the government. Now they don't come around--unless we get in trouble. It's the only way to run a business.'[208]

And those businesses were being run according to profitability, Hangen wrote, not the "'laws' of Marxism-Leninism."[209]

Hangen was more bullish on the transformative potential of the NES than any other visitor of the era, making it sound as if managers like Wiedmer were nearly the equals of Western-style CEOs. Though he was ultimately uncertain when "the fruits of the system" [meaning con-sumer abundance] would actually arrive, he believed the young "technocrats and intellectuals" could be highly instrumental in the process of *political* liberalization in the shorter term. Hangen believed that if the West would only initiate dialogue with the regime, then the SED leadership, feeling less afraid of Bonn's hardliners, might see the technocrats as the voice of reason and remove its own hardliners. What Hangen was ultimately getting at, as he wrote the book version of his travels in 1966, was

that the NES, having introduced the profit motive into the production process, could become an unstoppable force, providing the prosperity and security that would give the GDR both international acceptance and more economic independence from the Soviets.[210]

But later visitors were far more skeptical. Both Sylvester and the aforementioned *Economist* "special correspondent" (1967) approved of the basic idea of putting most important decisions into the hands of technocrats, and introduced managers very much like Löschau and Wiedmer. However, both saw the NES as up against larger, systemic limitations. In the following passage Sylvester describes another manager who was even more distant from, and skeptical of, the party's "old guard":

> 'The most important thing for now is that I do my own planning instead of waiting for the authorities to tell me what to do,' the director of a large iron and steel plant told me. We were discussing the 'new economic system' inaugurated in 1963. He was evidently pleased with his new freedom and responsibilities, but did not care to identify himself with the party.[211]

But after elaborating on both the wider powers his "director friend" had within the *VVB* to which his plant was affiliated, as well as the red tape that remained with regard to the calculation of prices, Sylvester got to larger difficulties that the GDR faced if it were to take the NES to its "logical conclusions." He suggested that they must either allow prices to rise and fall with demand, as was currently the practice in Hungary, or at least gain a more favorable bargaining position with the USSR. As the Soviet's chief supplier of "industrial goods," the SED craved Western technology to produce and deliver them more efficiently. Getting such technology would surely give them more leverage with the Kremlin. However, the regime had limited hard currency reserves, and because of West German insistence, limited trade credits with most Western countries as well. The SED's difficult future task, then, would be to convince Western businessmen that supplying the GDR with new expensive technology to produce goods for export to the U.S.S.R. would also

improve *Western trade relations* with the Soviets.[212]

The *Economist* correspondent was far too brief about the opinions of the *VVB* director he interviewed, describing him as a bright, quick 38-year-old economist, but focusing more on his sweeping power over individual firm managers within his *VVB*, which to him placed too much constraint on their individual initiative.[213] And constraints seemed to appear everywhere in this description of the NES -- the two biggest being the general resistance of the "economic tech-nicians" to a more truly free market, and the regime's aversion to a more open public sphere. The correspondent truly expounded a "market-led strategy" -- a view that would later be referred to in the West as "Thatcherism" -- in identifying the weakness of the NES, and an enlightenment-based faith in free information as key to rational problem solving. If the thinking to decentralize decisionmaking and let prices reflect true costs had been basically right . . .

> . . . it is hard to see how this system can work without the regular provision of financial news and comment on as wide a scale as in western industrial countries, or how management personnel at all levels can be really efficient in home and export markets unless they have full access to the foreign financial press. This would imply the substantial abandoning of newspaper censorship--a major reversal of policy which appears to be quite unacceptable at present.[214]

Equally unlikely were free market reforms, which, as noted, the author believed to be essential for "real growth." The problem for the correspondent was not the NES *per se*, but *all* systems of centralized planning: what they lacked was the private entrepreneur's intuition and willingness to take risks. Individual imagination was what technocrats and planners lacked:

> This writer could argue that, on all western experience, the east Germans [sic] must go much further in their liberalisation to get the real dividends. Reflecting on western experience of trying to shape investment decisions by the public manipulation of credit conjures up sad images like the British Aircraft Corporation, or France's lengthy attempts to lick into shape a steel industry which, in the end,

> is unlikely to be showing very much profit anyway. *In western experience, the real growth comes from the firms that got away, defying the nice calculations of averages on which the public planning is based and pulling the rest of the economy after them, willy-nilly, on to new technical and financial ground.* (emphasis added)[215]

In the end, the NES was quietly withdrawn in the wake of the 1968 Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia, as retrenchment throughout the bloc brought an end to all kinds of liberalization. But this didn't stop some later visitors from locating a similar pragmatic and independent spirit among managers. Moskin (1970) was one. He was probably more impressed with the manager of an East German steel firm than any previous correspondent had been with their informants. This was because the man's personality suggested not simply independence and pragmatism, but a kind of rugged, *entrepreneurial* Western attitude as well:

> The most fascinating man I met in the DDR was the very short, very dapper general manager of the giant steel complex . . . . He was Erich Markowitsch, 56, who wore a lace-edged handkerchief in his jacket pocket and -- speaking French -- invited us into his office. He seemed atypical of a worker-farmer Socialist state, but there is no question what Markowitsch is. He has been a party member for 40 years and survived 12 years in concentration camps. He said 'I am only a simple Communist.' . . . Markowitsch would have made it big in Pittsburgh or New York as well as Eisenhüttenstadt. He is alive, sharp, aggressive, nervy and probably a highly effective leader.[216]

Moskin went on to explain that Markowitsch ran a government-owned monopoly: despite appearance and style, he *really was* a simple Communist in that sense. On the other hand, he got his 21,000 workers at Eisenhüttenstadt to beat production targets and thereby earn "more than a $1 million in bonuses" and "three extra paid vacations days this year."[217]

This pursuit of profit and achievement, needless to say, was shared by East German capitalists, whose partnerships with the government numbered in the thousands and

> the government stays out of daily management, but sets production targets and presses for hard currency, especially American dollars, from export. (His biggest customer abroad is the Hub Floral Corp. in Boston) Chrestensen gets a tax-free salary as the managing partner and a heavily taxed share of the profits as a stockholder. He can even hand down his share of the company to his sons. . . . . This "mixed ownership" seems to work. Productivity is high. Wages have doubled in ten years. The firm has become the biggest in its field.[219]

Rather than a wealthy tycoon, then, Moskin offered a portrait of family business handed down through the generations, which in more recent times had become a mainstay in the East German hard-currency export economy.

Several other private businessmen were interviewed by Western journalists in this period, and the advantages of their partnerships were clear to see.[220] Stephen Aris introduced a furniture manufacturer, Horst Schaefer, who was doing around £1 million of business annually. He too ran a family business, with his son, which he started just after the war, and he partnered with the state in 1948. Schaefer referred to the regime as a "sleeping partner," but unlike the others men-tioned, he traded away majority stock ownership in order to receive more capital from the regime. Aris emphasized government regulations by which Schaefer must abide, such as how much he had to pay workers, and, now that the state held majority share, how much it would pay him in salary. But Aris believed that the arrangement was not only a good one for a private business-man, but that Schaefer and his like had advantages over their Western counterparts:

> In many ways, Schaefer is better off than he would be in the West. His supplies are guaranteed, as are his prices, and as long as he can keep the factory working efficiently he has not a great deal to worry about. Even more striking, the State allows him to keep in addition to his salary his own private share of the profits. This means that even after he has paid an 85% profit tax his total earning are around the £10,000 a year mark. Clearly even in East Germany some people are more equal than others.[221]

As the last sentence suggests, "East German capitalists," were rather richly rewarded, and

accounted for 20% of East German production by the end of the 1960s. Indeed, the partnership strategy was more advanced in the GDR than in any bloc country. Michael Mok (1967) was one of the first Western correspondents to interview an East German capitalist, a fashion designer named Heinz Bormann -- a man who truly lived the life of a "robber baron." Authors like Mok introduced businessmen like Bormann to make the GDR seem less foreign to American readers:

> In 1962, when Bormann was seeking to expand, a law was passed which made private businessmen eligible for state-loans, with the state entitled to share profits. 'I was suspicious at first,' says Bormann, who is now 48, 'I was afraid that some bureaucratic elephant would try to tell me how to run my business. . . . But at last I decided to try, first because 'trust breeds trust,' second--and more important--because it seemed reasonable that if the state had an interest in my business, I'd be more likely to get consideration when it came time to distribute material in short supply.' Bormann now main-tains three homes, two imported cars and a motor launch. His fashion house, East Germany's No. 1, is expanding and, according to Bormann, the state has remained an absolutely silent partner.[218]

Were it not for the backing of the regime, Bormann's career reads like an American dream life. And like a Yankee entrepreneur (albeit in obviously different framework) he expressed a bullish confidence about the future: "we are in little danger of nationalization," he said, confident of continuing profitability and even further expansion.

Referring to the partnership concept as a "neo-Marxist situation," Robert Moskin (1970) interviewed a successful entrepreneur, making the phenomenon seem a tad less glamorous, with the state *somewhat more* involved. But the owner's basic independence seemed as secure as Bormann's, and the author clearly viewed him as someone unexpectedly familiar:

> A businessman can be a stockholder collecting dividends from others' labor, just like in the good old capitalistic U.S.A. . . . One businessman I met . . . is Niels Chrestensen, the tall, sad-faced 63-year-old head of a $5 million seed-growing company his Danish grandfather started in 1867 in Erfurt, the flower capital of Germany. Today, the state owns 41 percent of the company. Chrestensen says

according to several visitors, they too knew they had it better than their West German counterparts. Another fashion designer, Herbert Schnabel, told *Time* magazine's Bonn Correspondent George Tabor in 1970: "Its easier facing state officials than stockholders." And then, after stating that he would now be a millionaire if he had left before the Wall was built, he added, ". . . I'm not sure I'd [still] have it, with all the gangster methods of competition."[222] West Germans sometimes heard similar comments from business people as well.[223]

In the end, then, the small but important semi-private sector of the GDR's economy was seen as a familiar point of reference, *and* a boon to the regime. Importantly, visitors could discuss (and praise) it without appearing to justify or approve of the the SED. But at the same time, its clear that these authors saw East German capitalists as experiencing a kind of "best of both worlds": big profits, with independence of action *and* almost no financial risk. They had similar personalities and abilities as the SED's "young technocrats," but clearly were in a more enviable position due to the apparent limitations and inefficiencies of the GDR's New Economic System. Its hardly surprising, therefore, that the visitors who were most critical of the GDR's improving economy said almost nothing about East German capitalists or their partnerships with the state: there appeared to be no negative side to the arrangement.

Instead, the harshest critics focused on practices that suggested other failed or nearly failed efforts to imitate the West.Their main point was not that state socialism was bankrupt: this they took as a given. Rather, they wished above all to describe how completely frustrating and second-rate they found every product, institution, and practice in the GDR. Three longer-term visitors were absolutely indignant about all the "inconveniences" they experienced: not only was the bureaucracy meddling and insufferable, but

material conditions seemed to be no better in spite of economic progress. Two of these critics were a married couple, K. and B. Deutsch, from Austria and Great Britain, respectively, who were lured to the GDR with a promise of well-funded research opportunities and stayed for six years;[224] the third was Harvard graduate and self-proclaimed socialist Steven Kelman, who in truth was deeply hostile of the American Left, and had to disguise his anti-regime agenda to gain entry to the GDR. He also guaranteed East German authorities a sympathetic report on return to the U. S.[225] These three critics made the GDR appear almost totally unchanged since the days of high Stalinism. All that seemed to new to were its weak efforts to imitate Western consumer culture.

Kelman was, without any exaggeration, the most severe critic of the GDR since the early post-Wall years, maybe since the early 1950s. He thought the regime pursued an almost apish imitation of Western consumer goods production, and in so doing had created more of a "junior Germany" than a separate German state. Nowhere was the imitation of the West more evident than an East Berlin and other rebuilt city centers:

> . . . what impresses one most is that in building their showcases [city centers] the authorities have chosen to measure progress by how closely they have approached Western styles. Thus, the Grill Bar of the Interhotel demonstrates how up-to-date it is by introducing pay toilets in its rest rooms. And not only that--the bar prominently displays cash registers imported from Sweden, whereas most establishments make do with locally manufactured registers. Though the menu of the Grill Bar offers 'Milch Shakes,' it does not include a single Russian specialty--not even a Russian *solyanka*, a spicy soup with fish, olives, and capers, which is usually considered to be any restaurant's minimum gastronomic concession to the Soviet Union. After dinner at the Grill Bar, one can take a jaunt over to East Berlin's Bowling *Zentrum*, the first of its kind in Eastern Europe. All the equipment there is American-made, and for weekend evenings a lane must be reserved a week or more in advance. There were two clothing chains--Exquisit and Boutique-70--selling imported Western fashions at four to six times what they cost in Western Europe; blue jeans or Dacron pullovers go for forty dollars, simple suede jackets for three hundred. And the talk of East Germany these past two summers was a new hotel on the Baltic Sea, the Neptun, which was erected by a Swedish construction

> firm under government contract. At times, the imitativeness goes awry, as when the bar at the Interhotel in the port city of Rostock was given the name Boutique.[226]

Kelman went on to complain that every consumer good was second rate, and all food and beverages substandard. He was most dumbfounded by a beer shortage in East Berlin -- it seemed to be the ultimate indictment of a German state. He also made it appear that young people were in constant danger of arrest for the most minor or inane comments, and that all private business was on the verge of nationalization. The author clearly exaggerated, but he also appeared to have no sense of the region's recent history, limited resource base, or difficulty reorienting trade and production since the end of the war. There was not a bit of "handicapping" the GDR's economic performance in this account, nor was there any consideration that Western hostility at least partly explained the regime's controlling and intolerant behavior.

The Deutsches, too, could be incredibly myopic, applying middle class and liberal Western standards to all their experiences and observations in the GDR. Their final comments on life in East Germany were: "It's like the capitalist world, only far less efficient, and deprived of personal and political freedom."[227] But more specifically, they described the regime and its impact with a certain flippancy . . .

> The general picture is neither of 1984 nor of Stalinist paranoia, but of a fussy boarding school. This is not only the red tape ('nothing is done properly -- its a farce'); nor the constant education ('all those discussions leading nowhere'); nor even restrictions on travel ('the intellectuals' leading grouse); but the all-pervading dullness, the lack of entertainment. The tell-tale list of the Deutsches' pleasures on their return to Britain includes being able to get clothes cleaned without disaster to the fabric, not having to stand on long train journeys, reading a good detective story, being able to taste the freshness of an egg, and shaving with a blade which cuts the stubble rather than the skin.[228]

Given this multitude of complaints and petty frustrations, one wants to ask why the Pro-

fessor and his wife ever risked going in the first place. All the piece said was that Prof. Deutsch hoped to be given the resources and freedom to advance his research, but instead was greatly slowed and ultimately frustrated by the endless "red tape" of the regime. Perhaps the only difference from Kelman was their belief that free speech was not as severely restricted. "You can say what you like as long as you do not actually call Ulbricht a nincompoop," the Professor observed.[229] What ultimately explained the dim views of both the Deutsch's and Kelman was a combination of bitter resentment of the regime *and* duration of stay: Kelman, as mentioned, fooled the regime into allowing him an extended visit in the summer of 1971, and this chicanery came back to haunt him: it is clear from the book he later wrote on his stay that fear of being found out caused him to exaggerate the power and menace of the regime's "police state"[230] But more generally, both authors seemed much farther out of their element than any others in this period, or perhaps more precisely, unable to adjust to the very different environment of this place they viewed as substandard in every way.

Crossman, returning to the GDR in the middle of Kelman's stay, offered a remarkably contrasting view of the new city center of East Berlin -- partly to make his point that the GDR had become a "free standing" and more or less permanent state. Where Kelman found weak, second-rate imitation, Crossman found a new and *reoriented* capital center, facing decidedly eastward. In the following passage, recounting his first morning in East Berlin, Crossman described a new capital fit for a state that seemed quite distant from West Germany:

> . . . I found myself at a window on the 31st floor, facing a television tower which makes our Post Office tower [in London] seem bulboid, and looking down on the spacious avenues of a brand-new city. Ten years ago both Berlins were still centered around the Unter den Linden and the Friedrichstrasse. Now the centre of East Berlin has been moved bodily to what was once the working class area a-

> round the Alexanderplatz. Ten years ago the only new building the communists could show you was the latrine-tiled Stalin Allee, which began in a mass of ruins and ended equally abruptly at two bogus watchtowers. Now, the Karl Marx Allee stretches nearly to the university and the district on both sides has been filled with huge, gleaming blocks of industrialised building, the newest and most shiny around a huge new Leninplatz equipped with a huge, new, rock-hewn Lenin.[231]

While it should be noted that some contemporaries noted how drab and even forlorn some residential neighborhoods *near* Alexanderplatz remained, they generally shared Crossman's approval for the development of the city center.[232] But according to Crossman, the "new look" of East Berlin was not just indicative of economic might, but of the regime's new international status as well. On his way downstairs in the elevator he met Polish women and "a couple of Africans," and then a host of other foreign visitors at breakfast. This diversity led him to conclude that the GDR was joining the community of nations as a independent socialist state, not aping the capitalist West.

Once again, Crossman's views diverged markedly from an American contemporary, suggesting the same ideological divide that the GDR's "pre-Wall successes" laid bare a decade earlier. Those visitors inclined to accept the reality of a separate and more or less permanent East German state could write about its achievements (against the odds) and offer a more complex sense of the relation between the state and population; those determined to insist on the regime's lack of legitimacy searched out all examples of oppression, manipulation, and material short-comings, in order to imply that there was no reconciliation occurring between the regime and the population. But after the early 1960s, only Kelman and a handful of hostile West German travelers remained on this side.

On the other hand, its important to be clear that those accepting the reality and permanence of the GDR were also not supporters of the regime. Whether such visitors described an Eastern "state identity," or were more primarily interested in the regime's

odd combination of continuing political rigidity and expanding consumer economy, they advocated only *small steps* toward acceptance of the GDR, never any sort of positive defense of the regime. Crossman, clearly the most leftist Western visitor of the period, is a case in point. Though bringing the separate reality of the GDR into sharp focus, he did not apologize at all for the oppressive nature of the regime. Indeed, he was both amazed and incensed at the regime's censorship. He learned that not just "offensive" printed matter was seized when mailed to the GDR, but *all* printed matter. The revelation came when he was caught in an argument about economics. He offered to mail a copy of a book on the subject to "a schoolmistress who had worked in England" upon his return.[233] The woman then had to tell the truth that she would likely never receive the book, but only after "twenty minutes' painful interrogation."

> Some of the Germans present were abashed. But not the ambitious young city councillor beside me. He makes no excuses. 'Seizing the lot,' he tells me, 'is cheaper and easier than wasting money on hundreds of censorship staff. As for British newspapers and periodicals, we make sure by banning everything except the *Morning Star*. If we made the slightest concession to liberal progressiveness the West Germans would have overwhelmed us with their filfth, Anyway there are quite a number of ideas we won't tolerate here. When they start germinating we exterminate them. We need to keep our German youth undefiled.'[234]

Crossman's frustration with these attitudes was ultimately shared by every visitor who wrote about the regime in this period. They all agreed that the SED's pigheadedness and controlling ways were insufferable, but that the regime's economic power and security behind the Wall meant it must accepted in some *de facto* way. As Moskin put it "it has become foolish to ignore them."[235]

But the East German "state identity" we have seen described was an odd part of the regime's security as well, for the regime and society seemed to have come to share a group of common German traits. Both authoritarian rule and the basic acceptance of it, e-

ven among those who disliked the regime, seemed to derive from a traditional, "typically German" respect for law and order. More than one visitor suggested that communism, like Nazism before it, was successful in Germany because of traditional (presumably inherited) German traits. And the regime came to seem more German as well: not so much in its official trappings or legislation -- although those were sometimes mentioned[236] -- but in its basic authoritarian and bureaucratic nature. Only Kelman and some West Germans continued to claim or imply that the communist state was merely *imposed on the people* by the SED. Moskin hinted at a kind of *convergence* between authoritarian policies and the populations' behavior as he introduced "the Germany we don't know":

> . . . this is East Germany, the German Democratic Republic (DDR). Poor. Hard-working. Disciplined. Communist. And above everything--German."[237]

Crossman conveyed the same feeling rather more cynically (and with a certain relief) describing the population of the GDR as "a phalanx of 17 million Germans marching toward socialism." I say relief because to him, their apparent socialist orientation guaranteed that Germany would remain "safely divided."[238] Hotham clearly agreed with Moskin's view also. After referring to the role economic progress and limited political liberalization had played in quieting opposition, he remarked: "on top of this there is the instinctive German distaste for rebellion and love of order -- and there is plenty of order!"[239] Earlier West German visitors had spoken of the preservation of certain German traditions, but only in the years surrounding the turn of the 1970s did the regime seem to "graduate" to the status of "German."

Conclusion

At the end of 1972, the two Germanies signed the Basic Treaty, in which Bonn recognized the GDR as a separate state, but one possessing a "special relationship" with the Federal Republic -- meaning it was not completely foreign or sovereign. The historic moment was noted in an addendum to a travel report in *Contemporary Review,* by an author who had just visited both Berlins.[240] Thomas Land was one of the last Western visitors to write about the GDR before its official acceptance by the U.S. and its Allies the next year, but was neither as disparaging as Kelman nor as fawning as Crossman. But like both of them, he saw the dictatorial nature of the regime as ever-present, still lurking behind its new, modern facade:

> Alexanderplatz, once the heart of Berlin as a whole, is now unrecognizable to West Berlin visitors with its large new hotels, conference centres and memorials built in the spacious Russian style and with a view to Karl Marx Alle with its prosperous apartment blocks. This district of shops, offices, travel bureaux and luxurious homes is for the successful if not rich East Berliners, and for visitors who would not want to cross the Wall without a valid two-way travel document.[241]

Land went on to write of a certain prosperity in East Berlin's working class districts, but also, like so many before him, seemingly could not turn himself away from the Berlin Wall: he called it and the border with West Germany a "monument to fear." The GDR unquestionably had become a sovereign state, but every visitor, sooner or later, directly or indirectly, related all of its achievements -- and shortcomings -- to the Wall and the coercion it represented. While these views are in no way surprising, the irony is that its welfare dictatorship"[242] and economic stability *preceded* the building Wall -- the latter albeit briefly -- and the crisis that precipitated its construction arguably resulted more from the blunders of Khrushchev and the SED than from in-built failings of East German economic system.

The story of a "new GDR" emerging in the mid-to-late 1960s, then, was partly based on amnesia: not only was the progress of the 1959-1960 forgotten, but so too was popular approval for a number of socialist achievements that dated back even further. While many detractors in the 1950s focused on flight, frustration, and popular hostility toward the regime, not a few Western visitors found evidence that socialist achievements had struck fairly deep roots, and already in 1959 even some American visitors were arguing for some sort of *de facto* recognition. Clearly flight to West, the issue that most dominates our understanding of the GDR before August 1961, was not always *the* critical issue to contemporaries -- even dedicated anti-communists. Their reports reveal the power of economic progress to *limit and even reverse flight,* and also the attachment, for better or worse, of many East Germans to the socialist system in that period. No sort of extreme measure like the Berlin Wall appeared inevitable to Western visitors to the GDR in the mid-to-late 1950s.

But as we have seen, it was also apparent before the building of the Wall that East Germans' clearly disliked the regime that provided their welfare benefits. Throughout the 1950s (and, after the crisis period of late 1960-1962, in the following decade as well), this seemingly contradictory set of views was noted by visitors as *coexisting* in most East German minds. This was *also* true of the welfare state and lingering hopes for unity -- East Germans wanted *both* -- at least until the mid-1960s. However, as the benefits of economic progress became more widely shared in the 1960s, it is also true that dislike of the regime was somewhat reduced: the pre-existing welfare state began to be matched by a greater day-to-day well being.

Western visitors also found that East Germans' lived experience under the SED created a more ambivalent view of the West than more recent scholarship suggests. East

Germans were told by their regime to fear and loathe the West, even as the regime imitated some of the outward manifestations of capitalism, but East Germans craved Western consumer goods and tried to imitate Western styles. Nevertheless, the West was more than "a danger to be feared or . . . example to be emulated," as one German historian has put it.[243] The prosperity of West Germans was bitterly resented in the East, and the value system of the West considered alien and even degenerate. Even opponents of the SED registered strong resentment of West Germans and dis-approval of Western culture years after the building of the Wall.

With the exception of several brief periods of extreme political-socio-economic crisis, such opinions were noted with regularity. The problem, of course, was that many Western visitors missed the full range of opinions, particularly when they talked only with refugees, opponents, or narrow-minded functionaries of the regime, or, for whatever reason, never delved into the complexity of East German opinions, focusing instead on a multitude of complaints, shortages, and resentments which could always be found in every locale. And, as we have seen, many could blame more complex views on propaganda and lack of accurate information, both of which did admittedly play some role. But keener observers understood that apparent contra-dictions in East Germans' views were rooted in the unique context of divided Germany, which fed their hopes for economic security within some system of more democratic socialism. Many East Germans, in effect, desired a third way between Western capitalism and Soviet communism, in large part because they had lived in and approved of the social welfare system of the GDR while remaining highly skeptical of the capitalist economic system of West Germany.

But recognizing this was not the same as believing such opinions constituted a separate shared identity over and against that of West Germans. Only a minority of visitors

-- most of them left-leaning or social democratic Western Europeans -- made such claims, and even they believed that conditioning through propaganda and censorship, as well as real or implied coercion, played a role. And of course, because Eastern identity, as it was variously defined, never seemed to involve a genuine sense of *allegiance* to the regime, it seemed to defy traditional notions of group identification in several ways. But if East Germans did not appear to all visitors as a distinct and separate people, they clearly did appear to be a typically *German* people: the hard work and skill that went into rebuilding the region and laying the foundation for economic expansion, as well as the apparently widespread appreciation for law and order -- even the occasional private businessman partnered with the state -- made East Germans appear familiar to Western visitors filled with stereotypes about the orderly, hardworking, and unpolitical "German."

But for a handful of visitors in the 1960s, the apparent "Germaness" of the regime and the people, combined with the appeal of socialist achievements and ambivalence toward West Germany, *did* suggest a "state identity," or as some called it, a "state consciousness." It cannot be a coincidence that this combination of views, already visible years earlier, was only referred to as a "state identity" once the regime appeared to have weathered the crisis of the early 1960s. Nevertheless, the idea of a state identity was never used to argue for official recognition of the GDR, or even *de facto* recognition. Indeed, the state identity was so complex, one might almost say eviscerated, by feelings of resentment, particularly over restrictions on travel to the West, that it was never looked at as grounds for normalizing German division. In the final analysis, the travelers who argued for *de facto* recognition of the GDR, as well as those who believed that Western governments should wait for the two Germanies to initiate the process, considered the issue primarily in terms of *Realpolitik:* the strength and stability of the GDR argued for its accep-

tance, but *not* the plight of ordinary East Germans.[244] Unlike most modern nation-states, East German "state-identity" was primarily a phenomenon divined by *outsiders*, while the official version that was touted by the regime in its new 1968 Constitution seemingly had no political purchase within the GDR, let alone the West.

Like foreign visitors, only a limited number of West Germans, West Berliners and other German-speaking persons came to believe that East Germans were a separate people from West Germans, or that they identified with their state in any way. Also like their foreign counterparts, however, a somewhat larger group of West Germans described traits and attitudes that at least *implied* a separate identity. But the majority of German visitors rejected the idea with far greater passion and conviction than most non-Germans. Indeed, most denied the regime any legitimacy at all, seeking at almost every turn to find evidence that it was a wholly artificial entity overlaying part of an enduring German nation. A number of these visitors to the GDR even offered their readers strategies with which to destabilize and overcome the regime on a person-to-person basis. The way they experienced the GDR, its crises, its growth and accomplishments, *and* their efforts to "Germanize" the region, the people, and in some cases the regime itself, will be the subject of Chapter 6.

[1] The quote is from Norman Birnbaum, "Nothing Land," *Encounter* XI (1), July, 1958, p. 38. For him, it referred only to young intellectuals in the GDR, but from the perspective of many Western visitors, it seemed to apply to a much larger segment of the population both before and after the building of the Berlin Wall.
[2] "Young Technocrats Take Helm in East German Industry," *The Times* [London], September 16, 1963, p. 9, c. a..
[3] Robert Moskin, "The Germany We Don't Know," *Look,* June 16, 1970, p. 45.
[4] For an evenhanded examination of economic and technical improvements, but continuing hardships as well, see "Recovery in East Germany," *The Times*, October 18, 1954, p. 7, c. f ; October 19, 1954, p. 9. c. f ; October 21, 1954, p. 9, c. f. Roughly the same appraisal was reported a few weeks earlier by American Correspondent Will Lang of *Life* magazine, though he seemingly went out of his way to stress that livings standard lagged behind West Germany. "Fun, Culture and Rebuilding in the Other Germany," *Life*, May 10, 1954, pp. 44-50. The same modest economic improvement continued to be noted in the spring of 1955 Leipzig fair. See Edgar P. Young, "East Germany Revisited," *Contemporary Review* (July, 1955), pp. 19-23, of which more below.
[5] "Poverty and Gloom in Eastern Germany. Record of a Cycling Tour." (See Chapter 5)
[6] Another British correspondent at Leipzig, Guy Hadley of the BBC, stressed that many of the foods and goods available during fair were not there at other times, and the difficulty many families still had in getting basic food at affordable prices, but also noted that young people and skilled workers could find jobs and relatively good-paying ones at that, with relative ease. Hadley, "A German City under Communist Rule," *The Listener*, March 17, 1955, pp. 461-462.
[7] For example West German Peter Ganz, who wrote of new sense of self-assertion in the population in the spring of 1954, See Ganz, "Die Ostzone Heute: Ein Reisebericht," *Frankfurter Hefte* 9(4), 1954, pp. 290-294. Somewhat less menacing, but ultimately subversive as well, were attitudes of young people described by Fritz Alleman (of whom more below) in 1955, He gave the impression that both Christian young people in the *Junge Gemeinde* organization, as well as students more generally, "constantly display an inclination toward "creeping revolt." It seemed that all efforts to select for university study those students with the proper ideological outlook still did not prevent rebellious young spirits. He did not, however, speculate on any role they might play in another uprising. F. R. Alleman, "Glimpses through a Curtain: Some Observations on the Soviet Zone of Germany," Encounter," *Encounter* (5)1, July 1955, p. 34.
[8] Originally published in serial form in *France Observateur,* a condensed version was published in West Berlin by the Protestant publishing house Verlag Unterwegs as Bertrand Ferney, "Reisebericht aus der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," *Unterwegs* vol. 5/6 (1954), pp. 318-330.
[9] These are my translations of passages from Ferney, "Reisebericht . . . ," pp. 320-22.
[10] Perhaps most surprising of all is the attitude of the fourth informant towards the churches. While the phrasing leaves this part of the comment open to interpretation, its clear that this businessman did not see organized religion as a welcome force in politics, let alone a rallying point for resistance -- a rather different perspective than those described by West German Christians discussed in the previous chapter.
[11] For example Hadley, p. 462. Others will be mentioned presently.
[12] During the period of the "New Course" there was fewer restrictions on travel in both directions.
[13] Derek Van Abbe, "Three German Impressions, 1954," *The Australian Outlook* 9(2), June, 1955, pp. 127-9.
[14] Young, p. 23.
[15] Van Abbe, p. 129.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Alleman, *Bonn ist nicht Weimar* (Cologne, 1956). Cited in Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford, 2006), p. 17.
[18] Alleman, "Glimpse through a Curtain," pp. 30-36.

[19] Ibid., p. 33.
[20] See Peter B. Johnson, *Reuter Reporter among the Communists* (London, 2000).
[21] Peter B. Johnson, *Reuter Reporter in Divided Germany, 1955-1958* (Olsztyn, Poland, 1998), p. 36.
[22] See "The New East Germany I: Meissen Pottery and The Industrial Phoenix," *The Times*, September 25, 1956, p. 11, c. f.
[23] Ibid., p. 35.
[24] Ibid., p. 52.
[25] Here I paraphrase Birnbaum, p. 37. More will be said of his views below.
[26] "The New East Germany: I -- Meissen Pottery and the Industrial Phoenix." The continued fairly dismal living conditions for unskilled workers, pensioners, and some members of the middle classes were elaborated around the same time by another "special correspondent" for the more economically conservative *Economist*. See "East German Realities I," *The Economist*, October 6, 1956, pp. 53-4.
[27] F. R. Alleman, "Gespräche am anderen Ufer," *Der Monat* 9(97), October 1956, pp. 3-9.
[28] Ibid., p. 8.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., p. 9.
[32] The report was published in West Germany as Bertrand G. De l'Ain, "Kann in der "Zone" etwas passieren?" *Die Politische Meinung* 1(7), December 1956, pp. 65-71.
[33] "East German Realities II," *The Economist*, October 13, 1956, pp. 151-2.
[34] Edmond Taylor, "Overheard in Berlin," *The Reporter*, March 7, 1957, p. 33.
[35] For German realism, see Ibid., for their conservatism, caution and lack of spontaneity, see Surindar Suri, "Tendencies in East Germany," *Contemporary Review*, February 1957, p. 100.
[36] Inside East Germany: Another Hungary Brewing?" *Newsweek*, April 8, 1957, pp. 51-53.
[37] Ibid., p. 53.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Mike Dennis, *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic, 1945-1990* (Harlow, UK, 2000), pp. 80-85.
[40] "The Two Germanys," *New Statesman and Nation*, April 6, 1957, p. 433.
[41] R. H. S. Crossman, "The Blockade of East Germany," *New Statesman and Nation*, August 24, 1957, p. 219.
[42] Crossman made the argument in Crossman, "The Two Germanys," *New Statesman and Nation*, August 31, 1957, p. 243. Unlike the correspondent, he offered no advice as to how bring unification about.
[43] Desmond Donnelly, "East German Easement," *The Spectator*, July 5, 1957, pp. 8-9.
[44] Ibid., p. 9.
[45] "East Germany--I: A Look of Permanence," *The Economist*, April 12, 1958, p. 125.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid, and "East Germany--II: Dogma and Practice," *The Economist*, April 26, 1958, pp. 323-324.
[48] "A Look of Permanence," p. 126.
[49] Birnbaum, p. 33-4.
[50] Ibid., p. 34.
[51] Ibid., p. 35.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid., p. 37.
[54] Ibid., p. 38.
[55] Two reports on the "Second Berlin Crisis" that did not argue for political or economic motives were in the center left New Republic, and the left Nation. The former was Terrence Prittie, "Khrushchev's Long-Term Objectives in Germany, *The New Republic* December 15, 1958, pp. 9-10; The latter "Germany in Disequa-librium," *The Nation*, November 22, 1958, p. 3.

[56] "K and His 'Captive' East Germans," *New sweek*, March 16, 1959, p. 37.
[57] Doctors were indeed an oft-cited example of a group that was pressured, whose children were often denied admission to medical studies (because their parents were from the middle classes), and that the regime could ill-afford to drive away. Kahn claimed the state forced doctors to give up all their "ethical standards," but her's (and the parents) ultimate concern was the threat communist ideology posed to the children. *U.S. News and World Report* focused more on the regime's unwelcome demands on physicians, such as pressing them "to join collective farms as government employees, or the regime vetoing their prescriptions of sick leave for industrial workers. "12 Years and They Still Flee," p. 86.
[58] Fulbrook, *Divided Nation*, p. 196. Surveys even indicated that only 42% of young workers who *left* the GDR argued that its industries should be reprivatized. Dietrich Staritz, *Geschichte der DDR* (Frankfurt/Main, 1985), pp. 122-3. Cited in Dennis, *German Democratic Republic* (London, 1988), p. 29.
[59] "K and His 'Captive' Germans," p. 37.
[60] One estimate by the East German government for the entire period 1954-1961 shows that 1.27 percent of the entire East German population were returnees, while "first time immigrants" accounted for 0.39 percent of the overall total. See Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass Roots*, p. 147. The author did not comment on why so many returned, but as we will see, many contemporaries believed it was the radically different nature of West German society that brought them back.
[61] T. H. Elkins, "Journey into East Germany," *The Geographical Magazine* XXXIII (2), June 1960. The same basic argument was also presented by Elkins in a letter to New Statesman, challenging the view of the magazines anonymous pundit, Critic, regarding the forlorn qualities of East Berlin. See Critic, "Berlin Diary," *New Statesman*, 6 June 1959, pp. 784-5, and T. H. Elkins, "Berlin," *New Statesman*, 20 June 1959, p. 864.
[62] See "East Germany: Ten Long Years," *Newsweek*, October 19, 1959, pp. 51-52; Kuh, "East Germany is No Mirage"; "Russia's Richest Colony." Kuh and Peter Webb of *Newsweek* were probably the first American reporters to travel freely in the GDR since 1948.
[63] The quote is from Richard Crossman, "The Two Germanys," *New Statesman*, 6 February 1960, p. 179.
[64] Johnson, *Reuter Reporter among the Communists*; Erik Nohara, "A Visit to East Germany," *The Listener* LXIII (1609), January 28, 1960, pp. 155-7.
[65] Michel Bosquet, "Das Andere Deutschland," *Frankfurter Hefte* (14), 1959, pp. 665-671. Parts of his story were incorporated into a report in the British news monthly *World Today*, in R. A. Fraser and Fern Rich, "Economic Progress in East Germany: Impressions of a Recent Visit," *World Today* 15(9), September 1959, pp. 341-351. The original French version appeared in *L'Express* , and Fraser and Rich drew considerable material from it as well; Crossman, "The Two Germanys," (1960) and "The Wrong Side of the Elbe," *New Statesman*, 23 January 1960, p. 94.
[66] Johnson, *Reuter Reporter among the Communists*, p. 29. The author subsequently noted that according to three election officials, others who spoke out directly against the single list, or went into the private booth to strike out names, were not punished, and Johnson believed them. One noted that under current conditions, "the Communists could afford to be tolerant," meaning apparently, that economic improvements and a less-hostile population had made the regime a bit more secure.
[67] Ibid., pp. 109-110.
[68] This sort of opinion was expressed to both foreign and West German travelers repeatedly after the building of the Wall and until the end of the 1960s, as we will below and in Chapter 6.
[69] Ibid., pp. 112.
[70] Ibid. Further on, the author offered his own thoughts on the compatibility of Christianity and socialism while describing a "parliament" of the Free German Youth in Rostock. "My view is that one can believe in socialism without being atheist. Indeed, some Christians would argue that certain parts of Christian teaching are calls for a socialist order." (p. 118)

[71] Ibid., pp. 132-3.
[72] Ibid., pp. 121-123.
[73] Nohara, p. 157.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Bosquet, who traveled in the GDR around the same time Johnson took up residence in East Berlin (early May, 1959), seems to have been granted more freedom of movement that any foreign journalist since Betrand Ferney. In both cases, such permission seems to have been granted because their "socialist credentials" suggest they would give the regime a fair hearing. For Ferney's views, see above pp. 376-377.
[76] The original French version suggested that the workers' leverage regarding control of the production process derived from the memory of June 1953. A director of a lathe producing factory in Karl Marx Stadt (formerly Chemnitz) believed they would never again accept the imposition of work norms 'from above.' Instead, "production aims put out by the regional planning committee are discussed for eight weeks or so, and a joint report estimating what the workers believe the factory can produce in a given time is them sub-mitted to the regional planning committee for approval. In the end, the norms proposed must also by ap-proved by the workers." It was translated in Fern and Rich, p. 346.
[77] The quote is from the original versions, translated in Fern and Rich, p.345. The phrase, "in that order" is missing from the German version.
[78] Fern and Rich, p. 346. This phrase is also missing from the German version.
[79] Elkins, "East Berlin."
[80] Fern and Rich, p. 343. The prices and waiting lists were also not mentioned in the German version.
[81] Bosquet, p. 669.
[82] This quote also appeared only in the original French version, and was also translated in Fern and Rich, pp. 349-50.
[83] Bosquet, p. 671.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

[86] The theory posited that economic modernization was increasing the need for technical experts, regardless of their absolute loyalty to Marxist dogma, and this younger, better educated, less dogmatic generation had by the mid-to-late 1960s become "institutionalized counter elite" within the SED. West German political scientist Peter Christian Ludz believed this group had created the foundations of the GDR's economic success and stabilization not simply by their efforts to continuously increase productivity, but also their prioritizing "technical and economic progress" over ideological conformity and their recog-nition that the GDR, like other industrial societies, was becoming more "socially differentiated" -- which I understand to mean more knowledge- and technology-based, with a correspondingly wider occupational profile. See P. C. Ludz, *The Changing Party Elite in East Germany* (Cambridge, MA, 1972). Its important to note, however, that Ludz emphasized that the counter elite was *limited* in its capacity to challenge the "old guard" -- (the term he used for the latter was "strategic clique") -- both in terms of its relative influence and its intellectual predisposition. As he notes in the conclusion of his study (written in 1968 but only pub-lished in English four years later) , the counter elite, like the "strategic clique," retained Marxist materialism as its basic dogma (p. 412). Indeed, in the English version, he revised his introduction, arguing that by the early 1970s, the technical experts, now increasingly screened for political reliability, were becoming, as he put it, more an "institutionalized elite" than a "counter elite" (p. xv) Visitors who wrote about the new, younger "technocrats" *before* the publication of Ludz's study suggested that these groups might come to have a much greater liberalizing influence than Ludz seems to have ever contemplated. At most, Ludz predicted that they were likely to be much more "attun[ed] to the needs and realities of GDR society" (p. 412), suggesting that the outer parameters of one-party rule and control would not change all that much. Among English-speaking GDR historians, Fulbrook seemed to doubt that the the young technocrats ever were a genuine counter elite, while Dennis agrees with the view that they offered a certain limited challenge to the older generation. See Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 360, and Dennis, *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic*, pp. 110-1.

[87] R. H. S. Crossman, "The Two Germanys," *New Statesman*, 6 February 1960, p. 179.

[88] Crossman, "The Wrong Side of the Elbe," *New Statesman*, 23 January 1960, p. 94.

[89] Flora Lewis, "Report from Khrushchev's Germany," *The New York Times Magazine*, March 20, 1960, pp. 25-27, 92-94, 95.

[90] Ibid, p. 95.

[91] Crossman, "The Wrong Side of the Elbe." The author was not completely unconcerned about indoctrination, however, particularly the hostility instilled toward West Germany.

[92] Ibid., p. 93.

[93] Ibid., p. 95.

[94] The expression was used by Kuh, p. 207.

[95] This was the figure mentioned by Robert Littell, an American reporter for *Newsweek* who, incidentally, likened the regime's uniforms, propaganda and public ceremonies to those of the Third Reich. See Robert Littell, "The Other Germany," *Reader's Digest* (77), July, 1960, p. 202. There will be more about his views presently.

[96] Littell, pp. 202, 204.

[97] Ibid., 204.

[98] Lachman, p. 116.

[99] Ibid., p. 115.

[100] "Eastern Germany--II: Unsuccessful Apartheid," *The Economist*, July 2, 1960, p. 47. The first part of the piece was mainly about the upside of economic progress. See "Eastern Germany--I: "Towards the Promised Land," *The Economist*, June 25, 1960, p. 1350.

[101] Barkeley, p. 155.

[102] U.S. President John F. Kennedy said privately of the Wall that "it's not a very nice solution . . . but a hell of [a] lot better than a war." Quoted by N. Gelb, *The Berlin Wall* (London, 1986), p. 201.

[103] Fulbrook wrote that "From 1961, there were clearly two Germanies." Fulbrook, *Divided Nation*, p. 196. Mike Dennis has written that ". . . there is good reason to regard 13 August 1961 as the real date on which the GDR was founded." Dennis, 2000, p. 101. Corey Ross suggested much the same thing, although more in terms of socio-governmental interaction: "As numerous observers have commented, in the shadow of the Wall there emerged a tacit, pragmatic arrangement between rulers and ruled that by and large held sway until the latter 1980s," Ross, 2002, p. 60. David Childs, in more simple and subdued fashion, described the Wall as taking "the explosive pressure off their [the SED's] state and society," and described the end of fear that every absent skilled worker had fled to the West. He wrote that "even with-out the New Economic System this would have represented a huge gain for the East German economy." Childs, pp. 65, 70.

[104] A "special correspondent" for *The Economist* at the fall 1961 Leipzig fair was not clear whether this was the original, threatened separate peace, or one in which the West, now chastened by the building of the Wall, would accept two German states as a *fait accompli.* See "Triumph and Struggle in Saxony," *The Economist*, September 8, 1961, p. 961.

[105] "Any Moment, an Uprising," *U. S. News and World Report* September 18, 1961, p. 40.

[106] See George Bailey, "The Other Side of the Wall," *The Reporter,* November 23, 1961, p. 22, and "Der Alltag in der Zone ist Grau," *Ostdeutsche Monatshefte* 27 (6), December 1961, p. 329-330. There will be more about this anonymous travel report in Chapter 6.

[107] Sarah Gainham, in West Berlin just days after the Wall went up, heard reports of wildcat strikes "over small hitches on the factory floor," suggesting that even the most privileged groups in the work force had become "constantly disaffected." See Gainham. "Through the Brandenburg Looking-Glass," *The Spectator*, August 25, 1961, pp. 248-9. Most scholars have argued, however, that the resistance there was was too disorganized, and both the response of the regime too "ruthless" for any revolt to have been possible.

[108] Bailey, p. 24.

[109] Malcolm Muggeridge, "On the Boarder," *The New Statesman*, 22 September 1961 pp. 379-380.

[110] "Nazi tactics" was a term used by a West German visitor to Dresden in late 1963. See "East Germany, They Have Given Up Hope," *Time*, December 6, 1963, p. 39.

[111] See, for example, "I Saw the Communist Police State in Action," *U.S. News and World Report*, Septem-ber 18, 1961, pp. 39-41; "East Germany: Over There," *Time*, September 15, 1961, pp. 35-6, and "Through the Wall," September 22, 1961, pp. 29-30; For a story about a disappearance reminiscent of the postwar years, see Robert Alden, "Journey to the Silent Germany," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 8, 1962, p. 44.

[112] Child labor and miserable living conditions for those in both factories and farms were reported by American author and world traveler Nora Waln in early 1962 in Nora Waln, "With the Mongolians in East Germany," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 209 (3), March 1962, p. 51. The title refers to her trip across Asia with Mongolian horsemen who came to the GDR to buy a prized stallion from a state-owned horse farm in Brandenburg. Alden, who was at the Spring 1962 Leipzig fair, was advised that as soon as the fair ended, "the shops will be empty and once again there will be shortages of everything--potatoes, eggs, sauerkraut, beef, pork, sausage, dresses, shoes, cloth." Alden, p. 36.

[113] Alden, p. 36.

[114] "The 13th Comes and Goes," *The Economist*, August 18, 1962, p. 603.

[115] Ibid., the author referred here to the views of Marion Countess Dönhoff, chief political writer for *Die Zeit*, and Richard von Weizsäcker, CDU member and later a representative in the Bundestag and President of the Federal Republic from 1984-94.

[116] Dennis, 2000, p. 103.

[117] Alden, p. 48.

[118] Living with Pankow and the Wall," *The Times*, September 21, 1962, p. 13, c.. f.

[119] Ibid., c. f-g.

[120] This group included two German-speaking authors we will discuss in Chapter 6. A third was a West German traveler to Dresden, who wrote in November 1963 "Never have I seen people who feel so alone, lost and abandoned. They have given up all hope." See "East Germany, They Have Given Up Hope," *Time*, December 6, 1963, p. 38. A fourth author was American Kenneth Lewan, who focused on the apparent radicalization of jurisprudence in the GDR, but elsewhere found most persons either completely mislead by the regime's propaganda and censorship, or else determined opponents of the regime. See Kenneth Lewan, "Conversations in East Germany," *East Europe* 12 (12), December, 1963, pp. 11-17.
[121] See "A New Look at Life Behind the Iron Curtain," *U. S. News and World Report*, April 22, 1963, pp. 96.
[122] Hans Gerstorff, ". . . weil es weitergehen muß: Notizen von einer Reise in die Zone," *Sonntagsblatt* 44, 3 November 1963, p. 4. More will follow about this report in Chapter 6.
[123] "The Other Side of the Wall," *The Times*, 4 June 1963, p. 11, c. e.
[124] Daniel Callahan, "Seeds Behind the Wall," *The Commonweal*, May 31, 1963, pp. 275, 278.
[125] Joseph Wechsburg, *Journey Through the Land of Eloquent Silence* (Boston, 1964); Dieter Hillen-brandt, *Die Mauer ist Keine Grenze* (Dusseldorf, 1964).
[126] Hillenbrandt's views on this topic will be considered more closely in Chapter 6.
[127] Wechsberg, "A Reporter in the DDR: The Far Side of the Abyss," *The New Yorker*, July 1, 1961, pp. 44-64.
[128] Wechsberg, *Journey Through the Land of Eloquent Silence*, pp. 48-50.
[129] Sommer, "Zwichen Mauer und Plakatanwand."
[130] Apel, "Bericht über das 'Staatsgefühl' der DDR-Bevölkerung." The Author had already published a longer version of the interviews and his findings (not including his final visit in 1966) as Hans Apel, *Ohne Begleiter: 287 Gesprche jenseits der Zonengrenze* (Cologne, 1965). Ohne Begleiter translates as "without escort," emphasizing the freedom under which the author operated. But notice also that in the title the GDR is still referred to as lying "beyond the zonal border" (*jenseits der Zonengrenze*). Note: Apel should not be confused with the politician of the same name who served as Minister of Finance and Minister of Defensive in the 1970s and early 1980s, among other positions held during his long affiliation with the SPD. The Hans Apel in *this* writing was born in 1895; Hans Apel the politician was born in 1932.
[131] "East Germany: Notes from Beyond the Elbe," *The Economist*, April 11, 1964, pp. 125-6.
[132] A similar view was expressed later that year by Sarah Gainham, who spent nine days traveling in the GDR, and concluded that the new "rational economics," as she called it, was an "all or nothing" strategy that was bound to force changes throughout the Soviet bloc. Gainham, however, actually seemed to be *lamenting* the success of the NES, believing the West had missed an opportunity to collapse the GDR's economy early in 1961--presumably through a total economic boycott. See Sarah Gainham, "Over the German Wall," *The Spectator* November 13, 1964. One contemporary visitor, however, who predicted that the NES and the new generation of technocratic managers would most definitely *not* induce the ruling elite to liberalize was John Mander. He described the regime's functionaries as alienated from reality -- most apparent in their ability to accept sudden 180 degree changes in the party line without any cog-nitive dissidence. See John Mander, "Beyond the Wall: 1964," *Encounter* 23 (9), September 1964, pp. 40-47. The report was translated into German as well, published as John Mander, "Ein Blick über die Mauer," *Der Monat* 192, pp. 16-23.
[133] "Labour Scene in East Germany--I: New Towns Growing in Confidence," *The Times*, June 22, 1964, p. 7, c. f.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.
[136] "East Germany Revisited: Change at a Snail's Pace," *U. S. News and World Report*, January 11, 1965, pp. 54-56.
[137] Ibid., p. 55.
[138] Ibid., p. 56.

[139] Welles Hangen, "Stirrings Behind the Wall: East Germany's Muted Revolution," *Harper's Magazine* 230 (1380), May 1965, pp. 77-83.
[140] See end note 86.
[141] Hangen, p. 78.
[142] Ibid., p. 82.
[143] Ibid., pp.82-3.
[144] Arthur J. Olsen, "Since August 13, Everything's Different," *The New York Times Magazine*, September 19, 1965, pp. 36-7, 49, 52, 54.
[145] Ibid., p. 49.
[146] Ibid., p. 37.
[147] One of the first visitors to note it was Bertrand Ferney. Later, from the opposite end of the political spectrum, so did Kenneth M. Lewan, p. 17 (see note 118), and Wolfgang Hoffman, a West German Catholic author who visited the GDR early in 1966 -- both with much more dismay. Wolfgang Hoffman, "A Visit to East Germany," *America*, April 9, 1966, pp. 486-492.
[148] Olsen, p. 49.
[149] This number appears slightly high. In Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen, *DDR Handbuch* (Cologne, 1979), pp. 400-401, the numbers of those who attempted escape and got through *in the 1970s* were roughly 725 per year. The total killed attempting to escape from all GDR borders was estimated by one observing group, *Arbeitsgemeinschaft 13. August* cited in Dennis, *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic*, pp. 99-100, just over 750 for the entire period from August 13, 1961 to November 9, 1989. Even if it were assumed the daily total of those getting through in the 1960s was slightly higher, it would still be no more 3 per day.
[150] Olsen, p. 49.
[151] Mander, one of the SED's harshest critics, heard in Saxony in 1964 that Ulbricht had become something of a fixture in the landscape, no longer known as *Spitzbart* (the one with the pointed beard), was now known -- somewhat more affectionately -- as *unser Waldi* -- (roughly "our little Walt")-- in Saxony?: not loved, but appreciated for his longevity, and the fact that "there are many as bad, and some certainly worse, in the Party hierarchy. They [the East German population] do not suffer from Western illusions that, 'if only Ulbricht went,' all would be well." Mander, p. 45.
[152] Olsen, p. 52.
[153] Peter Jochen Winters, "Gott will, aber der Sozialismus . . . ," *Christ und Welt* XIX (11),18 March 1966, p. 3. More on his views will follow in Chapter 6.
[154] Olsen, p. 54.
[155] Uwe Kitzinger, "The Other Side of the Wall," *The Listener*, December 9, 1965, p. 943.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Kitzinger, "The Other Side of the Wall--II," December 16, 1965, p. 985.
[158] One such author was Stanley Kauffmann, Associate Literary Editor of the *New Republic*. Early in 1967 he reviewed a recent book by an Amos Elon, an Israeli author who had visited both Germanies in 1965. Elon spoke of a psychological adjustment of the Eastern population to the regime due to 18 years of communist rule. Kauffman added that "several West German journalists told me that many East Germans have pride in their accomplishments and in their country." But he did not name these authors, nor was he convinced that East Germans' pride in their own efforts translated to identification with the state. Instead, he took a sort of middle ground, cautioning readers on the one hand that it was wrong to assume all East Germans wanted to become West Germans, but on other assuming East Germans' pride derived not from a socialist mindset, but from dealing successfully with the multitude of problems at hand: "conditions there are undeniably grimmer than in the West, but men who have organized an effective production schedule or rebuilt a ruined town inevitably take some pride in their work," he wrote. See Stanley Kauffman, "Haunted and Haunting," *The New Republic* 156 (10), March 11, 1967, pp. 20, 37-8. The book he re-viewed was Amos Elon, *Journey Through a Haunted Land* (Austin, TX, 1967).
[159] Ronald Taylor, "Germany--East and West," *Contemporary Review*, April 1968, pp. 199-202.
[160] Ibid., p. 200.

[161] Ibid.
[162] David Hotham, "East Germany Fears Infection of Liberalism," *The Times,* August 14, 1968, p. 7, c. d-f.
[163] Ibid., c. d.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Fulbrook, Anatomy of a Dictatorship, pp. 271-4.
[166] Hotham, c. d.
[167] Ibid., c. e.
[168] Ibid., c. f.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Jean Edward Smith, an American professor of international relations working at the University of Toronto, visited about a year before Hotham, and believed most young people, if not the population in general, were less critical of the regime than Hotham's informants, but "believed in socialism" and thought East German educational opportunities were better than in West Germany. He agreed that most of them were unpolitical, however, but assumed they were not well informed about the West. Unfortunately, however, he gathered these views from conversations with one young woman, a guide who escorted him and his family in their travels throughout the GDR in the spring of 1967. See Jean Edward Smith, *Germany Beyond the Wall* (Boston, 1967), p. 12.
[171] Hotham, c. f.
[172] Ibid.
[173] J. Robert Moskin, "The Germany We Don't Know," *Look*, June 16, 1970, pp. 42-50, 53.
[174] Ibid., p. 50.
[175] R. H. S. C. (Richard Crossman), "East Berlin Diary," *New Statesman*, 11 June 1971, p. 803. The two German-speaking authors were Erika Runge, who published excerpts from interviews with East Germans in Erika Runge, "Naja, Ich Lebe in der DDR," *Der Spiegel*, October 11,1971, pp. 90-97, and Kohlschütter -- actually Swiss in origin -- author of Kohlschütter, "Sie Sagen ‚Ja' zu ihrem Staat," *Die Zeit* 32, 7 August 1970, p. 3. Much more on their findings will be discussed in Chapter 6.
[176] R. H. S. C., "East Berlin Diary."
[177] Ibid.
[178] Moskin, p. 45.
[179] Michael Kogon, "Reise ins Deutsche Ausland," *Frankfurter Hefte*, October 1966, pp. 699-710. The author is the son of the renowned German Catholic socialist author and journalist Eugen Kogon.
[180] Ibid., p. 699.
[181] "East Germany: The Country Beyond the Fringe," *The Economist*, March 26, 1966, pp. 1217-1220.
[182] Ibid., p. 1220.
[183] Anthony Sylvester, "The Other Side of the Wall," *East Europe* 16(6), June, 1967, pp. 3-7.
[184] Ibid., p. 3.
[185] Kogon, p. 703. Other authors heard even more bitter puns and jokes that mocked this policy. Micheal Mok, correspondent for *Life* magazine, was told by an elderly man that the bus taking pensioners to West Berlin was know as "The Zombie Express." Micheal Mok, "The East Side of the Wall," *Life*, 62, May 26, 1967, p. 70.
[186] Kogon, p. 705.
[187] See end note 185.
[188] Mok, p. 70.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid., p. 59.
[191] Ibid., p. 70.
[192] Ibid., p. 66.

[193] That was Kogon, p. 705, who was annoyed by the blaring transitor radio of a youth who indeed had a Beatle haircut, as well as violet bell-bottomned pants and seemed to disrupt the peaceful tranquility of the beach at the resort town of Bad Schandau. The author referred to the youth as the "shame of Schandau," but the youth was of only momentary interest to both the author and the vacationers around him.
[194] Stephen Aris, "Behind the Wall--the Miserable Miracle," *The Sunday Times Focus*, 6 December, 1970, p. 57.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Raymond Fletcher, "The Real Berliner," *New Statesman*, 29 October 1971, p. 586.
[197] Sylvester, p. 4.
[198] "East Germany: The Country Beyond the Fringe," p. 1217.
[199] Moskin, p. 44, 48.
[200] Sylvester, p. 4.
[201] "East Germany: Flowers beyond the Wall?" *The Economist*, August 19, 1967, p. xxix-xxxiii.
[202] "East Germany: Firm's Eye View," *The Economist,* August 19, 1967, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.
[203] These were not the first mentions of such persons, but the first in depth, biographical-style reports on their success. The first foreign visitor to mention a partnership between the regime and a private businessman was MP Desmond Donnelly in the summer of 1957. He referred to the policy of partnering with capitalists as the "Joint-Venture" system, and was told that the idea was heavily influenced by a similar system already operating in Communist China. Donnelly, p. 8.
[204] Moskin, p. 53.
[205] "The New Elite in Handel's [sic] Town," *The Times*, September 17, 1964, p. 10, c. d.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Hangen, pp. 78-9.
[209] Ibid., p. 79.
[210] Hangen, *The Muted Revolution: East Germany's Challenge to Russia and the West* (New York, 1966) pp. 96-97.
[211] Sylvester, p. 6.
[212] Ibid., p. 7.
[213] "East Germany: Firm's Eye View," pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.
[214] "East Germany: Flowers beyond the Wall?" p. xxx.
[215] Ibid., p. xxx-xxxiii.
[216] Moskin, p. 46.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Mok, p. 71-2.
[219] Ibid.
[220] For example, see, "East Germany: Capitalists Among Communists," *Time*, April 20, 1970, p. 84.
[221] Aris, c. f.
[222] "East Germany: Capitalists Among Communists."
[223] For example in Erika Runge, "Naja, Ich Lebe in der DDR," *Der Spiegel* 42 (October 11, 1971), p. 97. Her conversations with a number of ordinary East Germans will be discussed in Chapter 6.
[224] K. and B. Deutsch, "East German Irritations," *Contemporary Review* 215 (1246), November, 1969, pp. 253-255.
[225] Steven Kelman, "Letter from East Germany," *The New Yorker* XLVIII (32), September 30, 1972, pp. 85-105. The New Yorker's editor said nothing about Kelman's politics, but a critic who had also spent time in the GDR, mentioned his writings against university activism and suburban New York high school radicals. See Hugh T. Murray, "The Traveler's Tale Interpreted," *The Nation*, April 16, 1973, pp. 505-6.
[226] Kelman, pp. 85-86.
[227] K. and B. Deutsch, p. 255.
[228] Ibid.

[229] Ibid., p. 253.
[230] None of this information was revealed in *The New Yorker*, but was explained in his book. See Steven Kelman, *Behind the Berlin Wall: An Encounter in East Germany* (New York, 1972).
[231] R. S. H. C., "East Berlin Diary."
[232] For example Thomas Land, "Peering over the Berlin Wall," *Contemporary Review* 222 (1285), February, 1973, pp. 101-104, and Fletcher, 1968.
[233] R. S. H. C., "East Berlin Diary."
[234] Ibid.
[235] Moskin, p. 53.
[236] Sylvester, for example, mentioned the new law of February 20, 1967 conferring citizenship in the GDR "on all who resided in the Republic at its creation on October 7, 1949." (p. 6)
[237] Ibid., p. 42.
[238] R. S. H. C., "East Berlin Diary."
[239] Hotham, c. f.
[240] Land, p. 104.
[241] Ibid., p. 103.
[242] The phrase was coined by German historian Konrad H. Jarausch. See Jarausch, "Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship," in Konrad H. Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York, 1999), pp. 47-65.
[243] Jarausch, "Beyond Uniformity: The Challenge of Historicizing the GDR," in Ibid., p. 11.
[244] Of course, there were those who believed the regime's strength and stability had also created more genuine supporters. See for example, Smith, *Journey Beyond the Wall*, p. 242.

Chapter Six: An "Other Germany"?
German Travelers and Correspondents in the GDR, 1955-1972

West Germans, West Berliners, and a handful of former residents of the region that became the GDR have left behind stories of socioeconomic change and popular "accommodation" to the East German state that are not dissimilar from those of contemporary non-German visitors. But not surprisingly, the "German stories" of the GDR in the 1950s and 1960s possess emotional intensity and a kind of schizophrenia about "the other Germany" that go far beyond the uncertainties of contemporary foreign visitors. Non-German writers, as we have seen, struggled to determine just what popular identification with "socialist achievements" meant in the relation of East Germans to "their state." In times of relative prosperity, many such visitors, particularly those of left and left-leaning political views, assumed there was fairly widespread approval for these "achievements," creating a growing emotional and intellectual divergence from West Germany. However, during both relatively stable periods and intermittent crises, other observers and travelers just as easily surmised widespread rejection and even hatred of the Eastern regime, leaving the issue of socialist achievements completely aside. For German visitors, however needless as it may be to say, questions of popular identification in the GDR were invariably questions about the meaning of German national identity as a whole, and also about the meaning of West German citizenship and cultural developments.[1] West Germans, West Berliners, and refugees from the GDR who wrote about their travels in the GDR in the 1950s did not entertain the idea that the residents of "the Zone" were anything but their countrymen. In the next decade, however, after the building of the Berlin Wall and the resulting socioeconomic stabilization, these German narratives of developments in the GDR would raise uncomfortable questions about changes in East German mentalities and their relationship with the regime.

This chapter, then, chronicles the evolution of non-Communist German thought on the GDR, as portrayed in travel stories from 1955 to 1971. Since the majority of these persons *were* West German citizens, however, for purposes of convenience I will refer to them collectively as West Germans. I will argue that this group had greater difficulty theorizing the odd combination of components making up "Eastern identity" than their non-German counterparts--that is until the Wall virtually assured prolonged division. Travelers *before* the Wall seemed to carry with them the basic assumption that such an identity could not exist, given the ideological chasm between the SED and the vast majority of the population. They concentrated instead on the numerous small difficulties, and occasional pleasures, of daily living. Through most of the period their criticisms of the regime were rather indirect -- the SED and its representatives remained at the margins of their accounts. East Germans they encountered were opportunistic, making the most of their limited possibilities, and either politically disengaged or supporting the regime for completely selfish regions. This focus of attention and point of view were not conducive to broader conclusions on the relation of state and society, but its safe to assume they believed in an almost total alienation from the regime.

Around 1960, when their criticisms became much more pointed, it was ideological threats to children and food shortages that captured their attention. They continued to assume, quite rightly, that there was little affinity for the regime amid the general population, but they took no stock in the view that East Germans identified with "socialist achievements" or particularly resented West Germans. Nonetheless, they were clearly troubled by the longer-term future, given the apparent successes of the ideological indoctrination of youths and children.

But it was also in 1960, as we have seen, that one author from West Berlin, Erik

Nohara, took up the idea -- in a report published in Britain -- of a separate East German identity, at least in embryonic form. Then, about two years after the Wall was built and economic stabilization became apparent, a *handful* of West German visitors joined him (and certain foreign visitors discussed in Chapter 5) in mapping out the intellectual terrain of East Germans' worldview. They elaborated on the idea that it lay somewhere *between* the ethos of East and West, in the desire for some kind of democratic socialism, with both economic security and more freedom, particularly freedom of travel. But apparently there was *no* widespread desire for West to overcome the SED, let alone remodel the Eastern system on liberal capitalist lines.

Not surprisingly, however, many West German visitors did *not* share this view, nor did they make much of an effort to even consider if a separate East identity existed. But what nearly all of these visitors of the 1960s did share was a sense that "Germanness" continued to define the region. The diverse observations of these writers offer insight into GDR and Eastern European history at a "moment" before both became dominated by narratives of political disillusion and economic problems. In particular, West German travel stories can be read as various sides of a debate that prefigures the arguments over recognition of the GDR in the era of *Ostpolitik,* after 1969. They also reveal how West Germans grappled with the apparent finality of German division, as well as the loss of the former Eastern territories to Poland.

To preview this debate in brief, several West German writers urged acceptance of the reality of a distinct and separate East German society: however reprehensible the regime might be, its subjects were determined to make the best of life there, and this invariably meant *further divergence* from West Germany. Another group insisted, in various ways, on denying altogether the legitimacy of the regime and maintaining the older view of

East Germans as "captive peoples." But a considerable number of others were somewhere in the middle, urging a continuing struggle, in effect a war of ideas: do not ignore the SED or their state, but *overcome them* through the force of better arguments. The question of whether West Germany ought to have a relationship with the GDR -- and if so, what kind -- was debated in an era when the East-West division of Germany and Europe was still *not* officially ratified, but taking on the appearance of permanence. The diverse reactions of West German visitors to their experiences in the East derived from the geopolitical "predicament" of having to coexist with an unwanted, but ultimately unavoidable rival state.

Evaluating this rival, a co-claimant to the history and culture of the dismembered German nation, as "typically German" seems counterintuitive given its radically different socioeconomic system and political regime. And indeed, many aspects of the society, economy, and politics of the GDR could not be neatly inserted into *any* "German tradition." Therefore what would not "fit" had to exposed, and usually rejected. But from the mid-1960s through the early 1970s, the GDR appeared "German" enough -- or in some readings, contained a way of life that was simply "normal" enough -- for many visitors to argue or imply that the division of Germany was not simply a necessary evil, but in some ways good -- a kind of relief from the uncertainty and instability of the years of mass flights and border tensions -- and better for East Germans themselves. According to this argument, the Wall, economic improvement, and relative liberalization now gave East Germans the opportunity to make reasonable lives for themselves without constantly looking over their shoulders at the "golden West." But before getting to questions about the "Germaness" and acceptability of the GDR in the 1960s, we must first turn to the more volatile years preceding it, when West Germans could more easily reject the regime wholesale,

and argue that its population was completely alienated from the regime.

Difficulties and Disaffection: West Germans Report "Daily Life" in the GDR, 1955-60

More than anything, the GDR in the 1950s is associated with *outmigration* -- the flight of an estimated 3,500,000 million persons up to 1961.[2] It is well established that the majority of these migrants were skilled and better educated workers, motivated primarily by better the material rewards waiting in the West -- meaning that political pressures were usually secondary, despite considerable media attention implying the contrary.[3] Less well known today is the "reverse flow" of perhaps 500,000.[4] Several contemporaries noted in 1959 -- during a period of rather sudden and impressive economic advance in the East and recession in the West -- that a considerable number of them were *West* Germans, also in search of better economic prospects.[5] While their percentage is not known, the phenomenon suggests what visitors in the previous chapter revealed about the 1950s GDR: that there were ups and downs that were much more striking to con-temporaries than they have appeared in retrospect.[6] The large shadow cast by outmigration, the West German *Wirtschaftswunder*, and brief political disturbances in early 1957 and late 1958 have obscured the fact that all was not in disarray in the GDR before the building of the Wall. West German visitors hinted at the very same thing -- often unintentionally, but nevertheless. If they failed to consider approval for "socialist achievements," they did not always focus on attacking the regime--at least not until the the last year and a half before the Wall was built. When they did, it was in the period of mounting food shortages, but also increasing ideological rigidity. By 1960, West Germans seemed to be describing a rebirth of the Stalinism and dearth of 1948-52.

West Germans visitors in the mid-to-late 1950s brought with them the basic as-

sumption that a separate East German identity was a non-starter. The fairly obvious ideological gulf that existed between the regime and the vast majority of the population, continued harsh living conditions, and the authors' own difficulties with the idea of two Germanies, surely made the entire topic unimaginable. Yet while their assessment of popular opinions was basically correct, genuine allegiance to the regime, as we saw in Chapter 5, was *not* essential. Unlike their foreign counter-parts, however, it was fairly easy (and perhaps necessary (?)) for West Germans to assume that East Germans general dislike for the SED meant they were merely holding out against the day of reunification with the West. There seems to have been little consideration of how their different lived experiences might complicate any future reunification either. East Germans seemed engaged in a struggle not so much to survive, but simply *endure*, biding their time while trying to prevent their children from being "converted" to communism. However, the sense of alarm and dread expressed by some writers in the early 1950s did give way, for a time at least, to more dispassionate descriptions of "making the best of it."

This meant a focus on the daily struggles, (rather than fears and dangers) that occupied ordinary East Germans and their families. There seemed a quiet sense of normality in these observations, or at least of decreased tension. There was also related interest in the slow but continuing process of reconstruction and signs of industrial advance. In describing these developments, however, authors often found their way to anecdotes on the unequal opportunities that resulted: good pay and steady work for younger, skilled male workers contrasted with the limited, even endangered incomes of the middle classes and the elderly, while new flats and furniture for a limited few "stay-at-home" housewives contrasted with the continuing unavailability of most of the basics for many of their working counterparts.[7] But these authors strove more to deliver objective updates than

political essays.

The few who *did* comment on the larger political implications of their findings wrote in politically conservative publications, offering advice on how to stave off the growing "mental divide" between East and West. Most of the other pieces were anecdotal, "human interest" stories, designed to demystify the daily routines of ordinary, mainly non-political persons. But whatever their political content, nearly all of the reports contained a sense that East Germans were seizing whatever opportunities they could for themselves and their families. To the visitors this was by and large a predictable *reaction* to difficult circumstances, rather than genuine and thorough *adaptation* to a new sociopolitical regimen. East Germans (or "Middle Germans" as some visitors chose to call them) in many ways retained a familiar routine of daily experience. One writer noted that the farther one traveled from the frontier, the more normal daily life appeared, as if to tell readers that a very basic reality of work, family, and community were easily obscured by the political divide.[8]

There was good reason for this perception. It is beyond question that the more draconian terror of the Stalinist era (border policies excluded) was over by the mid-1950. The dearth and hunger of the immediate postwar period had largely passed as well. These developments are largely explained by the SED's "New Course," a greater emphasis on consumer goods' production and a relaxation of political pressure, all in response to the workers' uprising of June 1953. But despite the hopes of leftist visitors like Heinrich Fraenkel (See Chapter 4), these were changes in *tactics*, rather than overall *policy*--which remained "socialization" of the overwhelming majority of industry and farming *and* integration of the population into the party's "mass organizations." With the exception of indoctrination pressures on youths and children, the regime's projects seem strangely ab-

sent from most of these reports, or at best very far from central. The anecdotal approach, combined with somewhat less oppressive and grim conditions, largely explains this.

It has been shown in oral and daily life histories that in times of stability, "politics" seems unrelated to "ordinary experience"--on some higher plane.[9] Its arguable that the tastes of mainstream news readers in this period reflect this disjuncture as well. While there are now mountains of documentary evidence about the politicization of daily in the GDR, (and more important perhaps, its contestation) which create the impression of a continuous politicized existence "from cradle to grave," more pedestrian conceptions of "the political" could make the regime appear more shadowy, on the fringes, both in terms of overall police power and its day-to-day political influence. Like more recent research, the commentary on such matters demonstrated the *limits* of state power. However, in travel reports, the focus was more in the limits of the regime's capability to police society and "deliver the goods" -- rather than its frustrating efforts to enlist the population in the "building of socialism."[10]

At the same time however, contemporary reports also hinted at patterns of disingenuous behavior among party cadres, and exploitation of even the best paid workers.[11] And when admiration was expressed for rebuilding and reconstruction efforts, there was still a sense of foreignness--and ugliness--about most of the new buildings. Meanwhile, the general upturn in the economy in the mid-1950s was often attributed to the hard work and ingenuity of the population, but *not* to the economic planning of the regime.[12] There was no hint in any of this that the intent behind the regime's efforts was humanitarian at all, but at the same, it did not appear to menace East Germans in any way either -- that is, with the exception of attempted indoctrination.

In the last years before the Wall, the relatively uninflammatory mid-1950s re-

ports were replaced by a combination of harsh economic criticism and warnings about more intense political indoctrination. The former suggested, once again, the limits of regime power, while the latter suggested its potential strength. At the same time, however, these visitors remained focused on the difficulties of daily experiences -- they wished to expose the regime's economic failings and the misery that resulted. In doing so, they reinforced the idea that "the state" and "society" were rigidly separate -- and that the latter was more or less victim of (or at times, resistance to) the former. Of course, by 1960 there was something to their argument about basic economic failings: as noted in the previous chapter, the SED was somewhat guilty of overselling the economic upturn of 1959 (even while scholars have arguably erred in the opposite direction). But by the middle of the next year, hard times had returned. Food shortages and a return to rationing were brought on by the last phase of forced collectivization and the resulting flight of peasant farmers from the land.[13]

West Germans seized on these troubles to extol the "failures" of the regime. One traveler who went "shopping" in East Berlin and other cities as well, argued that East Germans were not well fed at all, not even close to West Germans in per capita calorie consumption.[14] Sybille Martin reported rationing of potatoes and fresh milk, as well as shortages of bread and tomatoes in various cities. Other fruits and vegetables seemed plentiful, but overall food supplies hardly approached normal Western levels. Meanwhile, good textiles remained prohibitively expensive -- she calculated that clothes of even subpar quality cost four to six times as much as in the West -- while the best woolens were reserved for "functionaries and highly honored activists."[15]

All of this was meant not just to demonstrate ineptitude of the economic planners in East Berlin, but to demonstrate that consumer goods' shortages were *endemic* to So-

viet-style planned economies. The author set out to debunk the "alibis of communism" -- the regime's tendency to blame individual errors, selfishness, and "sabotage" for all its failings rather than the systemic flaws of communism itself. She was not the first West German critic to adopt this strategy.[16] She wrote that while state-controlled newspapers blamed shortages on an "overbearing wholesaling functionary," or the "tardiness of a sales director," or a "mistake in planning" by a "railroad functionary," no one could take these excuses seriously anymore:

> This we have known since 1946, [and] in the Soviet Union since 1919. And we are once again convinced, that the lack cannot be only a temporary side effect of the 'building of socialism,' but inseparable from, even bound up with the system.[17]

There was no mention of the *particular* difficulties that plagued the system at that moment, as if nothing had really changed since the end of the war. But this was the first time in years that a Western visitor talked about long lines of women before food stores (she claimed they were a "kilometer-long"!). She wondered how they could travel to shopping centers, wait in line, and still find enough time to feed their families.

Similar concerns were discussed at even greater length by another West German woman who spent several weeks visiting family in an unnamed locale.[18] But Gerda Müller's account went much farther afield, and in the process created a picture of a state and society with little to distinguish it from the Stalinist era. Like many West Germans of the time, she rejected the designation *DDR* in favor of *Mitteldeutschland*, suggesting both the illegitimacy of the regime and illegality of the loss of the eastern territories. For this author, economic policy in the GDR was not simply an obvious failure, but a broader pattern of assault on the traditional middle class family and its values. Small business owners were threatened with seemingly inevitable étatization, while housewives worked "male jobs." Müller dramatized the dilemma young Christians faced regarding participation in

the official state confirmation ceremony, the *Jugendweihe*: should they refuse it because it conflicted with church confirmation, and thereby endanger their future career options? Younger children, meanwhile, were being "raised by the state," exposed to the "corruption" of communist indoctrination at both day care centers and kindergartens. The anecdotes in this report built up a picture of dictatorship and frustration that might have been written a decade earlier. Some of the information covered was second-hand, or derived from "tangents" (once Müller drifted to the subject of the recent collectivization drive after just praising the selection of baked goods (?). But at every turn, Müller attempted to reinforce the notion that basically nothing had changed in the GDR since its founding.

This was most clear in her discussion of the indoctrination of children and young people. She described kindergarten games that taught children about "Uncle Max" (i.e. Marx) and his "sayings." But she found anti-West German propaganda even more disturbing. She learned of its toll on a small child through an unexpected misfortune.

> When I was taken with a broken leg to hospital, I met many children, with whom I often conversed. An especially interesting and nice girl was there, she was in the second year of [primary] school. One day, [when] she had just learned that I was from the West, she called me to her and said, as she looked at me with guiltless child eyes: 'You, Gerda, I am so sorry that you live in the West! Should my father send you a little [care] package?' [A] little seven-year-old-girl! I nearly laughed . . . [about her incorrect grammar] . . . and secondly about her opinion of the poor West. What must they have told these children about us? How bad it is for us, how we are hungry [as opposed to] some kind of paradise they lived in. Again and again they have told them, until they finally really believe it.[19]

This experience was just the beginning for Müller. She believed all youth activities -- the schools, *Jugendweihe*, *Junge Pioneeren*, and the FDJ -- had as their primary purpose *the estrangement of young people from their West German counterparts*, and she believed this was the key to creating a "communist state." All her previous criticisms and frustrations seemed unimportant compared to the apparent successes of the SED in molding the

young into irretrievable adversaries of West Germany. Aside from one "courageous boy" she observed questioning the claim that the world had been formed without God or any creator, East German youth seemed trapped, unable even to develop individual identities:

> How should the youth form their own opinions under these conditions? Even the radio [like newspapers, schools and communist organizations] brings nothing different. . . . why should they form an opinion, [when] it is readily dished up for them and read [aloud]: For Unity, Freedom, and Socialism--Struggle against Capitalism, Struggle against the West German Atomic Destruction (*Atomtod*), Our Young Power Belongs to the Victory of Socialism, All Power for a Building Program of Peace. Why should they not believe it, when it is said everywhere: the signs in the streets, the newspapers in the [news]stands, the radio at home and the teacher in the school. [Because of it all] the little Renate startled from fright when she heard that I lived in the West, and stammered: 'Agh, the evil Adenauer lives there, who always throws all the atom bombs and only wants war, Agh, I would not want to ever live there' -- she was eight years old.[20]

By the conclusion, the East German youth seemed completely "captured," and like authors in the early 1950s, she insisted their only hope was for West Germans to maintain contact. Just what type of contact could sway them she did not say, but concluded instead with a rather banal warning reminiscent of American McCarthyism:

> We must learn to save our freedom, otherwise we will not be free much longer, but overrun by communism and becom[ing] slaves of a godless system. If we sleep through this warning, we will eventually have a very bitter awakening.[21]

Another West German traveler the following spring expressed the same anxiety over pressure on the youth. Writing in a Christian weekly, Jürgen Heck actually said much less about the "godlessness" of the regime, but expressed the same fear that the young were being made totally dependent on the "totalitarian state."[22] This author's fears also suggested that in some ways the regime was achieving its goals. Coming to the Leipzig fair in March 1961, he found the expected red propaganda banners, but seemed stunned to learn that oppression was not as pervasive or blatant as Western newspapers and

refugee reports had indicated. A young man made clear that the population was neither brutally held down nor "thirsting for liberation." Even popular resistance to the recent round of collectivization was nowhere as determined or widespread as he had been led to believe. No, the truth was less dramatic, but *even more worrisome* -- communism was "firmly in the saddle," and a repeat of June 1953 was virtually impossible. It was not just improved living standards that had created this stability, however. Like his predecessor, the author was convinced the regime "had the youth for itself." This was based on a much shorter visit, without the benefit of close familial connections, but he believed the key to the "capture" of the youth was the educational system.

Virtually all students of GDR history agree that, as one scholar put it, "the greatest expectations of all were placed on young people."[23] Throughout the postwar years and the 1950s, as we have seen, visitors worried about SED efforts to woo youth, often as not because they sensed the regime had *real benefits* to offer young people: free education, good career prospects, and a less tangible "sense of purpose." While Müller made little effort to seriously consider this appeal, Heck believed it went a long way to explaining the apparent progress of indoctrination. According to him, the reason youths in Leipzig knew nothing about Western philosophy or arts, but only about the "progress of Marxism" was precisely because opportunities for free education and the "security of material existence" that followed it were so tempting that they invariably sought the "spiritual security" of Marxism as well.

But despite this seemingly more realistic appraisal of indoctrination, Heck too understood this process as "totalitarian mind control": breaking down the youths identity both as "Germans" and autonomous individuals. The youths acceptance of the "all embracing state" meant a basic denial of their selves: as Heck put it, they had sold their "I"

to the state in exchange it for security and a state-planned life. For the author this was the central danger communism posed to the West, and to "human development" in general. The West must counter the uniform "closedness" of the GDR by developing the "I" in freedom -- within the context of a multitude of "opinions, parties, communities of belief, spiritual currents."[24] Of course this made the West appear disunited and weak, but in the struggle with "totalitarian" communism, the developed, self-aware "I" could be the a useful weapon.

Heck was neither the first nor the last author to instruct readers on how to fight estrangement and indoctrination in the GDR. He went on to debunk the idea that state-planned lives would create a more humanistic social order, calling the process instead the creation of so many "wheels in the collective."[25] Eventually, after describing a few areas of life where state domination was *not* complete -- such as the satirical East Berlin cabaret *Pfeffermühle* [Peppermill] -- the author described a real life "wheel": a young party activist.

Like the Müller's quotes of the girls above, this young man's responses to Heck's questions seemed straight out of the Stalinist era:

> In conversation with a young man, who evidently was some sort of students' functionary, I asked what he studied. He answered 'I have only studied Marxism.' -- 'Only Marxism? Is that itself an area of study (*ein eigenes Studium*)?' -- 'Yes.' -- 'Then are you a career Marxist?' -- 'Well, you could say so.' -- 'What possibilities has one as [a] career Marxist?' -- 'Well, one can find a position in the party, [or] can go into [a] scientific career, [which is] what most do -- everything is possible.' -- 'And you, what are your plans?' -- 'I will soon take a place in the Institute for Oriental Studies here at the Karl-Marx-University in Leipzig.' -- 'But -- have you made [any] Oriental Studies? -- 'No, not that.' -- 'And in spite of this you can become an assistant at the Institute for Oriental Studies?' -- 'Well, yes, I will still certainly have to learn a language.' Maybe this is something typical, that I met in this conversation: for all activities a secure grounding in the Marxist world-interpretation is decisive. It is the prerequisite of specialization. Specialist knowledge and qualifications must have an ideological (*weltanschauliche*) founda-

tion.[26]

The author left the matter there, and went on to other ideational differences between East and West brought to mind by his observations at the fair. He certainly could have considered that a young party activist was hardly typical of the student population in Leipzig, and that studies in Marxism-Leninism, though required of all university students, were something of a formality in most disciplines. Of course that would not fit as neatly into the overdrawn picture of the Eastern "collective" versus the Western "I." Yet, if these views seem overly alarmist in retrospect, they were in some sense rooted in a "moment" in which the SED was stepping up its socialization of the economy and "educating" a new generation with no direct experience of any other regime. As we saw in Chapter 5, even before the Wall was built there remained reason to believe that time was on the GDR's side.

This focus on the threat to the individual seemed to take West German visitors away from examples of more collective resistance in these years, or any sort of organized opposition in general. Instead, they described how the *individual* worker, housewife, or young person struggled with indoctrination, or scarcity, or perhaps sought to better their individual condition in the face of the powerful shaping force of "the collective." In effect, they continued to view life in the GDR as individuals struggling against, and often succumbing to "totalitarian domination." But these assumption are nonetheless important as basic reminders that the GDR had *not* been "written off" by *all* West Germans in the face of fading hopes of unification. Even if the West German government gave only lip service to unification and recovery of the lost Eastern territories, 1/3 of West Germans had familial ties to the GDR, and many millions had roots in the lands east of the Oder River.[27] More generally, nationalist feelings had not totally evaporated, even with the powerful

counterforces of *Wirtschaftswunder,* anti-communism, or intermittent feelings of shame about the Nazi past. Even if anti-communism in particular did work quite well to counter the "natural desire" for unification,[28] these authors show how it could be used for the opposite purpose -- to *encourage solidarity with East Germans.* The key, apparently, was to cast them as individuals struggling with the burdens of a failing economic system and oppressive, indoctrinating regime, not as parts of collective groups which were not entirely opposed to the socialist system.

Finding a Third Way? -- A West Berliner looks at East German Aspirations in 1960

To West Germans visiting the GDR from the late 1950s to early 1961, the question "what *kind* of unification East Germans desire?" would have seemed odd indeed, given more pressing questions such as "unification when?" or "unification ever?" But for one visitor, West Berliner Erik Nohara, the question of what East Germans really wanted opened the door to serious consideration of the emerging differences between them and their Western counterparts.[29] Nohara was the first German author to seriously consider how the resentment and dislike East Germans felt for West Germany factored into their sense of themselves as a separate group of people--a separate group with their own ideas about reunification. His conversations with young, disillusioned intellectuals, as well as his observations of the wider society (as noted in Chapter 5), suggested hopes for retaining some socialist achievements in the event of unification, but at the same time a complete and total rejection of the SED.

But it was equally clear that these aspirations had evolved in and been shaped by 15 years in the GDR. Nohara described a shared sense of social ethos that had emerged *partly because of* the ideational framework of the regime, and partly from struggling for

something more *within* that framework. Clearly East Germans did not want a simple adoption of the Western system, nor the complete overthrow of the Eastern system. It was the first time since the early 1950s that a West German visitor had seriously considered that the GDR's welfare state and socialized production could be popular among East Germans, or that lived experience there could be transforming in a positive way. All of this had seemed unimportant compared to the regime's unpopularity and economic troubles, but Nohara believed it indicated the existence of a more stable society than most West Germans believed. This sense of the GDR's limited stability would evolve under later West German authors after the Wall was built. Though he could not have known it at the time, his understanding of the difficulties of any future unification was a foretaste of arguments visitors would use in the mid-to-late 1960s for *acceptance of the GDR* as a separate, and more or less permanent, state and society.

Nohara's emerging sense of East German society in 1960 was almost buried in a tale of ideological intolerance on the one hand, and the fanatical efforts of his young hosts -- members of the FDJ -- to head off any possible criticism of the regime, however well intentioned, on the other.[30] But in a meeting with persons he described as "young intellectuals," the issue of the lack of organized opposition in the GDR raised the problem of sociocultural difference between the two Germanies.

> People in the West may wonder why the Polish and Hungarian example [ie. national reform movements] did not catch on over here. One reason is that the active oppositional elements have already gone. Even more important is the fact that we have not the slightest chance of copying the Polish model.'Even if we could assume,' the argument goes, 'that an upheaval would be successful--and the assumption itself is illusory--this would have the effect of an *Anschluss*; that is, of the German Democratic Republic being incorporated into West Germany. We are not so fond of this idea as you may think. All right, Ulbricht and his gang happen to be scoundrels, but your way of life is no solution either. It lacks purpose and in many respects it's just a sham. Just take your shop-window culture. Agreed that there are still a lot of things which are extremely expensive and of poor quality, or

> which you simply cannot buy over here, But your whole retail trade and the organization of services is overblown and devoid of any human aspects. You should visit one of our state-owned restaurants run by a collective of young people. They refuse to take tips, not because they are not allowed to but because they think it's immoral. Nevertheless you can expect a decent service without servility. We are poor but it is a respectable poverty. You are enormously well-to-do--at least, compared with us. But your wealth is not respectable and to no good purpose.'[31]

Not surprisingly, Nohara explained these "pent up feelings against the West . . . [as] to some extent the effect of indoctrination," but did not doubt their sincerity.[32] The quote, however, reminds of observations by earlier German travelers in Chapter Four, and given the passage of time, it can be understood as the outcome of socialization processes at work on a new generation with no adult experiences prior to 1945. However clear the rejection of the SED leadership here, the sense of dignity, social solidarity and "respectable poverty" would not have been possible without the basic direction and organization given the society by the regime. Nohara demonstrated further on that non-intellectuals took a positive view of the "social world" of the GDR as well. He noted how West German "catch-words" and ideals no longer figured into most East Germans' frame of reference, and how the institutional framework of the GDR was perceived by most of them as "a permanent and positive good."[33]

Nohara was clearly *not* a cheerleader for these developments, however, for he emphasized that there was no way to neatly separate the "framework" (generally accepted) from the "fanaticism" and "political bigotry" of the functionaries (generally despised). He was quite certain, as were previous and contemporary foreign visitors, that "indoctrination" had played a major role in the popularity of social system. But even so, he was also certain the majority of those "able to formulate their views, if given the chance to do so" would retain what others referred to as the regime's socialist achievements.[34] The question of how the two societies would be rejoined, obviously, was put off for nearly a ge-

neration by the building of the Berlin Wall. In the years that followed, inquiry by (some) West Germans into the complexities of East German aspirations and beliefs (about both their own regime and the West) meant coming to terms with several unpleasant truths. Apparently many, if not most East Germans not only had long ceased to hold out against the day of "liberation from the West," but on top of this they had serious criticisms -- not simply envy -- of the economic system and society of the Federal Republic. Many visitors of the 1960s, even bitter enemies of the GDR, would attempt to deal with these realities by "Germanizing" the state and society of the GDR -- in effect explaining East Germans' rejection of West German values as rooted in an older social ethic that survived there. But even those who still avoided these "truths," perhaps them even more so, played up the Germanness *of the region and the population*, if not the regime itself.

The "German GDR" I: Denial and Delegitimization

Many, but not all of the West Germans visitors who were determined to deny the existence of a separate society in the GDR traveled there in the two-to-three years after August 13, 1961. In creased political repression and continued economic problems in those years greatly aided their case that the vast majority was completely demoralized, even desperate, and longed above all else for reunification. But there were a number of later visitors as well, who in different ways acted as if SED rule was not only oppressive and hated, but *a complete sham* as well -- several authors treated the regime as if it hardly existed at all, or at best was a mere hindrance to any and all positive social and economic developments in the region since 1945. For these authors, "Germanness" superseded any ideology, and was more important to defining the region than any bureaucratic, administrative, police or security apparatus imposed by the regime.

Not surprisingly, these "deligitimizers" contained a number of fairly ardent nationalists, persons with direct ties to the region, and also several persons of fairly outspoken Christian faith. For them, the "base" of the region was *German traditions*, and the regime was a flimsy, clumsy and perhaps temporary "superstructure" imposed by military force. They clearly represented conservative and nationalist West Germans determined to never relent on demands for reunification. But even so, they could occasionally approve of certain socially conservative aspects of GDR culture, which they knew were promoted by the regime, and made life there seem quite different than in the more liberal and permissive West. They give insight into the conservative resistance to *Ostpolitik* that mounted in the late 1960s and early 1970s, eventually forcing the special election of 1972 fought largely over that issue alone.

Several anonymous visitors between late 1961 and early 1963 went to great lengths to present East Germans as cornered and desperate, but *not fully resigned*. Their most basic hope, or so they said, was still unification. The impassioned nationalism of two of them in particular was very striking--as was their nearly total silence about the chauvinistic excesses of the German past.[35] They concluded from the building of the Wall and the harsh repression in the months that followed that the GDR had been exposed as a completely artificial creation, a mere overlay of armed personnel, guard dogs, watch towers and "reeducation camps." One of them created a kind of mantra that most East Germans seemed, consciously or unconsciously, to share: "it is no longer worth it."[36] The author repeated the phrase in the second of a series of articles in the Protestant weekly *Sonntagsblatt* in the spring of 1962. The underlying message of the series was that East Germans were near a breaking point and might soon revolt.

However, on closer inspection this author seemed to contradict these premises.

The East Germans he met and wrote about appeared more as Schweiks than potential rebels. The author described a kind of informal network of jokes, graffiti, and even covert messages "between the lines" in newspapers that seemed to allow many workers and ordinary citizens to let off steam. An inset article in one issue also described a black market clothing trade.[37] In spite of the grim implications of this series -- suggesting a new claustrophobia in the wake of the Wall -- it seemed to reveal far more *survival skills and petty resistance* than anything else. Still, the piece was intended to impress the reader with the sense of a great gulf between the regime and the people. The separation was most dramatized by a funeral the author witnessed near the Wall. The cemetery, directly adjacent to the border area, could only be entered if the pastor and all mourners were searched and then escorted by armed guards. Like the Wall itself, the funeral symbolized unwarranted intrusion "from above": law-abiding persons in their darkest moment were guarded and watched like criminals.[38]

For some visitors, as we will see presently, developments in the year 1963 suggested that the post-Wall period of hardship and repression was coming to an end. But attempts to completely deligitimize the GDR continued as well. A refugee from the region, pseudonym Eric Balow, not only denied the GDR completely, but railed against West German indifference in the process. He accused West Germans of taking freedom for granted, enjoying prosperity while East Germans "by mere geographic accident" were paying the entire price for German aggression in the war.[39] Such criticisms rather obviously betray the author's unspoken assumption of the normality and naturalness of a single German nation. But for Balow, consciously or unconsciously, this assumption allowed him to also minimize the Nazi past. He noted, for example, that the older generation of East Germans "still have vivid memories of better living conditions and an exi-

stence dignified by greater personal freedom than they now have under communism," while including in that group persons with no adult memories of life before Hitler.[40]

Towards the end he attempted to explain himself by acknowledging that while the "new terror" was "not as murderous as its predecessor," the latter had not been as pervasive in "every minute of . . . daily life."[41] By doing so he obviated the important point that this only was true for those deemed ethnically pure and political unthreatening by the Nazis. In the same vain he commented that the German-German border had in effect fenced in the East Germans "like cattle," apparently without the slightest awareness that such terminology recalled the slaughter of Nazi death camps.[42] Ultimately, however, this was not an outright denial of Nazi criminality to further the cause of unification. Rather, Balow intended to stress that the regardless of the past, East Germans (and perhaps by implication "Germany" itself?) were victims of Communist oppression whose sufferings ought to provoke outcry in the West.

That suffering included shortages and shoddiness of both housing and all kinds of consumer goods, which Balow listed in painstaking detail. He described the plight of a young couple who had to volunteer for hundreds of hours of construction work to secure an apartment in a housing coop. Wherever he went, government propaganda did not square with actual conditions, whether it be the condition of railroads, the preservation of historic buildings, the production and price of television sets, or the (limited) variety of fruits and vegetables. Several "post-Wall" contemporaries noted many of the same problems, but none painted so dark a picture. Even benefits, such as paid state vacations, were criticized for the lengthy waiting periods involved, state control of all arrangements, and restrictions on individual travel -- even to 'friendly' socialist countries.

But material failings were not as important to Balow as political pressure. 1963-4

is generally considered a turning point towards greater political relaxation, and though repression of *outright dissent* became far more severe later in the decade, there was no return to the harsh period of detention and "reeducation" of the fall of 1961. But the elaborate network of spies and informants created in the 1950s continued to be strengthened and enlarged, and Balow called this "system of terror without let up" the "main burden on people's minds."[43] The author took East Germans' public quiescence as proof of their total fear of and alienation from the regime.

> An atmosphere of mistrust of one's neighbor, of fear and resignation, prevails everywhere. Because of Ulbricht's omnipresent spies, people waiting in lines for hours on end don't dare to utter any complaint or to criticize the shortages in food supplies; they simply await their turn docilely and silently. In restaurants, too, I noticed that my friends fell silent whenever a waiter approached our table. Dancing one evening in a cafe with a girl I had known for a few years, I happened to remark, in a voice that could possibly have been audible to the couples dancing around us, that the last time we had danced together had been in West Berlin two years before. She suddenly grew pale and glanced around nervously. Later, she explained to me that before that visit she had been obliged to sign a pledge at her place of work that she would never set foot in West Berlin. My innocent remark could easily have given her away.[44]

It has been pointed out that most apolitical East German citizens had little to fear from "volunteer" informants, the Stasi or other police forces, but mainly because they had been trained from childhood to in no way draw attention to themselves in public -- as this example clearly demonstrates.[45] Balow was not wrong to stress the potential danger of public criticism or any comment that might seem pro-Western, but he made such conditions appear to exclude any possibility of a *modus vivendi* between East Germans and the regime. He did the same with the widespread practice of watching West German television. To him, it was demonstrated total rejection of the Eastern system and an uncritical longing for all things Western. "Even Western commercials receive undivided attention because they often show new products which East Germans otherwise might never hear of,"

he observed,[46] not considering that such viewing might also be a kind of "safety valve" that allowed an increased *toleration* of life in GDR. Instead, he called it "Escape via the Airwaves" in a subheading.

But like pre-Wall German visitors, Balow showed concern about the threat communism seemed to pose to the young. At a performance of the opera *Fidelio*, it bothered him that while the "older generation" reacted with emotion to a scene depicting loss of freedom, the younger people in the audience simply listened quietly.

> This incident by no means implies that young East Germans have become converted to communism. On the contrary, many are disillusioned and dissatisfied. But their resistance or objection to the regime seems to be based on instinct and parental influence rather than on profound criticism, for which they simply lack the necessary perspective and information. They themselves can hardly be blamed for this.[47]

Despite his apparent confidence that the young did not support the regime, the passage invites the reader to consider how long it would be before their "lack of perspective" left them open to "conversion." Once again, it seemed time was on the SED's side:

> My conversations left me with the sad feeling that cultural isolation is one of the most deplorable aspects of East German life, and that the alienation of the country's young people from their contemporaries outside the Communist bloc will even increase in geometric progression as time passes. Apparently there is not way to prevent this development.[48]

But in the end, the most obvious evidence of the GDR's illegitimacy, the Wall itself, was marshaled by Balow to insist that state and society remained diametrically opposed. West Berlin had not just been an escape hatch, but an oasis of *temporary relief* from the pressures of regime propaganda, and contacts with persons and cultural manifestations denied entry to the GDR. Now, with the "hatch" closed, East Germans were "completely at Ulbricht's mercy."[49] What this ultimately meant, however, was left unanswered. As we have seen, however, by 1963 few observers or visitors believed a revolt

was likely. If Balow agreed, it was only because he imagined the GDR as a virtual prison under "lockdown," making all revolts impossible.

His view could be placed at one extreme of a continuum for that transitional year, in which most visitors, both West German and foreign, described East Germans as either somewhere between resigned and hopeless on the one hand, or starting to "make the best if it" on the other. But also in this period, certain visitors seemed focused more ethereal definitions of the regime than on the "man in the street." These authors approached the "mission" of deligitimizing the GDR far more subtly and on a more philosophical plane, but like Balow, they shared a conceptualization of the regime as *outside* of German and local history. If East Germans were the "captives," of the SED, the deeper, historical *essence of the region* was something they would have much more difficulty trying to transform. For some, this meant that the regime could be virtually ignored, or treated as an unpleasant epiphenomenon peripheral to their true interests in visiting the region. For others, the SED state was simply an outright lie, which they were determined to expose. Either way, the *region* stood apart, somehow "untainted" by the "building of socialism," while the corollary at the level of daily life was a kind of "peaceful co-existence" between state and society. The overall paradigm of great distance between the regime and people remained, but was altered to fit the different interests (and sometimes obsessions) of the visitors.

Of course, it was clear by 1964 that East Germans' desperation and hopelessness had lessened, and therefore the task of deligimitization grew more difficult. Still, authors went to great lengths to argue that however strong the imprint of the regime, the people, the countryside, and notable historical locations *had not been intrinsically changed.* Instead, they portrayed the region as caught in a kind of "stand-off" between a German cul-

ture and population on the one hand, and an imposed, even ephemeral layer of rulers and privileged elites on the other. It must be stressed, however, that this was not simply a generic rejection of "communism" as alien or atheistic (though such views clearly played a role). Rather, it was *a particular effort to counteract the new stability of the GDR*. Once it became clear that East Germans would not revolt over the Berlin Wall, and that the regime had become more or less permanently established, "deligitimizers" had to make all improvements in the region appear to have resulted from the peoples' efforts alone, while the regime was little more than a kind of parasite. At best, it merely benefited from the hard labor of others; at worst it shamelessly exploited it subjects, rewarded undeserving opportunists, or ruled at the behest of a foreign power. In these interpretations, East Germans seemed to go on with life *in spite of* the SED, carrying the Germanness of the region along with them.

In some cases, the story of how "life goes on" played out in smaller towns and villages, away from the usual destinations of Berlin and Leipzig. The regime was clearly present here also, sometimes destructively so, but the *essence* of localities endured nevertheless. In some cases it was the *petit bourgeois* living room of friends or relatives; in others, it was reconstructed historical monuments, or even a screening of an American film. At Rheinsburg, the Prussian retreat of kings and princes, the long history of the place seemed almost tangible to West German Peter Aurich.[50] Here the symbols and iconography of communism had been affixed to older buildings, but seemed oddly out of place on their dilapidated Baroque facades. Meanwhile a restaurant associated with 18th century poet Theodor Fontane had not really changed in character, even if a sign on the exterior informed patrons that it was now under control of the "Worker inspectors" of a nearby *VEB*. But the sign was a kind of warning about the threat posed by "socialist con-

struction." Red Army soldiers had attempted to literally rob the town of its character since 1945 by stealing many statues and monuments, and the local party leadership was determined to rid the place of all "alleged traces of reactionary Junkerdom (*reaktionäre Junkertum*) and Prussian spirits."[51] Locals had saved and hidden a great many statues in their homes. He described them as "deeply conservative" and opposed to all change. To Aurich, the struggle for "historic Rheinsburg" was not about fighting oppression, however, but staving off decline.

The castle was a case in point: some revival of the French-style gardens was pleasing, but the buildings themselves, now a convalescent center, sported the same combination of decay and propaganda banners as other public buildings, its cemetery sporting far too much Russian graffiti. A dedication on an eighteenth century obelisk, brought to the author's mind a Prussian prince, who warned about how quickly historical truth could be buried and forgotten. Aurich contrasted it with a new communist pledge in the local schools that implied a more selective appropriation of memory -- the need to preserve *only* what was good and sensible. The author contrasted "socialism" and "history" and this and other ways as well. The former was manifest in the distance thunder of guns, the sounds of maneuvers of the *Volksarmee*, the latter in the music emanating from the home of a local choir director, in ancient folktales of the region, and in the words of a poem about the castle. Aurich wanted to warn readers of the threats posed by change in the GDR, but implied again and again that "socialism" was at odds with the culture, the inhabitants, the essence of Rheinsburg, and that all three would endure.

"Tradition versus socialism" did not seem as fierce a struggle to Irmgard von der Lühe, who visited the northern coast of Mecklenburg in 1967.[52] This was because she described solid new housing developments, a luxurious seaside resort, and good quality food

and retail service -- all with virtually no reference to politics or ideology. These achievements were all attributable to a vague "they," or "those here," but not the regime. One of the only times the author gave the SED credit (somewhat backhandedly) was for the appearance of the countryside. She noted that cows and fields looked robust, and how the pattern of cooperative farming had inadvertently reproduced the original appearance of the great *Junker* estates.[53]

But at the same time, the divide between state and society was more hinted at then showcased. Once, von der Lühe noted that *Bausoldatan* (ie. conscious objectors to military service) were working on the railway lines; at another point, masses of people were traveling great distances to see the hit Western musical, *My Fair Lady*; elsewhere, the rebuilding of Rostock, heavily damaged during the war, had been accomplished not so much in cooperation with the state, but simply by the "will to live." Then there was the beach outside Bad Doberan, described as a kind of sanctuary, far away from politicians, functionaries, ideologies, and "community forms." A nearby seaside resort for the working class, meanwhile, was not nearly as refined or luxurious as one exclusively design for the "producing intelligentsia."[54] But these observations aside, von der Lühe's intent seemed to be convincing readers that the Communists had not managed to ruin the region, that somehow, efforts at upkeep and development had left its essential nature intact, that in fact they had very little to do with socialism or politics in general. Even more technical problems of development, specifically housing shortages, were discussed by the author in strikingly non-political terms. The rapid development of the port of Rostock, early entry of young skilled workers onto the job market, and low rents relative to wages (making it especially hard for private owners to renovate existing buildings) were all discussed with little chastising of the regime.[55]

But then suddenly, as if by magic, the question of church restoration allowed the author an opportunity to cast the regime as a mortal enemy of the population. In Rostock, bombed churches had met several different fates. One had been removed for a street widening, another remained unrestored, with a tarp covering the exposed nave, a third was partially restored, through contributions from Swedish and other foreign churches. The forth and most historic, the *Mariankirche*, had been dramatically saved from fire-bombing during the war. *None* had received state interest or aid, but nearby the Bad Doberan Minster might not survive without it. Von der Lühe learned that the community was working hard *on its own* to raise a half million marks for a new roof. The reason: obtaining aid through the Organization for the Protection of Monuments would mean tacit acceptance of the regime's atheism. A veritable mass movement had come to the church's rescue:

> Enterprise, trade union, and school field trips bring in, along with their admissions fees, proceeds of many post cards; individual persons give special contributions out of their savings. For they have just read the stones -- the thin, striving columns, the warm red light, the Bible stories carved in wood -- and they proclaim what the teachers, functionaries and activists attempt to withhold from them.[56]

Until this point, anti-communism had hardly even seemed to be the author's agenda. But here was a clear instance of a struggle for "hearts and minds." But what's most striking in this quote is how all "appendages" of the regime, right down to school teachers, were radically demarcated from those who would help save the church.

In the end, then, this oddly "politics free" narration of 1967 Mecklenburg turned sharply political. Up to that point, it seemed that change had been only distantly or tangentally related to the regime's ideology. While Aurich tried to separate Rheinsburg's *past* from its socialist present, von der Lühe seemed determined to separate Mecklenburg's *present* from its socialist *governance*. Odd indeed considering that the SED was notorious for politicizing even its most mundane accomplishments. But somehow the author's take

on Bad Doberan and the rest of the account were two sides of the same coin. Mecklenburg remained distant from socialist ideology, and so did those who helped save the Bad Doberan Minster.

Another visitor of the same year, Joachim Nawrocki, economic correspondent for the conservative *Frankfurter Allegemeine Zeitung*, removed socialist ideology from the equation in a more obvious and novel way.[57] To him, the GDR was not really a socialist state at all, but more like an absolutist state or medieval kingdom, a "fiefdom" (*Fürstentum*) as he called it. Nawrocki was surely right that privilege and inequality were part of the GDR's "nation-building," but he emphasized social inequalities to suggest an almost total separation between the lived experiences of the elite and the masses. What made the state "absolutist" was that the elite was a combination of the highest levels of state and party functionaries, along with intellectual and scientific luminaries.[58] The latter were given all sorts of special privileges, both for their service and for the prestige their presence lent the regime. Like the political elite, they had as access to hard money, scarce consumer goods, the best housing, travel to the West, etc. Notice that their "distance" from ordinary East Germans is described here in spatial terms as well:

> This is the new upper layer in East Germany; not absolutely a new class, because too heterogeneous, but a group that lives separately from the rest of the population, in special, exclusive living quarters or apartment houses, with their own clubs and shopping possibilities and a range of other privileges. Scientists belong to this group, several doctors, artists, a few top journalists, and the highest level of the functionary-hierarchy.[59]

Like eighteenth century kings at court, the SED surrounded itself with such talent to enhance its reputation, while letting the "old nobility" languish. The author described how widows of aristocrats were now forced to sublet rooms of their villas, and, through certain "intermediaries," find buyers for their valuable jewelry. Meanwhile the "new elite" took

on something of the character of a closed social caste:

> Those who belong to East German establishment keep up a sociability in feudal clubs, among which the one in Dresden, over which physicist Manfred von Ardenne presides, is the most well known. . . . The 'Dresden Club' is located in the *Lingner-Schlößchen auf dem Weisen Hirsch* and is run by a noble woman. In an exclusive, subdued atmosphere, waiters in coattails offer service, and one can eat and drink sumptuously, one can read books and newspapers from the West without inhibition. Guests can stay over night there and parties can be celebrated. One is among his like and wants to remain so also . . .[60]

Between this elite and the great mass of "subjects," Nawrocki described a semi-privileged layer of government ministers and industrial managers. They too received preferential treatment regarding food, consumer goods, and even the ability to purchase products earmarked for export. But according to the author, their pay was hardly commensurate with their workload or level of responsibility -- even performance bonuses managers might receive were "unequally distributed." By and large, however, this lowest rung of "the rich" in the GDR were well cared for. The condition of "the poor" was a very different matter.

In a word, the GDR's poor were elderly. Even if the majority of the population were "making a living," according to Nawrocki life was often miserable for seniors. While social services helped make up for their pitiful incomes to an extent, the author demonstrated that most could not make ends meet without the help of their families or "acquaintances." he described the plight of a disabled and retired single woman who, despite increases in the minimum pension, still could not subsist, so she had lived the past 14 years with her daughter. Luckily for her, the daughter used "connections" from her work at one of the satellite parties to get the mother a small new small flat. It was not the only way to obtain one, but otherwise one must demonstrate either "exceptional hardship" or "exceptional persistence," as Balow and other critics had noted previously. To afford the flat, the mother had to receive a "subsidy" from her daughter to get by, in exchange for helping

out at her apartment. The mother could only get by if she was "very careful," but even then she faced the same general problems of availability: coffee, meant and even butter could still be hard to find at times. Nevertheless, she claimed to "have everything" and seemed satisfied.[61]

But Nawrocki had tales of even lower pensions and "pension inequality." Intelligentsia and those "socially active" received a much greater percentage of their former incomes, while the regime seemed to have little interest in supporting its poor. Permission to travel to the West was hardly a boon to the elderly either: there was "welcome money" in many cities (including West Berlin), but staying was *not* practical. Paraphrasing the woman, Nawrocki wrote "she has her daughter in East Berlin, her apartment, and after all old people do not like to be transplanted."[62] Also, very little effort was made to organize them politically. The woman was not recruited for any house meetings, nor encouraged to vote on election days. The "princes" of this fiefdom apparently graded their concern for their subjects on the basis of usefulness alone--unless, of course, a "loyal intercessor" came to their rescue.

Nawrocki's fiefdom was not as alien as von der Lühe's intrusive "atheist regime" in Mecklenburg, but neither so fully denied the legitimacy of the GDR as a contemporary expatriate who returned to Brandenburg the same year. For Horst Mönnich, the region was nothing more than a "fore-field" of the Soviet empire -- a kind of defensive perimeter dictated by the superpower conflict and postwar partition.[63] His travel tale was a grim diatribe on what he believed was the forced *denationalization* of Germans East of the Elbe, and the even more embarrassing "sell out" of the German nation in the West. Ironically, however, this self-styled "stranger in his own land" almost devoted more space to the procedures for *crossing the border* than to his actual experiences *in the GDR*. To him,

the border inspections were equivalent to placing his body and possessions at the mercy of mortal enemies. He reminded readers that of all visitors to the GDR, only West Germans had no representation there, and this left them "fundamentally differentiated," as if they "wear a mark on their forehead."[64] He described a sense of inner dread both before and during the crossing. What if he did not adhere to any number of the rigid, detailed instructions? What would become of this "man without a country?" The questions were never answered, of course, because he *did* receive safe passage, as he had on previous trips into East Berlin. The dramatization was *strictly hypothetical* -- an attempt to play the role of a first-time visitor. But it was also a kind exercise in displacement of frustration and anger he felt toward the East German bureaucracy. He took every petty rule as a *personal violation* -- an attempt to deprive him of his natural right to visit a part of his "fatherland."

But Mönnich wasn't just blowing off steam: he turned his frustration to good purpose, lecturing his readers on the utter falsehood of all names and linguistic devices that divided East and West Germans. All of it denied their common and natural ownership of the land on *both sides* of the iron curtain. He viewed his journey as an opportunity to remind both himself and readers about the "forgotten truth" of German division:

> . . . give me the chance to smash to pieces these stupid western, eastern conceptualizations that I don't know from fiction and produce a different picture of this land of yours and mine, [the kind] we Germans use if we are speaking of Germany; give me the possibility to rectify that which is distorted in the haze of an artificial hate that lies before us.[65]

The passage through the border certainly had not been promising in this regard. He could scarcely believe the young guards could seem so disconnected from a fellow German as they meticulously searched his vehicle. But eventually, he finished narrating border procedures, the journey through East Berlin's S-Bahn and train stations, and the

final rail trip to his childhood home. There, a kind of epiphany was waiting -- one with universal application for all West Germans willing to put aside their fear or reticence and visit the GDR. He "felt as one, who had found something again that he had lost,"[66] and that "something" was the habit of thinking in *all-German* terms.

It returned to him for the first time while changing trains, as he was caught up in a great flood of passengers walking between platforms. Notice in this passage how narration in the *third* person (and more importantly, improvements in the quality of East German footwear) helps to minimize the difference between the author and the locals:

> . . . he is one of them, giving into it, walking with them, letting himself drift along, is happy to be one of them, crowded into their hurrying, their stoicism, their secrets, their expectations, their disappointments, until he stands on the train platform of his childhood longing and releases the suitcase handles from his hands, there he looks down at himself.
> Nothing he sees differentiates him from the others, not even his shoes, which are as little new to him as are those of the others -- was it not so a few years ago? -- had one always recognized [the] one from the West by the shoes, all people looked, if they talked together, at the shoes . . . but that has passed, no one sizes him up suspiciously, and he can hear them speak.[67]

This "reunion" was prelude to the author's sudden realization of the completely artificial nature of *both* Germanies. But it was not simply the "return to the *Heimat*" that broke through years of conditioning. Rather, it was an odd discovery at his final destination that told him all he needed to know. As he thumbed through the new *Autoatlas der Deutschen Demokratische Republik,* which he found in his relatives' living room, he discover that beyond the GDR's western border, where West Germany should appear, there was only blank space. The atlas delimited only the areas *open to East Germans*. Western towns and roads did not exist at all, nor did rivers, forests or mountains. A German road atlas denied the very existence of *over half* of Germany! While describing the faded, *petit bourgeois* decor of a living room in his relatives' house, as if to suggest the lingering, shared past of

East and West Germans, he concluded that for the present, Germany was divided not into states, but "fore-fields" of two military powers. The fore-field of the second power was missing, because . . .

> . . . the memory should be extinguished, every fixed idea be abolished and give way to a fog, which opposite their own forefield makes contours and colors for its occupant. Only here, so persuades the power to the occupants, is it possible for you to exist, is it possible for you to be, to live through the future.[68]

For Mönnich, the occupation period continued, but now only as a projection of super-power conflict, and this was the long and the short of German division. "In reality" he wrote, neither side "lived out of itself, but from the respective patron state."[69] Assuming no degree of sovereignty in either Germany, (the voluntary nature of West Germany's "surrender" making it even more reprehensible), the author was literally a "man without a country" -- invalidating both German states in one stroke. He believed any contrary opinion was simply "forgetting" the truth, and warned his readers against it. He would not even accept the claim of Bonn to represent all Germans! -- this too, he argued, was an act of forgetting. But beyond the facts of Soviet and American domination, Soviet *policies* in their 'forefield' were most disturbing -- not just denial of freedom and basic rights, but their *internationalism*. He argued that the Soviets aimed to "defeat such values, that commonly make up the character of a people," but insisted there was "no identification of the people with its leadership,"[70] But the overarching problem remained foreign occupation itself.

Of course, there was a certain truth to all this: however outmoded his view might have might seemed to many West German contemporaries, Mönnich's uncompromising sense of the indivisible nation was part of a line of German thought that had been battered and questioned, but surely was far from fading simply because of the building of the Wall.

And in geopolitical terms, the Western Allies *de facto* acceptance of the inner-German border implied precisely what he accused, that West Germany served foreign powers (and Western neighbors) as a defensive perimeter. This most complete denial of the increasing stability of the post-Wall GDR, then, was also the sharpest critique of the Federal Republic and the Western Allies by any West German traveler.

Most West Germans who turned their critical attention back on the Federal Republic, however, were not so much interested in denying or deligitimizing the GDR as they were in *combating it*. In other words, their criticisms were meant to strengthen the resolve of West Germans and their leaders in a war of ideas. They made little effort to deligitimize the GDR because, in a way, they took its illegitimacy for granted. Yet they too, assumed that the basic "Germanness" of the region hardly extended to the regime itself. Their observations in the GDR will concern us next.

The "German GDR" II: "They Still Need Our Help"

The previous group were primarily either "muckrakers," or bereaved expatriates, or both. Aside from Mönnich, they rarely criticized West Germany, and they *never* offered readers advice on what they or their government ought to do to minimize the threats the Eastern regime posed to German traditions and values. Indeed, it should be clear from the previous section that the focus of the "deligitimizers" was usually East Germans' *own* responses and efforts -- their petty resistance and the pressure they were under -- which drove home the point that the people *and* the region itself remained intellectually separate from the regime.

Another group of authors, clearly in agreement about this separation, seemed more concerned about *how long it would hold*. Therefore, their observations on the GDR were

interspersed with exhortations and advice for West Germans (and in one case, Americans also). They advised not just on ways to combat the "message" of the SED, but also on the need to understand both the hard political choices East Germans had to make, and why they deserved a degree of respect and admiration. Rarely did these authors offer systematic plans for "ideological offensives," but instead focused on the importance of *dialogue* -- with regime functionaries and ordinary East Germans as well. Their own experiences in the GDR told them that dialogue would yield not just better understanding, but a sense of enduring, shared values. West Germans, in other words, had to be sensitive to the subtleties and difficulties of life in the East--that is understand how it was *different*--but at the same time must not forget the history and culture they had in common with East Germans.

These travel stories unfolded against the same background as those just covered -- from the repressive and seemingly hopeless period just after the building of the Wall to the more stable, settled period of economic improvements in the mid-1960s. The earliest tale, from the fall of 1961, expressed the greatest sense of frustration, even righteous indignation, among East Germans, but in the end seemed to devolve into a clumsy sermon in which the author's own opinions and those of his alleged informants became difficult to distinguish.[71] To dramatize the atmosphere of oppression and decay in the countryside, the anonymous author invoked the terminology of the postwar years in his title: "Everyday Life in the Zone is Gray."[72] The difference from West Germany was apparent from the moment the author's train left Bavaria and crossed the border. The description of the countryside could have been written in 1950: unkempt fields, houses with pealing plaster, neglected train stations, the few visible people seemingly afraid to make eye contact, and the red banners of socialist slogans. "Does Siberia begin here?" a bewildered fellow-trave-

ler asked.[73]

After passing through West Berlin and traveling via the S-Bahn to the East side of the Wall, the author made known a 20-year absence from the region. Apparently this made the militarized border and multiple security checks that much more astounding. But in the end the author had far less to worry about on than journey than did *East* German travelers, who were described as "intimidated, poorly dressed" and being thoroughly searched at baggage control.[74] Later, with time to observe other passengers more closely, the author declared that no one who had not seen East Germans in person could envision the total look of "hopelessness" and "joylessness." They seemed enveloped in both silence and the fear of making eye contact, especially with the passport control officers. These early observations hardly hinted at the defiant attitudes the author would encounter later.

Along the way to the author's home village, there were hints of older values enduring against the demands of the regime and its collectivism. At an unexpectedly long layover at a station restaurant, the author was surprised to learn that West Marks were not accepted. With-out the slightest hesitation, the waiter gave the author his address, saying the author could mail the fare when convenient. When offered the author's address in return, the waiter simply said: "No thank you, that isn't necessary, you already have mine!"[75] The encounter was the first of many that emphasized the continuing and undiminished decency and kindness of East Germans, enhancing the sense of their victimization and suppression by an "alien" regime. Their frank openness was important too. The author's hired driver (the only one available in the author's hometown) remarked sarcastically: "Now you can see everything exactly [as it is]. You can look at our worker- and peasant-paradise exactly [as it is]!"[76] But these views only hinted at the author's general impression of the people in the GDR as sharing a sense of being *abandoned and forgotten*

by West Germans.

The author remained in the village for three weeks, visiting all friends and acquaintances who remained, watching West German television with them, and engaging them in long, private, individual discussions, in which they "attempted to say, what weighed on their hearts."[77] The author believed, like Balow, that they were far more burdened by "unfreedom and the absolute lack of rights" than any material deprivations, which the author assumed had become rather routine experience. But unlike Balow, the author stressed their *fixation on the West*: hoping for relief, but doubting it would come. Despite the author's efforts, many did indeed feel forgotten. The author wanted to make clear their anger (and apparently his own) at West Germans who "in a drunkenness of becoming rich have forgotten that they also must share in the common guilt and the common destiny."[78] The author's informants were angry too because they had been told by the Western powers to "hold out," and had hoped that eventually the West would "rally" to a more "active politics," instead of continuing to react defensively to the Soviets.

The author used the informants' opinions to suggest a radically different approach. This would involve not merely greater solidarity with East Germans, but renouncing West Germany's "egregious" complicity in their oppression.

> To my questions, 'how one here [in the GDR] imagine [this] active politics of the West?' came the consistent answer: The West should break off all economic contact with the East. It was a shame that there were West German firms that went to the fair at Leipzig after August 13. This showed that you value your money bags more than freedom. . . . I objected: 'If we deliver nothing more to you, then your economy will get into even greater difficulties, and you will feel it as hunger and privation.' The answer: 'Our state is long since bankrupt already, there is already no bread! The West has delivered the barbed wire with which we have been locked up in our KZ (concentration camp). It is impossible to buy even one meter of barbed wire for a cow pasture. So it is with all other things that the West delivers. You sell to our industry vitally necessary machines and raw materials, which however are bought not for the benefit of domestic commerce, but only in order to ful-

> fill the orders of the Russians, who use our industrial products for their rearmament.[79]

And just in case the moral appeal was not enough, the discussion ended with a dire warning designed to appeal to West Germans' *self-interest*:

> And the western currency that the SED-state takes from you, is used to pay for spies and saboteurs that the communists support in the West. You pay indeed with interzonal trade for your own hangman and concentration camp guards, because if you continue on in this way it will not be long until you are also taken in.[80]

The plan was seemingly made foolproof, and its logic ironclad as well, by the informants' response to the most important objection -- the problem of a Soviet response. They assured him that the Soviets *would* negotiate, because without Western supplies the entire eco-nomy of the bloc would virtually collapse. This was due to the inferiority of most GDR- and Soviet-bloc manufactures. They believed the great majority of the economy was only "hanging on" because of trade with the West. They even repeated tales told in the postwar years about the economic misery in the U.S.S.R.: that Russians working in the GDR found it a paradise compared to their homeland.[81] Unlike the postwar years, however, this situation did not put them in a bind, but in the position to actually improve their global position by abandoning Germany entirely! Continued division only meant economic stagnation and "bayonet rule." Any attempt to gain control of West Germany could only bring "universal annihilation." But a united Germany would give the Soviets what they needed most: trade with an economic powerhouse. However naively (or self-servingly) they argued that the economic benefit to the Soviets -- "how the immediate future can better fill their pockets with money" -- would outweigh the political costs. This was because of the emerging Sino-Soviet split: "their actual problem is China, not the West!"[82]

But the informants went deeper with their critique of West Germans. In so many words, they, like Mönnich, accused them of discarding their national identity. They questioned their commitment to unification, while emphasizing their own desire for an "economic and morally strong Germany." Then, in a puzzling twist of logic, they added that this very same united Germany would be "a true, active bulwark against communism," hardly a basis for future Soviet security, particular considering that Western European and American conservatives had thought the very same about the Third Reich in the 1930s. But without skipping a beat, the informants (or maybe the author himself?) offered a kind of collective "testimonial" on the unworkability of state socialism in the GDR.

I call it a testimonial because there is no sense of a variety or complexity of individual opinions, but *one voice* explaining everything. First, there was no incentive to work in either agriculture or industry. There was no energy or money among the "dispossessed" to repair buildings or keep up fields, while incompetent party sycophants had control of the new collective farms. Like authors in the previous section, this one used available evidence to suggest a rigid separation between the "untainted" population and the "outsider" government caste. However, under the difficult conditions of food and man-power shortages in the early 1960s, this was not so much the result of principled resistance as *fear of being charged with "sabotage"*: "[anyone] with brains in his head keeps clear of every responsibility, because he knows for certain that he will be made responsible for every failure and [therefore] stands constantly with one foot in prison."[83]

All of this apathy and fear, then, would be transformed in the event of reunification. All East Germans needed was an opportunity to work again for their own benefit, and only the West could provide it. The author (or editor ?) double-spaced the following for emphasis: "with the help of the West, above all however in freedom, our land could

begin to bloom tomorrow!" This plea was not simply for destruction of the East German government, but a kind of "national liberation" from an artificial divide, recalling the views of Balow and Mönnich. The author expounded further on the national feelings of East Germans when speaking about the youth. While previous authors feared that they would be "lost" to the regime, this one believed Marxist-Leninist teachings had awakened their critical resistance. This was made manifest in their refusal to volunteer for enlistment in the *Volksarmee*.[84] In the village where he stayed, over half the youth had withstood "many hours of interrogation and attempts at extortion . . ."[85] According to the author they would except a "general conscription" but would not *freely choose* military service over "peace."[86] Their determination not to volunteer, he believed, was only the tip of an iceberg of passive resistance, which he believed signified the widespread rejection of the regime. The author believed the only reason East Germans did not revolt was the limited hope of success, as exemplified by Soviet garrisons and the "example of Hungary" (meaning the crushed Hungarian Uprising of November 1956). To dramatize the complete alienation of the people from the regime, the author even referred to the SED leadership as *non-German,* "Soviet citizens," while, even the regime's outspoken supporters were not genuinely committed: "There are no communists there, and the few who act as if they are, do so out of fear, out of stupidity, or out of opportunism."[87]

The author had made so much of popular hatred for the regime, however, that it became necessary to qualify these passions to an extent, to convince Western readers that East Germans had not become completely brutalized and vengeful. This was accomplished by stressing the "human warmth" among them, that could only be seen in the interpersonal relations of the private sphere. Like the waiter he met on his first day, he believed East Germans shared a desire to help each other "carry the burden of unfreedom." But be-

yond this, the author believed they sought and struggled to preserve "true spiritual values." The church community was "stronger and livelier" than in West Germany, and continuing interest in church baptisms, weddings, and funerals, as well as the care lavished upon loved ones' graves, spoke of a desire to hold onto and "a past in which life was fuller and more beautiful." The author, however, had *even less* to say about the *political nature* of that past than Balow. The point was that East Germans' longing for a "fuller life," according to the author, was in truth a desire for unity with the West -- that is, if the West had not lost *its* "true spiritual values." In the end, the author was not sure if this was not in fact the case:

> There are people, that live over there (*drüben*); people who, like us, carry the same basic instinct of longing for freedom in their hearts. And if it is not possible for them to realize freedom outwardly, they do look for it inwardly, because each is as free as his thoughts. No barbed-wire fence can change this. And this perhaps gives us occasion to ask how free are we?[88]

Later visitors with advice on how to help East Germans were not as bold in their proposals, and did *not* criticize West Germany for its trade with the GDR, concentrating instead on its failings in the war of propaganda and information. They too, however, at times found West Germans to be lacking in "values" in contrast to East Germans. But the less desperate tone of their reports suggests the end of the harsh conditions following the building of the Wall. The relative liberalization and economic improvement that followed led these visitors to focus on fostering and maintaining *interpersonal contacts*, in some cases even with regime functionaries and cadres. Several authors thought they could either "convert" the younger and more open-minded among them, or, at least, mellow their dogmatic tendencies, thus aiding the cause of internal reform. Another focus was to "educate" readers, not just on what ordinary, apolitical East Germans might need, but what they had achieved as well, and to warn them not to misinterpret the beginnings of "nor-

malization" in the GDR: if life there was no longer marked by constant oppression, fear and hopelessness, there was also *no* true *rapprochement* between most of the people and the regime.

The author who perhaps wrestled most with the implications of the increasing stability of the regime in 1963 began his report from the fall Leipzig fair by pitying the East Germans -- for their lack of consumer goods and the odd, disinfectant smell that seem-ed to pervade everywhere.[89] But Hans Gerstorff earnestly believed the achievements of East German *workers*, if not the regime, were substantial, even if he did not call them a miracle. This was ironic, of course, because it was these achievements, according to the author, that allowed the regime to maintain a thread of legitimacy. Indeed, at the center of its propaganda was *positive reinforcement* of the workers' efforts, while by contrast, the West offered little more in response than "critique and ideological polemics." However hollow the refrain coming from Pankow, it at least offered a sense of *paternalism*, while the harsh attacks of Western media seemed merely to exhaust themselves.

Another problem Gerstorff had with Western media was its sensational revelations of escape routes -- Gerstorff said he was reproached for it repeatedly. In effect, these efforts to discredit the SED only reduced the chances of other would-be escapees. What East Germans really needed from the Western airwaves was *practical advice*. The West should help them adjust to the regime and prevent mutual estrangement while avoiding revelations that could endanger "them and their families."[90] This would involve much more careful consideration of the electronic messages beamed at the GDR. The author stressed that the West must be bold and unconventional, rather than issuing further ideological broadsides. Short on specifics in this area, he did have a good deal more to say about interpersonal contacts.

The problem was that West Germans often failed to take East Germans' feelings into account, nor could they put aside their own preconceptions in forming opinions about the region. One example the author cited, was the continued use of "die Zone" to refer to the GDR. (apparently at the time of writing he did not know his editors had used it in subtitle of *his* article!) Also like several other authors, he felt compelled to explain to those still afraid or otherwise unwilling to visit that only by being among East Germans could one understand the "fundamental facts" that so many in the West denied: namely, that two years after the Wall, the population was "developing" and adapting to the system because they had no other choice. Adaptation among the "17 million" in the East "must go on" (*weitergehen muß*), and above all this meant individual concessions to the demands of the state. Gerstorff did believe that certain opportunities for petty resistance existed, especially if one was a highly valued, skilled worker, but he reminded readers that not resisting did *not* automatically make one an opportunist either. Gerstorff was perhaps the first West German visitor after the building of the Wall to describe East Germans as having more complex emotions than burning hatred or total despair.

But he was *not* describing any sort of *modus vivendi* between the East German regime and people either -- quite the contrary. A certain amount of participation was necessary, he argued, for the population to keep alive the *struggle against the SED.* West Germans must understand this before judging skilled workers who joined the party. From Gerstorff's point of view, most of them neither sought nor desired to join, but refusal could severely hurt career chances, perhaps even "throw his family into misfortune." The author feared that a West German reaction against the party rank and file could only lead to a "forced solidarity" between them and their leaders.[91] But there were clearly other motivations for participation as well, and Gerstorff was the first West German since Nohara

to admit that East Germans benefited from the regime's welfare state -- indeed, that many of them participated for the same reasons West Germans accepted and participated in their own state -- because it fulfilled "fundamental needs."[92]

A rather unlikely example the author gave involved a group of young "street rowdies" he saw in a pub, dressed in leather jackets, smoking American cigarettes, by all appearances no different than Western youths. But they were clearly impressed with another group nearby: young GDR sailors, "strong and disciplined." The appeal was clearly *not* political, but the implied sense of *adventure*. West Germans assumed all male youths in the service of the GDR were saboteurs or deserters, but Gerstorff strongly doubted it in this case. Elsewhere, he observed more practical benefits: in the Baltic shipyards (as we have seen, one of the most obvious regime successes to numerous visitors), the state provided working families with nurseries, health care, cafeterias, even bananas for the little children.![93] Workers there seemed to be the envy of their countrymen.[94] Though the author clearly thought of the regime primarily as "foreign rule," and implied that most East Germans did as well, nonetheless it offered a "German-authoritarian paternalism" that resonated.[95]

We have seen that some foreign visitors went even further, describing the regime as essentially "German" itself. Eventually a few West German visitors would do the same, but not Gerstorff. The regime *tried to appear* German through its welfare state, but otherwise acted to instill a distorted and irrational resentment of the West (and the outside world for that matter) through its propaganda and critical media reports. In effect, he blamed all of East Germans' criticisms of the West on the regime, noting that even the SED's "confirmed opponents" gained "defiant satisfaction" from its reports of problems in Western countries -- tossing aside their usual skepticism for the Eastern press in the

process. Most basically, he felt this was a defense mechanism: East Germans wished to "not appear entirely uninformed" to Western visitors.[96] In this manner, East Germans' resentment of the West seemed easily explained. In effect, they were German countrymen deceived and semi-coerced by the regime, who must nevertheless live under the regime. Gerstorff's task, then, was to convince West Germans that they going forward with their separate existence in the GDR without drifting any further away from the West. Expanding contacts with West Germans was seemingly the only way to maintain this delicate balance, and as we have seen, Gerstorff believed this would only be possible if West Germans made considerable efforts to empathize with the difficult path so many East German workers must tread.

The importance of contact and empathy was at the forefront of several other reports. Here too, the goal was to square the idea of an emerging separate society with a continuing -- and overarching -- sense of commonality between East and West Germans. One such author, an anonymous traveler in late 1963, followed the strategy of Aurich and von der Lühe of emphasis the essentially German essence of the region as well as the population. More than Gerstorff, this author seemed quite convinced that essential Germanness of the society would ultimately overcome the alien and enemy regime. This author not only used more blatantly nationalist language, but also offer direct examples of how interpersonal dialogue could establish and nourish East-West connections, while the problem of propaganda and misinformation seemed less pressing.

This report was published in a journal for expellees from Schlesien, so not surprisingly, its author began by reassuring readers that old familiar landmarks in *Mitteldeutschland* were still there, and that residents were far from "converted to communism."[97] The author had last been in the GDR at the very moment the Wall was built. Returning for the

first time since raised the immediate question of how different East Germans had become in the interim. Had they been "re-educated" to the point where reunification in an "intellectual-spiritual" sense was no longer possible? And had the youth "succumbed" to the "constant propagandistic treatment"? Were they "no longer German?"[98] In retrospect these questions seem the products of fear and paranoia, and yet they are reminders of the impact of the Wall on the contemporary psyche. The author devoted most of the series to assurances that the broad population was indeed still *very* German, and that the few true believers in Communism were certainly not beyond reach of reasoned, pro-Western arguments.

One of the first impressions of the endurance of German culture came during a two-hour layover in Magdeburg. Ruins had been cleared, street cars no longer detoured, and new commericial buildings in the Stalinist-wedding-cake style had replaced them, their store windows offering "attractive displays." But it was the area around the historic Magdeburger Dom that most impressed the author. The old city that once surrounded it was gone. No longer hemmed in by houses or ruins, the cathedral stood out even more starkly, dominating the city, and visible from a great distance. To the author it was a beacon of hope, and because it contained the tomb of Otto the Great, a medieval emperor who defeated Magyar invaders in 955, it was an enduring symbol both of German tradition and Christian faith. The author assumed the regime hated both. The Dom was closed on that particular day, but the authors quickly reassured readers that church services were well attended. Indeed, tolling bells drew the author to a neighboring Catholic church, where many were praying, including youths wearing the blue shirt of the FDJ. "Well, Magdeburg is not yet atheistic inside," the author remarked.[99]

Darkness brought further reassurance. The shopping district became illuminated

by many advertisements, and a fountain bathed in colored lights. To the author, this "show window" for the GDR, however pleasant, was a sign of the regime' need to *compete* with the West, rather than further demarcate itself: "One would think one was in a West European metropolis, and would not remember a thing of red reality, if one didn't notice the name Ernst Thälmann on one lit-up advertisement."[100] What lay behind this "facade" was ultimately more important, however, and it turned out that young people remained as German to the author as the city was Western. The author met two of them during a conversation with an old friend, described as "working in industry," who was joined by an Evangelical pastor and his two sons. The two boys were reluctant to speak until they learned the author was a trusted friend and a West German. But the conversation that followed was apparently less about the "plight of the young" than about more general developments that, very much in the vein of Gerstorff, hinted at a certain normalization: the informants convinced the author that major food shortages were a thing of the past, and equally important, that there was no systematic campaign to destroy the nuclear family. They believed the most serious remaining problem of daily living was actually the low incomes of most families. Like Nawrocki, then, the author found ammunition with which to accuse the regime of betraying its socialist principles, but apparently had expected things to be a good deal worse.

Of course, the author agreed with Gerstorff that improved conditions had not led to any *modus vivendi*. This author, however, focused rather more on the threat that travel restrictions posed to German national identity. In the following passage, however, notice how quickly these frustration convert into anger with Bonn and economic elites in the West, those who had in effect "sold out" the German nation:

> [He] explained that he had a close relative in a north German city. He had not seen him in many years. Maybe now he would also not want to come and visit him.

> This consciousness, that he is not allowed [to travel], that one hinders him from that, that our fatherland has been divided . . . keeps him awake at night. And how long more will it last? What possibilities exist to change this hopeless situation? And right away come bitter reproaches against the *Bundesregierung* and the satiated 'Economic-Miracle children' in the influential circles of the *Bundesrepublik*, who have written off the Germans east of the 'iron curtain.'[101]

But among those "written off," love of the fatherland remained paramount. The author was not the first West German to argue that military service worried East German youth the most because they were "tormented" by the thought that one day they might have to take aim at their Western "countrymen." But after claiming this the author -- very much like the first author of this section -- seemed to leave aside the opinions of informants and engage in a kind of testimonial that sounded much more like an editorial than a recounting of East German opinions. This time, however, the issue was the plight of the churches.

Like previous visitors, the author believed the churches had not simply endured, but were thriving under duress. Nowhere did the regime seem more alien than in this description of church-state conflict:

> The gates of hell have been opened for years, in order to devour the church. The entire power instrument of propaganda stand in the service of atheism, but the church lives and grows.[102]

The author reported gleefully that church attendance was on the rise -- many who had left were returning. Moreover, in some districts *no* children were accepting the secular state confirmation (*Jugendweihe*), most young people were still getting married in churches, and there were hardly any unbaptized infants. The Christian youth who had seemed so "endangered" to pre-Wall authors seemed especially active and interested:

> And especially pleasing was the enthusiasm of the youths, that come consciously to the church. Marxism is trivial, boring, hypocritical. It does not liberate the youth. Indeed, it opens their eyes. Goethe was right [when] he called . . . the devil

> [that] 'part of that power, which always wants evil and always produces good.' Before the war there was more atheism in this city [Leipzig] than now. People have gotten to know Marxism from their own experience.[103]

The author had to admit that the pressure of pre-Wall years had largely ended, but mainly because the regime lacked the resources to target "all groups that were disagreeable to them." Not surprisingly, the pastor reentered the narration at this point. He believed the party still wanted to "exterminate the Christian belief," and the current relaxation resulted only from the failure of pre-vious strategies. He believed the new approach was to simply ignore the church, taking away its martyr status in hopes that it would become irrelevant "a few generations." And yet he was sure this strategy was not working either. But in discussing the relationship between the church hierarchy and the regime, the pastor qualified the author's dichotomy of Germans on the one hand and Communists on the other. Not every official was "an Ulbricht" he remarked. "They are indeed *German* men, those who sit in the offices," (emphasis added) and therefore church-state relations were conducted correctly, if not cordially. Indeed, church leaders were no longer pressured to declare loyalty to the state, and preaching went on in "full freedom."[104]

And as it turned out, there were a *few* areas in which church and state found agreement. The only one the author discussed, however, was the policing of prostitution and sexually explicit printed media. The author and pastor seemed to agree that policies against sexualized content had helped reduce criminality among East German youth, while more liberal policies in the West had resulted in just the opposite. The pastor added that prostitution in the East had been a "terrible plague," but the regime had stomped it out. The church wholeheartedly supported such efforts. However, the conversation ended with frustration, because censorship policies were so blanket that there was a great lack of books as well. Good, contemporary, unpolitical books were sorely lacking in the GDR,

complained the pastor, echoing complaints expressed to Michel Bisect several years earlier.[105] The exchange was the first hint of reaction against social liberalization in the Federal Republic, though the so-called "sexual revolution" was still a few years away. The author anticipated later visitors' fascination with the moral rectitude (or as some put it, the "prudery") of the regime, as well as some passing references to how disciplined and well-behaved East German youth seemed in comparison to the West.

Not traditional, but more contemporary "Germanness" was very much in evidence at Leipzig Fair. Crowds and flags from *both* Germanies, and a variety of Western automobiles, gave the author a feeling of being in Munich or Hamburg. Familiar (and reassuring) architecture joined new buildings that, though Stalinist in some cases, were not entirely disagreeable. Nor was shopping in the city center. The author assured readers that rumors of "outrageous prices" in *HO Laden*, were completely unfounded. Selection, of course, was rather limited, with some over-supplied and others completely lacking. Predictably, the author avoided a Bulgarian restaurant for the most storied establishment in town, Auerbach's Keller, favored haunt of German *and* foreign fair visitors over the years. The author seemed relieved to report that: "there the old Leipzig coziness reigns, which has remained unchanged."[106]

But Leipzig, like Magdeburg, was a scene of the regime's rather awkward attempts to be modern, and even cosmopolitan, as well as historically conscious. The famed Thomaskirche, resting place of J. S. Bach, was clear of surrounding ruins, but inner restoration made the tomb inaccessible. Not far off, travel agents were hawking tours to satellite countries. Strangely enough, Poland cost more to visit than the USSR or the other bloc nations. The streets were crowded with visitors from even farther afield, particularly noticeable were Africans in traditional garb. A discussion with a young Arab visitor sug-

gested the impact of Soviet and East German propaganda in the developing world -- apparently foreign visitors believed the Soviet line regarding German division, the building of the Wall, and even their claims that the the GDR was making more "industrial progress" than the Federal Republic! The author described this discussion as an attempt to explain German division "from a German view" -- again suggesting the complete foreignness and illegitimacy of the Eastern regime. But clearly the encounter was also included to admonish West Germans to take initiative, since the fair gave the SED an important platform with which to influence public opinion.

But the author ultimately indicated that the West must combat the SED's influence primarily within Germany and at the interpersonal level, picking up where Gerstorff had left off. The author urged West Germans not simply to visit and keep personal contacts alive, but to meet and debate *the party rank and file* -- even invite them to visit the West Germany! The author provided an example: a chance meeting at the Leipzig *Hauptbahnhof* with a middle-aged party member. The man knew right away the author was not a local, but when he learned the author was from the West, he mentioned his relatives in a Western city and thus began an engaging discussion.

At first, the author was cautious, praising the reconstruction of Leipzig. Then, however, the author moved to the senselessness of German division and the "cordoning off of the zone."[107] After a bit of hedging, the man admitted that sealing off the GDR had been a "tactical error." He believed the SED "los[t . . . its] nerve, and now the American monopoly-capitalists are rubbing their hands."[108] The man then expressed fears that a clique of West German "capitalists and war criminals" were fomenting another war, and the author moved to convince him otherwise: did he really believed that just 20 West Germans in high positions could start a war? Eventually he admitted he did not. But what

about the former *Wehrmacht* generals in the *Bundeswehr*? the man asked. The author appealed to the lessons of experience.

> 'Were you a soldier in the war?' 'Yes, five years long and then [I was] in a prison camp. I have had enough [of war].' 'Do you believe that a general who knows the [last] war from his own experience would wish a new war upon himself and others?' He could not really believe that either. Now I criticize the signs at several places in the Hauptbahnhof, which blame the Federal Republic for warmongering.[109]

From there, the discussion proceeded to unification. They agreed that a future unified Germany could not be one side simply absorbing the other, but must result from a truly free vote. Apparently, however, they could agree on little more, and instead expressed mutual admiration for reconstruction on both sides of the Elbe. Their "nationalist bond" seemed to reach a crescendo when they agreed further that Leipzigers had rebuilt their city *without* Russian help. Then they parted pleasantly. The course of the conversation seemed to confirm the author's belief that most rank and file party members were "mostly only *German* people, who had fallen victim to the propaganda."[110] (emphasis added)

In the end, however, the discussion was included to support the author's belief that common concerns and opinions still held East and West Germans together -- their politics notwithstanding. But the larger message, expressed both here and in the previous encounter with the young Arab, was that that communist propaganda, indeed the existence of the GDR itself, obscured the truth about "Germany." The shared past and essential common values described in the meeting with the party man suggested that only the Soviets and the leaders of the SED stood in the way of reunification. But what of the young, who lacked the shared past of the war generation? The author used another encounter to suggest their national feelings had been activated by the same issue discussed by the first author in this section -- the threat of military service.

This time, however, the informant was a girl, the daughter of an old friend, from an "old, established Leipzig family," in her final year of high school. She was quite that pressure to join the *Volksarmee* was why so many students had fled to the West, specifically "*so they did not have to shoot at their own people one day.*" (emphasis added). She added that universal conscription, established the year before, was widely disliked, " . . . but the political pressure has diminished." By and large, this was also true for young Christians and other dissenters, who now had more opportunities for admission to higher education. Interestingly, however, the diminished pressure had apparently convinced the daughter to accept her fate (*Schicksal*) in the GDR, and even develop something of a socialist outlook. The author left these complications aside however, turning to the girl's frustrations with lack of unbiased textbooks at her school. She made up for it, in part, by reading from the family's private collection, but even here, good accounts of the *recent past* were sorely lacking. The author did not deny that West German schools and textbooks had also failed to adequately "master" the recent past, but once again, an important observation was left aside to keep the focus on fostering contact and preserving ties.

The simplest way for West Germans to do so was attend the Leipzig fair. The author insisted that West Germans must *not* boycott the fair on moral grounds. It was more important than ever because for all the continued commonalities, the Wall and the ever-lengthening division of Germany were taking their toll. Mention of the fair, once again, brought the author back to concern for international opinion also:

> One should travel to the Leipzig fair. Yes, it is a national duty to travel there, so that [East Germans] may see, that there is also a Germany in the West. We should talk to the people there, even those [of us] who don't have relatives or close acquaintances in Leipzig. Of course those who only listen, and lack the courage to speak up, ought to remain at home. We must have the courage to speak openly and sincerely, especially with foreigners, who otherwise receive only the dished-up red propaganda.[111]

The author also faced the same problem as Gerstorff in having to come to terms with the new stability and certain positive changes in the GDR. Readers must not take any of this to mean that East Germans did not still long for unity, however. The fair remained West Germans' most important opportunity to reassure East Germans "that we have not forgot them, that we have not written them off."[112] Unlike Gerstorff, however, this author did not wrestle with the apparent dilemma faced by workers whose career prospects and family security depended on their joining the SED. Instead, the author expressed a kind of unthinking dread mixed with hope, noting in Weimar that ". . one sees more persons with the SED badge [here] than in Saxony. But how many of them are convinced Marxists?"[113]

Earlier the author had emphasized the survival of historic buildings in and the enduring German character of Halle (which made the regime's propaganda banner and signs seem all the more out of place). But not surprisingly, the Weimar streets named for Communist heroes were pure sacrilege. Fortunately for the author, however, the Goethe and Schiller sites were undefiled, and the author showed an even deeper reverence for the pair, than the postwar visitors we met in Chapter Four. But a bus trip to the nearby former Nazi concentration camp of Buchenwald allowed the author to return to the problem of West Germany's international image in the face of "red propaganda."

On a tour of the camp led by a former inmate (and a uniformed woman who interpreted for foreign visitors), a busload of visitors learned about horse stalls that concealed a secret execution chamber, and a hanging tree (and now missing gallows) just outside. The processes of murder and torture were discussed in graphic detail. The guide made much of the Nazi practice of concealing the impending fate of victims until it was too late, convincing them all the while that they were about to have a physical exam. The author's purpose in recounting it all, how-ever, was not so much to reflect on in the Nazi past, as

show how the SED used that past against West Germany. Just after the guide described the critical role of Communist resisters in the camp, there came, according to the author, "the most confused agitation against the Federal Republic . . ." The target was Hans Globke, author of the official commentary on the 1935 Nuremburg Race Laws, who more recently was Konard Adenauer's chief chancellery aide. But according to the guide, Globke was only a symptom of a much larger problem:

> 'there are two German states: in the GDR all murderers have been punished; in the FRG of Adenauer they are protected.' It was claimed that Globke ordered the murders here. A visitor, probably a Russian, expressed doubts: 'Was Globke really in Buchenwald?' The answer: 'Yes, I can swear to it, not only Globke, but also Generals Speidel, Heusinger, von Kielmansegg.' He named many more names.[114]

Once again, the problem for the author was that all foreigners in the group (even the skeptical Russian) accepted all of these claims as the absolute truth. But the author indicated that the Western press also made far too much of "German crimes." Not exactly a Nazi apologist, the author clearly felt helpless before the litany of half-truths and exaggerations: "all doubts of the visitors were self-confidently refuted," the author commented. But because a planned conclusion to the piece was never published, there was no further advice to West Germans on how to counter the regime's total denial of a past shared with West Germany.

The series concluded in December 1963, just as the New Economic System was beginning to have positive effects.As we saw in the previous chapter, these changes impressed many foreign visitors. However, they did not deter some West Germans from continuing to use experiences in the GDR to formulate approaches and strategies designed to separate East Germans from the SED. As in the postwar years (See Chapter Four), the majority of West German reports from the GDR were written by *private travelers* -- that is, writers (often anonymous) who did not travel as members of the media, and were

therefore not subject to the same restrictions, or the kind of "schmoozing" foreign correspondents were sometimes treated to by the regime.[115] Even in the mid-1960s, while the West German government still officially eschewed all official contacts, there remained considerable controversy as to whether West German correspondents should travel or take up semi permanent posts in the GDR.

The idea of posting correspondents in East Berlin or the GDR, or even their accepting invitations from the regime for temporary visits, clearly remained controversial in the spring of 1964 when Theo Sommer's report appeared in *Die Zeit*. Soon after it, a discussion of theoretical and political problems, but also the opportunities for professional reporting from the GDR were discussed in *Europaische Begegnung* -- and Sommer's findings were singled for some criticism.[116] Nevertheless the report attempted to answer all objections against reporting from the GDR. The author, Manfred Jäger, essentially argued that while it was difficult for correspondents to maintain objectivity in the radically different environment of the GDR, or not be intimidated or misled by the "pedagogical" and "patient" explanations of regime functionaries, it was nonetheless a moral duty, both to West Germany's countrymen in the East and the Western standards of free inquiry and objectivity for Western journalists to forego no opportunity to visit, establish personal contacts in the GDR, and strive for accurate, dispassionate analysis of the regime and society there. The Western truth standard and open, honest communication, would ultimately undermine the SED's legitimacy, particularly if applied to reporting at the grass-roots level. As Jäger put it:

> The duty of objectivity demands this [to forego no opportunity to visit] just as does the solidarity with countrymen, who have to establish their lives under uncomfortable, occasionally inhuman conditions of communist rule.[117]

But of course, such a strategy would involve challenging the "comfortable preju-

dices" of many West Germans still held about the regime -- that in effect it was in nothing but a giant concentration camp -- And this challenge invariably involved balancing positive developments with the essentially dictatorial nature of SED rule. But the search for the truth in the GDR would itself be a victory for the West, and *not* an aid to the Eastern regime:

> Renouncing 'black and white painting' does not make the workers' and peasants' state more attractive, but strengthens the position of a democratic press, which looks after its guaranteed freedom of opinion and information.[118]

To further objections that extended visits to the GDR were surely make reporters more sympathetic to the "socialist cause," Jäger countered that extended visits in Moscow had not made West German reporters less critical, so why would longer stays in the GDR do so? And in any case, correspondents need not fear expulsion, which would only result in a propaganda victory for the West. What Jäger shared with the travelers of this section was a seemingly unshakeable conviction that SED could be overcome -- eventually -- because West and East Germans remained countrymen and the SED could not disguise this basic truth without lies and deceptions. Yet the greater interest in "the truth," as the quote suggests, does imply *a kind of acceptance* of the GDR, in the sense of a willingness to take for granted its functioning reality. And that willingness was ultimately based on the realization that the post-Wall era of the dictatorial oppression and dearth had passed. Those who aimed to fight the GDR *through* the creation of a more nuanced picture there, then, still faced the predicament of Gerstorff and the previous author -- explaining the differences in the GDR while insisting that commonalities with the West remained all-important and worth fighting for. Two visiting West German agricultural researchers, while offering the most complete program for detachment of East Germans from the SED to date, also redefined conditions on the ground in the spring of 1965.

Joseph Müller and Fritz Lachenmaier visited a number of collective farms, as well as agricultural councils, collectives, and schools in Leipzig and Jena.[119] The report started as a memorandum for officials in the Bonn government, but soon found its way into the anti-communist *Deutsche Fragen*. The journal's editors believed it was invaluable to the concerns of inter-German relations. But in truth, the report was at bottom a plan to prevent two German societies from forming at all. The authors were not the first to encounter signs of rather dramatically improved living standards, but still felt the need to stress that continued shabby appearances (both of older unrepaired buildings and newer, prefabricated construction) were deceiving. Most families were now able to cover basic necessities (with two incomes), and even save for "luxury goods," including cars. Like the previous traveler in this section, Müller and Lachmaier stressed that the biggest complaint now heard concerned travel restrictions. But for them, such frustrations did not signal a radical divide between rulers and ruled: they believed instead there were many social layers between the "pig-headed SED man" and the pro-Western opponent.[120]

Müller and Lachmaier described different types of regime functionaries, and several types of youth as well. Their essential "Germanness" was not at issue, but rather their various reasons for participation. If Gerstorff had assumed most workers joined the party to protect their own material interests, these authors created a kind of continuum of personalities, each one having rather mixed motivations for their participation in the party, or in the case of the youth, their preparation for that participation. They also found mixed motives among persons who expressed non-affliation to the SED or Bonn. Not surprisingly, they believed *true* ideological commitment was lacking among almost *all* of these "types," though some thought they could change the system for the better if they worked within it. They believed the largest group in the population rejected the SED out

of basic anticommunism, but also believed that "much was not in order" in the West: "corruption," "criminality," "pursuit of nuclear weapons, former Nazis in high places," but also for the "conspicuous materialism" of the population. But since these views so closely echoed the SED party line, the authors doubted their authenticity. Instead, they believed they were the expressions of a population "forced into hypocrisy" -- that is, learning to hide their true opinions from early childhood. Yet at the same time, they believed SED propaganda -- "unbalanced" information, and "tendentious" arguments -- was starting to have its effect after twenty years, and its ultimate impact in large measure would be deter by the counter-arguments offered by Bonn and West German visitors.[121]

The authors, then, were less interested in engaging functionaries or rank-and-file party members than the broader, unpolitical population, presumably the kind of people private West German travelers would encounter most. Could West Germany "present itself" and "sell itself" in such a way as to truly counteract the SED's influence on the Eastern population? Apparently before even attempting to do so, West Germans had to come to terms with many shortcomings. The authors presented a very critical and high-minded list of changes needed to counter the stinging reproaches previously mentioned -- corruption, criminality, former Nazis in government, etc. -- and, like the first author in this section, insisted that the West's "message" must be more thoughtfully delivered on both radio and television.

Müller and Lachmaier supplied a series of instructions on how to engage East Germans, which actually were "oft heard reproaches" of East German agriculture workers who badly wanted their neighbors to take Western media more seriously:

> 'You must react more [often] to the agitation of the SED, refute it objectively, defend your democracy and point the finger at the non-democracy of ours without a negative connotation.'

> 'You must bring out more of the world of work in West Germany, for example in agriculture. The lead article in *Neues Deutschland* is often dedicated to agriculture. In West German television there is nothing about agriculture. It would be very interesting to us.'
>
> 'You should bring more objective and non-partisan reports of your political life. Not only the sharp critiques of 'Panorama' and 'Report,' which we welcome as evidence of your freedoms, and not only speeches of party politicians, but detailed commentaries, in which this or that decision is objectively justified. Please consider that we, in contrast to you, cannot read everything the next day in the newspaper.'[122]

The authors noted an additional simple suggestion that was perhaps most important of all: more *previews* of upcoming programs, since no printed guides could be had in the East.

The authors' own sense of urgency regarding such improvements was clear enough as they surmised the extent of communist control in the countryside. The building of the Wall, of course, had led to a reduction of political pressure on the collective farms, but well-trained and absolutely loyal functionaries controlled the agricultural councils at the center, county, and district levels. The only groups whose true "inner attitude" remained a mystery were the managers of the collective farms, the "leadership cadres" composed mainly of party members, and the ordinary farm workers. A window onto their views, however, was the behavior and attitudes of the *sons* of collective farmers. Interviews with them revealed their resignation: lacking hope of ever leaving the farms, they were pursuing further agricultural studies: skilled training which would qualify them for higher-paying positions. They did not to take Marxist "political education" seriously, but unfortunately clearly rejected the West German regime as well.

This put Müller and Lachmaier in the difficult position of suggesting that these youths were immune to Marxist-Leninist indoctrination in their studies, but SED

propaganda formed the basis of the their criticisms of the West. But they *did* admit it was partly the West's fault: "democracy in the Federal Republic is not yet perfected," they wrote.[123] This combination of "Eastern indoctrination" and "Western imperfection" was a grave concern, for they believed that even these non-political young workers, as they moved from education to career promotions would "with the help of the party . . . one day unconsciously cross a border, after which there would eventually be no return."[124] They did not elaborate on exactly what lay *beyond* that border, but once again, it was clear that time was *not* on the side of the West. Once again, the simple endurance of the regime and its opportunities for the young were the reasons why.

In the meantime, however, the authors evaluated the remaining connections between the two Germanies, and what West Germans must do to strengthen them. Television and radio were important, as we have seen, but like the two previous visitors, the authors equally emphasized *personal contacts* -- meeting on an individual level. West Ger-mans must not simply travel to the GDR whenever possible, but once there, make every effort to speak in private with East Germans, and offer them a sense of solidarity. They must "bear witness to our will for reunification," look for "connections," and avoid "estrangement." Most importantly West Germans must "*allow no 'special partial state consciousness' to develop.*"[125] (emphasis added) The authors believed both quantity and quality of visitations was lacking. Family visitations had declined, while West German "discontents" with communist inclinations were routinely invited to the GDR. Interpersonal relations also suffered, as other visitors noted, from both East Germans' cautiousness and West Germans' conspicuous displays of wealth. What was needed was for the "responsible-conscientious majority of our countrymen" (*Größtteil unserer verantwortungsbewußten Mitbürger*) to take every opportunity to visit the GDR.[126]

To that end, the authors concluded with a list of instructions for travelers, predominantly common-sense advice. They urged readers to dispel "propaganda caricatures," and misconceptions by paying careful attention to their manners. But when it came to politics, manners must not prevent *engaging in political discussion*. West Germans should extol the superiority of their political system whenever willing discussion partners could be found. Visitors must also be prepared to help strengthen the urge to a more "individualistic kind of life," but at the same time avoid "misuse" of the "currency differential" -- or in other words, defend Western freedoms without "Western arrogance." (But interestingly enough, in a nod to improved conditions in the GDR, they also warned visitors not to overestimate the difference in living standards) The visitor must be school in politics, prepared to deal with "dialectical arguments" and the standard reproaches West Germans received (by which they most likely meant the lack of social solidarity in the West) because "in a totalitarian state, nothing is unpolitical."[127]

And finally, to persuade those who still feared the "iron curtain," the author stressed what travelers had long known about the process:

> In general a journey to middle Germany is neither a risk nor an 'adventure.' Perhaps the reports of the press about incidents at the demarcation line and in middle Germany leave a distorted picture. It is certain that no danger menaces the vast majority of our fellow citizens [East Germans]. Therefore it can be established also that relations in middle Germany [between East and West Germans], despite all legal insecurities, are such that no adventures are possible.[128]

None of this, of course, prevented delays or obstructions *in the issuing of travel permits*. West Germans must persevere, they authors wrote, and never get discouraged.

More generally, they also believed tourism, and German-German "cultural- and sporting events" must be encouraged and cultivated more systematically, but did not explain how the ordinary traveler might influence such developments. But in all of these vi-

sits, the goal was *not* to make "converts" from among the "thin layers" of functionaries and others who were true believers (what they called as the "missionary approach").[129] Rather, the object was to "out-maneuver" regime supporters through *greater numbers* and *better arguments*: if visitors could back their assertions with facts, they should not to be afraid of debate. "Confrontation does not equal subversion," they wrote, meaning there was nothing wrong with arguing good points emphatically. However, in all this they were clearly wrestling with the difficulty presented by improved economic conditions, feeling a need to reemphasize that arguments against the regime should never be based on "false judgments" regarding living standards. But their final recommendation, reminding of Gerstorff, was about travel *in reverse*:

> Every visit[or] to us should be better looked after: The pensioner-visit, because humanness is of immediate importance, but also the visits of functionaries, because the conversations with them give us a possibility to testify to our attitude. Much enlightenment and objective 'setting-right' is possible.[130]

And indeed, "enlightenment" was a well-chosen term, because these authors and the others in this section expressed a strong confidence that *rational arguments* would invariably succeed, and "turn" East Germans from the obvious deceptions and weaknesses of the SED's counterarguments. At the same time, however, Müller and Lachmaier, also like the previous authors, stress in this quote and elsewhere the need to create a sense of human solidarity and a rekindling of national feelings by playing down the rather obvious and growing differences between East and West Germans.

Those differences were even more on the mind of a traveler to the Leipzig fair the following spring, Peter Jochen Winters.[131] What jumped out immediately for Winters was increasing pride in reconstruction and improvements in the city. For him, it was more clear than ever that West Germans *must* acknowledge the achievements of East Germans -

- if not the Eastern *regime* -- as they sought to intensify contacts with them. He began by recounting an experience in the city center. While photographing a ruin from the war, he was criticized by a local woman who wanted more attention paid to nearby improvements: the city post office and a nearby hotel, both of which she claimed were "world standard" (*Weltniveau*).

Indeed, "world standard" had become the new slogan in the GDR, Winters wrote: the term was used by the broader population, and the functionaries as well, to express their pride in many areas of achievement. Winters was not pleased with all the regime's building plans -- like von der Lühe he was skeptical about its declared interest in preserving monuments -- but had to admit that a number of restorations and artistic endeavors were indeed "world standard." The leadership was apparently more self-confident as well, if tolerance of a Leipzig cabaret featuring pointed political lampoons was any indication. But Winters felt the SED was not taking advantage of its apparent success: achieving "world standard" ought to include opening the region to tour groups, from both West Germany and the rest of Western Europe. Even if more restorations and accommodations were still needed (not to mention an "attractive ad campaign" and less bureaucracy), in the end it surely would all be worth it, he believed, particularly in terms of hard currency receipts.

Rather than view the GDR's achievements in light of the political and economic distance traveled since August 1961, Winters wondered why the regime trailed behind other Soviet bloc countries in tourism. But then, remembering that the GDR remained a kind of special case, he hesitated.

> Now naturally, for citizens of the Federal Republic a vacation in Yugoslavia or Rumania is a world away from a visit to Weimar. This was clear to me when I ate lunch in a local restaurant in Weimar. Suddenly a busload of the National People's Army broke in. Young chaps, whose conversations were hardly different from the

> kind of soldiers in the *Bundeswehr,* had been together on an outing. I would have liked to sit with them, drink a beer with them, talk with them. I didn't do it. What would have happened, if they had been members of the border patrols (*Grenzeinheiten*)? A couple of them wore decorations. Had he shot refugees, prevented a breach of the border? The wall in Berlin, minefields, and the shoot [to kill] order are insurmountable barriers.[132]

But these feelings of estrangement, and even terror, were qualified immediately. Unwilling to learn more about these particular soldiers, the author assured readers that the border guards were a source of "headaches" for the SED, "above all for the younger, pragmatic, thinking comrades." Discussions with functionaries indicated that these younger soldiers, even those in high positions, were particularly uncomfortable with their "shoot to kill orders," which they described as a "relic of the cold war."

But ultimately Winters' agenda lay not with young soldiers, or other ordinary East Germans for that matter, but with the younger generation of party functionaries, the "young technocrats" who, as we have seen, were expected to be agents of change. He agreed with contemporaries that they were "reasonable people," but also that they remained "convinced communists." It seemed that "reasonable" here had replaced "German" in descriptions of officials who remained approachable, but Winters did not refer to them as "misled." However, like the anonymous visitor in *Schlesische Rundschau*, Winters believed they were essential to West German approaches to the GDR. Like foreign visitors, the author was sure the younger generation believed they were sharply critical of the "old guard of dogmatics at the top and the pig-headed *apparatchiks* in the lower ranks of the party- and state-hierarchy."[133] But at the same time, he believed West German "outreach" to the GDR was now more complicated given the regime's strengthened position: "They know also that *at most* a few thousand of their subjects would leave for the West for good, if today the walls and barbed wire came down."[134] (emphasis added) As we

will see, Winters was not the first West German to make such a definitive claim, but it did not deter him from arguing that the "new generation" of party members *could* be cultivated and even turned to the Western cause.

To do so, however, as previous authors noted, required offering them a truer picture of the West than either West German television *or Neues Deutschland* was offering. The solution, also suggested earlier, was to invite them (as private persons) to West Germany. West Germans need not fear meeting and engaging them, for such invitations could set important precedents: if the East German regime permitted them, then it would be all the more difficult to continue to deny "normal citizens" travel permission; if it did not, it would at least be a propaganda victory for the West.

Winters, then, like the "strategizers" believed in the ultimate triumph of facts over ideology -- that is, if the facts were consistently and widely advertised. His choice of influential members of the younger generations, however, suggests a more strategic, targeted approach. But neither nor the others in this group considered the "lure of prosperity." It is interesting that only the anonymous visitor from 1961 talked about the economic possibilities of unification, and this is almost certainly because the apparent stability of the GDR in the years that followed would have made such promises seem ridiculous, but also because any hint at such possibilities appear belittling to East Germans.

But as for the younger generation of cadres, Winters' focus is different than those foreign visitors and other observers of the mid-1960s who wondered about the assumed openness and flexibility of the younger generation of technocrats. While some foreign authors, as noted, hoped that their increasing importance in the processes of economic production and planning might increase their political influence, thereby mellowing the ideo-logical rigidity of the leadership, Winters hoped instead that they could operate as

enemies within the party -- that is if West Germans could sufficiently influence them with the idea that SED ideologues were their *common enemy*, *not* simply the enemy of progress in the GDR.

But in truth, Winters placed more emphasis on encouraging West German *visitors* than West German *hosts*. Perhaps he assumed readers would prefer to travel themselves, rather than invite East Germans into their homes. Also, when it came to the question of engaging the technocrats, Winters was surprisingly cautious, and differently focused than Müller and Lachmaier. He urged readers to *not* argue for major changes -- such as the lifting of travel restrictions which the regime would never agree to -- even if it would aid their cause to do so. Instead this advocate of "converting" young cadres stressed the need to seek *compromise*, which he believed would in the end produce more general benefits. The ultimate reason for this "go-slow" approach, according to the author, was the self-image of the regime. To Winters, the SED leaders remained insecure, *petit bourgeois* upstarts -- social climbers who were too unsure of their status to take risks. To other writers in the 1960s, and later historians as well, this was an attitude to some extent *shared* by the leaders *and* the population. But the author had little to say about the attitudes of the non-political majority, save advice to readers to meet them at the Leipzig fair. But he also encouraged travel there for the simple reason of keeping East Germany familiar to West Germans: "A trip in the eastern part of our fatherland is in any case a journey into a world that is becoming strange to us," he lamented.[135]

But if his experiences was any guide, such a journey would do much to remind visitors that the GDR still remained essentially a *German region*. Despite many shortages of food and consumer goods, as well as omnipresent police, Winters found many survivals of older times -- which, oddly enough, combined with certain new achievements to

create a sense of feeling "at home." The apparent lack of change since the war even made him nostalgic: old and smoking locomotives, cobble-stoned streets, houses in need of plaster or new paint. Like so many previous West German visitors, he stressed that Soviet dismantling and lack of Marshall aid meant straight comparisons between East and West were inappropriate. But given their different starting point, wrote the author, "our middle German countrymen" have achieved "remarkable things," and are continuing "upwards" even if not yet rivaling the West.[136]

Part of this upward trend contrasted with the nostalgic side of the region: newer, diesel locomotives and electrified railways, construction projects, repaired buildings and entirely new ones. Winters, however credited his "countrymen" only, *not* the SED:

> And even if we value nothing of the socialist form of economics, nevertheless we must admire the tough industry of the middle German population, with which they -- I would almost like to say: in spite of socialism -- have produced [so] much.[137]

This denial of any credit to the regime suggests the continued belief that the leaders and the people remained radically separate and opposed. Indeed ,Winters did not even raise the issue of workers' joining the party to improve their career prospects. Meanwhile, at the Leipzig fair, Winters reminded of regime critics in Chapter 5 when he described the latest exhibits of Soviet bloc technology as evidence a desire to *imitate the West*, perhaps even to join it:

> If it [world standard] is . . . a dumb slogan, it nevertheless reveals a phenomena that should actually please us. The striving for world standard is the orientation toward the material relations of the 'capitalist states.' In this respect it would be a natural task to support our countrymen in their efforts toward [achieving] the world standard in their products.[138]

This apparent openness to the West suggested that the counterpart to inter-personal contacts ought to be intensified inter-German trade as quickly as possible (Winters

called it "interzonal trade" to reemphasize his lack of recognition of the GDR). He believed this was especially critical given the unfair trade agreements forced on the GDR by the Soviets, which prevented its *Weltniveau* products from reaching the West. He chided the West German government for not guaranteeing trade credits, as had the governments of the U.S., France, and Great Britain--each for eight years or longer--because for Winters, increased trade seemed the next logical step in the struggle to reorient East Germans toward the West and, eventually, reunify the two Germanies. Over the long term, he believed increased trade could only improve the living conditions of East Germans, thus gaining the West a distinct political advantage. The days of calling for boycotts were clearly over, and in the long run, Winters would be proven right about the value of Western goods in the East. But in the meantime, he seemed to underestimate the complexity of Eastern views regarding both the West and the achievements in the GDR. While he was right that East Germans were proud of them, he could not see them as connected in any way to the popularity of the Eastern social welfare state. Rather he assumed East Germans unwillingness to turn away from the SED and toward was simply a product of confusion and manipulation. Perhaps this was why he concluded by emphasizing that trade must *only be part* of the West German outreach to the East, that there was indeed "broad pallet of possibilities for all-German politics," and that ordinary West Germans must become part of a mass movement of "witnesses for German unity." The trick, however, was to find ways to acknowledge the GDR's (read East German peoples') separate achievements in the process.

The German GDR III: Roots of an "Other Germany"

Early in 1963 an anonymous West German visitor argued that a kind of accommodation was under-way between the East German regime and population.[139] This author was *not* the first German-speaking writer to point out that the GDR must be accepted in the West -- for the time being, at least[140] -- but *was* the first to suggest that something more than simply "making do" was occurring in East German society. Indeed, the author hinted that a minority were feeling a greater sense of belonging to the land and people, if not to the regime itself. In 1964 a second author followed with what was a daring hypothesis for a West German: that an East German "state identity" did in fact exist. More than simple approval for the SED's welfare state, it expressed itself in a feeling of *belonging* to a distinct state and society.

It seemed West Germans were at last beginning to accept what had already seemed clear to many foreign visitors -- that East Germans' attachment to socialist achievements and resentment of the West had created a different worldview among them. But did this make them a completely distinct group of people? Foreign visitors had offered little guidance in this area. For them, East Germans had been "learning to live" with the SED and had developed their own set of opinions and expectations, but it was not clear that they saw them as a distinct *nation*. Not surprisingly, when West Germans began at last to argue that a "state identity" existed in the GDR, they too stopped short of calling East Germans a separate people. Such a concept was arguably problematic for *anyone* visiting the GDR in the 1950s or 1960s. But of course, the claim of a state identity would have been highly controversial in the Federal Republic, to many even unthinkable. For this reason (and their own dislike of the East German regime) most of the authors we will meet in this section based their arguments for a state identity, or simply a "feeling at home" among

East Germans on *geopolitical realism.* The relative permanence of the GDR behind the Wall meant that any serious attempt to understand the plight of East Germans must begin with the assumption that there were two Germans states. For these authors, no policies, direct contacts, or reminders of the artificial nature of the postwar settlement should prevent acceptance that the GDR was a state, however detestable, and that its population was diverging from the West because they too were accepting that reality.

But taking this position did not mean the authors were in any way sympathetic to the SED, nor were they *un*sympathetic to the complexities and difficulties of "accepting reality" in the GDR. In fact it will become apparent below that their inability to completely separate emotionally from East Germans made them especially sensitive to their predicaments -- arguably more so than the travelers in the previous two sections. At the same time, however, their conscious acceptance of German division arguably gave them greater awareness of many subtle *differences* between themselves and East Germans. All West German visitors had "lessons" for their readers as they compared the East with West Germany, but none were as conscious of *themselves* as they interacted with those beyond the Wall as the authors we will meet presently.

For foreign visitors, as we have seen, applying terms like "Russian colony" to the GDR did *not* mean denying its existence. Nor did foreigners (after the early 1950s at least) offer much advice on how to overcome communist control. And most pertinent to this section, foreign visitors had limited capacity (and lack of pressing interest) to examine and evaluate minute and subtle differences of behavior and language between West and East Germans. In short, getting a "true picture" of the GDR did *not* force foreign visitors into the political controversies, much less the problems of definition and self-definition, that it did West Germans.

At the same time, however, the West German travelers offer insights into the individual processes of accommodation to the regime that *complement* the findings of a number of foreign visitors in the previous chapter. Both groups of writers offer impressions from personal experiences and one-on-one conversations that betray certain positive feelings about life in the GDR which have seldom been investigated by scholars of the GDR. Both groups too described the growing trend towards what might be called "grudging approval" for the regime, even if the West German authors, as noted, only began to report such views a few years *after* the building of the Wall. Though in most cases the evidence is presented rather impressionistically, it does roughly correspond to the trajectory outlined by West German sociologist Hans Apel.[141] He found that increased numbers of East Germans were expressing a preference for the East German "system" over its Western counterpart from the mid-to-late 1950s, and, after a brief interruption, continued to do so from 1962 to 1966. It is important to stress that despite differences of emphasis and point of view, the following authors share a good deal with contemporary foreign visitors.

Central to this shared evaluation was the belief that increased numbers of East Germans did not simply accept, but to a limited extent approved of the regime as both a social welfare provider and guarantor of law and order. Of course, for all but the most daring, the Wall made *some* accommodation with the regime unavoidable. But what the authors in question have in common is the view that East Germans did *not* simply face the inevitable, but in some respects *embraced it*, particularly in the mid-to-late 1960s. But this "embrace" did not involve patriotic fanfare or even vocalized approval. Rather, it was a quiet sense of being comfortable and familiar with a certain routine of things. It was made manifest in speech -- in the use of terms like "our republic" -- even though they

were accompanied with no expression of sympathy for either the leadership or Marxist ideology -- but also in more general feelings that in spite of all difficulties, the GDR was "where one lived."

Despite the pronounced lack of enthusiasm in such attitudes, West Germans as well as foreigners believed they were strongly influenced by the regime's control of the media -- and this in spite of the seemingly universal viewing of West German television. Surely of equal importance, as recent scholars have noted, was rational calculation by individual East Germans. But this emphasis on the more selfish, even defiant bargaining, or "negotiation" by workers and individuals at the local level is almost entirely *absent* from the accounts of contemporary visitors. For them, rational calculation, playing out against the backdrop of a "socialist environment," did not appear wholly selfish or anti-regime, and certainly not system-destabilizing. Instead, lived experience in a separate culture and way of life (which in any case was unlikely to change) was shaping East Germans self-understanding *even as* they complained about and criticized the regime. This meant that "rational calculation" appeared to involve a degree of "going along," and even feeling somewhat satisfied, with one's involvement in workplaces, schools, local organizations, and the like.

I want to argue that from the perspective of the following authors in particular, there was no conflict between East Germans' general approval of socialist achievements and their individual, rational calculation. Those authors who accepted the Wall and division as more or less permanent tended to view East Germans as doing the exact same thing, and acting accordingly. They found self interest often closely intertwined with attitudes that promoted and reflected a certain stability, personal opinions of the regime, the party, or Marxism notwithstanding. While its certainly true that West German visitors in

particular *brought out* the "defensive pride" in East Germans -- a sense of embattlement and history of struggle, and sense of participation in a non-capitalist system -- these attitudes clearly derived from the *total* experience of life in the GDR, of which the confronting of visitors from the capitalist West was only a small part.

As mentioned, the first post-Wall West German visitor who described a certain amount of "feeling at home" in the GDR was among those trying to advise West Germans to accept the reality of two Germanies, at least for the time being, without legitimizing the regime or denying the continuing difficulties faced by most East Germans. The report presented the same bleak and forlorn landscape described by visitors in the previous two sections. However, in discussions with friends and in random encounters, the author found opinions ranging from resignation to acceptance to genuine support -- and even the most resigned persons found some solace in participation. The following passage begins with the very same hopeless desolation described by anonymous author of November 1961 (pages 506-512), but inquiries revealed a small bit of satisfaction amid the harsh conditions. When a train conductress wanted to know who had invited the author to the GDR, and the author simply replied "friends," the woman was quite puzzled:

> 'Friends? But you have to have a reason. Who travels to the GDR without a reason?' 'I just want to know what life is like here.' The conductress looked at me seriously and quizzically and then she looked out the window at the deserted [*menschenleere*] land. 'Do you like it here?' Not wanting to lie, I said, 'I am from the East.' The conductress stood up and took her hat. She had the broad, hard hands of an agricultural worker. 'Did you assist with the harvest this past fall?' I asked. 'Naturally.' One must also do [what's necessary] for [food] provisioning. If not, one can't expect there to be enough. But it was also fun for me.' Then she wished me 'a pleasant stay in the GDR' and left. . . At the next train station there was a saying that was different than all those I had read up until then on the journey toward S. It almost rhymed: Do something for the Republic -- then you can make your own luck![142]

This sense of pulling together in difficult circumstances might easily have been charac-

terized as achievement *in spite of* the regime, as it was for Winters. But here social solidarity was clearly linked with the regime's ideals, if not the governing system itself.

The same connection was more clear at the first stop of the author's journey, though in this case the way was somewhat eased by the status of the author's "friends." They were a doctor father and pharmacist daughter, seemingly outside of the world of shortage and drudgery around them. The author might have used their good fortune to launch into a diatribe on in-equality à la Nawrocki, but the father and daughter were possessed of a sense of the social responsibility that came with their privileges. The author was wowed by their top-of-the-line Soviet *Moskowitsch* automobile, complete with a cyrillic-lettered logo, which the daughter, Ellen, drove to the train station to meet him. Like the vehicle, she was elegant and stylish, oddly out of place in a "colorless world." But all her privileges, including the car, ski trips, horses, and vacations on the Black Sea, did not allow her access to the thing she valued most: her husband in West Berlin.

Yet this final piece of information, so easy to use against the regime, was left aside as the author described meeting her father, Dr. F., at their luxurious home. They toasted their reunion with champagne, in a scene containing a curious mixture of attitudes: commitment and selfishness, but also guilt and insecurity, along with the author's continued fascination with Ellen:

> 'A hearty welcome to the GDR', he said. 'We are still completely damned capitalists, as you can see, but we are also helping with the construction of socialism.' He laughed and Ellen toasted him: 'to your health, worthy doctor of the people!' 'To yours, worthy pharmacist of the people!' (naturally, neither one had such a title, but it was fun for them to address each other in such fashion. Maybe this is also a way to vent.) 'Hopefully you won't go around like a rich aunt, who is indignant about the backwardness of her poor relatives,' said Ellen. She wore a tight-fitting dress out of luminous colorful Chinese silk and looked enchanting.[143]

But if the two *were* venting, Dr. F. later made it clear that their toasts were not meant to

be completely ironic. Further on, he defended life in the GDR, as well as his own efforts to seek accommodation with the regime.

> 'You are now in a poor, sick, and bled-white land. But we love it--in spite of it all. And your 'poor brothers and sisters in the East'--can't you just once think of something different?--don't just suffer. One cannot only suffer if one wants to live. We go on living according to our [own] way and perhaps many among us are happier and more satisfied than many in the West. The lesson that we have to learn day by day is: Marxists are people too. As a doctor I must also heal them. Here, they are now our neighbors.'[144]

This is one of the earliest (and clearest) statements of what I would call *embracing the inevitable*, rather than *passively accepting* it. Its also clear that in the process the doctor has been changed as well. The "embrace" implies a demand for *self*-definition, rather than accepting an external stereo-type. But beyond what cannot be changed, there is a hint of feelings expressed in the postwar period: that at the local level, the GDR is a more rational and even more pleasant place than the West. But even if one did *not* believe this, certainly coexistence with the regime appears possible.

The author also described a very different East German lifestyle, full of struggles and lacking luxuries, *but also* embracing what possibilities there were. The author's destination was the home of friends Ernst and Anja. Their hospitality outdid Ellen's and Doctor F.'s. Like most West German visitors, the author kept both locations secret, but admitted that travel permits outside Berlin or Leipzig at fair time remained so restricted in early 1963 that the Eastern authorities could easily have identified them if they so chose. But the problems of a cold winter seemed far more pressing for Ernst, Anja, and their children, and it was to this predicament that the author quickly turned.

Despite feeding five large tile stoves with brown coal, the family house was deathly cold inside -- the thermostat never climbed above 12 degrees centigrade. According to Anja, each family member wore three sweaters to compensate -- 18 sweaters in all --

though GDR woolens were quite expensive and wore out far too quickly. But in an equally chilly (and crumbling) church, the author attended a Sunday service that suggested once again that East Germans made virtue out of necessity. The pastor suggested that the challenges confronting Christians ought actually to be understood as *opportunities*. The following quote from his sermon reminds of the views of Nohara's intellectuals, though from a different ideological perspective. Once again, East Germans basically opposed to the SED understood themselves *as separate from West Germans*, precisely because of their different sociopolitical context:

> 'I wouldn't want to to live in any other world than here and now. Isn't it much easier to be Christians than [its is for] our brothers and sisters in the West? Where does it say in the Bible that to the Christian belongs the freedom of the Western world?' Where the spirit of the Lord is, freedom is there. 'I believe, we must be thankful that we are allowed to live here.'[145]

The author wondered what a regime informant would have made of this "thankfulness," but drew no conclusions. Instead, the narration turned to a familiar West German theme -- the trials and tribulations of the shopper, in this case amid lingering ruins in the center of the village. A few quality products hardly made up for the limited availability or poor quality of most other items. The one aspect of shopping that was *not* difficult was getting through traffic -- the evening "rush hour" amounted to four cars in forty minutes.

But these familiar elements of daily experience were clearly not as important to the author or his hosts as the on-going effects of the Wall in the GDR. Discussion with Ernst and Anja about a recent failed escape attempt allowed the author to present life beyond the Wall as both a tragedy *and* an opportunity--indeed even a kind of blessing. Here is Ernst's reaction to the news:

> 'Such madness' . . . 'as if one could not live in this Germany also--naturally the Wall is a misfortune for millions. And it is grotesque, that you have to travel from Hamburg to the Oder [River] in order then to tell my mother in West Berlin how

> things are going with us. But I also know that the Wall has made many people calmer here. They stand now with both legs in this world and have finished sneaking glances at the West. How many have been ruined by that [*dabei kaputt gegangen*]. You [in the West] must try to imagine this being pulled between flight plans and the will to remain here. We know what that means. It was a difficult decision not to leave.' Then he laughed and said: 'We learn here to live between *nitschewo* and to make the best of it.'

The Russian (*nitschewo*) was followed by "to make the best of it" *in English* to emphasize the apparent misuse of East Germans by *both sides*: exploitation by the USSR, and little besides entreaties to "hold on" from the Anglo-Americans.

But more important, the quote implies that in spite of all difficulties, many East Germans -- though clearly not all -- felt some sense of normality in the GDR, and did so even *before* the building of the Wall -- when Ernst and Anja decided to remain. Furthermore, the quote implies that West Germans should *not* encourage East Germans to attempt further escapes. And, most importantly, through Ernst, the author has made the clear "Germanness" of the GDR -- his friend calling it "this Germany also." At the author's "going away party" this last point was reinforced. The cross section of East German intelligentsia in attendance -- Ellen and Dr. F., a female book-keeper from a collective farm, a female high school teacher, "a horticulture architect" and his musician wife -- was described as "these other Germans." To the author they were proof that the best and brightest had *not* abandoned the GDR wholesale -- indeed they were a more "alert and lively" group than any the author had lately experienced. The author could accept two Germanies not simply because to do otherwise was "madness," but also because the GDR truly was a thriving *German* society.

The term "state identity" was not used by this author, partly because the reality of separate Eastern state did not seem to include (or even require) active participation or even allegiance. Rather, The "stateness" of the GDR seemed based mainly on doing what

must be done simply to make a functioning society possible. On the other hand, the author insisted there was an "other Germany" with "other Germans," with participation being a *societal* duty, if not a *political* one, as the case of Dr. F. makes clear. It could reasonably be concluded, however, that both he and earlier writers like Nohara were describing a *de facto* state identity, without calling it that. But when the term *was* actually used, beginning in 1964, it really pointed more to pride in and sense of co-ownership of the regime's achievements (which we have seen had been described by many visitors long before) not simply feeling a certain duty to one's fellow citizens.

As we have seen, Western travelers to the GDR began to produce book-length accounts of their travels in the mid-1960s, emphasizing the new stability and, despite their different foci, a turning away from the totalitarian interpretations of the regime that had been dominant in the 1950s.[146] Some of these visitors tended to believe that recent economic improvements within the "New Economic System" suggested new possibilities for change in the GDR's relationship to the West. For our present purposes, however, a handful of West German authors in particular also suggested a kind of paradigm shift in Western understandings of relations between the East German regime *and the population*. The latter's famous dislike for the SED leadership was be-coming somewhat normalized, even ritualized, while the notorious "grumbling" of East Germans began to be interpreted differently. Not only did it now seem an outlet, a release that acted as a kind of safety valve, but the *focus* of the grumbling, the shortcomings that drew the ire of the citizenry, suggested a general expectation of the regime to provide at least a minimal living standard, and therefore a tacit acceptance of its right to rule. This acceptance of the regime, though implying little to no appreciation, was what made the first West German visitor declare that an East German state identity had come into being.

That visitor was Theo Sommer, introduced in the previous chapter. At the time he was political editor of the liberal Hamburg weekly *Die Zeit*, and would go on later to be its co-owner.[147] Traveling with two other West German journalists in the GDR in spring 1964, he approached the issue cautiously. To begin, like Gerstorff, he questioned the appropriateness of the term "Soviet Zone," *not* because the GDR ought to be given *de facto* recognition, but because the term simply did not adequately to describe the "different civility" (*Andersartigkeit*) the visitor found there. That civility turned out to be two sided: like later writers, Sommer saw GDR society as divided between public and private cultures. But he believed the public culture was divided as well, into *two facades*. The first, facing West, consisted of the Wall, guard towers, barbed wire, heavily-armed police, and, in the background, the Red Army. The second, facing inward, consisted of propaganda signs, banners, and activities directed at the East German people. The private cul-ture of the GDR he believed to be radically separate, and out of time, a pre-World War II landscape of sleepy villages, where a rare automobile rumbled over cobble-stone streets, and plaster crumbled from old building facades. It was quite a bit like the villages and small towns described by visitors a decade earlier.[148]

But Sommer was actually more interested (and somewhat irritated by) the developments in GDR cities. Their new, prefabricated and standardized housing, were only a modest improvement over the Stalinist-era "wedding-cake" flats of the postwar years. But it was also in the cities that night life -- though limited by comparison to the West -- did suggest a limited cultural opinions. In Dresden and several other cities, bars and dance clubs were full of life, young people, and "the Twist." And those young people were now allowed, in some cases even encouraged, to wear Western clothing, the young to sport American "crew-cut" hairstyles, the young women to don lipstick and nail polish -- all

that was once condemned as "treacherous expressions of *petit bourgeois* thinking."[149] Other visitors in this period made much of the apparent predicament youthful rebellion posed to the regime.[150] But for present purposes, "youthful expression" suggests that the Sommer's (and other author's conceptions) of a rigid divide between public and private worlds was somewhat wide of the mark. A more humorous example of the interchange of private and public followed shortly:

> In one city I even saw neon ads for a socialist deodorant. Maybe with this they will manage to defeat the GDR-smell in the end, [that smell] which hangs in hotel corridors and lecture halls, in office rooms and restaurants, a mixture of Lysol, too-often-burned fat, and burned cigarettes, in which Lysol dominates.[151]

Another change was setting in, even more telling of the new stability and economic advance. Sommer believed that not only had hunger been banished -- along with the infamous long lines in front of grocery stores -- but that "corpulence" was becoming a problem.[152] But it was the oft noted dawn of "advanced consumerism" -- the availability of televisions and consumer appliances through installment buying -- that convinced Sommer that the regime had taken a major step forward in its quest for legitimacy, even if Western living standards were still unattained.

> The regime is now capable of fulfilling the elementary needs of the people. The wishes of the zone population are already directed less to elementary things and more along the lines of various luxuries, to things a bit exquisite; to a piece of French soap or a certain brand of American razor blade. They don't want chocolate, but good chocolate, maybe from Switzerland; not cigarettes, but Western cigarettes; not nylons, but seamless nylons. And they dream of their own car, like the people on this side of the border--but the cars have a delivery time of many years and are three times as expensive as on our side.[153]

Notice that the author, despite his expressed concerns, slipped back into the use of "the zone" seemingly out of habit. But the solidity of the regime seemed beyond doubt. The "bled-white land" of the previous author had been transformed in single year: statistics

showed a favorable balance of trade, leaps in agricultural production, industrial targets fulfilled. But as the quote suggests, fulfilling basic needs had only *increased* popular expectations for better consumer goods, and grumbling, therefore was growing rather than ebbing.

But according to the author, this new discontent was tolerated so long as it did not question "the fundamentals of the regime." What's more, he learned from the district party chairman of Leipzig that the vast majority of complaints brought before the district council in the second half of 1963 had been "processed." The chairman assured Sommer that this two-way process was indicative of the fact that "the people today have settled their relationship to their state."[154] The man insisted that the people "scolded" the regime not to distance themselves from it, but as a sign of dedication to their own work. This passage reminded a lot of the previous author's focus on dedicated, thoughtful workers and intelligentsia, but Sommer was not so immediately convinced.

Part of the reason was that he found *considerable disillusion* with work, with state-owned stores, and with communism itself. A young FDJ member who worked in a city construction office (probably in Leipzig) was appalled by the cheating, shirking of responsibility, juggling of statistics, and overlooking of minor defects in products. Six months earlier he had left university, but already saw the future as "very gloomy." In Berlin, meanwhile, an angry customer at a state-owned store loudly complained about a "no-exchange" policy, exclaiming that such "pigheadedness" would never be possible "if this were a private bookstore." At the Goethe house in Weimar, when the museum director pointed out details of a set of 16th century Italian plates, explaining that there was no red in the color scheme because at that time red could not be baked, one visitor blurted out "thank God!" When the director asked "why thank God?" the man said simply "I

prefer blue." For a moment the entire group seemed to hold its breath. Then their guide, an FDJ member, tried to introduce a bit of levity: "unconscious expression of hostility for the Republic, ha ha!" Perhaps the youth was right: these were examples of *venting*, ultimately unthreatening to the regime. Sommer, however, described them not to agree that East Germans had "settled their relation with their state," but to demonstrate that the opposition the regime now faced was very *low-level,* and rather easily neutralized or deflected. In some cases this even involved backtracking or conceding to popular pressure, such as the recent repeal of a rule requiring purchasers of new televisions to promise in writing never to watch West German channels.

But once again, like grumbling, T.V. was another vent, or safety valve. Anticipating how many later scholars would explain regime stability in the 1970s and 80s, Sommer understood that the toleration of a whole host of apparently non-conformist and dissenting activities was a sign of the SED's increased strength.

> The SED knows quite exactly how these things lie, but they close both eyes to it. The tolerance threshold of the regime is today higher than earlier--in any case regarding the population (not regarding rebellious [party] comrades). And so painfully strikes the explanation that is offered to an SED member as well as a non-member[;] it is something gruesomely obvious: only the Wall has made it possible. Since then, for the first time, there has been economic progress, because the 'bleeding-out process' ended and the regime can reliably count the labor-power potential of the land; since then has it been possible to loosen the internal pressure for the first time.[155]

While the previous author had seen the Wall as calming the *population*, Sommer saw it as calming the *SED* as well. We have seen that even the harshest critics from the West could not deny the dramatic economic progress by 1964 (though the claim that it was the "first time" was wide of the mark), while the relative liberalization that came with it was greeted with rather less enthusiasm. Sommer, however, saw *political relaxation* as the key: essentially it gave the regime a sense of solidity and normality such that its per-

manence seemed assured. Generally approval of the social welfare system or economic achievements only crept into to the explanation further along. In the following quote Sommer initially suggests accommodation was simply accepting the inevitable, but his description of the process of adjustments indicates East Germans' pride in their achievements as well:

> . . . . a state consciousness does exist in the GDR. Many of my discussion partners, [who were] also critics of the regime, spoke naturally of their 'republic': 'We have done such and such in the Republic . . .', 'our Republic has . . .' It is still a timid state consciousness, a 'subconscious state consciousness', as an FDJ functionary expressed it, but nevertheless [it is] already clearly enough pronounced to allow the differentness of the GDR, its difference from the Federal Republic to become visible--and the fact is that the population in increasing measure expects it. . . . Psychologically this is thoroughly explainable. The majority of the people do not remain [for] an undetermined time in a defiant pose or attitude of resistance; they come to an arrangement with their environment, if this environment appears to be unalterable. The people of the GDR also do not want the achievement, which in spite of all external and internal differences in the course of time they have accomplished, laughed at or scoffed at: in the end they are their own achievements. Out of this creator's pride (*Schöpferstolz*) comes a certain identification; out of the identification[,] in the end self-satisfaction (*Sich-Abfinden*).[156]

As we have seen, foreign visitors described similar speech ('our republic'), and defensive pride *before* the post-Wall stabilization, in some cases even before the Wall itself. Sommer's further comments on a certain envy of the West, as well as a critical distance from it, also echoed previous visitors. His informants in particular did not approve of West German approaches to health care and education, as well as the presence of former Nazis in high places. Sommer felt the need to stress that these views were *not* naive or misinformed, assuring readers that they knew GDR newspapers were far from objective. But, "if only half of what is printed in our newspapers is true, then that is bad enough!"[157]

Sommer, though far from the first to describe such attitudes, is to my knowledge the first German-speaking visitor, writing for a West German audience, to claim that an

East German state consciousness existed. Many West German contemporaries, some of who, as noted, traveled several years later, would have nothing of such a concept, refusing even to consider that such an identity was *possible*. But clearly the combination of the finality of the Wall and the economic success that followed made an Eastern state identity the logical conclusion: the Wall, ironically, made it possible at last to suggest "the unsuggestible," but more important for this argument, made *previous trends* more difficult to deny. Even the dreams of his informants for a better future: some kind of merging of the East and West systems which jettisoned the "disadvantages" of both and "combined their advantages in a new model" -- had been noted by previous visitors.[158]

But because the Wall, Sommer did not make much of those dreams, or East Germans pride in "their" achievements, but instead, as suggested above, believed the state identity of East Germans consisted of a quiet and inward-looking "making the best of it." Perhaps their quiescence was the main reason so many visitors failed to notice it, along with the obvious mental distance that remained between the functionaries and the general population.

> . . . the people are silent, building fences around their private lives, marking themselves off from the officials and devoting themselves to their work, which for the near future at least promises a pale reflection of the prosperity they hear extolled daily on western television. . . . In one word: they live for their different interests, hopes and hobbies. No wonder that philately has become a mass movement, flies and fishing a sport of the people. The private sphere serves once again as a place of refuge, in which one is saved from the grasp of politics, the intimate sphere likewise (an old friend proudly showed me pictures of a nudist beach where he loved to spend his summer vacation with other 'producers of culture'). Education and training also offers a refuge. Sometimes it appears . . . as if the entire GDR is a giant working-education union; the people crowded into specialist courses and night schools, into circles and correspondent's courses. In a country where the wage and salary levels are fixed in iron, only through [skills] in which he "qualifies himself" is the individual capable of working his way up to an 'income-leader.'[159]

Despite the author's determination here to stress the separation between the people and

the regime, the process of education clearly *mingled* the purely private with the public. But the important point about the "state consciousness" is that it was emerging in spite of (or perhaps because of) the a-political (even selfish) retreatism later described as a "niche society," and later still as a field of conflict and negotiation. The sheer "weight" of German division -- which cannot always been seen in documents on the relation between the regime and the population -- is important to consider in this process. The quote suggests how throwing themselves into existing opportunities for both *self*-development (the private sphere) and career advancement (participation in the outer sphere[160]) meant living a life constantly compared with that of West Germans, one different from theirs, but *also* removed from communist ideology and regime expectations.[161]

But the feelings of state identity and social cohesion made possible by the Wall were, of course, also somewhat tentative and incomplete *because of it*. Questioning East Germans about what would happen if the border were reopened made this clear. Some believed a mad stampede would ensue; others that East Germans only wanted the right to travel where they pleased, and would soon return. But one man believed they would return only to prevent the Wall from being rebuilt! -- a rather odd melding of feeling at home *and* fearing increased coercion. Sommer did not suggest what view predominated, but did find evidence of persistent feelings of connection to the West. East Berlin had been reopened to West Berliners for the first time on Christmas day 1963, and the author found broad support for another one-day opening in 1964. But virtually no one he asked believed the West officially recognize the GDR to get a more liberal travel agreement. Such attitudes suggested (once again) that a sense of separate identity *coexisted* with indifference to the regime. Sommer estimated that 80-90% of the population simply sought accommodation. For all the talk of "our republic," attitudes toward the regime remained

far from supportive:

> The spectrum of their feelings reaches from deepest resignation all the way to pure opportunism; in between there are all shades of of hopelessness and hope, from skeptical distance from the regime to skeptical nearness.[162]

In the end, then, Sommer discounted both pride in economic achievement and the sense of living in separate state, due to the lack of any real alternative to the current situation. Yet, however inadvertently, Sommer had shown that the divide between the public and private, and by extension between politics and daily life, was far from complete, and this allowed for a considerable amount of social integration: practices and opportunities that went beyond simply "making the best of it." Unable (or unwilling?) to break out of the paradigm of forced accommodation, he used an odd -- perhaps even inappropriate -- analogy to stress the essential on which the East German state consciousness rested. An informant told him that during the Swedish occupation of the Thirty Years War, they had buried German farmers in mud. Only the lucky ones' heads remained above ground. But if anyone of them cried out, surely their head would be pushed under too. It reminded of the Stalinist terror, and seeming allowed no possibility for accommodation. But for all of this, the idea of the East Germans as an emerging separate people was finally out in the open.

How different -- and arguably, more realistic -- were the views of Sommer and the previous author compared with those expressed in the previous two sections seems clear enough. But the controversy surrounding Western journalists visiting the GDR -- and the reticence of private persons with no family or business interests to visit -- continued through the end of the decade. Indicative of the controversy is the fact that even Manfred Jäger, who as we have seen believed West German journalists had a *duty* both to visit and to apply Western standards of objectivity to their reports, jumped to conclusions in using Sommer's subtitle: "Journey to a Distant Land" to point up the tendency of some

authors to overexoticize their experiences in the GDR.[163] Stranger still was the fact that in the end, Jäger recommended *not* a journalistic account, but the work of a private traveler, Dieter Hildebrandt, who crossed between East and West Berlin on business numerous times from August 1961 to early 1964.[164]

Hildebrandt shared with Sommer (and the author before him) a belief in coming to terms with division, at least in a tentative way. However, while his East Germans were also "making the best of it," he portrayed a good deal more agony and expressions of helplessness in the process. Many of those he wrote about had views that oddly combined the observations of visitors like Balow, Winters, and Sommer: holding out against the day of unity, they were also making do and participating in socialist organizations. A young man who joined the SED admitted to Hildebrandt that cooperation (*Mitmachen*) was the only real alternative.[165] The man had broke with his Stalinist stepfather several years earlier, therefore seeming an unlikely candidate indeed for party membership. Another young husband, seemingly prematurely aged from despair, expressed a feeling a having been totally abandoned by West Germans. Then he apologized to his Western guest, explaining that "we are all slightly cracked here."[166] The author believed most parents of young children had decided to stop expressing critical opinions in the home, because if their children heard contradictory messages from those of school, they would become "schizophrenic."[167]

There were many other encounters with persons in far less agony: though some truly feared the regime, others were "imperturbable," still others were "happily convinced."[168] But driving Hildebrandt's narrative were two important points: first, that daily life in the GDR was really quite ordinary, despite popular imaginings in the West of the "Ulbricht-terror" or the "Concentration camp 'DDR'";[169] and second, that shedding illu-

sions about the East meant "in-creasing the distance of the countrymen on the other side of the Wall from our own goings-on."[170] But as the term "countrymen" suggests, recognizing distance did *not* mean letting go of *all* ties. Quite the contrary: those who castigated business travelers and casual visitors to the GDR as "capitulating to communism" did so, according to the author, because they misunderstood that truly effective resistance -- both by East Germans *and* Western visitors -- had to be based on a *realistic* understanding of daily life and politics. "Sobriety is a better basis for skepticism, for resistance, than fear or a vague resentment,"[171] he wrote, while at the same emphasizing that everyday life was not based solely on "grinding rage (*Wutknirschen*) and hateful feelings toward the regime."[172]

Like Sommer, Hildebrandt was trying to stress that accommodation to the regime, though basically forced upon East Germans, did *not* make them helpless, suffering victims, but unlike him, Hildebrandt was more wedded to the idea of somehow overcoming the Eastern regime, rather than accepting it as unalterable. But I hesitate to put him in the previous category of visitors, the "strategizers"--those who offered strategies for resisting the regime--because he occupies a more precarious position. His determination to understand East German society *on its own terms*, involved, to some extent at least, reifying the very regime he wished to help ultimately overcome. Such reification is apparent in certain passages that hinted at a state consciousness. For example, in the following quote of a man from Bitterfeld:

> 'Do you know . . . I am not a party member, but one must say one thing: Here the people learn, the workers think. The party teaches them to think, but naturally they don't always think in the way of the party. You in the West live simply with yourselves, the workers have no need whatever to think things over, it all goes just fine for them. All of you should think more.'[173]

Hildebrandt almost certainly included the quote to stress more *subtle differences* between

East and West Germans, and perhaps to scold West Germans for their apparent complacency. And yet, the quote can also be seen as an example of a nascent state consciousness, specifically what Nohara described as an identification with the *social system* -- in part at least -- though not the regime itself. The unintended consequences of regime-sponsored education here are not simply a failure to "convert" workers. They have produced a sense of separateness from, and even a measure of contempt for, West Germans and their "freedom." Only hinted at here is the related Western problem of "affluenza" discussed in the previous chapter, but as we will see below, not as important to West German visitors.

In the years following the travels of Sommer and Hildebrandt, the West German government remained preoccupied primarily with domestic concerns, as did the Eastern government. While there was economic advance and a relative liberalization of social policies in the GDR -- at least until the Czech crisis of the summer of 1968 -- an important political transformation was underway in West Germany. The post-Adenauer era began in 1963 with the "father of the Federal Republic" retiring under a cloud of scandal. His replacement, former Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard, mastermind of the *Wirtschaftswunder*, ran into both political and economic difficulties, eventually including an industrial recession, leading to speculation in East Berlin that the SPD might soon come to power in Bonn, a prospect that clearly worried Ulbricht.[174] As it turned out, however, the CDU actually *increased* its strength in 1965 elections -- and maintained its coalition with the FDP. But the weakening economy led to a budget crises in 1966, which Erhard attempted to counter by proposing more interventionist policies, including higher taxes, which were anathema to the FDP ministers in his cabinet. They resigned, thus opening the door to the SPD to share power for the first time since the early 1930s. Growing radicalism on both the left and right suggested the advisability of the move as well.[175] In the resulting "Grand

Coalition" of November 1966, former West Berlin mayor Willy Brandt became foreign minister. Thus began a new era of West German politics, even if the critical changes in relations with the GDR and Eastern Europe would not commence until 1969.

In the meantime, the Grand Coalition actually gave the SED "more ammunition" to use directly against the SPD, accusing its leaders of allying themselves "with reaction" in working with CDU Chancellor Georg Kiesinger -- a former member of the Nazi Party -- and for serving as junior partner in a regime that did nothing to silence rightwing parties demanding a restoration of Germany's 1937 borders.[176] Though the Two Germanies did not drift further apart in the mid-1960s, they remained, each to the other, at arm's length, without formal diplomatic relations, but still trading on a rather limited basis. The number of West German visitors gradually increased, but the GDR still lacked the infrastructure to encourage large-scale tourism. Meanwhile, West Germany became mired in domestic turmoil: frustration with the SPD's participation in the Grand Coalition, the rise of youth culture and university attendance, and outrage over the Vietnam War triggered a boisterous extra-parliamentary opposition on the left.[177]

The lack of any normalization of inter-German relations in this era is clearly reflected in the travel stories of the previous two sections. Denying the existence of the GDR, as did Mönnich, and, by implication at least, von der Lühe (both in 1967) and strategies for weakening SED rule and 'Westernizing" East Germans elaborated by Müller, Lachmaier, and Winters in 1965-1966, presupposed a continuation of mutual non-recognition. Of course, these authors described some noticeable change and material improvement in the GDR, but suggested only accommodation "under duress." In effect, the official view that there was no East German State was matched by the assumption that no Eastern state consciousness had developed. But a small number of visitors continued to

insist there already was such a consciousness. The author who offered the most empirical evidence for it was Hans Apel, introduced in the previous chapter.

Hans Apel, who we met in the previous chapter, argued in 1967 that East Germans not only preferred the East German system to the West German, but that a significant number had already felt this way *even before* the Wall was built. His point for the contemporary German context was that the "official dictum" that 90 % of the Eastern population were opposed to the regime, a proposition that had been widely debated in the FRG since at least 1965, must now be set aside altogether.[178]

The basic finding of his interviews, so contrary to most of contemporaries, was that over the previous decade an increasing number of East Germans were expressing a "positive attitude" toward the East German state, and clearly choosing it over the West German state. The key basis for this support was the desire to retain the welfare state and socialized industries -- and in no case support the return of capitalism -- despite a general sense that much about the East German system must be improved. Apel estimated that 40% of East Germans already held this view in 1964, the same year Sommer found a emerging state consciousness that was quite a bit less positive.[179] By 1966, he believed 71% of East Germans consciously chose the Eastern system over the West.[180] No contemporary West German visitor suggested this level of approval.

There are several reasons, however, why Apel's estimates ought to be believed. Most obviously, there is the dramatic economic upturn of 1964-5, the impact of which was probably only felt in its entirety by 1966. The other is Sommer's (and his anonymous predecessors') point about the changed nature of grumbling and frustration -- no longer concerning basic needs, and much less challenging of the system. This and the views of foreign visitors discussed previously suggest at least a basis for approving of the

East German social system, as do the comments visitors such as Wechsburg reported (Chapter Five), suggesting no desire for the return of private ownership of industry. Its arguable that the general approval for "socialist achievements" *carried over* from the late 1950s and then, combined with the apparent finality of the Wall and a degree of prosperity, produced a more solid sense of belonging than most West Germans contemporaries imagined -- or cared to imagine.

We have seen that numerous West German critics persisted in various efforts to deny that the GDR was a real state at all, or if it was, something very far from its socialist ideals. We have also seen that other, more pragmatic observers assumed that the values of the West, particularly freedom of information and free speech, if "pitched" to the East Germans properly, could sway them to the Western cause. In this view, East Germans could still remain staunch opponents of the regime (with the help of continued Western contacts) even as they were working within the Eastern system and making lives for themselves. Its arguable that this political-ideological agenda, and the assumptions that followed from it, combined with the "culture of grumbling" that was ubiquitous in the GDR to render invisible the general approval for socialized production and the Eastern welfare state. Apel emphasized that these views usually had to be drawn out of them through lengthy discussions -- sometimes over the course of several meetings -- as they became increasingly comfortable with the interviewing process. This "method" involved a level of comfort and intimacy that most West German visitors likely did not have with anyone they did not know prior to their visits. And, in any case, we have seen that many West German visitors did not recognize economic progress as an achievement of the regime at all. Perhaps the question of preference for socialism over capitalism was not even deemed worth asking, given the obvious lack of choices for the vast majority of East Ger-

mans.

Apel's findings were published in a period in which increasing numbers of West Germans, particularly in the younger generation, were coming to believe that since the division of Germany could not be altered, and the GDR was basically an established state, the time had come for some form of mutual recognition. By early 1969 a West German traveler to the GDR had published a book on his experiences which argued that East Germans did possess a separate identity, that there were in fact two Germanies, and it was time for Bonn to revise its "outdated" policies and take steps towards official recognition.[181] Wolfgang Nette arrived at these controversial conclusions after many visits to East Berlin and the GDR both before and after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. He focused considerable attention on the experiences of daily life in order to elucidate the subtle differences between East and West Germans.[182]

The younger generation of SED party members (whom Nette called "hard-boiled Communists") occupied his attention as well. He came to believe that this group, whatever its liberal impulses, continued to identify with the Eastern regime, anticipating the change of view P. C. Ludz himself experienced in the early 1970s (see Chapter Five). But theirs' was *not* an absolute ideological allegiance. The young communists were less attached to their state than their Western counterparts, their commitment based on a combination of survival instincts and "psychological repression." What this meant was that in spite of their lack of dogmatism *and* their fascination with Western technological advances, they still instinctively defended the regime, and the suppression of the "Prague Spring" as well.[183] Nette implied that similar processes were at work in the general population.

He believed some limited identification with the regime was necessary as a "com-

pensation for tension": by which he apparently meant avoiding a life of *psychological dissidence* (ie. feeling mentally stranded halfway between East and West). Yet his focus on daily life suggested *another* psychological issue. In Nette's view, East German identity was not so much about making peace with the regime as *confronting its daily consequences*. The latter included the many small difficulties in government services and consumer goods, which brought out the oft-cited Eastern "inferiority complex" in the presence of West German visitors. It was not simply the automatic assumption that Western goods were always better. Everyday problems placed East Germans in a seemingly perpetual defensive mode, forcing them to constantly apologize or make excuses for little failings of the system (ie. the milk did not arrive on time). In response, West Germans had to restrain expectations learned under prosperity, and not let the "anger over certain inadequacies" upset them. These small differences in behavior and expectations convinced Nette that there truly were two German peoples, despite the pretense by the "political establishment" in the West.[184]

Further proof lay in the strategies implemented by East Germans to adjust to life under dictatorship, what the author referred to as the "psychology of everyday survival." Nette was not the first to note in this regard the "tendency toward *petit-bourgeois*-ness" -- a retreatism colored by the tastes and behaviors of the lower middle class of the prewar years.[185] But he was among the first visitors to suggest that the regime *actually encouraged* this behavior, allowing its citizens a temporary respite from the "daily problems of socialism" (*Problematik des sozialistichen Alltags*).[186] This turned out to be only part of the social solidarity the author observed in local communities. Housewives worked in "chains," alerting each other when long-awaited food-stuffs suddenly appeared in stores, and offered "neighborly support" in many other small ways: the "solidarity of the house-

wives" as Nette called it.[187] There was also a general willingness of neighbors to help each other in numerous ways -- particularly if one had certain expertise -- such as with the installation of a washing machine or lending small household items. All of this seemed far more routine than in West Germany.[188]

The author insisted, however, that this sense of community was *unpolitical* -- that the regime would have liked to use it to increase its control over society, but could not. But this solidarity *did* derive from the *ultimate design* of the social system: according to the author it was rooted in the GDR's relative equality of incomes and its limited opportunities for consumption: almost everyone but a tiny elite -- the "political cream" as Nette called them -- had to drive the same small, basic cars and live in similar 2-room apartments. "The exceptions only confirm the rule," he wrote. While the elite seemed to exist on a separate, higher plane, the ordinary East German, observing the lifestyle shared with the "rest of his fellow humans," was developing a sense of "self-security" without feelings of inferiority. And this security had come about in tandem with a diminished feeling of subservience to the state. The "all-powerful regime" was now replaced by one that while still powerful, allowed opportunities to "fundamentally critique the details" of governance, if not the social order itself.[189] Nette was adamant, however, that *none* of this implied a *class-conscious* solidarity. He characterized the neighborliness of East Germans as a "private cooperativeness" (*private Hilfsbereitschaft*),[190] while the "self-security" seemed to include only a minimal sense of pride in socialist achievements.

The one area of the social welfare system which Nette *did* suggest was highly valued was education -- for both the youth and adults. Like Sommer, he noted that nearly everyone seemed to be studying to improve their qualifications and thereby their earnings. But his lack of comment on the *political aspects* of the educational system drew the ire of

a contemporary West German reviewer, Hans Kauffman. When Nette suggested that a key barrier to future integration of the two Germanies would be the widespread approval of the younger generation for "freedom of study," and when he praised the high quality of education in polytechnical secondary schools, Kauffman accused him of blindness to the politicization of the educational system. To this accusation Kauffman linked Nette's downplaying of the persistence of the "cult of personality" surrounding Walter Ulbricht, as well as his rather optimistic view of post-invasion relations between East Berlin and Prague, and warned that Nette was too busy noting progressive changes to always bear in mind the essential dictatorial nature of the regime. To Kauffman, then, the book blatantly misrepresented the total reality of the GDR, so much so that he asked why the author presumed to title it *DDR Report* in the first place![191]

Such criticism, of course, raises the question of whether the study of subjective, individual or daily life experience under *any* dictatorship is *ever* unproblematic. Criticisms of "empathetic" approaches to aspects of everyday life in the Third Reich in particular have sounded rather like the objections of Kauffman, although with an even greater sense of moral urgency.[192] It seemed that for most West Germans, reporting such perspectives on life in the GDR was only acceptable if tales of outright oppression or forms of quiet resistance were also included. But as Sommer's and Nette's observations suggest, in the 1960s it was becoming increasingly hard to deny that in many respects everyday life was relatively ordinary, and often unpolitical. And, more important for this argument, so was the East German state consciousness -- the sense of "our republic" -- which was tied to (somewhat) improved conditions, welfare benefits, and the daily small difficulties confronting the population, rather any sort of endorsement of communist ideology or the ruling elite.

After Nette, discussion about East German identity took place in a new era in West German politics, in which a new "social-liberal coalition" came to power in Bonn, and Willy Brandt, now chancellor, initiated *Ostpolitik,* an attempt to normalize relations first with Germany's Eastern neighbors, and then, between the two German states. Under Brandt, Bonn switched its official line from reunification to improving relations with Pankow, and working for "increased permeability" of the inter-German border for greater ease of "individual human contacts."[193] Eventually, in December 1972 *Ostpolitik* culminated in the "Basic Treaty" recognizing two Germanies, though the Federal Republic never accorded full diplomatic recognition to the GDR. These policies were fiercely opposed by conservative West Germans, and, initially at least, the SED itself, but they also created space for the argument that East Germans more positively accepted their state.

This is clear in two West German correspondent reports from the early 1970s. In them, socialist achievements appear more widely accepted, and the regime more traditionally German -- or simply "normal" -- than ever before. The two phenomena clearly appear mutually reinforcing also. To be sure, such views probably only represented the liberal wing of the West German media, but nevertheless, it was at this point that not only the landscape and villages of the GDR began to appear quintessentially German, but the East German regime was described in much the same way. The style and substance of socialist rule now seemed oddly reminiscent of the Prussian past, as did the behaviors and attitudes of East Germans themselves. All of this seemed to represent the growing view in West Germany on the need for improved relations, based on an acceptance that the division of German was unchangeable for the foreseeable future. When one correspondent could write that East Germans were "saying yes to their state,"[194] part of the reason was that a far greater number of West Germany now seemed prepared not to approve of,

but at least tolerate the other Germany.

Ostpolitik was ultimately based on the view that the only way for the two Germanies to ever be reunited was to first accept each others' statehood. This was Nette's view as well, and it clearly broke new ground. But before 1970, only Apel believed that the GDR's citizens freely chose to be part of the East state. The two correspondents we will meet presently, one writing in *Die Zeit*, the other in *Der Spiegel* now had more of a geopolitical space in which to elaborate on the idea of two Germanies -- space provided by the gradual process of negotiation between Brandt's government and the SED.

Andreas Kohlschütter, though native to Switzerland, was the first reporter in the mainstream West German media who dared suggest that East Germans *approved* of life in the GDR. Their "saying yes to their regime" -- here more than ever before -- meant not accepting the inevitable, but actually embracing it. The author used the metaphor of a train station: East Germans "no longer feel like they are in the waiting room"; at last, or so it seemed, they were "on their way." Of course, this was an odd metaphor considering the Wall and the iron curtain, but it suggested that the slow process of stepping nearer to the regime was at last complete. Still, like Nette and Sommer, Kohlschütter warned readers that the the "reality" of life in the GDR was complex and "difficult to categorize." It was nothing like West Germans imagined, but also nothing like the official line of the SED.

For the previous six years, most visitors had noted that the Wall, however monstrous, had solidified the Eastern economy and SED rule, and to some degree settled the future for most East Germans. Kohlschütter, however, began by illuminating the *dilemma* still posed by the Wall: how it often made it *harder* for East Germans to accept the regime. A Chemistry student from Merseburg, with no West German relatives *and* firm roots in the East told him "I remain speech-less every time I stand before this Wall." A

female school teacher noted the silence when she and her students stood before the Brandenburg Gate. She told him it felt like reaching the end of the world.[195]

But like earlier foreign visitors, Kohlschütter found East Germans who contended that the Wall had been necessary. The following quote is, of course, about developments of years before, but it seemed it had only become possible to write of them now that increasing numbers of West Germans were accepting the idea of two Germanies:

> Again and again I heard: 'the Wall was necessary if the GDR was not to bleed to death and go to the dogs.' Or 'right after the Wall we came along economically.'[196]

The quote hints again at a semiconscious identification with "our republic," and more broadly with a way of life: one's lot in life depended on the success of the larger economic whole. Other changes which dated from years before explained the GDR's stability, and apparently, the willingness of ordinary people to make a go of life there. The author was astonished when collective farmers told him *in the presence of* an SED functionary that they mourned the loss of their private farms. Didn't they risk imprisonment for such an open, anti-regime statement? No, they replied, because the Wall had changed things so dramatically: "[such open expression] would not have been possible before the Wall, then the people would have been locked up by the police."[197] It was at this point that Kohlschütter declared that the Wall had ended the "provisional period" of the GDR -- a view that foreign visitors had held, as noted above, as early as 1964. If the effects of the Wall were only apparent with time, West German understandings of those effects were delayed quite a bit longer. Continuing on as if it were still the mid-sixties, the author related the thoughts of a construction worker, a man who had commuted to work in West Berlin before the Wall made it impossible: "Before the Wall I would've not put a *pfennig* on this GDR-state--now one thinks differently."[198]

At the same time, however, Kohlschütter suggested that East Germans had a

great-er appreciation for the regime's achievements than had previous authors. Apparently, a key reason for appreciation was the *increasing permanence* of the Wall. It seemed that the passage of time was making acceptance of a future in the GDR easier, and that acceptance, in turn, had increased the appreciation of many for their "new life." One informant told Kohlschütter that the Wall had helped him decide to marry and build a career, even join the SED for the "career advantages" membership brought. Another, a student of "theater sciences," was also determined to make something of himself in the GDR. His criticisms of travel restrictions actually belied a general acceptance of the regime, and sense of feeling "at home." He told the author that if he could, he would go all the way to France *by foot*--but then walk all the way back. Such attitudes, according to the author, hinted that East Germans were neither rebellious nor "paralyzed" with resignation. 'Putting up with the regime" had changed to "arranging" one's life in accord with it.

But as before, East Germans' attitudes did *not* imply belief in communism. There was no question of ideological support; or any genuine allegiance for that matter. The author called it *rücksichtsloser Egoismus,* which translates as "unthinking (or "unrestrained") egoism."[199] His informants were simply trying to find a way to the best possible life. In the GDR, this meant *participation*, even if was not always heartfelt. But either way, participation often included party membership, and for youths, military service. The most grim and contemptible example of this "egoism" came from a student who had recently served in the border patrols: "Why should I sit in jail for not taking aim at an idiot, who still wants to go over the Wall?"[200] But the epitome of lay of the egoism lay in the apparent double-meaning of a slogan posted on many houses and factory entrances for Lenin's 100th birthday: "We honor Lenin, from whom we profit (*wir uns nützen*)."[201] To

the author, it was apparent that many East German workers' values and attitudes were being transformed, but not in ways intended by the regime. Indeed, one might call it "socialism for profit," a term which invokes a curious mixture of the survivalist "negotiation thesis" of later authors (discussed in the Introduction) and the "unthinking conformity" posited by Fulbrook. But did "socialism for profit" imply acceptance of a separate way of life from the West, or a kind of semiconscious urge to be more Western?

"Arrangement with Reservations" was how authors characterized this self-interested, egoistic participation, but among intellectuals, it seemed more obviously tempered by "inner resistances and barbs."[202] But for the broader population, the main "reservations" were continuing frustration over the lack of "little freedoms," -- the author's phrase for restrictions on personal freedom and autonomy, and they did *not* prevent most people, be they communist or not, from working and functioning within the system. And it was at this point in the piece that the sense of separate identity became visible. Rostock students who disagreed with the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, would nevertheless have taken part if ordered to do so. Making "arrangements," in effect, meant no longer questioning the GDR's statehood, its apparent "matter-of-factness." Like Sommer, Kohlschütter found that disapproval and grumbling actually reflected a certain stability and strength.

At the same time, however, the Wall remained an obvious liability. The author found that most people he met remembered its construction as a "totalitarian force measure." And yet, with time, they were increasingly "displacing this memory in orienting themselves toward existing East German possibilities."[203] Living standards, availability of consumer goods, education and research possibilities had all increased. The author referred to this situation (albeit somewhat late in the game) as the end of the "existence emergen-

cy" in the GDR, and by that he meant *the regime's existence*. That East Germans now dealt with the regime *as their state* was beyond doubt, and a kind of reconciliation had begun. Clearly this went beyond defensive pride in certain achievements to a sense of "everyday feeling of belonging" (*alltagsbedingtes Zugehörigkeitsgefühl*). What's more, the "political system-order" was now actually approved of, even if Marxism was not. To the author this was a marked change from his last visit in 1965, even if the public reservation typical of the mid-1960s remained.[204]

But how could people who rejected the founding ideology of the state still approve of it? The answer was not simply that it was "delivering the goods" -- ie. social welfare benefits, and, at last, better and more plentiful consumer goods. According to Kohlschütter, East Germans approved of the "original German kernel" of the regime, rather than its communism.[205] The Wall had hindered this approval initially, and remained a daily reminder of the regime's distrust, but at the same time, the leadership had become more skilled at using East Germans' pride in their work and achievements to foster sociopolitical integration. This was possible because it cleverly identified those achievements with stereotypically German attributes: "Through appeals to German industry and ambition, to the German love of work and reliability, the regime has freed up (*freigelegt*) ready-for-duty energy that is stronger than political objections."[206] The author believed that this energy, in turn, was being exhausted as East Germans threw themselves into work. This they did, of course, to escape: both from politics and the shortcomings of their lives. And it worked only too well: Kohlschütter believed that all those inclined to gather with colleagues or form clubs to advance "critical expressions" were simply too worn out each evening.

But given the nature of the regime, of course, work was not merely appropriately

"German" behavior: it invariably involved a degree of unavoidable political participation, and the author believed that the regime's *characterization* of that participation -- as co-determination in the workplace--did give the workers' a sense of shared power. Though the slogans could border on the ridiculous--one proudly spoke for agriculture laborers in proclaiming "We are conscious that we turn with the wheel of history when we help supply the population with potatoes"--others were more realistic, perhaps bordering on inspiring: "Work with [us], Plan with [us], Govern with [us]." But however much East Germans laughed and even parodied such slogans, they were no longer conscious of how much they fed their preexisting "work-eagerness."[207]

This could be seen in on-the-job experiences. The author interviewed a brigade of construction workers whose skill and speed at building schools had gained them a certain leverage with functionaries, and a sense of genuine co-determination as well. They bragged about both their work ethic and rationalization of the construction process that had cut the finishing time per school by nearly two thirds. They had carried the day with higher-ups regarding suggestions for numerous technical improvements -- that is, after a year and a half of bureaucratic delays -- and their ingenuity and determination had earned them a shared 3,000 mark bonus. In another dispute over unrealistic work norms, they had even threatened to dissolve the brigade, and the new norms were subsequently canceled. They all agreed that these experiences proved that slogans about shared work and governance were not "mere talk."

They went on to express hopes that recent discussions between the two Germanies (at Kassel in West Germany) might lead to the GDR's recognition, which prompted the author to probe the depths of their conscious attachment to the regime and "socialism":

> as I then followed with the provocative question . . . whether they were also convinced, that socialism, as it is called throughout the land on the banners, would be victorious in the end, it came to the typical breaking of the still labile GDR-consciousness: 'No, definitely not that, because if one [side] wins, another must lose, and that doesn't please us." This statement . . . met with no protest.[208]

And they were seemingly united in their disagreement with a number of state policies also. Not mincing words, they agreed the GDR's participation in the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia a "crock of shit" (*große Scheiße*), and believed that many fellow travelers of the SED were those who had formerly cheered Hitler. Despite their connection to the "German" ideals of work and their sense of integration into the state, theirs was a "critical solidarity" with the social system: clearly recognizing its basic legitimacy, while harboring a healthy skepticism for "true believers" and what they believed. But there was more that was "thoroughly German" (*urdeutsche*) in the workings of the GDR which contributed to the sense of "everyday belonging."

In particular, Kohlschütter believed the SED had fostered a traditionally German respect for authority. The regime was not just the basic provider, but also the guide and "giver of order." In these ways it did not inspire love, but rather avoided "creating the offense among the East Germans that West Germans expect to find."[209] The author drew on the region's history to ex-plain these developments, calling the regime a "Prussian-East German-communist patriarchy." What appeared to Westerners as "legal incapacitation" was no longer questioned by East Germans, but accepted as a matter of course.[210] The author then repeated the opinion that Nohara offered British readers ten years earlier: that many, perhaps most East Germans considered this "patriarchy" a positive good, that the Eastern order (if not communism itself) was "fundamentally affirmed." This was because the regime offered something the West could not: a "foundation" of security.[211] But the proof of this was not merely in the testimony of his informants. He urged readers to con-

sider the complaints and difficulties of Eastern refugees adjusting to life in the West as well, a phenomenon that numerous commentators on the GDR had mentioned since the mid-1950s.[212]

But if the SED dictatorship was rooted in German-Prussian tradition, the author stressed that its acceptance should not be understood as a mere hangover of behavior, "uninterrupted" from the Nazi and Wilhelmine periods. The importance of security, as suggested above, grew out of assumptions (albeit somewhat prejudicial ones) that East Germans had about West Germany. East German youths and students told the author that they "naturally" believed the West was a kind of moral free-for-all, that conditions there had simply "gone overboard . . . that not only in moral-sexual, but also in the political area it was necessary to more energetically step in and resort to forbidding."[213] A trio of young female apprentices in Halle-Neustadt contrasted "reasonable limitations" placed on youth activities in the East with "rampant" disorder among Western youths. They defended their social lives in the GDR, insisting that "there was fun here too, but it was controlled," and implied a dangerous alternative in the West: according to one of them: "Everything must definitely remain within limits. If some kind of loafer is at large here, without anyone knowing what he wants or where he wants to go, then he is checked before he does damage."[214] A second girl, from a family working on a collective farm, was more explicit in criticizing West German freedom: "What kind of confusion rages with you in the West. Where are the limits to things? where does security remain? who knows the way with you then?"[215]

Kohlschütter argued that this craving for security and propriety, bordering on the prudish, was a key to popular identification with the regime. It created a "narrow liaison" between the predominantly *petit bourgeois* population and the SED, precisely because in

the popular imagination, the West represented the opposite: permissiveness, atomization, and instability. But behind it all, according to Kohlschütter, was a remarkable symbiosis of behavior. The "narrow-minded dogmatism" and "self righteousness" the rulers showed in their dealings with communist allies had a striking parallel in the . . .

> . . . prudery and pedantry, the demonstrative law-abidingness and discipline, which one in meetings with most non-communist East German people meets again and again. Between the communist model student Ulbricht, who would like to give the other Eastern bloc states private tutoring, and the irresistible drive of this population for exemplary behavior, between the official and the unofficial East German ambition a true affinity has come.[216]

But this "affinity," not surprisingly, was *not* ideological: though the population and the regime had come to share many traits, belief in Marxism-Leninism was not one of them. Indeed, the very same people who stood up for the GDR, "especially when it is pushed onto the defensive," were completely disengaged from its ideas and longer-term goals. As we have seen, the extent to which the regime could control and direct East German society has been a matter of lively scholarly debate. But the idea that it could cultivate and nurture values that were rooted in *longer-term* German or Prussian traits has often been rather easily dismissed. Clearly Kohlschütter was not describing mere popular adjustment to the "rules of political game." Rather, he was denoting a kind of *merging* of popular and governmental desires for order and discipline.

What Kohlschütter described might be called "affinity of the everyday." A combination of economic prosperity, political stability, tradition, lack of real options, and importantly, *perceived difference from the West*, had created shared habits of behavior and even shared values. Ironically, this totally politicized society seemed ultimately to be held together by a tacit under-standing that was free of ideology or any real patriotism. This is not to suggest that conflict and "negotiation" weren't part of the overall picture. Clearly

Kohlschütter saw efforts at accommodation as primarily based on *selfish motives* -- the de-termination to "make something of one's life" in the GDR. But theories about a basically adversarial relationship between the regime and the population, or studies of the East German generation coming of age in 1960s, have not satisfactorily dealt with the complexities of accommodation in the this period (and earlier).

Nor have they considered how "German" the GDR came to seem to Western observers and visitors in these years, or how normal daily life there increasingly appeared. Kohlschütter clearly expanded on both perspectives, even if offering many similar observations to Sommer, Nohara, at least one anonymous German visitor (in 1963, earlier in this section), and many foreign visitors as well. Indeed, Kohlschütter's GDR was the most German incarnation to date, and no doubt this view made it easier for readers to accept it as a separate society. That accommodation in the GDR was becoming an increasingly normal process -- one of making the most of one's opportunities -- and that East Germans truly did feel "at home" there was even more clear in the writings of Erika Runge, who visited not long after Kohlschütter and published excerpts of numerous interviews in *Der Spiegel* the following year.[217] Most of these testimonials implied an even more positive sense of accommodation to life in the GDR. The sense of the social system as a "positive good" was more specified, and its agents -- at the local level at least -- appeared more like true public servants, even community members, rather than adversaries or outsiders. There were also a few rather poignant remarks about the West which reinforced a sense that the life in the East did have certain advantages.

Runge's informants came from virtually all walks of life. None wanted to be identified as "political," and, like those Kohlschütter talked to, the main reason they participated in the East German system was personal gain. However, their pursuit of personal

gain led not just to acceptance, but *approval* of the regime as a social welfare provider. Moreover, it was given credit for fostering an increasing sense of social solidarity at the local level as well.

The following quote from a 32-year-old pipe fitter demonstrates that self interest and acceptance of the East German system did not necessarily conflict. This was precisely because one's political commitments could be limited, to some extent, and the socioeconomic order, for all its shortcomings, seemed not only familiar, but in some even superior to its Western counterpart:

> I am not in a party, I am only in the union. But, well, yes, I'm living in the GDR, and I'm not living badly, so why shouldn't I be for it [the GDR]? I have actually never had great thoughts. One does complain if one doesn't receive things, and one must often walk and stand in line for many things, but basic necessities (*die Güter des täglichen Bedarfs*) are always available, only luxury items are often difficult to obtain. This is well known . . .
> For cars there are, however, long waiting times. But in five years or so one can go there just the same and buy one's self a car, maybe even in installments (*Teilzahlung*). But I would not want to live in the *Bundesrepublik* because of cars and such things. . . . One hears a lot about unemployment on your side and the difficulties with apartments. Here it not all fun and games either, but we don't have worries of unemployment. I am at home here. My family lives here, the children have grown up here. I would definitely like to remain here.[218]

A master shipbuilder around the same age seemed even more satisfied. The integration of his children into "collective living" through the schools and kindergarten was one example of how the regime's presence at the local level could be not just inoffensive, but positive and affirming. And the system permitted individual gains at the same time: in adding that kindergartens and nurseries were very cheap, as were social insurance, taxes, and rents, he could conclude that "The rest remains for us . . ."[219]

But small benefits *on the job* seemed to increase quality of life as well. Visitors to the GDR in the early years made much of the overworked, tired, and distressed popula-

tion, the result of seemingly unrelenting pressure for greater productivity. But a younger head of a work brigade, Rudolf F., explained how additional work could now be a benefit -- that is, for *retired workers*. They could and often did continue to work while collecting their pensions. Rudolf, who had just completed his final year of study for his "speciality," spoke of a 67-year-old colleague who asked to work for two more years. He explained that all retirees who wanted to continue were allowed: they could work a shortened schedule or even look for a new position in the enterprise. Quite a few of them worked four to six hours a day, though long commutes due to housing shortages discouraged others. Rudolf added that the enterprise could always use the extra manpower.[220]

But most important for the retirees was the continued connection to the workplace, and there were other opportunities for them as well. Another pipe-fitter from the Neptune shipyards explained that retirees there were enrolled in a "veterans' union" which they owned themselves. The group had its own club and meetings. But in order to deemphasize their new status and instead promote a continued sense of belonging to the firm, the larger shipyard workers' union made great efforts to keep them informed and involved: not only did they continue to receive the yard's trade union newspaper, but were invited to all trade union events as well -- and in a way that stressed their *ongoing relationship* with the enterprise.[221]

For current workers, another institution for integration was the enterprise's "conflict commission." According to the same pipe fitter, offenses against "work discipline" were handled *not* by a judge or court, but internally, by workers themselves. The offender had to stand before the "collective" and give account. This could be more painful and efficacious than a court:

> There [at a court] perhaps only unfamiliar persons sit, but here familiar people, familiar faces, and then: 'why have you done this?' I can say, year by year we

> have reduced offenses. Naturally we choose only very good colleagues for the conflict commission, who should each be an example as well.[222]

All of these examples of local, integrating institutions seemed far away from politics, and even farther from the tenets of communist ideology. There was virtually no mention by these informants of any pressure on themselves or their co-workers to join the SED or the satellite parties, nor did they criticize unions as mere "transmission belts" for regime goals or values. Rather, the impression is conveyed that daily participation in all these regime-sanctioned organizations served to enhance workplace solidarity and encourage individual self-development.

The same seemed true of *neighborhood organizations*. Like the kindergartens and schools mentioned above, community organizing seemed to enhance neighborhood solidarity, while also fostering give-and-take between local officials and party activists on the one hand, and residents on the other. Willi M., member of a "Living District Committee" of the National Front, discussed a local competition for the "improvement of shopping culture and for sophisticated decoration of display windows." According to Herr M., the decor of the show windows of the local *H.O.* store was not up to 1970 standards. Meanwhile a private retailer, Herr D., next to the *H.O.*, had window displays that were so "excellent" that passers-by could not help but stop and stare, ignoring the *H.O.* window. Herr M.'s committee invited the *H.O.*'s director and "a few other trade experts" to them and explained their viewpoint. The *H.O.* personnel were defensive, even to the point of conflict, but a representative of the local lord mayor helped the committee get its point across.[223] The outcome of the "display window debate" was not included, but Runge's larger point was that community organizations did have channels and opportunities to shape both debate and the planning of events at the local level. This was also not the only mention of the continued prospering of private business.

A teacher, who was a member of another Living-District Committee, had an even more personal experience of community spirit. In his apartment building, the "house assembly meeting" regularly alternated between neighbors' apartments, and became an occasion for both business and sociability. Living in the building were a famous actor, a doctor, several engineers and an employee of the *Volkspolizei*. Coffee or tea was usually served, sometimes even wine. But this did not simply foster neighborliness. What had begun as an *obligation* had, for this man at least, become a source of unexpected camaraderie. The housemates had grown far more easy with each other, and more importantly were awakening local support for the "National Front in the Living District" as it attempted to deal with local problems.[224]

Similar thoughts on another Living District Committee came from a journalist. He described how the National Front was engaging every household assembly to contribute to the beautification of Rostock. The occasion was the twelfth annual Worker Festival. The assemblies were "advised" as to the way each occupant could help arrange the streets nicely. This involved numerous small tasks: trimming hedges, watering flowers, mowing the yards, and taking care that all banners and signs with socialist slogans remained in good order and all chains of lights burned in the evenings. According to the man "such things were discussed and exchanged, and in this [way] one felt responsible that everything is indeed in order."[225] All of these experience suggested that in neighborhoods as well as in the workplace, socialism "at the grassroots" was also not always about conflict and "negotiation." The National Front seemed quite adept at tapping into psychological needs for community and order, and providing opportunities for individual contributions to both. None of these informants spoke of indoctrination or pressure to join the party, or any organization beyond their living district committee. While it cannot be doubted that

indoctrination and pressure continued, participation at the local level had never before been described as so natural, unthreatening (and unpolitical). Like Kohlschütter, Runge offered evidence that the regime had become acceptable as the framework of social order, even it if it failed to inspire widespread political commitment.

A forty-four year old ballet instructor suggested the stability and normality of daily experience also, but linked it more directly with politics and ideology. Indeed, he claimed there was no way to grasp the problems of the East German public *without* taking interest in politics. Though not a party man himself, he felt compelled to commit to the principles of the SED (which he referred to as "our worker party"), because of his own public role as both an artist and co-supervisor of stage productions. Not that his commitment was separable from personal gain: he received both a car and a good salary for his work: "not bad" he said. But many other artists, including the dancers who studied under him, were not so well paid, and he emphasized the regime's commitment to developing new policies that would encourage families of young artists to support their career aspirations. While critical visitors presented artists as chafing over restrictions or soldiering on in spite of them, this man was clearly an advocate for the state as the grand patron of culture. Whether his commitment was based more on his love of the arts or support of the SED was less clear. Like the workers and committee members just mentioned, however, his approval for the system seemed rather narrowly focused on his own immediate "sphere."

In this he was much like Herbert M., 48, chairman of a collective farm. Herbert was old enough to remember when his parents were day laborers on the former *Junker* estate. There had been no local primary school, and as a child he had journeyed (presumably on foot) to a neighboring village, no matter the weather. There, one room had

housed all eight classes. But now, his children had a kindergarten, and polytechnical school nearby meant that ten years of basic schooling were basically obligatory. Through this school system his children would not just learn, but "adjust" to their place in the community. But education was also being extended to local farmers as well: Herr M. was quite proud to report that a "culture house" had replaced the local "shabby pub." It was both a cultural center and a restaurant (*Gaststätte*), with a great hall that seated 250 and hosted events nearly every night, including films, political and cultural events, and workers' festivals which included two cabaret groups. "One can say simply, [that] life in the country has become cultured," he declared.[226]

But on land, just as in the cities, stability and acceptance were predicated primarily on personal gain and opportunities for self-advancement. A worker at the same collective, described her demanding work schedule, but also the growing specialization and technologization of work. These developments meant that virtually everyone had to study to qualify for increasingly complicated jobs. "Soon there will no longer be simple workers," she explained.[227] Her husband had needed four years of correspondents' courses to become a foreman. She had attained qualifications as well, and they contributed to her feeling of peace with her life situation. She did not identify with socialism when specifically asked, but she clearly felt at home. She had lived her entire adult life in "this time" (meaning in the GDR), had not been to the West nor to other countries, but like the others, believed that her life was certainly not bad, because "one can learn here."[228] In admitting that her own achievements were limited, she made clear that those with talent and determination could improve their lives: "Had I not been so dumb, I would have been able to do something else." she confided.[229] She had no complaints about "our republic," at least the parts she had visited on yearly travels with her husband. She could not judge

"other circumstances," (apparently meaning West Germany) however, because she did not know about them. Others were not as circumspect in expressing their views on the West.

One was the 37-year-old manager of the *Teepott*, a bar-restaurant that the attracted a diverse patronage, including parties from enterprises and local work brigades, "closed societies," various delegations, and, from time to time, West Germans. He bragged that all were catered to "a bit nicely," and could "eat reasonably," -- and not just cold snacks, but entrees and a variety of upscale cold dishes as well.[230] Apparently however, he heard many complaints from West German guests, particularly about the price of spirits, and in mentioning them he turned the tables and criticized West Germany. Yes, he might have shortages of fresh vegetables in winter, but West Germans had inflation problems, conflicts over wages, and so on--he knew it all from television, and the "grapevine." Unlike the ups and downs of the Western system, he insisted, "we always know where we are."[231] This and another encounter suggested that the GDR offered a kind of shield against the vagaries of capitalist modernization: the very real problems in the East at least did not threaten to put one out on the street.

Paul O., a middle-aged owner of a small handicraft business, saw the West as a newer, more dynamic, but also more unstable, and a dangerous place to try and pursue his goals:

> If I imagine [that] I lived in the Federal Republic, then I would perhaps in a short time develop my ten-man enterprise into an eighty- or hundred-man [enterprise]. I would have to pay very close attention, in order to be a match for it. Because of the competition that is the rule there, only a short time would be sufficient to bring what one has built up under the hammer.[232]

Such things, of course could not happen in the GDR. His ten-man enterprise was thriving and completely secure, and would remain so even if it grew much larger -- that is, so long

as he was willing to "participate" in the society (read cooperate with the regime -- for he said nothing about partnership with the state). Both Western colleagues and his own experiences seemed to confirm that the GDR offered him an almost idyllic existence:

> I have what I need, and must say [that] we as a handicraft firm can afford here what a handicraft firm over there can afford. In exchange-conversations, as at Baltic Sea week, when the handicraft colleagues from over there come, they always say in the end: 'Well yes, you have a bit more peaceful life than us.'[233]

But other informants showed that not just community and stability, but the *promise of change* could induce people to feel at home in the GDR, particularly progressive policies that promoted gender equality or women's autonomy. A 35-year-old female union functionary at the Neptune shipyards had worked her way up from several skilled positions, one in a steel works, another in shipbuilding, and now oversaw the hiring and qualifications of 1,200 female workers in the yards. Additional advanced training suggested, once again, the possibilities for personal achievement *regardless of gender*. Not only was she studying to be an "economic engineer" at Wismar, but planned even further studies "to perfect my development."[234] Her husband was apparently quite supportive, not only encouraging her studies but pitching in at home, looking after their four children, cooking, doing the wash, even the food shopping. She placed the "evolution" of their relationship within an epochal change in both gender relations and the status of women. Her perspective made the GDR seem more utopian than idyllic:

> Along with this [shared responsibilities in the home] I want to say, that the relationship between husband and wife has changed. . . . the man no longer wants to have an unconditional (*unbedingt*) wife, [one] who is exclusively sexy, but he places value on a clever wife. In that respect the relationship has shifted in favor of the marriage. Love has even become different. I would say, it has become nicer . . . through the increasing self consciousness of the woman, through her qualifications.[235]

A younger female student, though less prosaic, offered another example of pro-

gressive change that benefited women especially. After describing the cheap, modern and comfortable living facilities for students at Rostock University, and not surprisingly, the generous stipends as well, she was very frank about the widespread use of the birth control pill. She believed she spoke for most students in her dormitory (all female) in her view that "the pill" allowed female students to remain completely focused on their studies and bring them to conclusion before having to worry about having children. Runge's informants, taken together, had diverse reasons to commit themselves to life in the GDR: they were not simply trying to keep their heads down and live a "normal life," nor were they merely "negotiating" out of pure self interest. Virtually all of them were taking advantage of available opportunities for *self-improvement*, and along the way, gaining in their appreciation of the GDR's economic and social order. But unlike previous West German visitors, Runge did not offer her own analysis of these testimonials, leaving them to stand independently. They only hint at the kind of symbiosis of state and society described by Kohlschütter or the typically German towns or landscapes described by previous visitors. If anything, Runge's GDR is a state undergoing a rather unique, even alternative process of modernization; not becoming more quintessentially German, but definitely more normal and taken for granted in the eyes of its citizens.

Epilogue and Conclusion

In the years that followed, the theme of the more traditionally German GDR would be revisited by a number of German-speaking travelers, as access to destinations beyond Berlin and Leipzig became increasingly routine for much larger numbers of West German visitors. But many of them would continue to stress that border fortifications, obsessively fussy bureaucracy, police surveillance, and inadequate facilities for tourists cast sha-

dows over travels advertised as "journeys into the German past."[236] Despite the regime's efforts to encourage visitors (mainly to obtain hard currency) the GDR in the 1970s and 1980s was at best a problematic destination for German-speaking tourists.

And of course the problems of travel suggest that in spite of the Basic Treaty of December 1972, and international acceptance the following year, the status of the GDR in the West was never fully normalized. If by the 1980s it became acceptable in West Germany to acknowledge the existence of two distinct and separate German states, there was never any true sense of equivalency in public discourse, just as the Basic Treaty never acknowledged the GDR as fully sovereign. And as early as the mid 1970s, the persistent and even widening gap between Eastern and Western living standards added to this unequal status, ensuring that the GDR would never be thought of as a genuine alternative to West Germany. Though a number of studies from the late 1960s to mid 1980s described the GDR as the same kind of "Red Prussian" success story described by Kohlschütter, especially in terms of a working socialist economy, there is little evidence that such views seriously impacted West German perceptions of the GDR.[237] Even radical German leftists of the 1970s seldom took the East German system as an example for creating an alternative to the liberal capitalism and parliamentary democracy of the Federal Republic.[238] The GDR, in the final analysis, was accepted in the West in the era of détente because there was no alternative. First Willy Brandt, and then U.S. Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford concluded that the only way to reduce tensions in Europe was for the West to *de facto* recognize Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, and with it, two German states. But in the process the GDR, to paraphrase a provocative 1970s book title, was never fully able to "come in from the cold."[239]

Given these circumstances, perhaps it is not surprising that the authors in this

chapter never considered whether the essential "Germanness" they found in the GDR might influence political or social developments in West Germany. To say the very least, West Germany in the 1960s was changing dramatically: economic boom, generational change and conflict, the emergence of a more "permissive society," and urban reconstruction seemed to have moved the society a world away from the postwar years. The student revolt of 1968, SPD rule beginning in 1969, *rapprochement* between the two Germanies from 1970-1973, and the radicalization of the New Left revealed just how divisive many of these changes would prove to be. But however strange it may sound, West German traveler to the GDR between 1955 and the early 1970s offered only parenthetical comments or veiled allusions to these developments. Many of them, as we have seen, *did* bring normative assumptions about Western bourgeois freedoms and Christian faith to their observations about East German life and institutions. Such authors were, not surprisingly, sharply critical of most aspects of the East German sociopolitical system, but generally wrote very little about social change in the West.

But on occasion, some of them quoted East German opinions that stated or implied criticisms of West Germany. Recall, for example, the worker who told Hildebrandt: "all of you [in the West] should think more," in commenting on the unpolitical, self-satisfication of the ordinary West German,[240] or the anonymous visitor in 1963 who praised lack of pornography and prostitution in Magdeburg, clearly implying that such social ills continued unabated in the West. Also, as we have seen, there were frustrations expressed with Western media, which is interesting, of course, because Western radio (and television in particular) have always been assumed to have been the West's greatest weapon against the SED.

But one of the more striking condemnations of the West in this era dealt with *all*

Western news media, both electronic and print. An informant (apparently a close friend) of the anonymous visitor to East Berlin in the spring of 1962 (See section 3 above) savaged them all behind closed doors. The author, however, did not include the diatribe simply to attack West German media outlets, but clearly to criticize the growing commercialization of West German society *as a whole*:

> Your radio, your television, we try again and again to switch on the forbidden stations, but unfortunately it is seldom worth it anymore. The things that interest you! And how many important things you [simply] shrug off with a wave of your hand! If earlier one would smuggle over a newspaper out of Hamburg or Frankfurt under considerable danger, experience showed it went from hand to hand, [and] it was worth the danger. And today? it has become irrelevant to us, and the '*Spiegel*' is stacked on the back steps.[241]

In retrospect, such comments seem rather ironic, considering how much *more* commercialized, titillating, and superficial Western commercial media has become. But then, the aforementioned remarks on pornography and prostitution from 1963 seem similarly misplaced. Yet whatever the concern such comments showed for the apparent moral and intellectual decline of the West German public sphere, they were *far from system-challenging*. Entreating readers to think more about such matters in light of the experiences of East Germans was not the same as offering the social system of the GDR, or any part of it, as an *alternative* to the Western system. Generally speaking, Western visitors cited the failings of the West German system not for their own sake, but for the ways they impacted *East* Germans. The same author from 1962, for example, attacked the Western media for revealing escape routes, and three years later, Müller and Lachmaier took Western television to task, as we have seen, both for its lack of objective and non-partisan reporting, *and* lack of detailed commentary on many political decisions (see Section Four above). As it turned out, the only writer who questioned the legitimacy of West German institutions was also the *GDR's* fiercest critic, Horst Mönnich, and he could only do so

by challenging the *entire postwar arrangement*, insisting that however much West Germans "sold out to American capital," there was no comparing those events to the coercive origins of the GDR.

But Mönnich's "soul-searching" aside, the goal of West German travel stories was *not* an exercise in direct comparison, let alone questioning West German institutions. Hints about changing morality there, or that vagrants, criminals, and rowdy youths were not dealt with effectively, or that West Germans erred in questioning the motives of East German workers who cooperated with the SED, were never followed by any deeper analysis of contemporary West German developments. Those who argued for or gave evidence that East Germans were positively accepting their lot in life *did* point out that a major reason was social welfare benefits lacking in West Germany -- job security, social welfare, subsidized rents and utilities. But they never understood their purpose as advocating for similar changes in the West. Even if certain social policies in the GDR might have seemed desirable, the dogmatism of SED functionaries, the lack of free elections, and the context of Cold War made imitating them -- or even suggesting it -- a non-starter. But not only is: its arguable that the GDR's *very existence* helped foreclose a more socialist path in the Federal Republic, as a brief reconstruction of postwar West German politics makes clear.

It is been noted that in the immediate postwar years, the majority of the West German population supported the goals of the Western SPD: reunification, reduced tensions with Eastern neighbors and disarmament, and, domestically, codetermination in the work-place and a state-directed economy with limitations on the market.[242] These goals were all frustrated fairly quickly, as the CDU fostered a free market economy, gave only lip service to unification while refusing to recognize the loss of Eastern territory to Poland

and the Soviet Union (and integrated the Federal Republic into the Western alliance system), and, against considerable opposition, began to rearm in 1955. Anti-communism and the "economic miracle" insured popular support for the first two policies, and despite controversy, the third policy came to represent another CDU victory. It was this transformation of West German public opinion that forced the SPD to abandon its founding ethos as a working-class opposition party and moderate its platform, becoming a "mass party" in 1959. The place of the GDR in this tale of frustrated hopes is glaringly obvious. Regarding relations with Eastern neighbors, as Andrei S. Markovitz has written, "In relations with the East, the GDR was a daily reminder of the country's division and its occupation by foreign powers."[243] Regarding domestic socioeconomic reform, any proposed change of course could be rather easily red-baited, given the close association of "socialism" with the SED dictatorship.

Given this background, it is easy to see why West German visitors felt little compunction to reevaluate their own institutions and values in the face of Eastern alternatives, however "German" they may have seemed. But they also failed to join the chorus of foreign visitors who, as we saw in Chapter 5, found in East Germany a pale, second-rate reflection of Western capitalism. To West Germans, such a typological comparison was hardly imaginable, simply because the GDR could never be viewed as a completely foreign land. However clear and obvious its differences from the Federal Republic, it was never a distinct object of inquiry or dispassionate analysis for West German visitors, even for those who tried to make it one. Whether they accepted it as an unchangeable regality, denied it entirely, or contested it, West German visitors searched for what was familiar, typically German, or simply "normal" in the daily life of East Germans and in the regime's institutions because they could never fully detach themselves from what they

were attempting to describe. In the final analysis, those who argued in the mid-1960s that a realistic appraisal of life in the GDR meant accepting it as a separate society expected too much from many West Germans. Very few of them were willing to believe that an East German state consciousness existed, and those who did would nearly contradict their own experience to insist that it was wholly based on accepting the inevitable, or on completely egoistic impulses, or both, rather any genuine approval for the regime's social welfare benefits and state-owned economy. Not until the late 1960s did a handful of these visitors come to believe what foreign visitors had maintained years earlier: that most East Germans generally approved of socialist achievements. Interestingly, though, both West German *and* foreign visitors began to describe *the regime* as "essentially German" around the same time: just as the idea of accepting the GDR and improving inter-German relations was gaining momentum in West Germany.

Before the second half of the 1960s, however, it remained basically taboo to call the GDR a genuine state, and therefore positing an East German "state identity" -- unless it was based primarily on propaganda and a lack of alternatives -- was nearly as problematic. If the reality of two Germanies was becoming increasing inevitable, particularly by around 1963-4, it still remained unmentionable, but also, for many West Germans, somehow unimaginable. To most of the authors discussed here, and perhaps to West Germans in general, the GDR in this era was *not* a rival German state so much as an odd and unavoidable misfortune. West German visitors tried to deal with its peculiar status be searching out aspects that seemed familiar (read German traits and behaviors) and through in-dividual efforts to "make the best of it" -- efforts that only appeared to be part of living a "normal life" by the end of the 1960s. In a society which historians have characterized as being thoroughly politicized --even partly created by political

domination[244] -- contemporary West Germans found strikingly *un*political people, operating intellectually as independent agents, rejecting communist ideology even as they embraced or at least accepted the social order. They also found a state dedicated to social and economic transformation, which they believed (or hoped?) had *failed* to change the essential "Germanness" of the region and people. However, that state surely *had* changed the broader population in terms of technical education, job training and creating a sense of communal ties and obligations, which, along with the fostering of law and order and *petit bourgeois* egalitarianism, seemed to make the vast majority feel "at home" in the GDR by the early 1970s.

[1] It is of course impossible to raise the issue of post-World War II German national identity without mentioning the debates surrounding the historical relationship of *both* Germanies to the Nazi past, most particularly the problematic attempts of conservative West German scholars and commentators to "normalize" concepts of German national identity and patriotism by arguing that Nazi crimes, and the Holocaust in particular, were not unique or singular, but related to and even inspired by previous genocidal acts and large-scale persecutions in the Ottoman Empire and Stalinist Russia. For the discussion of the issues at stake in the West German *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s, see Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler's Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (New York, 1989), and Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA, 1988). The works of the original contributors to the debate, who included German philosopher Jürgen Habermas and historians Andreas Hilgruber and Micheal Stürmer, see *Historikerstreit: Die Dokumentation der Kontreverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung* (Munich, 1987). German-speaking travelers in the GDR did not exactly ignore the relationship between the Nazi past and contemporary developments in the GDR, but, like authors in previous chapters, tended to refer to the pre-communist past and unified Germany *in general* as the "natural state" of political and social organization in German-speaking central Europe, thus creating the impression that the Nazi past, while undeniably tragic and horrific, was the *cause* of the great interruption of German national history, but not *part* of the interruption itself.

[2] Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 195.

[3] For contemporary reports focusing on flight as a response to repression, which arguably over-emphasized the flight of the minority of professionals, most notably doctors and academics, among the refugees, see Chapter 5. Western findings suggested economic considerations and better career opportunities in the West as the primary motivating factors. See Ibid., p. 196 and Dennis, *The Rise and Fall of the German Democratic Republic*, p. 90.

[4] See note 2.

[5] See Chapter 5.

[6] Fulbrook, for example, devoted less than a paragraph to it, while Dennis ignored it entirely.

[7] See for example "Menschen in Leipzig und Dessau: Begegnungen auf Reise durch die Sowjetzone," *Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschafts Zeitung*, May 28, 1955, p. 3.

[8] "Alltag in der Ostzone: Gewöhnung und Denktraining sind Gefahren," *Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschaft Zeitung*, May 18, 1955, p. 2.

[9] See Chapter 3, end note 173 for Ulrich Herbert's article on memories of the Third Reich and the postwar years. In discussing how this perception of the "high politics" allowed ordinary Germans to obviate the question of their responsibility for the deportation and annihilation of Jews during World War II, Frank Stern summed up this tendency very well: "Since it was apparently a question of 'grand politics' on a national scale, . . . One felt helpless, subordinate. As someone states in one of the interviews: 'politics weren't discussed--they were a taboo subject.' One had nothing to say--the others (high up in government) had said it all." Frank Stern, "Antagonistic Memories: The Post-war Survival and Alienation of Jews and Germans," in Luisa Passerini, ed., *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories: Volume I: Memory and Totalitarianism* (Oxford, 1992), p. 34.

[10] For more on the later scholarship focusing on the "limits of dictatorship," see the Introduction.

[11] In "Menschen in Leipzig und Dessau" the anonymous author of a young miner, who despite good wages and opportunity for secondary study in Leipzig, but part of the reason for the move was health problems created by his work. "I sweat too much," he explained, while also indicating that both male and female workers in the mines had lost their sex drives.

[12] See for example Hans-Christoph Bömer, "Beobachtungen in Mitteldeutschland," *Civis: Zeitschrift für Christliche Demokratische Politik*, May, 1956, pp. 15-16. Among the visitors of the mid-1950s, Bömer was clearly the most politically partisan, understanding his visit to Leipzig as part of student organization from Freiburg as an opportunity to debate their hosts, young members or candidate members of the SED and faculty as well. Unfortunately, the university itself was closed for the spring 1956 Leipzig fair, and the student body was mostly away.
[13] 30,000 peasants fled to the West between early 1957 and the end of 1960, with the numbers increasing dramatically in 1960 and into early 1961. Strikes, burning crops, and neglecting livestock were carried on by many who stayed. See Dennis, p. 88.
[14] Sybille Martin, "Einkaufen in Ost-Berlin," *Deutsche Fragen* 16 (9), September 1960, pp. 170-171.
[15] Ibid., p. 170.
[16] The phrase was used by the same anonymous visitor who wrote "Menschen in Leipzig und Dessau," in a later, more scathing attack on the 'failures' of the SED. See "Das Alibi des Kommunismus: Eindrücke aus der deutschen Sowjetzone," *Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschafts Zeitung*, July 18, 1955, p. 1, 3.
[17] Martin, p. 171.
[18] Gerda Müller, "Eindrücke bei einem Besuch in der Mittelzone," in *Mitteldeutschland, Prüfstein der Bundesrepublik: Vorträge auf d. Frühjahrstagung d. Steinbacher Kreises in Bad Driburg, 1960* (Troisdorf vor Bonn, 1961), pp. 83-96.
[19] Ibid., pp. 90-1.
[20] Ibid., p. 95.
[21] Ibid., p. 96.
[22] Jürgen Heck, "Blicke hinter den Vorhang," *Die Kommenden* 15 (7), April 10, 1961, p. 9.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid. Heck actually used the singular, referring to "man" (*der Mensch*) as of no interest to the regime "as [a] man" (*als Mensch*) but only as "[a] wheel in the collective" (*Rad im Kollektiv*).
[26] Ibid.
[27] Indeed, expellees from Eastern Europe were only gradually drawn into the fold of the CDU in the 1960s, having largely remained loyal to their own 'regional' political party with its platform of territorial restoration throughout the first decade of the Federal Republic's existence.
[28] Fulbrook argued that "fear of the provided powerful support for Adenauer's policies of western integration, outweighing the natural desire of most Germans to see their country reunified." Fulbrook, 1992, p. 185.
[29] Nohara, "A Visit to East Germany." The author was introduced in Chapter 5, p. 26.
[30] The example he gave was a complaint about a dim light bulb above his bunk in a dorm room in Leipzig. He asked his roommate if he could turn on the main light to read, and rather than answer the question, the young man launched into the a testimonial on the problem of bottlenecks in the production system, and the need to lodge a complaint with the "administration." The youth explained that "Our State Economy Plan provides for a sixty per cent. increase in the production of electric bulbs by next year.' When Nohara used the incident the next day to suggest to a "higher-up" in the FDJ that "his rank and file is sometimes overdoing its propagandistic zeal," he was told that he must have mistaken the size and brightness of the bulb, which the man claimed was not part of production plans. Nohara observed: "Initially, one may tend to regard this sort of thing as exceptional but after a while one learns that any remark, however well intentioned, implying a criticism against any conceivable aspect of life, be it the slowness of the waiters, the cheap sentiment of a film, or the pompous arrogance of a Leipzig professor--is taken as a willful slight against the Republic which must immediately and effectively be refuted." Nohara, p. 156.
[31] Ibid., p. 157.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.
[35] "Die anderen, die hinter der Mauer . . . ," *Sonntagsblatt* 16 April 22, 1962, p. 5; April 29, 1962, p. 4; June 10, 1962, p. 8; June 17, 1962, p. 4; July 22, 1962, p. 4; Erich Balow, "Notes on a Somber Journey," *Problems of Communism* XII (4), July-August, 1963, pp. 8-14.
[36] "Die anderen, die hinter der Mauer . . . " April 29, 1962, p. 4.
[37] "Reise in der Zone," July 22 1962, p. 4.
[38] "Die anderen. . . ," April 22, 1962.
[39] Balow, p. 14.
[40] Ibid., p. 13. The author referred to the older generation as "those over thirty years old," which in 1963 would have included persons born in the late 1920s and early 1930s -- ie. persons with no memories of the Weimar Republic.
[41] Ibid., p. 14.
[42] Ibid., p. 8.
[43] Ibid., p. 11.
[44] Ibid. For a detailed consideration of the limits to the concept of "niche society'" -- ie. public conformity vs. private authenticity -- in explaining the workings of East German society in its relation to the state, and the ways in which East Germans expressed disagreement with the regime, without necessarily destabilizing regime, see Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, pp. 129-170.
[45] Ibid., p. 55.
[46] Balow., p. 12.
[47] Ibid., p. 14.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Peter Aurich, "Middeldeutschland heute: Im Widerstreit zwischen Tradition und 'socialistischem' Aufbau," *Europaische Begegnung* 3 (6), 1963, pp. 366-8.
[51] Ibid., p. 366.
[52] Irmgard von der Lühe, "Das andere Wirtschaftswunder: Eine Woche in Mitteldeutschland," *Deutsches Adelsblatt* 6 (11), 1967, pp. 237-238.
[53] Ibid., p. 237.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., p. 238.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Joachim Nawrocki, "Privilegien wie in einem Fürstentum: Reiche und Arme in der DDR," *Der Spiegel* 21 (40), 1967, pp. 84-89. Despite his very negative portrayal of the East German economy here, Nawrocki produced in the same year perhaps the most positive overview of the GDR economy to date: Joachim Nawrocki, *Das geplante Wunder: Leben und Wirtschaften im anderem Deutschland* (Hamburg, 1967).
[58] Both the Americans and the Soviets made great efforts to recruit such German scientists as the war ended, especially atomic scientists such as Manfred von Ardenne who will be introduced presently. It is apparent that with a few exceptions, they chose to work and serve whichever side got to them first and offered them facilities to carry on their research. This is not as surprising as it may seem, given the state of destruction in Germany in 1945 and the need of many such experts to get the same basic necessities so badly lacking at the time. Rumors of Soviet kidnappings of thousands of German scientists were just that: instead most went voluntarily with promises of good housing and food for the families, and generally "decent relations between themselves and their Soviet supervisors. See Naimark, pp. 207-219.
[59] Nawrocki, p. 84.
[60] Ibid., p. 87.
[61] Ibid., p. 89.
[62] Ibid.

[63] Horst Mönnich, "Fremd im eigenen Land: Reisebericht eines Deutschen," *Christ und Welt* XX (17), April 28, 1967, pp. 23-24; (18), May 5, 1967, p. 26; (19), May 12, 1967, p. 22. The complete account of his travels was published as Horst Mönnich, *Einreisegenehmigung* (Hamburg, 1967).
[64] Ibid., April 28, 1967, p. 23.
[65] Ibid., p. 24.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., May 5, 1967, p. 26.
[68] Ibid., May 12, 1967, p. 22.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] "Der Alltag in der Zone ist grau . . . Eindrücke von einer Reise hinter der Berliner Mauer," *Ostdeutsche Monatshefte* 17(6), December 1961, pp. 323-331.
[72] Ibid., p. 323.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., p. 324.
[75] Ibid., p. 325.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., p. 326.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid., pp. 326-7.
[80] Ibid., p. 327.
[81] See the discussion of Werner Knop's travel report in Chapter Three.
[82] "Der Alltag in der Zone ist Grau . . . ," p. 328.
[83] Ibid., p. 29.
[84] Though pressure was strongly applied for "voluntary"enlistment in the late 1950s and immediately after the building of the Wall, the first draft in GDR was not actually instituted until January 1962, a few months after this author's visit.
[85] "Der Alltag in der Zone ist Grau . . . ," p. 329.
[86] Ibid., p. 330.
[87] Ibid., p. 531.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Hans Gerstorff, ". . . weil es weitergehen muß: Notizen von einer Reisen in die Zone," *Sonntagsblatt* 16 (44), November 3, 1963, p. 4.
[90] Ibid. Gerstorff was not the first visitor to hear such complaints. The anonymous visitor to East Berlin in the spring of 1962 heard similar complaints. See end note 35.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] We will see shortly that other critical visitors, such as Wolfgang Hoffman, stressed the lack of bananas -- even making fruit shortages emblematic of the failings of the regime. And indeed, such shortages were among the complaints visitors heard even in the 1970s and 80s.
[94] This should not be at all surprising, given the economic progress and job satisfaction that other visitors noted in Rostock. See Chapter 5, pp. 398-400; 433-5, and comments by von der Lühe above and testimonials quoted by Erika Runge below.
[95] Gerstorff, ". . . weil es weitergehen muß: . . ."
[96] Ibid.
[97] "Eine Reise von Deutschland nach Deutschland," *Schlesische Rundschau* 15 (47), November 22, 1963, p. 7; (48), November 29, p. 7; (49), December 6, p. 5; (50), December 13, p. 6.
[98] Ibid., November 22.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid. Notice however, that this author did not believe this imitation was a miserable failure, as Stephen Kelman argued in his savaging of the rebuilt city centers of Berlin and other cities. See Chapter 5.

[101] "Eine Reise von Deutschland nach Deutschland," November 22.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid. Concord between the Protestant churches and the East German state was not reached until 1978. From that time on, a degree of autonomy and limited free expression within the church's confines was permitted. But of course, the churches would become a kind of umbrella for resistance movements that grew in strength and daring during the 1980s.
[105] See Chapter 5.
[106] "Eine Reise von Deutschland nach Deutschland," November 29, p. 7.
[107] Ibid., December 6, 1963, p. 5.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., December 20, 1963, p. 8.
[114] Ibid.
[115] John Mander's visit to the GDR involved two weeks of such "schmoozing," as he traveled with a group of British reports as guests of the regime in 1963. They were wined, dined and taken on an extensive tour by party functionaries, the goal being to persuade them to use their influence to argue for more liberal trade policies between the U.K. and the GDR. See Chapter 5, end note 131.
[116] Manfred Jäger, "Von kleinen und großen Empfindlichkeiten," *Europaische Begegnungen* 4 (10), 1964, pp. 585-6. Sommer's report was expanded and merged into a book on the travels he and two colleagues, including the distinguished political editor Countess Marion Gräfin Dönhoff the following year. See Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, Rudolf Walter Leonhardt, Theo Sommer, *Reise in ein fernes Land: Bericht über Kultur, Wirtschaft und Politik in der DDR* (Hamburg, 1965).
[117] Jäger, p. 585.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Joseph Müller and Fritz Lachmaier, "Eindrücke aus Mitteldeutschland," *Deutsche Fragen* 12 (12), December 1965, pp. 227-232.
[120] Ibid., p. 227.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid., p. 228.
[123] Ibid., p. 230.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid., p. 231.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid. The exact phrase used was "In einem totalitären System, geht nichts ohne Politik," literally, "nothing happens without politics."
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., p. 231.
[130] Ibid., p. 232.
[131] Peter Jochen Winters, "Gott will, aber der Sozialismus . . . ," *Christ und Welt* XIX (11), March 18, 1966, p. 3.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid. The opposite view, that virtually everyone would leave were the Wall opened, was expressed as late as 1964 to West German Theo Sommer, who will be discussed again presently.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.
[139] "Nitschewo -- oder das sozialistiche Leben," *Sonntagsblatt* 16 (7), February 17,1963, p. 4.
[140] This distinction seems to go to Franz von Nesselrode, an American citizen who wrote for an Anglo-American audience. See Franz von Nesselrode, *Germany's Other Half: A Journalist's Appraisal of East Germany* (London, 1963).
[141] See Chapter 5 and additional evaluation of Apel's finding below.
[142] "Nitschewo -- oder das sozialistische Leben."
[143] Ibid. Its interesting to compare Ellen to the woman friend Joseph Wechsburg met in Leipzig in 1952 (See Chapter 3). The latter woman hesitated to make-up and dress stylishly, no longer appreciating glances by strange men, and for Wechsburg it all symbolized the loss of "better times." Here, Ellen appears to persist in efforts to keep up appearances, apparently without any problems from authorities, but only because of her privileged position.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid. Note the author's interjection to the effect that faith makes one free, in spite of political repression.
[146] Among the English travel reports were those of Welles Hangen and Joseph Wechsburg (see Chapter 5), among the Germans Hildebrandt (see Chapter 5 and also below) and Dönhoff et al. (an article-length version of Theo Sommer's contribution will be discussed presently), and of Israeli journalist Amos Elon, *Journey through a Haunted Land: The New Germany* (New York, 1967), based on his travels in both East and West Germany in 1965. Among the early appraisals of the regime that emphasized its totalitarian nature were Ernst Richert, *Macht ohne Mandat: Die Staatsapparat in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands* (Cologne, 1958); M. G. Lange, *Wissenschaft im Totalitären Staat: Die Wissenschaft der Sowjetischen Besatzungzone auf dem Weg zum 'Stalinismus'* (Stuttgart, 1955); and Peter Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men: The Story of the Communist Propaganda War in East Germany* (Palo Alto, CA, 1958). Incidentally, these are also some of the earliest scholarly monographs on the GDR (though the latter two still refer to it as the Soviet Zone, which, as we have seen, was the dominant designation in West Germany far into the 1960s)
[147] Sommer, "Zwischen Mauer und Plakatwand."
[148] See Chapter Four.
[149] Ibid. Gerstorff also was quite painfully aware of the "GDR swell," though he described it as entirely composed of disinfectant.
[150] See for example Dornberg, pp. 305-326, and Mok, p. 66.
[151] Sommer, "Zwischen Mauer und Plakatwand."
[152] Both Nesselrode (p. 59) and Nohara (p. 155) made similar observations before the Wall was built, but Sommer was the first *post-Wall* visitor to do so.
[153] Sommer, "Zwischen Mauer und Plakatwand."
[154] This view seemed shared by townspeople interviewed in an agricultural region of Mecklenburg in 1970. They spoke of "standing up for their rights" to pay raises and other benefits and in the end having their demands met. There was no sense in the interviews that these complaints were in any way system-destabilizing. See Hans Axel Holm, *The Other Germans: Report from an East German Town* (New York, 1970), pp. 184-187.
[155] Its interesting to note that some visitors in the years immediately after the Wall believed just the opposite: that the Wall had allowed the regime to *increase* pressure, whereas before it was built the SED could only push skilled workers and other valuable persons so far, out of fear they would flee to the West. See for example Bailey and "East Germany: Over There," (Chapter 5).
[156] Sommer, "Zwischen Mauer und Plakatwand."
[157] Ibid.
[158] See the quote from Robert Littel in Chapter 5, p. 38, which, though not referring specifically to the West German system, did imply a desire for Western-style openness in referring to the contemporary non-aligned and decentralized communist regime in Yugoslavia.
[159] Sommer, "Zwischen Mauer und Plakatwand."

[160] I hesitate to use the term "public sphere'"because it implies a forum of public discussion and political debate that did not truly exist in the GDR.
[161] Ibid. But then for all apparent difference, Sommer identified very Western practices in the educational and economic systems. He had much to say about the "socialist competition" in work places and other institutions. The East German press exhorted various groups in the society to "struggle" for better "performances." In Leipzig, the model presented in the press was the theatrical stage -- important social tasks ought to be done with the same spirit actors brought to their performances. Sommer believed that beneath it all was a basic appeal to self-interest, and self-interest led East Germans to crave social approval. In effect, their dedication to work and achievement was based on an ethic of "keeping up with the Joneses" (which he wrote in English), just as in the Anglo-Saxon countries. "Socialist competition," like much else about East German society, was made intelligible by relating it to Western traditions.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Jäger, p. 585.
[164] As mentioned in Chapter 5, end note 123, Hildebrandt was among the first Western travelers to publish full-length accounts of their experiences 'behind the iron curtain.'
[165] Hildebrandt, p. 20.
[166] Ibid., p. 17.
[167] Ibid., p. 16.
[168] The expression is from Jäger's review of Hildebrandt's book. Jäger, p. 586.
[169] Hildebrandt, p. 12.
[170] This quote is also a summary of Hildebrandt's view in Jäger, p. 586.
[171] Hildebrandt, p. 147.
[172] Ibid., p. 146.
[173] Ibid., pp. 80-81.
[174] Childs, p. 71.
[175] Fullbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 199.
[176] Childs, *The GDR*, p. 72.
[177] Fullbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 201.
[178] Apel, p. 169.
[179] Ibid., p. 170.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Wolfgang Nette, *DDR Report* (Düsseldorf, 1969). Nette worked for a West German radio network, developed many contacts in East Berlin, and traveled frequently in the GDR in the mid-1960s. He chided the West German government for its unwillingness to accept the reality of the GDR and the Oder-Neisse border, for not fully renouncing the Hallstein Doctrine -- by which Bonn refused to have diplomatic relations with any country which recognized the GDR (except the Soviet Union) -- *and even for failing to officially annul the Munich agreement of 1938* (in which Hitler got a green light from Britain and France to occupy the Sudentenland of Czechoslovakia). See pp. 123-4.
[182] See Hans Kauffman, "Vorläufiges über den Alltag in der DDR," *Deutschland Archiv* 2(1), 1969, pp. 37-39.
[183] These findings are summarized (and sharply critiqued) by Kauffman, p. 38.
[184] Nette, p. 63.
[185] Ibid., p. 87.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid., p. 93.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid., p. 95.
[190] Ibid., p. 93.
[191] Kauffman, p. 39.

[192] The fear that the "removal of distance" required for an "empathetic understanding" of daily life under Nazism would break "the previous general consensus resting on the total and complete rejection of this era," was the concern in particular of the Israeli scholar Saul Friedländer. The author feared that in attempting to treat the Nazi era in the same way as any other historical period, a focus on daily life would invariably lead to an "overweighing" of "non-ideological" and "non-criminal spheres of activity." See Saul Friedländer, "Some Reflections on the Historicization of National Socialism," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 16, 1987, pp. 310-24. The quotes here are from the discussion of the issues in Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, pp. 229, 224.
[193] Fulbrook, *The Divided Nation*, p. 210.
[194] Andreas Kohlschütter, "Sie sagan 'Ja' zu ihren Staat: Die Bewohner der DDR fühlen sich nicht mehr länger im Wartesaal," *Die Zeit* 32 August 7, 1970, pp. 3-4.
[195] Kohlschütter, p. 3.. c. 1.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid., c. 2.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid., c. 2-3.
[201] Ibid., c. 3.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid., c. 3-4.
[205] Ibid., c. 4.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid., c. 5.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Ibid.
[212] See Chapter 5.
[213] Kohlschütter, p. 3, c. 5.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid., p. 3, c. 5-p. 4, c. 1.
[216] Ibid., p. 4, c. 1.
[217] Erika Runge, "Na ja, ich lebe in der DDR," *Der Spiegel* 42 October 11, 1971, pp. 90-97. The complete collection was published in Erika Runge, *Eine Reise nach Rostock, DDR* (Frankfurt am Main, 1971).
[218] Ibid., p. 90.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid., p. 96-97.
[221] Ibid., p. 97.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid., pp. 90-91.
[224] Ibid., pp. 93-94.
[225] Ibid., p. 97.
[226] Ibid., p. 91.
[227] Ibid., p. 91.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid., pp. 91-92.
[231] Ibid., p. 92.
[232] Ibid., p. 97.

[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid., p. 92.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Among the travel reports of German-speaking authors who registered such complaints in the 1970s are Erich Witzman, "Wo Tourismus noch ein Fremdwort ist: Im Industriestaat der DDR," *Die Presse* (Vienna), May 13, 1978, p.23; "Ist die DDR heute ein Reiseland? An 'Programm, fehlt es nicht. Das Andere Deutschland, touristisch so gut wie unbekannt," *Die Presse* 8914, December 10, 1977, p. 24; Heinz Held, "Bei Goethe und Uta in der DDR: Auf der Suche nach Kindheit: Begegnungen im anderen Deutschland," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger* June 17-18, 1978, pp. 4-5; "'Touristenland DDR,'" *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 288, December 9, 1976, p. 30; Joachim Bessert, "Für uns ein fremdes Land: Eindrücke von einer Reise in die DDR," *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger* March 26, 1977, p. 3. Somewhat more positive about tourist opportunities in the GDR in the 1970s was Peter Jochen Winters, "Hilfe, die Russen kommen: Beobachten auf einer Reise mit dem Bus durch die DDR-Provinz," *Frankfurter Allegemeine Zeitung* 269, November 19, 1977, BZ, p. 3; Dieter Seliger, "Impressionen aus der 'DDR'-Provinz: Eine kleine Stadt in Brandenburg," *Die Welt* 127, June 2, 1976, p. 21. From 1978 or so onward, reports of visitors concentrated less on tourist possibilities than on the hardships faced by East German citizens: high prices, long lines at grocery stores, the craving of youths for Western consumer goods, and the continued years of waiting for a new car.
[237] For relatively positive appraisals of the GDR system from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s see Dornberg, *The Other Germany*; Nawrocki, *Das geplante Wunder* (both cited above); but also Martin McCauley, *The German Democratic Republic since 1945* (London, 1983); Kurt Sontheimer and Wilhelm Beck, *The Government and Politics of East Germany* (London, 1975); Dietrich Staritz, *Geschicte der DDR*; Karl Wilhelm Fricke, *Politik und Justiz in der DDR* (Cologne, 1979); Jonathan Steele, *Socialism with a German Face: the State that Came in from the Cold* (London, 1977); and perhaps most positive of all was Lyman H. Legters, *The German Democratic Republic: A Developed Socialist Society* (Boulder, CO, 1978). A post-1989 author who argued that the East German economic system was brought down by the ending of reform under Honecker, and might otherwise have endured as a dynamic rival to the Federal Republic is Jörg Roesler, *Zwischen Plan und Markt. Die Wirtschaftsreform 1963-1970 in der DDR* (Berlin, 1990). A 1978 editorial suggesting how unimpressed East Germans had become with the East German system was penned by Mathias Walden, "Wo die Abgrenzung versagt. Die Deutschen drüben richten ihren Alltag immer stärker am Westen aus," *Die Welt* October 31, 1978, p. 6. The author gleefully proclaimed the victory of West Germany in the competition, evidenced by the intimate knowledge East Germans had of West German industrial products and the fact that they increasingly judged their daily life by West German standards.
[238] Even the most radical leftist elements in West Germany overwhelmingly rejected the GDR, indeed Soviet-style Communism in general, as any kind of model for a more just society. This they held in common with most of the Western European Left, whose disillusion with the Soviet Union had grown throughout the 1960s, reaching the breaking point after the Red Army suppressed the 1968 reform movement in Czechoslovakia. In the brief West German Communist revival that followed, only one of the numerous splinter groups, the *Deutsche Kommunistische Partei* (DKP -- successor to the original KPD, which was declared unconstitutional in August 1956), took the GDR as a model for a "just society," and it never gained real political influence. See Andrei S. Markovitz and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 60-61.
[239] See endnote 224.
[240] See endnote 166.
[241] "Die Anderen, die hinter der Mauer . . . ," IV, p. 4.
[242] Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Cambridge, 1988), cited in Markovitz and Gorski, p. 34.
[243] Ibid., pp. 34-5.

[244] The most famed and sweeping version of this argument comes from one of Germany's most renowned social historians, Jürgen Kocka, who argued that the GDR was a *durchherrschte Gesellschaft*, meaning the state shaped and impacted society all the way down to its very roots. See Introduction, endnote 4.

Conclusion

The defeat of Nazi Germany in the spring of 1945 gave rise to great hopes for a future of peace and increased democracy in Europe. At the same time, however, there was also great fear of possible further disaster. The precarious nature of the Soviet-American wartime alliance, what one scholar has called the "shotgun marriage forced upon them by World War II,"[1] as well as the widespread destruction, suffering, and barbarous atrocities of the war were the main reasons for this concern. The widespread use of the terms "iron curtain" and "World War III" from very early on suggests how quickly a sense of danger came to rival initial hopes for a better future.

These fears (and hopes) are clearly revealed in contemporary reports on the Soviet occupation of Germany, and most specifically, in the writings of a small number of correspondents, officials, and other authors who were permitted to travel in the Soviet Zone. These first-hand accounts demonstrate in particular that beneath postwar fears and hopes lay the question of Soviet motives in Germany and Europe, and whether any genuine understanding between the Soviets and the Western powers was possible. A number of these authors offered radically different theories about what the Soviets wanted in Germany, but with few exceptions, they did not believe it was a separate Eastern state. Their observations suggest that to contemporaries, the fate of both the Soviet and Western Zones of occupied Germany appeared more closely linked than to later scholars and observers. In the first two years of occupation, most visitors to the Soviet Zone found the "social revolution" underway there to be progressive, dynamic, and more successful than the "negative" and "defeatist" occupation policies of the Allies in the Western Zones. These findings suggest *not* the cordoning off of the Soviet Zone, but a challenge to the Allies for the "hearts and minds" of *all* Germans. And, despite the radical changes the So-

viets brought to Germany in these years, most contemporaries did *not* believe a long-term division of Germany was likely, or even possible. Though there was no clear consensus, it seemed more likely that the Soviets, given their countertendency to exploit their zone via industrial dismantling, agricultural requisitions, and extraction of current production, were either planning to abandon Germany altogether, or (even more likely), to reach a settlement with the Allies on a merger of the Soviet Zone into the Western Zones, hoping in this way to influence events in the more economically valuable parts of Germany.

The idea that a separate state would emerge from the Soviet Zone was not widely believed until the Berlin crisis of 1948-9, a time when, ironically, Soviet fortunes in Germany seemed to have reached their nadir. But even after the lifting of the blockade and the launching of the two Germanies, the possibility of some settlement (or crisis) bringing an early end to German division could not be dismissed. Contemporary media still suggested a number of possible trajectories, none of which held out prospects for a long division, but some of which *did* contain the possibility of superpower confrontation. While it has long been known that the "iron curtain" did not bring any kind of stability in Germany or Europe for many years after 1949, a contemporary perspective on the occupation years suggests an even more unpredictable situation. The uncertainty over Soviet motives was all the more disconcerting by summer 1949 because of their efforts to manipulate German nationalist feelings through propaganda against the creation of the West German state. These efforts revealed not only the potential fragility of that new creation, but also the continued determination of Moscow to gain a foothold in West Germany, even if it meant trading away the regime that would soon become the GDR. It seemed that policies and events in the Soviet Zone were *anything but* clear indicators of the future of the GDR or Germany as a whole.

Between 1949 and the early 1970s, the Allies maintained an official position favoring the reunification of Germany, while *de facto* accepting the reality of two Germanies. The hope was that at some future time West Germany would become a political and economic "magnet" capable of absorbing the GDR. From the late 1950s to 1970, the Anglo-American media was cautious regarding normalization of relations with the GDR, but in general was critical of the Allies, particularly the United States, for publicly pretending the regime did not exist. But behind the scenes, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were prodding Bonn toward dialogue with Pankow and efforts to reduce tensions in Eastern Europe as well.[2] In the 1960s, allowing and encouraging the West German regime to take the first steps allowed the Johnson administration to "build bridges" to the Soviets and Eastern Europe without even granting *de facto* acceptance to the GDR.[3] I titled Chapter Two -- covering the period from the spring of 1948 to late 1949 -- "unity through division?", but in truth, the idea of pursuing unity through *accepting two Germanies* -- what might be called "*eventual* unity through division" -- was pursued throughout the *entire period* under consideration in this study. On the other hand, however, its clear that reducing tensions in Europe was far more important to the United States than the reunification of Germany.

With the beginning of *Ostpolitik* in 1969, the West German government's social-liberal coalition initiated a policy of increasing contact with the GDR, working toward a *kind* of official (though incomplete) recognition, and the extension of various kinds of financial aid, all of which helped weaken the Eastern regime far more than the earlier conservative policy of isolating it.[4] This was followed by international acceptance of the GDR in 1973 and, eventually, a ratification of the postwar boundaries of Europe with the Helsinki Accords of 1975. The pattern of accepting German division while working to under-

mine it "around the edges" continued, but in a changed context. But at the same time, it is clear that by the mid 1970s the United States and its Allies were equally prepared to accept the permanent division of Germany, if it came to that.

Over the years, these policies were predictably unpopular among many West Germans, particularly of the older generations, who fumed over the "writing off" of the East Germans, or in an alternative phrasing, their abandonment as "captive peoples." The reports of many visitors, meanwhile, indicate that Western policies toward the GDR greatly disappointed many East Germans as well, particularly before the economic upswing of the mid 1960s. Tacitly accepting the GDR as basically unalterable guaranteed East Germans' increasing estrangement from the West and reorientation toward the regimes and values of the Soviet bloc. But fixation on the "totalitarian domination" of East Germans, or what the Western powers might have done differently to prevent the strengthening and stabilization of SED rule, was, as we have seen, only a small part of the story told by Western visitors about daily life and socioeconomic development in the GDR. Despite East Germans' general dislike of the SED leadership, most visitors described ups and downs in relations between the regime and the population rather than permanent, irresolvable conflict. In other words, they disagreed with some later scholars who believed, in effect, that East Germans engaged in a forty-years civil war with the regime.[5]

This was because contemporary Westerners saw developments in the GDR primarily as products of *internal* developments and sociocultural interactions -- albeit in an atmosphere of considerable coercion -- rather than the larger exigencies of the Cold War. Of course, the GDR came into being because of antagonisms between the United States and the Soviet Union, and its demise is unimaginable without the international political changes that brought the Cold War to an end. But in the intervening years, visitors illumi-

nated a process by which the Eastern regime became accepted, if not loved, by most its citizens, and increasingly allowed them to live in circumstances about which they could even feel a certain pride. Many post-1989 scholars have agreed, up to a point at least. Both contemporary visitors and these later scholars suggest that the functioning reality of the East German dictatorship was "socially produced" -- that is, developed in the interplay between state directives, popular responses, and state efforts to adjust to those responses, but also in the integration of the population into numerous "mass organizations" and state-sponsored projects of reconstruction and economic development. But visitors brought different assumptions to their analyses, and therefore took them somewhat further.

I have argued that since visitors to the GDR lacked the hindsight of the "decline and fall" of the GDR (and in the case of the earlier ones, even the stabilizing significance of the Berlin Wall), these authors portrayed less conflict and contention in daily life, and more relative stability and even normality -- as early as the mid 1950s. But more importantly, they suggested that part of this "normality" was a general approval of the social welfare state, and pride in certain "socialist achievements." Moreover, many of these accounts show that the emerging sense of difference and separation East Germans experienced regarding West Germans was not composed merely of envy or deprivation, let alone hopeless longing. Though such feelings were indeed visible, a growing number of East Germans also betrayed a skepticism about the West to visitors, and wanted many of the GDR's achievements retained in the event of reunification.

While at least one prominent German historian has acknowledged that the SED attained a degree of popular acceptance by touting its socialist system and accusing Bonn of plotting to destroy it,[6] East Germans' *own views* on the benefits of the Eastern welfare

state, or their pride of participation in the development of the East German economy in 1950s and 1960s, have been little considered. We have seen that both the methodology of studying the East German dictatorship and society, and the specific geopolitical context in which they evolved -- most particularly the attractions of the richer West and the regime's efforts to prevent outmigration -- militate against the idea of a widespread acceptance of the East German system, let alone any kind of identification with the East German state. Yet the views expressed to many visitors over the years *do* suggest widespread approval of many East German *institutions, and* a lack of desire to exchange one's circumstances for a life in the West (even if one could). Though only a handful of Western visitors believed such views constituted a separate Eastern identity, most of them indicated that East Germans were not simply accepting what could not be changed, but actively embracing life in the GDR because its social system seemed beneficent, its economic achievements the product of their own participation and struggle, and the West German system, by contrast, seemed foreign, overly materialistic, and atomizing.

All of this, as well as an emerging sense that the regime embodied certain "German traditions" -- such as law and order and moral propriety -- suggests an intellectual "background" to daily experience in the GDR which does *not* necessarily supplant the concepts of self-interested "negotiation" or efforts to mind one's allotted task and "live an ordinary life," but *does* suggest that there was far more to East Germans' relationship with their state than forced reconciliation. Among the visitors, even determined opponents of the regime often saw approval of socialist achievements or the regime's guarantee of order as fairly widespread. Perhaps, in part at least, these views helped compensate for the absence of political freedoms, genuine political participation, or any true belief in the regime's ideological foundations. But how should these views be incorporated into the pic-

problem has been the lack of careful consideration of ordinary East Germans' views, the works of Lutz Niethammer, Alexander von Plato, and Dorothee Wierling being important exceptions. There is also the deeper problem of post-1989 political needs. As we have seen, German politicians since 1989 have sought above all to define the GDR as a fundamentally illegal and illegitimate state, and, as noted, this has encouraged totalitarian paradigms which discount the importance of the actions of ordinary persons. But the premises of "negotiation" themselves may also stand in the way, for in positing endemic competition between the East German state and society, they do not address the more philosophical underlying question of how individual citizens prioritized their needs and demands.

In other words, to make the case that East Germans wanted a social welfare state and preferred state ownership of large-scale industry and agriculture, and would in majority have been in favor of the regime if it could have achieved prosperity within that state-run economy, means also to suggest (and not too indirectly) that to the vast majority, material well-being was more important than political freedom or genuine democratic process. Indeed, by extension, raising this issue suggests that the same is basically true of most persons living under *any* regime, so long as political pressure does not reach intolerable levels. We have seen that many Western visitors believed that life under the SED dictatorship diminished East Germans' capacity for self-reliance and also limited their patience for parliamentary give and take. Yet at the same time, the desire of East German workers for both economic security and a sense of contribution to building a successful society were viewed as normal and even admirable. If, in fact, many East Germans viewed state socialism as a "good idea, but badly carried out," or ultimately measured the SED's success only by its ability to rival Western living standards, then future research on the

ture of a society wracked by "negotiation conflicts," one in which low-level resistance to regime directives, and the airing of grievances or strikes in factories, collective farms, work brigades, universities and schools, ultimately compromised the regime's ability to rule effectively?

This is obviously a difficult problem, which would involve asking new questions that regime documents simply cannot answer. After all, a worker who approved of the welfare state, and believed that state-owned industry was preferable to private ownership, might still be primarily occupied with improving his or her own situation, and might still view "the boss" as a member of an oppressive class. But if we look again at Theo Sommer's 1964 thesis regarding "negotiation": that East Germans' registering all manner of complaints with party functionaries was a tacit acceptance of the regime's legitimacy (rather than an unmanageable burden, as it would later become), we might amend his thesis and contend that for many East Germans, resistance and complaint were based on disagreements as to how a genuinely socialist state ought to provide for the social welfare. It would seem that one could place their grievances within such a context *and* also view them as a defense of one's self-interest, in the same way that a person might try and limit the exposure of their assets to taxation while still believing taxes are necessary to maintain police, schools, infrastructure, etc.

But of course, in the case of the GDR whatever belief there was in the justness of socialism coincided with a tremendous amount of "baggage" regarding the SED; not just the general dislike of the party's leaders, but also the belief that many regime functionaries and cadres were incompetent, domineering, or simply pigheaded fanatics. This helps explain why East Germans' basic belief in the values of socialism has been missing from the study of East German dictatorship, but does not explain it entirely. Another

East German dictatorship and society will have to ask more uncomfortable questions about the basic political assumptions of ordinary people, rather than assuming that in pursuing and defending their own interests, East Germans had a fundamental conflict with the construction of socialism.

[1] LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, p. 6.
[2] Schwartz, "No Harder Enterprise," in *TUSGECW*, pp. 32-3.
[3] The phrase "build bridges" comes from Ibid., pp. 33.
[4] Turner, *Germany from Partition to Unification*, p. 258.
[5] This argument was popularized by two former East German historians who were disadvantaged in their careers for not towing the political line. See Armin Minter and Stefan Wolle, *Untergang auf Raten* (Munich, 1993).
[6] Turner, *Germany from Partition to Unification*, p. 258.

Appendix

Newspaper and Magazine Sources for Footnotes

America

Atlantic Monthly

Christ und Welt

Christian Century

Civis

Commonweal

Contemporary Review

Deutsche Kommentare: Wochenzeitung für das ganze Deutschland

Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschaftszeitung

The Economist

Encounter

The Fortnightly

Frankfurter Allegemeine Zeitung

Die Gegenwart

Handelsblatt

Harper's

The Illustrated London News

Kirche in der Zeit

Kirchlicher Nachrichtensdienst

Kölner Stadt Anzeiger

Life

The Listener

Look

The Nation

Neue Zürcher Zeitung

The New York Review of Books

The New York Times

The New Yorker

The New Statesman and Nation

Newsweek

The Nineteenth Century and After

Die Presse (Vienna)

The Reporter

Rheinischer Merkur

Der Ruf

The Saturday Evening Post

Die Schaulade

Schlesische Rundschau

Sonntagsblatt (Hamburg)

The Spectator

Der Spiegel

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Textil-Wirtschaft

The Times (London)

Time

U.S. News and World Report

Vital Speeches of the Day

Die Welt (Berlin)

Weltwoche (Zürich)

Wirtschafts Zeitung

Die Zeit

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